



DANGEROUS  
LOVERS  
BOOK TWO

IN THE DEVIL'S  
SHADOW

MAGGIE BONNET

# **In The Devil's Shadow**

***Dangerous Lovers Book Two***

***A World Revealed***

**By Maggie Bonnet**

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## *AUTHOR'S NOTE*

Many people have read this book before it reached you. However, no one is perfect. **If you see a typo, please do not report it to Amazon.** Please directly contact me via social media so I can fix it.

You may also notice some words in italics throughout the book that are slang. Diana is Italian-American and Ares is Greek. These words, such as *Belissima*, are slang from their cultures. They are not typos.

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## *FOREWORD*

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## *CONTENT WARNING*

In *The Devil's Shadow* is the second book in a series, and will end on a cliffhanger. It is a dark, paranormal why choose romance. Nothing inside this book is appropriate for a reader under 18 years old. The men in this book are not heroes. They are morally gray alphaholes. The following pages include horizontal dancing (iykyk) magic, romance, eggplants, taco splitters, trauma, emotions, and so much more. You know the guys never make anything vanilla or easy. For a complete list of content notes, please visit [this](#) Instagram post. If any of the included content in the post offends you, please do not read this book.

This book is a why choose romance, meaning the female character doesn't choose a singular love interest. They're a family, y'all. Besties. When it comes to love, the more the merrier! She gets them all, and she deserves them all.

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## *DEDICATION*

If you got junk in the trunk, clap your hands.

If your thighs rub together, clap your hands.

If your bra's always too tight, and it never fits you right...

If you thicc and you know it clap your hands!

Embrace yourself and your body the way it is **now**. Love who you are **now**. Go live your life **now**! Life is too short to wait. Life is too short not to eat that fifth taco or another helping of lasagna! Viva la carbs!

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# AZAZEL

## *Prologue*

### *Twenty-Two Years Ago, Heaven*

I stood in front of an endless wooden door that was so tall, the blanket of dense, white clouds above me parted for it, like sheep for a wolf. The golden doorknob gleamed in the silvery moonlight. *Why did I answer his summons?* I've been disgraced for centuries now, no longer at his beck and call, yet here I was... Literally knocking on Heaven's door at some ungodly hour at night for a secret meeting with the one man I *should* hate more than anyone in existence. The man who ruined my life and made me a scapegoat for crimes I didn't commit. Someone who was supposed to be my mentor and fucked me over instead. Why did I come back—to a place I was expressly forbidden from returning—to see him?

*What does he want from me?* Hopefully, it was worth possibly losing my wings over. Despite being disgraced, I was allowed to keep my wings and magic. *Small victories, I suppose.* Those hypocrites would *love* to catch me and pluck out every single one of my feathers before ripping my bare wings from my back. Although I had trusted him in the past, I wouldn't put it past him to betray me now; not after what he'd done.

I studied the grain in the wood while I waited for him to show up. The swirling patterns were too perfect, to the point of being unnatural. But that's what Heaven was—*perfection*. Living to your fullest potential for 'the greater good.' We were just cogs in a machine, and as long as we all kept turning, who cared if we cracked under the pressure?

I waited seven minutes past the agreed upon time to meet. He was never late. This meetup was starting to seem more and more like a set-up. Just as I was about to fade back to my cabin off the grid, he appeared. His cream sweater and olive pants made him look relaxed. His ice blond hair and beard were neatly trimmed, not a hair out of place. They framed his square jaw, apple cheeks, and strikingly steel blue eyes well, like they always had. He smiled at me as if we were old friends. What a fucking joke.

"Azazel, thank you for meeting me. This is an urgent matter," he said with a serious set to his jaw. He cleared the cloud and unlocked the door, gesturing for me to follow him in. I stood there, staring at him. "Come on, we have a limited amount of time."

"Why would I go anywhere with you, Michael? I don't trust you not to capture me and accuse me of crimes I didn't commit, *again*. There could be soldiers behind that door waiting for me. What reassurance do I have that I'm safe? Because your word means nothing." I tried to keep an even tone, but it was hard not to sound angry about what had happened, even if it happened centuries ago.

Being disgraced was life changing, in both positive and negative ways. But being betrayed by a man who had claimed to love me like a father—who touted himself as a beacon of justice—was what gutted me.

"Azazel, I tried my best to keep you *alive*. Guilty or not, your head was on the guillotine. They were out for your blood, and disgracement was the best-case

scenario for you.” Michael’s gaze swept up and down me, and he raised a brow at my long hair and tattoos. I would have never been able to have them if I was still a graced angel. “I promise you, you’re safe. I’ll fade you directly to my chambers, but I can’t do that until you walk through the door into Heaven.”

I hesitated. Some instinct deep within me told me to trust him, but I wasn’t sure if I was being objective or nostalgic. He huffed, and strode toward me, taking my hand in his. An image of a baby in a bassinet made of clouds flickered through my mind, instantly putting me on high alert. *It couldn’t be...*

“The baby you prophesied is here. We don’t have a lot of time, as we have to get her home before her mother wakes up. But we need you to complete our plan to keep her safe,” he said as he squeezed my hand.

“*We?*” I asked, trying not to sound shocked. I knew she was coming, but was surprised they’d actually taken my prophecy seriously after they ousted me.

“Gabriel and Raphael are waiting for us in my chambers, son. We need four angels to complete the ceremony.” Hearing him call me *son* made an unwanted pang rip through my spine. He wasn’t the father-like figure I had always wanted anymore, but I couldn’t ignore his request. I had waited centuries for her to come. She was finally here, and that meant the world was going to change. Sooner rather than later.

I stepped through the door with him, and we immediately faded to his chambers as he had promised. They hadn’t changed a bit. White walls. Beige furniture. Everything had its place in the minimalistic space. Michael’s place looked just like an Ikea catalog—no clutter in sight. On the couch sat Raphael and Gabriel. Both of them smiled when they saw me, despite the part they’d played in my disgrace. Gabriel had the audacity to

look me in the face after he'd cast the final vote that convicted me. *Two-faced fuck.*

“Good to see you, Azazel,” Raphael said, leaning forward so his forearms rested on his legs. He intently scanned me, noting the changes in my appearance. “I see Earth has treated you...well.”

“Anything is better than being betrayed by those I considered to be my family, so yeah. You could say it's been a great experience so far,” I snarked.

Forget being nice. I couldn't hold the anger in. At least Michael had visited me in secret to apologize and explain himself. He tried to contact me every now and then and keep tabs on me, despite my best efforts to block his communications. I hadn't heard from these two in centuries.

“There was no way to save you from your fate, so why would I risk mine? It would have been political suicide to go against God's ruling on this.” He started to defend himself, but when he saw the dry, unamused look on my face, he dropped his eyes to the floor, muttering, “You were disgraced, but you kept your life, wings, and magic. You got a good deal in the end.” He knew the outcome wasn't fair, but he wouldn't go against the grain on this. And that was what it was. No way to change the past now.

“We don't have time to argue,” Michael reminded us. “We need to do the ceremony while she's still asleep and get her back before someone in the house notices she's gone.”

“What ceremony are we doing?” I asked. “And how could I possibly help? I'm barely an angel anymore.”

The room fell quiet as a member of Michael's house staff brought out a baby, swaddled in clouds. She wore a little pink bonnet and white and pink polka dot pajamas. Her face was peacefully relaxed as she slept. To think,

this little baby would grow up to one day save or destroy the world as we knew it. The world that many of us—upstairs and downstairs—had worked so hard to influence and shape.

“Azazel, you will be the child’s guardian angel, figuratively speaking. You know the most about the visions you had, and continue to have, about this girl.” *How does he know I’ve had continued visions of her?* “And you’re already on Earth. You can keep an eye on her, guide her to stay on the right path.”

“I can’t be her guardian angel. You need a graced angel to fill that role, Michael. If you’re taking my visions seriously, you know how integral she is to the world’s fate. Every creature’s existence, human and supernatural alike, depends on her. Why isn’t she going to stay here in Heaven where you can train her? What aren’t you telling me?” Something wasn’t adding up. He may be an Archangel full of *light and truth*, but Michael had a conniving side. I’d experienced it firsthand.

“Please, Azazel. I wouldn’t ask you if it wasn’t life or death. She needs guidance, someone to protect her. You’re the best man for the job.” He gazed down at the baby, as a tear fell from his eye. Raphael and Gabriel’s eyes bounced between us, and they fidgeted in their seats.

“How would I become her guardian angel? How would you bond us?” I needed to know the details before I agreed to this.

“A soulbond. It gives you all the same powers and benefits a guardian angel would have,” Raphael answered. “You’ll still be able to track her, know how she’s feeling, and fade directly to her, no matter where she is. The only difference is—”

“It’s permanent.” I interrupted, finishing his sentence for him. Usually, guardian angels were reassigned after their wards either overcame the crossroads in their lives,

were no longer in need of their services, or if they died. If I soulbonded with her, there would be no coming back from it. We would be bonded for the rest of our lives, regardless of how we felt about each other, or how the world's fate unfolded.

*Do I want to be bonded to this girl for life? Will I be able to guide her and keep her on the right path to achieve her destiny?*

"What's her name?" I inquired, stepping closer to Michael to get a better view. She snuggled into his chest as she dozed.

"Diana. It means divine," he replied. "Please, Azazel. I know Heaven let you down. I know we should have put our pride aside and stood with you so the threat was taken more seriously from the get-go, but there's nothing we can do to change the past. We can just carry on into the future and do what's right."

He made a good point. We couldn't change the past, but we could do everything in our power to ensure our future. My instincts told me that she needed me. That this girl wouldn't be able to overcome her trials unless I stood with her.

"I'll do it, but not for you. *Not for Heaven*. You all turned your backs on me. I'm doing this for her—for the world as we know it. Heaven and Hell aren't immune to the annihilation that will come to pass if she fails." I held my arms out, and Michael gently transferred Diana to me. She smelled like roses and fresh laundry. Her little nose wrinkled, then her face smoothed out again.

Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael stood, rearranging themselves into a triangle around us. They held hands, and started chanting the soul binding spell. "*Duae animae occurrit et fiet unum.*"

A silver light surrounded Diana and I as they repeated the words. An electric feeling crackled between



the two of us. My entire body buzzed with warmth and I felt the connection instantly. Gazing down at her, I realized the weight of the responsibility I now shouldered. This little girl was going to change the entire world—*usher in a new era*—and I would be there to help her, every step of the way.

After what seemed like no time at all, and yet an eternity, the light dissipated. Sparks flew into the air. *The spell worked.* Gabriel and Raphael shook hands with Michael and I, and hastily made their exit. They cared about the fate of the world enough to do the ceremony, but didn't want to be caught fraternizing with me. *Typical.*

"What now?" I asked Michael as he guided us to a couch in his study. Diana still snoozed in my arms, softly snoring. The walls were lined with ancient texts, from the ceiling to the floor. It was every bibliophile's wet dream come true. Michael probably read every book in here multiple times. When he was my mentor, I had made it my mission to read as many as I could, and would have finished them all if I hadn't been disgraced.

"You watch over her, guide her. You use your visions and magic to determine the right path and try your hardest to keep her on it. I know you're not beholden to it anymore, but try to stick to the guardian angel guidelines as much as you can. Don't interfere too much, and try not to blow your cover until she's old enough to understand. Report back to me regularly, so I can relay the information to God."

"God knows? I assumed we were doing this covertly, seeing as God wasn't a fan of my prophecy when I had it, and we're meeting at night time in secret." *The angels must really take it seriously if they got the Almighty on board.*

"Of course God knows, but this stays a secret between you, Gabriel, Raphael, and myself. I was

commanded to reach out to you until you agreed to come here. That's one of the reasons I've tried so hard to contact you these past few decades," he replied.

"The other reasons?" I asked.

"Because I miss you. I love you like a son, Azazel, and I'm so sorry I let you fall from grace. I thought I was doing the best thing for you, but I should have fought harder. I know you can't forgive me, but hopefully we can come together and move past it, *for her sake*." His voice was strained as he rubbed a thumb across her cheek. He seemed so sentimental.

"I can forgive you, actually." My voice cracked with emotion I never thought I'd express out loud. "Falling gave me perspective. Good and bad don't exist. Neither do Heaven or Hell. It's all relative. There are just two opposing sides that want different things and are willing to fight and risk everything over their beliefs. One wouldn't exist without the other. We've been pitted against each other for so long, but if we don't come together, the world won't survive to fight over anymore."

"There's no one I would trust with this task more than you. Promise me you'll keep an eye on her?" Michael sounded desperate. He *finally* understood how pivotal Diana was in all of this.

"I promise. You'll hear from me soon." I got up, handing her back to him as gingerly as I could. Babies were so fragile. She would need to toughen up and grow a thick skin if she was destined to save the world.

We walked to her bassinet, where the servant from earlier waited for us. He placed her back in, tucking her under more clouds. Michael escorted me to the front door of his house. As he faded us to Heaven's door again, I couldn't help but wonder what I'd gotten myself into.

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# DESMOND

## Chapter 1

*Present Day, JFK Airport, NYC*

My entire body was seized by raw panic. The only thing I felt was each strained, shallow breath that filled my lungs and burned my chest. I stared into my lap, only seeing blood—on my t-shirt, jeans, hands, and the floor. Her blood. *She died in my arms. We couldn't save her. Where was her body? She literally died... I felt her life force dwindle. Then her body just disappeared.*

“Desmond...Desmond!” **Desi!** Bash’s angry voice rang all around me, but I couldn’t look at him. My eyes stayed glued to the floor. *She should be there...* “We have to go! There are scalars everywhere!”

Reptilian shifters swarmed the entire terminal, heading right toward us with rage etched onto their scaly, slender faces. But I couldn’t make myself move or defend myself. My body wasn’t cooperating with me.

***Ares, he’s in shock. We have to get home. Once we’re there, help Olga pack up the essentials. We have to leave, ASAP,*** Bash mindlinked among the three of us. Ares’ shirt was soaked in blood and slashed to shreds that hung off his wide shoulders. The hair of his beard was matted with blood, too.

“What about Mal?” Ares’ voice was glacial. I had never heard him sound so detached before. “What do we do with him?”

“He’s still knocked out. Bind his magic with cuffs and temporarily blind him. I’ll figure out what to do with him when we reach the safehouse.” Bash’s calm voice did little to soothe me. I had trouble keeping my focus, my thoughts constantly bringing me back to Diana.

*Snarling, hissing, yelling, cracking.* Ares had a severed head in his hands. Bash was drenched in black blood. Someone shouted my name, but I was frozen, knees glued to the floor. The voice sounded so far away. We were surrounded by a ring of red barrier fire that kept the shifters at bay. A hand grasped my forearm, and the destroyed airport gate around me faded to black temporarily, until our living room came into focus. *Oh yeah, the wards are down...*

Olga held Oscar against her chest, tears running down her face. She looked to me as she awaited my instructions, but I just *couldn't*. I still knelt on the floor, and as hard as I tried to get up, my body was frozen to the spot. Why pack the essentials? Why go anywhere? She was gone. Satan knew we betrayed him. Any minute he was going to barge through that door, and we’d be fucked. We would be lucky if he killed us... and the idea was appealing. At least I could be with Diana that way. I had no clue how much time had passed since we arrived at the house. Bash slapped me across the face, waking me from the stupor I was in.

“DESMOND SINCLAIR! Wake the fuck up, and snap out of this bullshit. We need to go *now*. Olga packed up your things, but with Mal out cold, I need your help getting all this to the safehouse,” Bash commanded.

I got up, and he and Ares each took one of my hands. Ares’ other hand was on Mal, and Olga completed the circle we made. Our luggage, some

boxes, and Oscar were in the center. Bash cracked his neck—a telltale sign he was stressed—and we faded in front of a large white stone house with terracotta shingles. A mountain range loomed in the distance. I scanned the area, seeing no other homes for miles. Just desert and sand. My confusion must have been clear as day on my face. Ares took my head in his hands, gazing deep in my eyes.

“Where are we?” I croaked.

“Smack dab in the middle of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The house with all the fancy cloaking and protection spells?” Ares stared at me, frowning. I drew a blank... “The safehouse outside Las Vegas... *Remember*, you went full-raging-demon-douche on me for bringing a few coked-out strippers here a couple decades ago?” Ares said slowly, as if he was talking to a child. “I’m going to help you into the house.”

He carried me through the doors, depositing me on a leather couch. I heard rustling and talking in the distance, but my mind was a million miles away. As I ran my hand over the cool leather, I thought of Diana’s blue-gray eyes, and how I’d never gaze into them again. I’d never feel her soft skin or hear the sarcastic way she’d call me *sir*. A tear slid down my face as I stared off into the distance, losing myself in thoughts of the woman I’d wasted so much time resisting.

“Desmond... come on. Olga made food, and we’re going to come up with a game plan,” Bash said as he took my hand, lifting me off the couch. When we arrived at the house it was daytime, but the brilliant moon outside made me think I’d been sitting there for a while.

Bash led me through the living room and a billiards room, into the kitchen. I hadn’t been to this house in a while and almost forgot how beautiful it was. It didn’t matter though, because Diana would never see it. A couple days ago, I thought of how cool it would be to

take a vacation here, the five of us. Live it up in Las Vegas. Go to a show, and eat a delicious dinner. *What a fucking pipedream.*

“Hey, are you paying attention?” Bash asked, snapping his fingers in my face. “Earth to Desmond. You’re missing important information.”

I felt Oscar rubbing himself against my leg, and cleared my throat to center myself. *The guys need me.* I couldn’t live in LaLa land while shit was blowing up around us. “Can you catch me up?”

“Bash still feels Diana. She isn’t dead,” Ares said with a gleeful hopefulness that permeated me. What did that mean?

“How do you feel her?” I asked Bash. “Explain all of this. We don’t have her body, and we saw her die. How could she possibly be alive?”

“I feel Diana through our bond,” Bash said, clapping his hand on my shoulder. “If she were dead, I wouldn’t feel the pull toward her. That’s why I was so adamant about getting out of the airport and into one of the safehouses. This fight isn’t over yet!”

“So where is she? Use the bond to find her!” Ares shouted as he jumped out of his seat. His eyes lit up, and I could already see the wheels turning in his head.

“It doesn’t work that way. The bond connects us, lets us generally know how the other feels. Over time it will get stronger. As of now, I can’t use it to find her.” Bash admitted. “Olga packed her mother’s cards, so we could possibly use those in a recall or locator spell to try and find her location. But it may not work because they weren’t an original possession.”

“How did her body disappear, and how is she alive? Mal stabbed her in the heart. There’s no way she can live through that.” As much as I wanted to believe she was still alive somewhere, the stab was a mortal injury.

Bash and Ares locked eyes over the table, probably mindlinking each other. Usually, I would find being excluded extremely rude, but something inside me was broken. I found it hard to care about anything while Diana was missing.

“I have two theories as to what happened,” Bash said as he got up and walked toward the island to refill his plate. I hadn’t even touched my food yet. “Diana either time-hopped while she was dying, or Satan somehow used a recall spell to retrieve her. As to how she’s still alive... I’m not sure. But I *know* she is.”

“Or Azazel has her...” Ares growled. He clenched his fist so hard that his fork snapped in his hand, and his piece of steak dropped onto the floor. “That fucker is obsessed with my Little Goddess and wants her for himself. He probably pulled some magical angel-fuckery and has her captive right now.”

Bash held up a hand, shushing us as he stared at the ceiling for a few seconds. “Mal just mindlinked me. He’s awake, crying for help, freaking out over what happened. He can’t see anything or use his magic, and he’s *scared*...”

“I don’t think he realizes we’re the ones who detained him...” Ares commented evenly. “Do you believe he was possessed?” He directed the question at Bash.

“I one hundred percent believe he was possessed by Red, but I plan to explore his mind to make sure. That wasn’t him at the airport. He might hate Diana, but he would never do that. Desmond, what do you think?”

The way they both looked at me for guidance had anxiety clawing at my chest. I was supposed to be our leader: fearless, ruthless, strong, and cunning. But all I felt right now was a deep, aching sadness that was swallowing me whole. I wasn’t fit to lead us anymore.



“No, he wouldn’t do that. Satan controlled him somehow.” I didn’t even recognize the weak, tired sound of my own voice.

“I think the first thing we need to do is make sure Mal’s entity-free, then we get as much information as we can from him. The four of us will get a game plan together,” Bash offered. “We need to explore every avenue,” he said as he swung his head toward Ares. “Even if it means contacting Azazel. His gift could be useful in this situation, and if he’s as obsessed with her as we think he is, he’ll help us.”

“I *hate* that fuck-faced, feathered, foul-ass rockstar wannabe, and hope he chokes on his own fucking spit. And that his pillows are always warm on *both* sides. May his coffee order never be right and his favorite pastry be out of stock. One day, I’m going to cut his hair off and hang it in my trophy room.” Ares’ face twisted with disgust.

“Bro, you weren’t even involved in that love triangle. Calm down,” I said, astonished that he still had such negative feelings toward him. “Bash and I were the ones who got caught up with him, and we don’t even hate him that much.” I don’t hate him at all, but wish things had ended differently between us.

“You didn’t have to watch him destroy your crew with his stupid angel-dick nonsense. The way you two fought over him made me think we were done for...” Ares frowned, clearly remembering the blow-ups Bash and I had over Az.

*Azazel*. I couldn’t fall back into calling him that. Something in my gut told me we’d be hearing from him eventually, because for some reason he was watching over Diana. There were few reasons why someone, magical or otherwise, would have an angel assigned to them. We all needed to be on our guard. He could still hold a grudge against us, even after all this time.

“Alright,” Bash announced, clapping his hands together as a mask of determination fell over his face. “Let’s go get Mal and see what we can find out.”

We made our way up to the open door of Mal’s room. When he heard our footsteps, his head whipped around to the entryway. He was hogtied on the bed and blindfolded with golden magical bindings. Full-body shakes wracked him, making him resemble a timid mouse instead of the snarky asshole I favored. I guess Bash didn’t clue him in on what had happened.

“Mal, stop mindlinking me. You’re at the safehouse outside of Las Vegas. Desmond and Ares are here with us,” he said in a cool tone. Rolling up his sleeves, he sat on the bed next to Mal’s head. “Do you remember anything that happened between you leaving our planning session and what happened at the airport?”

His voice was a quivering mess. “I-I went to get something, and I heard Diana crying in her room. She asked me to t-take her away from us. Something inside my head told me to take her to the airport, but it wasn’t me. I don’t know how to describe it. After we got there, everything went hazy for a while, and I... *I stabbed Diana.*” His voice cracked as tears wet his razor-sharp cheeks. “I attacked Ares too, but don’t know how it happened. I wasn’t me; Red’s voice kept ringing throughout my head, like he controlled me.”

“Yeah, you cut me up with my own spear, *asshole,*” Ares spat. “You understand why I felt the need to subdue you? No hard feelings,” he barbed, rolling his eyes. He touched the magical bindings around Mal’s eyes, and they dissolved, allowing Mal to see. Then he broke the binds around his wrists and ankles so he could lay flat.

“I’m going to search your mind and confirm your version of events. Then Ares will broadcast it so we can watch them together,” Bash said. “It’s not that I don’t

believe you, but I also need to confirm that you're not currently possessed."

Bash repositioned Mal on his back with his head cradled in his lap. I placed my hand over Mal's, to push some calming magic through him so he'd stop shaking and relax. Bash had searched my mind before, and the more someone struggled, the more painful it was. Bash placed one hand on his forehead and the other on his temple. He spent the next several minutes concentrating as he searched Mal's mind for answers. Frowning, he grabbed Ares' hand.

"Ares, grab Desmond's hand, and get ready for a mindfuck."

The entire room around me spun, refocusing again on an office desk. This had been when Satan asked to see him alone, after I made him leave the steakhouse.

*Mal sat across from Satan, the memory playing out from his point of view. Red wore his usual red robe that completely hid his face in shadow.*

*"I know she's alive, hiding in your house. You all betrayed me. If you bring her to me Malcolm, I can spare your life," Red drawled in a sinister voice.*

*"I don't know what you're talking about," Mal replied with an even tone. "I haven't seen Diana since Ares burned her alive in the fire. I can assure you she's dead because I saw Ares do it myself."*

*"Lies!" Satan shouted as he grabbed Mal's hand, sending an electric shock through him. His body convulsed in pain as the electricity crackled all over his skin, shaking the view. He cried out in agony as his entire body bowed off the chair. Satan inhaled a deep breath, then blew out a red cloud of smoke that floated straight into Mal's mouth; presumably that was the entity that possessed him. When Satan let go of Mal's hand, the electrical current stopped.*

*“You will obey me, Malcolm Knight.”*

*Mal nodded his head. “Yes, Satan.”*

*“You will wait until the time is right, and then you will kill Diana. You’re going to murder her. You’ll kill her out of rage, because you hate her. Then all of your friends will leave you, and I’ll pick them off one by one.” Satan’s dark, evil laughter filled the air. “When you complete your task, my possession will end. Because you lied to my face, I’ll keep you on a second leash with Asmodeus. I’ve seen the way you stare at him out of the corner of your eye... I always have room for another pretty pet.”*

*“Yes, Satan,” Mal agreed, his eyes wide, filled with panic.*

*“When Desmond asks, you’re going to tell him I talked to you about assisting another crew of mine in teleporting moonstones. You don’t know the details because it’s a top-secret project. Tell him I’ll contact you later with specifics. Sit still, pet.” Satan got up and rounded the desk, standing somewhere behind Mal. “Hmmm, what a long, graceful neck you have. It seems you’ll take the same sized collar as Asmodeus. I’ll make sure yours is blue, so it matches your eyes.”*

*He patted Mal’s cheek, then walked in front of him and placed his hands on either side of Mal’s head. Mal’s eyes snapped shut, and when he opened them again, he seemed confused.*

*“I apologize, Satan. I momentarily lost myself. What were we discussing?” Mal asked, bowing his head in deference.*

*“Pay attention, Malcolm.” Satan barked, sitting on the edge of his desk, slightly further away from Mal. “I’ll be in contact with you about the moonstone shipment. It will be abrupt, so I’ll come to collect you myself. Be ready.”*

*“Yes, Satan. I look forward to assisting your team.” Mal shook his hand, and red and yellow sparks flew from their joining.*

*“My guard can see you out now,” Red said as he returned to his seat behind the desk.*

The entire room spun again, coming into focus at the airport. The scene was tinted the same shade of red as the entity that possessed him.

*Mal stabbed Diana in the heart. Then he twisted it for good measure, ensuring her death. Watching the scene from his point of view sent chills down my spine. Her face contorted with fear and shock. When he released the blade, the red tint disappeared. I ran toward Malcolm and picked him up, throwing him into an airline kiosk. The memory blacked out.*

I felt Ares' hand leave mine, and Mal's bedroom came back into focus. He laid on the bed, sobbing into Bash's lap. “She's dead. I killed her,” Mal whispered, just loud enough that I heard it. He sat up, hanging his head in his hands. “I *am* a fucking murderer.”

“Mal, Diana is still alive. Bash can feel her through their bond,” I said, rubbing his back and sending more calming magic through him. “You didn't do this willingly... We know you're not to blame.”

“Where is she?” he asked, sniffing punctuating his words.

“We don't have her with us. She disappeared. She either time-hopped somewhere, Red recalled her, or Azazel could have her. Those are our leading theories anyway,” Bash replied.

“She's alive?” Mal's face lit up with hope. “You know Azazel; contact him. Maybe he'll see something that can help us!”

“It's not that simple...” Bash added. “He keeps his home magically concealed like we do. The last area I

know he lived in was completely off the grid. We won't be able to find him, and I don't know where he lives now."

"How do you know that?" Ares asked, a hint of irritation in his voice.

"I like to keep a tab on my exes..." Bash trailed off, glancing around the room nonchalantly as he ran his fingers through his hair. "And maybe toward the end of our relationship with him, I got suspicious and tracked him for a while..." he said directly to me.

I sat there for a moment, staring at Bash in astonishment. Even for an incubus, it was extra as fuck of him to stalk our ex-boyfriend and keep tabs on him after we supposedly ruined his life and left him. He took creepiness to a whole new level sometimes.

"*Possessive much?*" Ares laughed. "You're fucking psycho, Bash. Do you have a little treasure trove of trophies from him too?"

Bash looked away from us, avoiding the question. I wouldn't be surprised if he did.

"Yeah yeah yeah, whatever. If you had the ability to track people like I did, you'd be all over Diana. It was hard to give her space and not track her constantly at the mansion in New York," he reminisced.

Everyone's face fell as we remembered her back at the mountain house. She always commanded everyone's attention when she entered a room, simply by being herself. And now we had no clue where she was, or if she was safe. The pressure to find her and bring her home weighed on me, like a Cerberus sitting on my shoulders. I had to snap out of whatever funk I was in and step up. My crew needed me. Diana needed me.

"Okay, let's split into pairs. Mal and I can work on ways to locate Diana using the resources we have and

what we know. Ares and Bash, you two work on ways to find out where Azazel is. We'll meet again tomorrow over breakfast." I got up from the bed, brushed myself off, and put my game face on. Mal and Ares left the room, but Bash stayed behind.

"Are you okay?" he asked me.

Bash rubbed my bicep as he searched my face for the truth with his penetrating midnight eyes. His inky, dark hair was wavy and disheveled looking.

"Yeah, I'm fine now," I lied. I couldn't describe what happened to me without feeling like a weak-ass bitch.

"Desmond, no one is faulting you. You thought Diana died in your arms and saw some horrific shit. Then her body disappeared. You were in shock." Bash smiled at me, his face full of understanding. But he couldn't *possibly* understand how epically I fucked everything up.

"Yeah, and I let the crew down. We almost got overrun at the airport by those fucking reptile shifters. I left you guys to figure out how to escape and get us to safety. I'm sorry, Bash."

"Lucifer's left nut, the bloody reptile scum... I almost forgot. They're going to be a huge problem... Let's deal with them after we find Diana." Bash sighed. "Look, you're our strong, fearless leader. But you're not impervious. Everyone is allowed to have weak moments, and when you do, the rest of us are here to step up and help you. We keep calm and carry on, *together*. You don't have to do it alone."

Bash brought his other hand to my cheek, rubbing his thumb against my beard. I leaned into his soothing touch. He always knew when I was hurting and somehow made it through my stubborn walls.

"I failed, Bash. Diana could be in some serious shit. This whole fucking plan went off the rails..." I trailed off, because it hurt too much to consider how much danger

Diana was in now that Red knew. “And she could be anywhere...” I grabbed the back of my neck, slouching in my pity.

“Des, hey, look at me,” Bash said as he grabbed my shoulders. “We will come back from this and kill Red; this is just a bump in the road. And I *feel* Diana. She’s alive, and not in a state of panic.”

His eyes slowly darkened to a pitch black. With how desperate and hollow I felt, I wanted to drown in their shadowy depths. Bash had the most beautiful eyes I had ever seen, until I saw Diana’s. I’d give anything to look down into her stormy eyes again, even if they sometimes made me uncomfortable with how they could peer into my soul. Thinking of Diana hurt so much, because no matter what Bash said, I would always feel her disappearance was my fault.

Bash caressed the back of my neck, guiding me closer until our lips brushed against each other. His mouth had always been so inviting and delicious. I took his face in hand and devoured him, clinging to him like he was a liferaft in a turbulent, deadly sea. My tongue plunged into his mouth, warring with his for dominance. He firmly held onto the back of my neck as I pushed him onto the bed and climbed on top of him, never breaking our kiss as he ground his hardness into my hip. Fumbling my button and zipper, he pulled my jeans and underwear down, then his joggers. My cock was hard as it slapped against my stomach. I could feel the wetness of his precum, and he thrust himself against my naked skin. I rolled us over, so I could sit on the edge of the bed with him straddling my lap. He leaned back slightly, taking both our hot, throbbing lengths and stroking them together. I couldn’t help but thrust into his hand. All of these feelings of failure and desperation swirling inside me needed to escape, and he was giving me the perfect outlet.



“Fuck, Bash, that feels *good*,” I growled as I wrapped my hand around his throat, squeezing just hard enough to cut off some of his air supply. “I want you to strangle my dick until I come all over you.”

“Yeah, Daddy? I want to feel your wet seed seep through my fingers, and then I’m going to lick it all up. Choke me harder,” he rasped, right as I tightened my grip on his neck. Our horns popped out, and I heard the crack of his tail whipping behind him as his rough hand continued to work our cocks.

*Hells bells, that fucking British accent gets me every time. Dirty little tease.* We both moaned into each other’s mouths as he kept stroking, the friction between us too tantalizing to resist. When we broke our kiss, he replaced his hand with his indigo tail. The erotic image of it weaving around us drove me insane. He rubbed my horns, holding onto them for his damned life as I thrusting into his tail like a rodeo bull. Our precum mixed together, making everything slippery and slick. The overwhelming sensations drove me to sink my teeth into his neck.

“FUCK,” he shouted.

The feeling of skin beneath my teeth made my inner demon claw its way out. My eyes refocused, and my skin tinted red. His tail squeezed our cocks so hard they erupted. Ropes of scalding hot cum landed all over our stomachs and his thighs. His tail swiped through our releases, and he brought the tip to his mouth and sucked it in.

***Smashing***, he mindlinked me as he got up, kneeling in front of me to clean off our combined cum on my stomach with his tongue. ***We taste delicious.***

When he was done, I pulled him to sit on my knee and gave him a long, languorous kiss to get a taste for myself. ***We do.***

“Do you feel calmer and more focused now?” he asked.

“Yeah. I know what you’re trying to say—and you’re right—but until we find Diana and I see for myself she’s safe, I’m going to feel like this is my fault.” I ran my hands through my hair and sighed.

“Okay, then we need to stop frotting around and get to work!” Bash exclaimed as he shot off my lap and pulled his pants up.

“Frotting?” I asked. “Do I want to know what that is?”

“Yes, google it, *Frot Daddy*,” he snickered.

I took my phone out to search for the phrase, immediately rolling my eyes at the results.

“Where do they get the term *frotting* from?” I thought aloud.

“Not sure, but it’s on my top ten list of favorite words from this century...hands down. *Our pants*,” he busted out laughing.

“Okay you Frotty Fuck. Let’s go get Diana back.”



# AZAZEL

## Chapter 2

I hadn't had a check-in from Diana in over twenty-four hours and could barely feel her through our soulbond. The radio silence between us was driving me insane. What if something happened to her? She could be locked away as a prisoner in their house. Or hurt. Or completely fine... although I had a dreadful gut-feeling she wasn't. Des and his crew could be brutal, especially Mal. After he tried to choke her to death, it took everything in me not to fly over there and beat the shit out of him and the rest of those morons. Possessed or not, Mal should have never been left alone with her. Hellbounds endured punishment for a reason, and they trusted him too much.

If we didn't connect with each other by tomorrow night, I was going to go to their house and find her myself. They knew about me, so the cat was out of the bag now. Even if she didn't want to see me, I needed to know she was okay. Diana was right. What kind of pseudo-guardian was I for leaving her in a place where she didn't feel safe? I wanted to protect her, whisk her away somewhere and hope for the best, but my visions were never wrong. She needed to stay with them to learn everything she could from them. *When she faces off with Red a year from now, it will all be worth it.* That's what I had seen coming, and I needed to hold true to it.

I sat on my bearskin rug, crossing my legs and breathing deeply to center myself. With my hands resting on my thighs, I focused on Diana. My magic caressed our soulbond, plucking the ethereal force connecting us to see if anything happened. I could barely feel her, less so than when I checked a few hours ago. *Something is definitely wrong.* I should always be able to feel her through the bond without issue.

I sat down on the couch and tried to read a book. After reading the same page three times and not retaining anything, I put it down and sighed. A cup of tea and half a can of pizza flavored Pringles later, I was still stressed. Nothing on Netflix caught my attention, and no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't feel her. The thought of never feeling her or seeing her again came to the forefront of my mind, no matter how hard I pushed it away. After that kiss we shared in the river, I wanted more. I wanted to get to know her better, find out everything about her mind, body, and soul. Despite watching over her for years, there were still things about her I'd yet to find out.

It wasn't until I heard a thud through the open window and smelled the overwhelming odor of roses that my heart took a breather from the marathon it ran in my chest. There's no way she could possibly be here. *I would have seen her coming.*

I followed my nose and went outside. All the air fled my lungs as I looked down and saw Diana passed out on my doorstep and soaked in blood.

"Diana?!" I dropped to my knees beside her and felt for a pulse, only finding a slight flutter where it should've been. "Diana, can you hear me?"

She was unresponsive. Her chest was barely rising and falling, and I panicked. *What the fuck do I do? Was she already dead? No, she couldn't be because then our bond would be completely gone.* I ripped her shirt open,

putting my hands against the wound and tried to heal her. My magic healed some of it, but the wound was too far gone. The damage was done. I swallowed, dreading what I thought about doing, but it seemed like the only option. Truth be told, I had no clue if I was capable of doing it alone. This was a spell that needed a large amount of magic and took multiple people to cast. If I messed this up, I could kill myself, but it was the only way to stop her from dying before I could figure something else out.

I held both her hands, and willed as much of my magic as I could into an equilibrium spell. She wouldn't die—she'd just exist in some kind of limbo until I could come up with another way to save her.

After carrying Diana into the house, I washed all of the blood from her, dressing her limp body in the same pair of sweats and tee she wore the last time she was in my cabin. I tucked us into my bed, spooning her as my mind free-fell.

*How did she survive getting stabbed in the heart?*

*Who did it?*

*How the fuck did Desmond and his crew let this happen?*

They were supposed to take care of her while she stayed with them. The more I thought about it, the harder the anger swelling inside me pressed against my chest. The only thing I took comfort in was the fact that Diana thought of me in her last moments. It was the only way she'd end up on my front porch. I held her tighter against my chest, and tried to calm down. I wasn't any use to her if I couldn't remain level-headed.

*Wait—when was she attacked?* She had to time travel either forward or backward in time to arrive here. Maybe she had already faced off with Red? Or maybe someone else stabbed her? The guys made some

enemies over the years, and with Diana's power signature and attitude, she was bound to run into trouble.

"Don't worry, honey," I murmured into her neck before softly kissing her over her pulse point. "I'm going to figure this out. You're not going to die, and whoever stabbed you is going to pay."

I laid awake for hours, running dozens of scenarios through my head about who could have killed Diana, and how I could keep her alive. None of them made sense. My mind was weary from a lack of sleep and food, but I couldn't shut it off. When I finally did rest, it was a fitful sleep plagued with nightmares of her death. *I refuse to lose her.* The world's fate rested on her shoulders...and I cared about her. Even though I was supposed to remain impartial as her guardian, I couldn't help but carry a flame for this beautiful, sassy woman.

There was only one person I could call for help, and he'd be mad enough to rip my wings off over this. Michael trusted me to watch over Diana, and I failed him. I sat up in bed, centering myself so I could contact him. Clearing my mind took way longer than it usually did as I waded through the stress and trauma of finding her almost-dead on my doorstep. When I was finally in a calm state, I created an orb with my hand and brought it to my lips to blow my message into it.

***Michael, please come to my house as soon as possible. Emergency concerning my ward.***

The message was vague enough that if it fell into the wrong hands, no one would know exactly what it was about. I thought about a fond memory of Michael from when I was training for my wings, to ensure the message made it to him, and it floated away through the open window next to me. Eventually Michael would come down, and hopefully he would know how to save Diana.



Three days and two messages later, Michael finally made it to my house. Apparently, there were some urgent issues upstairs that needed his immediate attention. I regretted not being more specific in my messages.

“What happened?” he asked as he looked around the cabin. It was a smaller space than he was used to. “Is she alright?”

“No. She showed up on my porch a few days ago bleeding to death from a stab wound, but I put her in equilibrium so we could figure out a way to save her,” I responded as gently as I could.

“Where is she?!” Michael’s face crumpled with pure fear. I gestured toward the bedroom, and he stomped through my living room, throwing the door open so hard that it bounced off the wall, leaving a dent behind.

I didn’t think he could get paler, but the sight of Diana prone in bed made him rival a white crayon. He sat on the edge of the bed and extended his hands until they were a few inches away from her body. He moved them slowly from head to toe a few times until he seemed satisfied with whatever information he gleaned. He then pulled her shirt down enough that he could see the stab mark. With his hand in the same position over the wound, his white magic pulsed through her. Nothing changed.

“I think there’s a way to save her, but I need to get Desmond’s crew on board. Can you contact them and arrange a meeting between the seven of us?” he requested, like he was giving me his sandwich order. Did he want toasted bread, condiments, and extra insanity on the side?

“Do we need them? They obviously have something to do with why she ended up in this condition. I don’t trust them.”

“Azazel, you need to let go of the animosity you carry for them. Their fates are as closely entwined with Diana’s as yours is. You told me before on a few occasions that they’re in your visions of her. The five of you need to work with her as a team, because you each offer her different strengths. Unless you want the world to end?” *Fuck Michael and his wiseness.* I shifted in place, tapping my fingers on my thigh. “I know your emotions are running high, but right now, I need you to do what needs to be done. Can you do that?” He clutched my shoulder and smiled at me, the way a father would look at their errant son.

I should be immune to that look after everything that happened. Sadly, I wasn’t, and he was right. As her guardian, I had to do everything I could in order for her to succeed. Even if that meant being around Desmond and Bash again. And Ares. *He’s so annoying.*

I closed my eyes, and thought about Bash. His dark, wavy hair, indigo eyes, and playful smirk swirled in my mind’s eye as I searched for our mindlink connection. The chances of finding it would be slim, but I had to try. It had been centuries since I’d linked him, but there was still a chance I would be able to find it. *Ah, there it is.* Maybe he held onto the hope that I would reach out and contact him again? I focused on it and thought of what to say... *Hmmm.*

***I have Diana. Archangel Michael and I need to meet with your crew ASAP.***



# SEBASTIAN

## Chapter 3

It had been thirty-two days since Diana disappeared. We spent our days strategizing and our nights scouring the four planes for her. Desmond and I searched Earth for both Diana and Azazel, but had no luck in finding either. Desmond had even searched through historical texts for clues, in case she was trying to contact us from a more primitive time period. *A long shot, but worth a try.* Mal scoured the Underworld, spending days at a time downstairs to find her and gather information on Red's whereabouts. Ares contacted his brother Apollo to search the Fourth Plane. Apollo was one of the few Olympians that still talked to Ares after he was exiled. Thankfully, Apollo was more than happy to help us and spend time with his brother. He also wanted to hear all about Diana, because he was a nosy gossip. *No doubt all the gushing Ares did about her would get back to Mount Olympus.* Only certain immortal beings had access to the fourth plane, and even they were hesitant to go there. That was not a place you would want to get jammed in, because once you entered, it wasn't likely you'd leave.

After the first two weeks of searching for her, our morale started waning away. Depression and hopelessness set in like a dark cloud over my crew. Desmond spent increasing amounts of time in his study

blaming himself and drinking the guilt away when he wasn't turning the world upside down to find Diana. The remorse and sorrow he kept at bay during the day overpowered him at night. He'd crawl into my bed to hold me, squeezing me so hard my eyes almost popped out of their sockets. Sometimes he'd fuck me until he couldn't feel anything anymore, and that was fine by me. I loved Desmond and always enjoyed a rough time. Eventually, he'd need to snap out of whatever funk he was in. I meant it when I told Desmond that he didn't need to carry the burden of leadership alone. But his pity party was turning into a rager, and we could not allow that.

Ares ate his feelings, much to Olga's dismay. She couldn't keep the fridge stocked, and the pantry looked like a battle ground filled with the ripped-up wrapper corpses of his processed garbage food victims. There were empty boxes of Ding Dongs, Krimpets, Little Debbie's, and Twinkies everywhere. Empty fun-sized bags of Reeses, Twizzlers, 100 Grands, and Snickers littered his bedroom. If the sweets in the house were sentient, they'd have hidden or formed a rebellion by now. His molars would have joined suit too. There were multiple times I'd find him in his bed, a bowl of guacamole and chips in hand, crying as he stuffed his face and listened to 80s rock break-up songs while sobbing. It was pathetic and demoralizing for the God of War and Personification of Chaos on Earth to act like a sobbing fool. When we tried to help him, he'd rage on us. A few days ago, he got so angry at me for suggesting he talk about his feelings that he set his curtains on fire.

Mal was a mess. He blamed himself for what happened with Diana, both before and after her disappearance, despite having no control over it; he had been possessed. Ares, Desmond, and I forgave him for everything and apologized to him. We had sort of ignored him after Diana came along and could have

done more to help them get along. We were working toward building our brotherhood back to where it used to be. He didn't isolate himself from us completely, but he avoided us when his emotions got the better of him. No matter how much we reasoned with him, he beat himself up over not being able to find her. After spending days at a time in the Underworld following leads, he'd come home, no closer to finding anything on Diana's whereabouts.

He did find out some information about Red. None of our contacts had seen him since the battle at JFK Airport, leaving Xavier, his second in command, to rule Hell in his absence. It wasn't abnormal for Red to spend a few days to a week here and there out of Hell. He ran Hell's business empire on Earth, after all. But an entire month? The factions were getting restless, and Pandemonium, Hell's central city, was frenzied with talk of anarchy and war.

I handled Diana's disappearance the best out of the four of us. I was sad about it, but I kept a stiff upper lip and carried on. It was most likely because of my claim on her and the resulting ability to feel her lifeforce. I knew she wasn't dead and just had to have faith that we'd find her. Whether it took another month, year, or an eternity, I knew we'd reunite. She was ours, and we'd never let her go. Whether she wanted to or not, she *would* come home.

For the first time in what seemed like forever, we all sat down at the table for dinner together to celebrate Taco Tuesday. It had become a sacred tradition in the house, and every week we'd try a new taco. This week Olga made us birria tacos, with a consommé dipping sauce and nachos on the side. Oscar took his usual spot in the empty chair next to Desmond, who passed his little feline bestie a plate with shredded birria meat, guacamole, and nacho chips smothered in cheese. Sometimes I swore to myself that Oscar loved Taco

Tuesday as much as the rest of us. For a cat, he had a really developed palate and enjoyed the finer things in life. He was actually a complete asshole about food; he refused to eat cat food or treats.

I planned to take advantage of us being together. We needed a pep talk to boost morale. This was usually Desmond's forte, but like I told him, we'd all be there for him when he needed us. Ever since Diana left, he had been in no shape to give an encouraging speech, let alone to the degree we needed.

"Gentlemen, we need to have a serious discussion," I announced. "We all miss Diana, but drinking, gorging, and avoiding our pain isn't going to help any—"

I was suddenly cut off from my speech by the voice of a man I never expected to hear from ever again. His smooth, cryptic voice with a slight southern twang infiltrated my ears and went straight to my brain. He always sounded like he knew a secret to which you weren't privy.

***I have Diana. Archangel Michael and I need to meet with your crew ASAP.*** Azazel's mindlink rang through my head, clear as a church bell. I froze, in shock that after centuries of no contact, he'd reached out to me. I always kept the link open, hoping he'd call.

"Bash, are you okay? You were mid Mary Poppins and clammed up?" Mal asked.

"Azazel mindlinked me. He has Diana, and Archangel Michael is with them. They want to meet us..." Part of me was overjoyed at finally having a lead on Diana after weeks of searching for her, but I was also hesitant. How did we know he was telling the truth?

"I FUCKING knew it!" Ares shouted, jumping up from his seat and pounding his flaming fists on the table as he burnt the tablecloth underneath. "I knew that feathered

fucker was keeping Diana from us! I'm going to grind his bones to dust and sell them on the Witch Market."

"Calm down, Ares. Azazel doesn't lie. He may be petty and unreasonable sometimes, but he's honest. The only reason he would withhold information is if it related to a vision he couldn't talk about," Desmond said. "Bash, you need to respond to him and convince him to bring Diana here where we have home advantage."

"Wait, that means he would know where we live..." Mal said.

"Honestly, I don't even care. I just want her back, and if Azazel knowing where we are is an issue, we can deal with that later," I snapped. I wasn't going to lose out on my chance at getting her back.

***You can meet us at our safehouse. I can open a summoning circle and bring you here that way, or you can fade here based on the mindlink, if you think it's strong enough to track,*** I linked him. Both options kept the location somewhat anonymous, unless he looked into them further.

***Hmmm, I'll try fading to you first. Wouldn't want to get trapped in a summoning circle. Please have a couch ready for Diana to lay down on,*** he responded.

*Why would she need a couch to lay down on?*

A few seconds later, I heard a crackle of energy sound outside, much like a thunderclap. We all ran to the window to get a closer look at them. Azazel waited at the gate, carrying Diana in a bridal hold. Her eyes were closed, and her head was cradled in the crook of his elbow. His long, curly mane was up in a top bun.

"She isn't conscious..." Mal whispered. "Something isn't right."

"I met Michael before when I served on the Precipes counsel, and he doesn't leave Heaven very often. He would only be here because something is wrong,"

Desmond solemnly said. He frowned at the sight of Michael standing behind them.

I waved my hand, opening the gate and letting them onto the grounds. They faded directly past the front door, and walked into our sitting room. Azazel wasted no time laying Diana gingerly onto the couch and propping her head with a pillow. She didn't move, except for the shallow rise and fall of her chest. Her eyes were shut, and her mouth was slightly parted.

"Please tell me she's asleep?" I begged Azazel. I walked up to him and extended my hand as a greeting, and he looked at it for a few moments before bringing me in for a hug. Even after everything that transpired between us, it felt so natural to hug him again.

"I'm so sorry," he said in a calm, soothing voice. "Four days ago, Diana showed up on my doorstep bleeding to death. She barely had a pulse, and I couldn't heal her wounds... They were too far gone. I put her into equilibrium until I could find a way to fix it. I called Michael in, given his closeness to the situation, and he told me to bring her to you four. He has a plan."

"Four days ago? She's been gone for over a month. What aren't you telling us?" Ares snapped. I had to admit the discrepancy in the amount of time she was gone was odd. And why was Michael close to the situation? He barely got involved in Earthly matters.

Azazel ignored Ares' outburst and switched his gaze to Michael and Desmond. They were talking in hushed voices. The rapport between them was professional, as they got straight to the point. I couldn't help but notice how Michael was slightly uncomfortable in his stance. I guessed being in a room with three demons and a mentally unstable god was off-putting to such a goodie-two-shoes angel. He turned to address all of us, commanding all the attention in the room.

“I have a strong suspicion that Diana is immortal. Please don’t ask me to explain why. I need our combined magic to bring her out of equilibrium. We need to let her die and reanimate. Then we can work on unblocking the rest of her powers,” he instructed.

“Unblock her powers? They already broke through,” I said. “Unless you know something we don’t.”

“You seriously can’t expect us to not ask you why you think she’s immortal. She’s a *witch*—there’s no way she’d have immortality, unless Bash is right, and you aren’t telling us everything?” Mal questioned. He was almost as bad as I was with his need to know everything; he hated unknowns. “How did you know her powers were blocked to begin with? This is super shady, especially for an angel.”

“*Archangel*. You must be the hellbound, Malcolm Knight?” Michael asked.

“Yes. And as a hellbound, you should be aware that I’m already depraved and soulless and won’t hesitate to hurt you if you so much as harm a hair on her head,” he growled. “I’m not sure I’m comfortable risking her life on your *assumption* that she’s immortal. She could die if you’re wrong. Why don’t we power-share with Azazel so he can heal the wound?”

“I wish we could, but that’s not going to work. She was on the brink of death when she came to me, and I was lucky to be able to force her into equilibrium with just my magic,” Azazel lamented. He sighed, pulling on his top bun in thought. His t-shirt had short sleeves, showing off how his muscles flexed. “I thought about this for two days before calling Michael and couldn’t come up with another solution. If you four have any ideas that are less risky, please share.”

All of us were silent for several minutes. Desmond paced the room. Ares sat on the floor next to Diana’s head, carding his fingers through his curly hair in deep

thought. Mal and I stood in place, throwing each other furtive glances. Mal shifted on his feet, his eyebrows dipping together.

***I don't think there's another way,*** Desmond mindlinked Ares, Mal, and myself.

Ares took Diana's hand, staring into her passive face. ***I can't lose her,*** he linked us.

***I have a good feeling about this. I think we should trust him,*** I responded. ***He obviously has ties to her too, or she wouldn't have hopped to him. I don't think he would hurt her.***

A weight settled into my stomach as I swallowed my nerves. This was such a risky move, but it was the only way to save her. I walked over to Diana, moving her from the couch to the floor in the middle of the room. Mal followed me with her pillow and placed it under her head. The six of us created a circle around her and held hands. We were putting a lot of trust in Michael, and he wasn't as forthcoming with information as I wanted him to be. I closed my eyes, allowing my power to flow through the points of contact between us all. As our powers met, I could feel their overwhelming surge rise and bubble within me, as if I were a conduit for an electric catastrophe waiting to happen.

Michael started talking in a strange language. It wasn't Latin, or anything I could recognize. After repeating the same chant for a couple of minutes, the lights flickered. The ground started to shake, causing all the furniture, paintings, and decorations in the room to vibrate. Diana's body began to softly glow. I felt her power swirl around the room, in a tornado of magic that touched from the ceiling to the floor, until it completely died out. Her chest stopped its strained rising and falling. The lights were steady again, and the tremors stopped. After a few minutes, Desmond broke away to bend down and check her pulse. He shook his head, indicating that



he didn't feel one. We all held our breath as we started the waiting game.

She was officially dead.

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# DIANA

## *Chapter 4*

The darkness I existed in faded, giving way to a light that seared my eyelids. My head pounded, and the pain radiated all the way back to the base of my neck. The coldness settling into my joints made them ache. My chest hurt so badly that it felt like Gordon Ramsey yelled at it to death and called it an overcooked disaster. A suffocatingly thick fog blocked my ability to remember anything. What in the dick and balls was going on? I tried to open my eyes or move my body, but I was frozen in place. I just laid there, drowning in pain, wondering what the actual fuck had happened to me. Was I alive or dead? Was this Purgatory? If so, I would be extremely disappointed. I thought there would be a chair here for me to sit on, or maybe a fire to keep me warm at the very least.

I had no clue how long I'd been here like this. Minutes, hours, days, or months? Slowly, the pain dulled as a blanket of warmth covered me. The headache lifted first, giving me the relief I needed to focus. My joint aches and the searing pain in my chest faded like a bad memory. I could finally move my fingers. Everything flooded back like a dam bursting as each memory appeared in rapid succession.

*Bash betraying me.*

*Running through the woods.*

*Ares branding me.*

*Mal taking me to the airport.*

*Red attacking us.*

When Mal stabbed me in the heart, I felt the betrayal at a molecular level. I knew he was possessed, but it didn't make it hurt any less. Saying goodbye to each of my guys hurt almost as much. It ripped me apart to die in Desmond's arms. Watching Ares cry as he told me he loved me—despite how angry I was at him—ruined me because I thought I would never feel that love again. Bash's devastated face as he begged me not to fly away... I couldn't take it. A tear slipped from my eye. I never got to say goodbye to Azazel. I tried so hard to fade to him before I died, even if I only got to see him for a few seconds, but I never made it.

I never reunited with my family. *I miss them—Angie, Nonna, Charlie, and Oscar. Would I ever see them again?*

The simultaneous fear, sadness, and anger I felt as my life drained away was just as painful as dying. When darkness swallowed me whole, I almost thanked it because the pain *finally* went away.

A spark lit inside me, spurring me toward the light. My life wasn't over yet. As long as Satan was still breathing, I had unfinished business to attend to. I would see my family again. I'd be with my guys again. When the time came, I would end Satan and put his ashes over *my* mantlepiece.

When my eyes opened, I saw a smooth, white ceiling. The light in here seemed natural, lacking the harshness of fluorescent bulbs. Maybe this wasn't Purgatory... Did I end up upstairs? I had no clue how I ended up in Heaven after fucking around with demons and the God of War. Maybe God was more forgiving

about premarital sex than people let on. Or maybe the Almighty felt bad for me. *I hope they have unlimited hors d'oeuvres and Cherry Coke up here. And Netflix. I can finally catch up on Stranger Things and watch that romance movie-porno-thing with Mr. Tall, Dark, and Handsome that Charlie had constantly raved about while I was alive.* Wait a minute, no. I wanted to live, not go to Heaven.

“Moons and stars! Her eyes are open. Little Goddess, you’re alive!” Ares’ voice assaulted my ears, confirming that I was not in Heaven and that he still had zero volume control.

His huge body barreled into me, lifting me off the ground and cradling me in hairy, muscled arms. The momentary disappointment about not being in Heaven faded, because I was alive... I could see my family again. Satan hadn’t murdered me. I still had a chance to fix all of this.

“Ares, put her down. She’s never died before. She’s probably disoriented,” Bash said as Ares seated me on a sofa.

Ares put a throw blanket over me and sat next to me so our thighs were touching. He tried to hold my hand, but I took it away from him. I knew they technically came to my rescue—and they would have saved me—if it wasn’t for Mal’s meddling possession. I was thankful for it, but was still furious with all four of them about what happened. Bash claimed me without even thinking of what I wanted. Ares burned his name into my skin... branded me like cattle. Desmond was a high-handed asshole pulling the strings. I *knew* he used my bond with Bash to his advantage in his grand plan.

And Mal... *fuck*, Mal. I had no clue how to feel about him. I wanted to believe he hated me, that he tried to kill me out of jealousy, but I saw the way he hesitated. I knew he was possessed even before Ares warned me at

the airport. Everything from him was a mixed signal. He acted like an asshole toward me and had choked me. But then he tried to be more cordial toward me. He offered to help me escape, but got possessed again and stabbed me... *Where is Mal?* I scanned the room as I cracked my neck. All four of the guys were standing near each other as they held their breath, literally. Bash was clutching Desmond's forearm. They all seemed so nervous, eyes wide and trained on me. Were they afraid I was going to run away again? *I'm not even sure where I am; this isn't the NY house. Where will I even go if I run?*

When my eyes landed on Azazel, an uncontrollable smile spread across my face, like the sun had started to shine. I was so scared I'd never see him again. Shifting in my seat, I took in his appearance, savoring it. He had his long hair tied up into a bun and wore a black tank with low cut sides. His black jeans were tight with a few holes. The only color he wore was a pair of yellow and orange sneakers. He held Oscar, looking down into the cat's face with a curious look on his own. His gaze swung to me and those warm eyes made me feel so happy.

"Hey, honey, how are you feeling? You were out for a while." He sat on my other side, setting Oscar down on my lap.

My little kitty-boy curled up to me and put his paw on my hand, as if he was giving me his strength and signature indifference. *Yeah, if only it was that easy to be above the emotional bullshit I feel right now.*

"Um, I'm not okay," I said as Ares' gripped my hand again in a tight vise hold, weaving our fingers together. I sent a crippling blast of magic through where our skin touched, and he let go, a surprised expression on his face. He turned, switching his focus to glare daggers at Zaz. "I'm furious at everyone, except you, obviously."

“What?” Ares and Bash snapped in unison, hurt and confusion filling their eyes.

How could they possibly be surprised? Desmond nodded his head. I could see him battle his need to take control and fix the situation, but instead he dropped his eyes to the floor. The sullen look on his face betrayed him; he knew why I was upset. I was surprised he wasn't being more assertive.

I finally found Mal standing in the corner, a look of guilt and worry twisting his hauntingly handsome face. He wasted no time crossing the room, standing far enough away that we had some distance, but close enough that he could draw my attention. He cleared his throat to make sure I noticed him. I wasn't sure if he realized, but even when I tried to ignore him with every fiber of my being, he always captured my attention. Whether I wanted him to or not.

“Diana, I know sorry isn't going to cut it. Satan possessed me, and I didn't mean to stab you. I really fucked this up. Confessing how jealous I was of you isn't an excuse. Calling you names, tormenting you, and almost choking you to death wasn't right. I regret every interaction we've had since I laid eyes on you in that club,” he rasped as tears welled in his eyes. I had no clue how to respond. “How do we start over? What can I do to make this right? I've spent days looking for you since you disappeared and hours thinking of what to say, and I have nothing.”

“Wait, what?” Azazel snarled. “You were possessed by Satan and you *stabbed* her? What happened?! That wasn't what I saw—it shouldn't have happened that way!”

“Is Diana safe with you four or does she need to come with us?” A random man with ice blond hair and piercing blue-gray eyes threatened. I hadn't seen him on

my first scan of the room. “I won’t have her being terrorized by this ruffian hellbound.”

Who the fuck was he? I was not going anywhere with whoever *us* was.

“Excuse me, but who are you? A little bold of you to assume I’d go anywhere with you, considering I don’t know you and you radiate sketchy vibes,” I snarked. Something about this man just rubbed me the wrong way. “I have five men who want to act like they’re my fucking father, and I don’t need a sixth. I made it twenty-two years without one, and I’ve survived so far.”

“I’m Michael,” he deadpanned, raising a brow at me like he held some authority.

“*Good for you.* I’m Diana. You’re going to have to be more specific, because everybody and their father is named Michael.” I was over this guy already and I just met him.

“Michael...the Archangel...*from the Bible.* I’m literally God’s right-hand angel,” he enunciated, like my brain had put up an *out for lunch* sign. If demons and Lucifer were real, I guess the angels were, too. I glared at him, because the last thing I needed was a pompous stranger witnessing my impending emotional breakdown.

I sat on the sofa wringing my hands together in silence for several moments while I took it all in. There were so many thoughts playing bouncy castle in my mind. What did Azazel mean when he said ‘That wasn’t what I saw—It shouldn’t have happened that way’? Mal seemed sorry, but all men say they’re sorry, even if they aren’t. I disappeared? They looked for me? Where was I, and how come Ares was shocked I was alive? Everything collided, and I sniffled trying to hold back tears.

“What’s going on?!” I yelled as I threw off the blanket. My head felt like it was going to burst. I ran my

fingers through my hair, pulling on it and relishing the feeling of the tension at the roots. “Why did you all need to look for me? There’s too much going on right now!” I screamed. Jesus, now I was vying for an Academy Award for Most Pathetic Bitch On Screen. I hated yelling almost as much as I hated crying, especially in front of people. I was losing my shit, and couldn’t seem to stop myself. Oscar was so scared that he hissed and ran under the coffee table.

“Diana, I think we should all sit down over dinner, Azazel and Michael included, and discuss everything that happened. That way we’re all on the same page,” Desmond suggested. He walked over to me and extended his hand. “How about I show you to your seat?”

“You expect me to sit down at a table with a man who tried to murder me, two who claimed me without my consent, another who can’t give me a direct answer to save his life, and a controlling asshole who can’t even admit his own feelings unless I almost die?!” I yelled at the top of my lungs. My voice echoed, sounding unnatural and damn near possessed.

My power swelled inside me, gassing me up like an old friend as it coursed throughout my body. I felt like I was being zapped with thousands of volts of electricity. Who did they think they were? *How dare they treat me like a child. Sit down at the table, Diana. Let us fucking twist every word you say and convince you that none of this is our fault.* No fucking thank you.

“Diana, calm down,” Ares said in what he thought was a soothing voice. *Never tell a woman to calm down.* He laid his hand on my forearm as he spoke, rubbing it up and down. Desmond and Zaz shook their heads with pinched facial expressions, while he remained oblivious to what he’d said. “We can eat, talk, and chill out. There’s no reason to get your panties in a twist. Unless



you want me to twist your panties for you...” He winked. That motherfucking dick *winked* at me.

I felt a switch flip inside me. My magic exploded like a grenade, causing everyone around me to catch the resulting shrapnel. My entire body lit on fire, clothes and all. The flames whipped out, burning Ares’ hand and catching his pants on fire. He stopped, dropped, and rolled, to put himself out. Desmond rushed toward me, but one swipe of my hand threw him into the wall at the far end of the room. Azazel started talking, but I didn’t want to hear anything he had to say. It probably was another fucking riddle anyway. One thought from my mind muted him. Mal inched closer to me, a corner of the blanket in each hand.

“Diana...” he hesitantly said. “You’re really mad right now, and we deserve that... but you set the couch on fire, and you’re dangerous right now. You’re hurting us.”

“I’m hurting *you*... **YOU STABBED ME!**” I screamed, my rage reaching epic proportions.

I had never been so angry in my life. I eyed the candle holder on the table, noticing its metal work. It had sharp strips of silver bands that weaved around to create a basket to hold the candle. The edges stuck out, like the ties on a bow. I picked it up in my hand and dumped the candle out. Before I even knew what I was doing, I stabbed an edge into his throat, directly through his windpipe. I twisted it to further open the wound. Payback could be a real bitch. Blood poured through the wound, and dripped out the edges of his mouth onto the crisp white shirt he wore. Seeing him die somewhat dissipated my anger, even though I knew he’d just reanimate. *Immortal fucker.* The flames engulfing my body and clothes snuffed out. My power still coursed through my body, but it became more manageable. Now I could concentrate on what was going on.

“Diana, what the fuck?!” Bash shouted. I ignored him. This was my payback, my moment, and I would not let any of them make me feel guilty about it.

“How does it feel to die, *Malcontent*?” I asked through a smile. Laughter bubbled in my chest. “Do *you* enjoy feeling the life drain from your body? Does it feel good to be soaked in your own blood?”

He fell to the floor, convulsing. As he gurgled on his blood to try and respond, I knelt beside him, so I could hear him.

“I deserve your anger, but death is temporary for me, princess. After I regenerate, I’m going to work to earn your forgiveness.”

Each labored word he spoke was said with a ridiculous confidence that no man should have while he died, like he knew it was only a matter of time before I forgave him. I had no clue how he thought he could fix things between us. Was he truly that egotistical? Every moment I’ve had with Malcolm was a letdown. His insults, general disdain for me, and actions hurt. He never made me feel like I was welcomed into their little family...after they literally ripped me from my own. If he really wanted to earn my forgiveness he had a long road ahead of him, and he wasn’t guaranteed to receive it.

When he died, everyone stared at me, the fear palpable in their eyes. Archangel Michael even looked a little green around the gills.

“I don’t know why you’re all looking at me like I’m the female Ted Bundy. You all fucking pushed me to this point,” I snapped. “From the very beginning you took my choices away from me, in every way. I fell for you, and was too dickmatized to see what you actually did to me.”

I returned to the couch, glaring at the men in the room. Every single one, with the exception of Michael, looked like a kicked puppy. He just looked *extremely*

uncomfortable and angry, if the scowl on his face was any indication. They each owed me an apology. Sex, gifts, riddles, and good looks wouldn't distract me. I wasn't going to back down, or go easy on them either. If they wanted my help with Satan, things had to change around here.

It only took a couple of minutes for Malcom to come back to life. The gaping hole in his throat stitched closed at rapid speed. He gasped loudly for air, and immediately swung his gaze to me. His piercing blue eyes studied me for a moment, and then he smiled. I was disappointed that he wasn't angry.

"You're so gorgeous when you're angry," he quipped, like I hadn't just stabbed him in the throat. Un-fucking-believable.

"You look like a corpse. It's an improvement on your normal appearance," I responded, my tone dry.

Desmond fixed his face as he stood tall and squared his shoulders. He was steeling himself for what I was sure would be a rousing speech about personal responsibility, controlling my emotions, and wasting time. "Diana, I regret being a controlling piece of shit. I'll include you in the decision-making process from now on. I do want you to know that I didn't get involved with you to distract you or control you. Everything I said, and everything we did together came from genuine feelings I have for you."

"Hmmm, seems to me like you're giving me a non-apology so you can feel like the ball is in your court again," I mused. "Actions speak louder than words, but I guess your apology is a start."

My eyes strayed to the damage around the room. The furniture was on fire, and the carpet had black burn marks. I ruined the wall I sent Desmond through. Ares' pants were scorched. Somehow, my own clothes were fine. I'd have to research why they didn't burn off.

Michael raised his hands, and a beautiful iridescent magic poured from them, like liquid opals. The room slowly righted itself. The plaster floated back to the ceiling, the burn marks lifted from the carpet, and the couch was fixed. Everyone thanked him for setting the room back to normal. I guessed that was something angels could do?

“Can we all sit down and talk? Azazel and I have no clue what’s going on, and we’d really like to work together on this,” he said.

I rolled my eyes and sighed. I was starving, and it wouldn’t hurt to have help from upstairs, as the guys called it. “Fine. It’s Tuesday, so y’all better have tacos on deck.”



Ares had gone upstairs to change his pants and brought me a fresh outfit, insisting I change into it when he returned. I assumed he didn’t like seeing me in Azazel’s clothes, territorial douche knuckle. When I went into the bathroom to change, I realized he’d brought me a black thong and sports bra, a pair of black leggings, and a shirt that said Taco Tuesday with a dancing taco on it. I felt a warmth flooding through me, but stamped it down quick. There was no way I would allow him to weasel his way back to my heart without an apology for what he did. I was done letting him get away with his antics.

An awkward silence settled at the table while we ate. Azazel was on my left and Desmond was on my right. Bash kept his predatory gaze trained on me from across the circular table, but I ignored him. *I am not giving in.* I had no emotional space for his red flag behavior right now. Even without his words, I could feel his lack of

remorse from here. *Fucking psychopath*. I had caught everyone at the table staring at me at one point or another. I couldn't blame them. It was common sense to keep your eye on the most dangerous person in the room. My earlier outburst proved that I had zero fucks to give anymore.

When everyone was done eating, Mal snapped his fingers. All of the silverware, plates, bowls, food, glasses, and the tablecloth disappeared from the table. He snapped them again, and a fresh linen tablecloth appeared. Bash waved his hand, and a cappuccino appeared for everyone, except me. I got an iced coffee, with milk, whipped cream and caramel drizzle in a tall glass—*my favorite*. He smirked at me, but I pushed the coffee away.

“No thanks, it's too late for me to have caffeine,” I said in a saccharine tone. I raised a brow at him, and he returned the gesture. I wasn't *that* easy; he'd have to work to make things right. No matter how badly I wanted to give in, it wasn't happening.

“Okay, so long story short, Red called Mal in for a private meeting and possessed him with an unknown magical entity that fed off and amplified his basest anger. Mal had no clue, because his memory was altered. While possessed, he strangled Diana. I saved her. We all had a disagreement, and Diana tried to flee the house. Ares brought her back, and we subdued her for her own safety,” Desmond debriefed in an emotionless tone.

“Mmm, not the entire story. Bash claimed me without asking before I even came to live with you all—he'd been stalking me for two months prior to Satan assigning you to kill me. Ares burnt his name into my skin because he assumed I'd be okay with that. And *you* are a controlling fuckface,” I added as I pointed to Desmond.

All of the guys squirmed in their chairs, except Bash and Azazel, with varying looks of remorse on their faces. Bash literally grinned like a prideful, deranged asshat, giving no fucks about his actions. Michael's jaw was set, and he seemed thoroughly annoyed as he grimaced at the men sitting around us. *Yeah, now you know how I feel, dude.*

"Diana wanted to leave, and Satan influenced Mal to take her to the airport. We had a huge showdown with him there, and he forced Mal to stab Diana. She time-hopped as she died, which is how we think she ended up with you, Azazel," Bash added.

"Diana power-shared with us, and we almost killed Red before he faded away. We weakened him enough that no one has heard from him or seen him since then. Xavier is running Hell right now, which is causing unrest downstairs," Desmond said. "Rumors of his demise are running rampant. People are starting to lose faith in him as a leader, on top of their growing dislike of him over the past few decades."

Zaz and Michael made eye contact, for at least a minute. I assumed they were mindlinking each other.

Michael shifted in his chair and leaned back. Typical power move. "How do we know Malcolm still isn't possessed? He could be relaying information back to Red right now."

"Once I killed Diana, I fulfilled the terms of the deal Satan coerced me to make with him. That lifted the possession." Mal looked to Bash for confirmation.

"I took the liberty of searching every nook and cranny of his mind and setting up some mental protections for him. He's clear," Bash announced smugly. "If anyone else is interested in setting up mental wards, let me know. I'm more than happy to help." He glanced at me, as if he was encouraging me to take him up on the offer.

“Zaz taught me how to ward my mind against unwanted presences. I’m sure he can assist me in forming more advanced mental wards.” I smiled at Zaz, just to piss Bash off.

I could practically feel Bash’s and Ares’ jealousy from across the table. Zaz smirked at me, like he knew exactly what I was up to. He took his hair tie out, letting a waterfall of curly brown hair fall around his shoulders, down to his collarbone. I *loved* his hair. If we weren’t all being dead serious right now, I’d ask him if I could touch it. It looked so soft and perfect, I’d rub my face into it. I had a feeling it felt like a fancy hotel pillow.

“Absolutely. Let me know when you’re ready, and I’ll assist you in *whatever* you need,” he flirted back.

A loud sigh came from the other end of the table next to Bash. Ares’ face was red and smoke escaped through his nose. His fist was clenched on the tabletop, and his face looked like someone had pissed in his cappuccino. The glare he leveled at Zaz dripped with jealousy and hatred. I didn’t care how mad he or Bash were. They deserved it for their caveman behavior.

“Ares, no need to smoke over those big feels of yours and get your boxers in a bunch. Why don’t you calm down? You should smile more,” I suggested as sarcastically as I could.

His fist caught fire. Mal tossed his drink over it, dousing the flames. The smell of rich coffee wafted through my nose as I inhaled and busted out laughing. Fuck being serious, that was funny.

“What confuses me is that Diana hopped just over a month ago, but Azazel said she showed up at his doorstep four days ago... So where was she for the remainder of the time?” Ares questioned.

“All I know is that as soon as Diana showed up at my doorstep inches from death, I put her into equilibrium,”

Zaz said. "I'm not sure why she was missing on your end."

"Yeah, her being immortal was a boon, because we really didn't have another option unless Desmond could raise her, and that's iffy, circumstantial magic," Mal said.

"Immortal..." I contemplated. "So, I'm not going to die? Ever? How did we know I couldn't die?" I asked. With all the shit going on in the past few hours, I'd have to unpack the fact that I couldn't die later. My emotional range wasn't equipped to deal with that mindfuck right now.

"I suspected it," Michael added. He was quiet until now, taking all the information in. "As far as the time difference, your ability to time travel must have manipulated the timeline."

"If that's even possible..." Ares quipped in a suspicious tone. "Something with you and Feathers over there still seems fishy."

"Time travel is an extremely rare, mysterious power. The magical community doesn't know a ton about it. My friend is the only other person I know that can do it," Zaz replied, addressing the whole table while ignoring Ares' barb toward him. He switched his focus to me as he put his hand over mine. "Diana, would you like to meet my friend? He can teach you how to control and direct your power, considering I can't hop."

"Wait, you don't time-hop? I assumed you could time travel, because you kept meeting me in different time periods," I said.

"No, I have the Sight. I can see the past and visions of the future randomly or through making contact with an object or person. I would have visions of you in the future, and use our soulbond to meet you wherever you were during that time."

"Our what?" I asked, confused.



“Azazel,” Michael said in a warning tone.

“No, Michael, she needs to know. Diana values honesty,” He sat straight in his chair as his honey eyes bore into mine. “Usually, a guardian angel is assigned to a person. They have the ability to watch over their charge because they share a loose bond. It sort of feels like the human equivalent of intuition. I’m a fallen angel, which means my grace was taken away. Disgraced angels can’t be guardians anymore. When Michael asked me to watch over you when you were born, we had to use a soulbond so I could do it. Our souls are bonded indefinitely, and it puts me at your disposal. You’ll always have eyes watching over you, unless you ask me not to. I will *always* respect your wishes.”

I sat there for a few minutes, speechless and caught in my own little world. That would certainly explain the conversation we had in the river, and how he knew so much about me. It also explained why I felt an instant trust and comfort toward Zaz when I met him in his cabin. Our souls recognized each other.

“I don’t understand... Why did Michael ask you to watch over me?”

“Remember when we met in the Civil War era, and I said you’d change the world? I was serious. Hundreds of years ago, I had two visions. One of a magical uprising, where Red is hellbent on taking over the world, and another of you fighting in a war against him. I also channeled a prophecy, which is very rare among those with my gift. The gist of it was that a witch-hybrid female child would be born when Hell was in turmoil. She would either save or destroy the world. Initially, the majority of Heaven didn’t take my prophecy or visions seriously. Years later, after I was disgraced, Michael made contact and met me. He found you, and wanted me to watch you because I was already on earth and kept having visions about you. I’ve seen you fight Satan, with all five of us by your side,” Zaz gestured to Desmond, Bash, Mal, and

Ares. "That's why I was confused earlier; the showdown with him at the airport wasn't foretold, although, not everything is."

*Seems like the Sight is just as nuanced and unpredictable as time travel.*

"Why did you agree to watch over me?" I asked, astounded by how selfless Zaz was. He could teach the other men at this table about acting right. "A lifetime bond? That's a huge sacrifice to make."

"I agreed to the bond because I knew how important guiding you would be for the world's survival. I felt it was the right thing to do."

"That's why you said you couldn't tell me everything when we were at the river. If you had, I would have freaked out...wait witch-hybrid? So my father isn't a warlock? He could be anything, like a demon, or a vampire?" I asked Zaz.

The thought that my father, a man who wanted nothing to do with me, was a magical being out there in the world rankled me. He could have helped me control my magic and answered so many questions. I would know who I was if he'd bothered to raise his child instead of being a deadbeat piece of shit.

"He's one hundred percent a magical being; there's no way he's mortal with how powerful you are. He isn't a vampire, because whether you were half vampire or full, you'd have sprouted fangs by now," Zaz said as he ran his hands through his hair. I could see the wheels turning in his head.

"Yeah, and their powers can't be blocked. We discussed it multiple times while you were in equilibrium. Bash, Mal, Ares, and I agreed a while ago that Diana is only half witch. It's imperative we find out who her father is and contact him. He can fill in a lot of the blanks, and if he's as powerful as we believe him to be, we can work

with him to bring Red down. None of us are safe as long as he's alive." Desmond was already starting to form a game plan.

"I highly doubt he's demonic. I would have smelled it on you," Bash pondered aloud.

Zaz squeezed my hand to get my attention. I was so busy dwelling on my father, I hadn't even realized he still held it. "If it's okay with Desmond, I'd like to stay here to help out and continue to watch over you. I'd also like a hand in your training."

Desmond's face pinked under Zaz's scrutiny. He looked around the table at Mal, Bash, and Ares. Their silent communication wasn't as secret as they thought. Their faces said everything for them. Mal's bored, annoyed expression told me he was above caring about it. Although, he always had resting bitch face. The determined expressions on Bash's and Desmond's faces showed me they agreed it was a good decision. Ares still had his furious expression from earlier. I had a feeling something had gone down previously, because there was no other reason he'd hate Zaz that much, jealousy aside.

"Sure. We have the room, and it would be nice to have your skillset on the team," Desmond said stiffly. "I'll mindlink Olga to set up the last room for you."

"Wait a fucking minute," Ares growled. "Bash and I claim you, and you get super pissed off and run away. But Zaz soulbonded with you—*when you were a baby and couldn't consent to it*—and you're A-okay with that?! This is *bullshit*," he spat.

"Ares, never assume you know how I feel. Last time I checked, you couldn't read minds." Every word that came out of my mouth was scathing. "I never said I wasn't upset about it. Zaz may have withheld some information from me in the beginning, but he was honest with me when he could be. He did what he thought was

the right thing to do, based on the visions he had. If I should be angry with anyone, it's Michael for suggesting the bond, but I have the feeling he's the type who feels he's never wrong."

"Rarely wrong," he corrected me. He smiled, but I couldn't muster a smile back. Something about him wasn't adding up.

"As much as I don't want to see my sperm donor, I agree it's a logical next step. I need to know as much about my powers and where I came from as possible so I have the best chance to beat Red," I admitted. "Michael, what made you so sure I was the child Zaz foresaw? I'm sure a lot of female, witch-hybrid children are born into the world...and the Underworld seems to always be a mess from what the guys told me." I couldn't mindlink with Zaz, but I swore he understood the suspicious look I gave Michael. The soulbond must have put us on the same wavelength. Something in my gut was telling me that Michael was keeping something from us all.

He wilted under the scrutiny of myself and the five men at the table. Sweat rolled down his forehead as he gripped the handle of his empty mug, knuckles turning white. Zaz grabbed his other hand despite Michael's struggling, holding firm as his eyes turned white.

# A Z A Z E L

## Chapter 5

Touching Michael was instinctual. After feeling Diana's distrust, my intuition told me I would get a vision from him. I had already suspected Michael wasn't telling the whole truth, ever since he contacted me twenty-two years ago. He rarely told the whole story, using the greater good as his excuse. I felt my eyes change as his memory flooded my vision. The room went white before refocusing all around me.

*Michael was in a dark nightclub lit only via strobe lighting. He and a tall, muscular man with black hair had a woman with dark curly hair sandwiched between them as they grinded on each other. They were in the midst of a throng of people gyrating and practically fucking each other with clothes on. The unknown man's hand trailed up the woman's thigh, slipping beneath her mini-dress. She turned her head in my direction to look up to his face, and I saw striking green eyes that glimmered in the strobe lights.*

There was no denying the woman was Marilyn, Diana's mother. The resemblance was uncanny. They had the same face shape, lips, and hair. Marilyn was young and looked just like I remembered from Diana's early childhood, before she'd passed away. The scene faded as another memory took over. The sight before me

only came in quick flashes, but what I saw was scandalous enough to make me gasp.

*Michael, his friend, and Marilyn were naked, tangled together in a bed with white sheets. Their moans and harsh breathing floated through the air, providing the perfect soundtrack for their X-rated activities. Marilyn was sandwiched in between them again, with the unknown friend on the bottom and Michael behind her.*

*“You’re so fucking tight,” Michael growled before he slapped her ass.*

*“I can feel us sliding inside her together, Mikey,” the man said before trailing bites across Marilyn’s jaw and down her neck.*

I could have gone the rest of my life without seeing that. No one wants to see the man they thought of as a father slapping a woman’s ass, especially when that woman was their charge’s...*girlfriend’s?...mother. Ugh, I have no clue where Diana and I stand on that.*

I had enough of an idea what that memory was about. I let go of Michael’s hand, which hurtled me back to the here-and-now.

I wanted to shift back to my human form, so my body would stop glowing silver and my eyes would turn normal again. When fully shifted, I wasn’t pleasant to look at. But I was too angry and on edge to channel my magic to change my appearance.

“You lied to me!” I bellowed at Michael as I stood up. My wings flared, and one of them almost hit Diana and Desmond. “How could you withhold that from me?!”

“I knew it! What did he lie about?” Diana asked, switching her gaze between us and shifting to the edge of her chair to give my wing some room, waiting on pins and needles for the answer. She had good intuition, but I wasn’t sure if she was quite ready to hear this.

Michael sat at the table, holding his head in his hands, and he exhaled a deep breath. He was silent for a few moments, no doubt trying to find a way out of telling us the truth.

Desmond waved his hand, and I heard locks engaging throughout the house. His smug smile brought back a familiar sense of comfort I hadn't felt in centuries.

"All the doors and windows are magically locked, and I disabled fading beyond the wards. You're not leaving until you tell us the whole truth. And you *will* explain yourself," Desmond commanded. He was still a leader, even after all this time. Seeing him take charge of a room was thrilling and spoke to something deep inside me. "You have no right coming to our home and withholding information, especially when that information concerns the woman we all care about."

Michael straightened his back, and clasped his hands on the table. He locked eyes with Diana. I held her hand, trying my best to give her strength. She was going to go ballistic once she heard the news.

"Diana, I'm one of your fathers," he said in a direct, serious tone.

"*What?*" she asked. Her face fell, settling into a mask of alarm. She looked at me, and I could hear the confusion in her tone she desperately tried to hide. "What is he talking about... *one of my fathers? You're my father?*" she asked after turning to face him again.

"I'm one of your fathers. Azazel, can you paraphrase what you saw, appropriately?" he requested.

"You have to be kidding me... *nope*. I'll never be able to unsee that last part. You dug the hole, so you can climb out of it on your own," I snarked. I wasn't helping him with this. He'd lied to me, too.

"For thousands of years, I've had an on and off again relationship with a man...your other father. There were

times we kept an open relationship due to circumstances I'd rather not talk about. We met your mom in a club, and we hit it off with her. One thing led to another, and we... um—" he rolled his hands in a gesture instead of actually saying he double-teamed her mom with his boyfriend. "Your other father ran into her months later, and realized she was with child. We did the math, and realized it could be ours. After she gave birth to you, we visited her while you were both sleeping and did some magical tests on you...and you had a third of each of our DNAs. We asked trusted sources, and no one had ever heard of such a thing happening before. You were a magical anomaly. That's when I knew Azazel's prophecy referred to you. When you were around two months old, we borrowed you one night and blocked your powers. They were so distinctive, even as a baby. Without a magical signature, you'd be safe...or so we hoped."

Diana's expression turned stony, and I couldn't tell if she was angry or upset. She wrung her hands together.

"Zaz, did you assist him in binding my powers?" she asked in a deadly calm voice.

"No, he did not," Michael interjected. "Myself, and your other father cast that magic. Your powers won't be completely unblocked until we lift the last of the magic ourselves. Azazel didn't show up to my home that night until much later, and all he did was participate in the soulbonding ceremony with Raphael and Gabriel. He had no clue."

She took a deep breath, and her face finally cracked. I could see the mounting fury in her eyes. "Who is my other father?"

Michael didn't answer right away. He shook his head, and before he knew what hit him, Bash stood behind him, with both of his hands on Michael's temples. I had never seen Bash take someone's mind by force. Michael's eyes rolled to the back of his head as he



thrashed around trying to buck Bash's hands off. Something Bash saw made him gasp. He dropped his hands from Michael's temples and backed away from everyone, with a look of pure shock on his face. He paced around the table, running his hands through his hair.

"Bashy Boy, what's wrong?" Ares' worried tone mirrored the rest of the crew's faces.

Bash took Ares' hand, presumably to show him what he'd seen. If I remembered correctly, Ares could share people's immediate thoughts like his father could. Ares grabbed Mal's hand, who then took Desmond's hand, Desmond gripped mine, and I held Diana's. Bash shared an image of the man from Michael's visions. His smiling face was highlighted by deep dimples and eyes as black as night. He had black hair with a little bit of gray around the temples, a strong jaw and straight nose, and was handsome, objectively speaking. He looked no older than forty. I could see Diana's resemblance to him. Mal, Ares, and Desmond gasped in unison. Desmond's face went milk white, somehow managing to look paler than it usually did.

"That's the man from the memories I saw," I confirmed before Bash could ask. "Who is he?"

"Diana's other father is Lucifer Morningstar. *Lucifer. Fucking. Morningstar.* The Prince of Darkness. The Antichrist. The Devil. We've been fucking the original Satan's daughter. I literally *CLAIMED* Lucifer's daughter!" Bash's anxiety-riddled tirade would have been hilarious if he wasn't so frantic.

There was no one more renowned or revered in Hell than Lucifer Morningstar. He created Hell—ruled for thousands of years with an iron fist. His escapades were legendary, iconic to the world, downstairs, on earth, and upstairs. He was known for being the most ruthless man in all four realms. I don't think he'd take kindly to any

man his daughter got involved with, regardless of who they were.

“This is some magical Maury shit. *Lucifer, you are the father,*” Mal whisper-shouted to Ares. The two looked at each other, and I assumed Ares mindlinked something threatening to Mal, who promptly rolled his eyes, pouting like a petulant child.

“My other father is the Devil?” Diana gasped, clearly unsettled by the news. “I’m a third witch, a third angel, and a third demon? Wait, I thought Satans only got replaced if they died... Is he dead?”

The guys all rounded their gazes on her. I guessed they hadn’t gotten around to teaching her history yet?

“No, he’s alive as far as we know. It would take someone with unprecedented power to kill Lucifer. The only being who could possibly do it would be God, but that wouldn’t happen. Lucifer stepped down from Hell and let his eldest child, Demetri, take over. When asked why, he wouldn’t give an answer. He went off the grid after that, and he’s rarely seen. His son only controlled hell for a few centuries before he was assassinated without an heir and replaced by his second in command. That’s when the position of Satan was born. The term was originally a term of respect for your father, so they named the position after it,” Bash explained.

“Oh...so I had a brother?” She was in shock, and although I could see the wheels turning in her head, I had no clue what she was thinking.

“Diana, you have so many siblings it isn’t even funny. Some of them are straight up psychotic and belong in a Hell-pit,” Bash huffed as he rolled his eyes.

“Diana, your other father and I started seeing each other before he fell from grace. He’s a fallen angel, not a demon—so you’re two-thirds angel. When he became King of Hell, we had to keep our relationship a secret. He

was...less than faithful. But instead of leaving him, I agreed to open up our relationship. The distance was hard on us, especially with the turmoil of the time, but I couldn't stop seeing him. I loved him too much for my own good, and still do. You're my only child, but your other father had...*many* children throughout the centuries."

"Yeah, Little Goddess, your Dad founded Hell's annual Bacchanalian Orgy," Ares chimed in, the goofy expression on his face grossly inappropriate for the conversation. "The best party in the world! So many good memories..."

Now was not the time for Ares to reminisce about his good times at the largest orgy in the supernatural world, especially since it was coordinated by Diana's father. Diana was already furious with Ares, and he just kept digging his metaphorical grave deeper. Her face turned the same shade as the hot sauce she'd drowned her tacos in earlier. I'm sure she didn't want to hear about her father's promiscuity or imagine one of her men at an orgy fucking other people.

"Oh, don't be embarrassed, princess. You're like a chip off the old block," Mal laughed. "Cut from the same polyamorous cloth apparently, just like everyone else at this table."

"It's true, you're...*with* these men? *All of them?*" Michael asked, a scandalized look on his face.

Diana's face twisted into a smirk so quickly it gave me whiplash. She bubbled with maniacal laughter as her face glowed with supervillain vibes. Leaning across the table, she bullseyed her gaze directly at Michael.

"Michael, don't you dare sit there and judge me. The men at this table may be psychopaths that abducted me and ripped me away from my family, but they showed more of an interest in me in the past month-and-a-half than you have in my entire life. You kept seeing some

guy that fucked around on you and dropped sperm samples like M&Ms... Whereas, some of the men at this table have shown me a level of devotion I didn't think was possible. If I choose to be in a relationship with any or all of them, I don't want to hear shit from you. You're literally some sleazeball guy who double-teamed my mom and probably wouldn't have called her again if she didn't incubate a child for you...who you *abandoned*. You're a fucking sperm donor, not a father," she growled, her words scathingly malicious. Smoke bellowed from her ears, and I worried that she may set herself on fire again.

One of the guys said ooooo in the background, but I couldn't tear my gaze away from Diana. She was a strong, confident woman who took no shit and had no shame. This was the woman I admired.

"You don't understand—" Michael started, but Diana cut him off.

"No. I don't want to hear anything you have to say. Do you know how hard it was growing up without a father? The ridicule I got from the other kids was brutal. I wondered everyday why one of the people who brought me into this world wanted nothing to do with me. I felt inadequate my entire life, and I have daddy issues that ruin every romantic relationship I'm in *because of you*. And Lucifer. For fuck's sake. I wasn't abandoned by one father, but two. Just my fucking luck," she lamented as she shook her head.

"Diana, I didn't have a choice but to stay out of your life. God ordered me to keep away; I could only watch you from the sidelines. I *had* to follow it. Lucifer stayed away for your own safety. He has enemies everywhere," Michael tried to defend himself, but it fell flat.

Diana may have been hurt, but she possessed unwavering convictions. She crossed her hands under her breasts, and her face contorted into a broken-

hearted expression. I could tell by her stiff body language that she was done with this conversation.

“Leave, now. I need time to process this and can’t even look at your face. You rubbed me the wrong way the moment I looked at you, and now I know why.” Tears fell down Diana’s face, and she turned her head. “Just because we share the same eye color, doesn’t mean you have any connection to me as a father.”

“Can we please talk? There’s so much I need to tell you. I want to know more about you,” Michael begged with a broken voice. I had only seen him cry once, at my trial. He was as torn up about this as Diana was.

She got up and left the room. I heard her run up the stairs and slam a door. After casting a silencing spell around us, so she couldn’t use her superhuman hearing, I rounded on Michael.

“I agree, you need to leave for a few days and give all of us time to process this,” I said, barely able to control my anger.

“Can you help her see reason, Azazel?” he asked me. “She needs to know there were bigger forces at play.”

I felt my glow intensify to the point where its silver rays bounced off the glassware on the table. I didn’t want to do a full-on shift and risk not being able to shift back for a while. Diana was just introduced to the supernatural world and in such an abrupt way. I didn’t think she could handle what fallen angels actually looked like. I had to control my emotions.

“You’re lucky I can still look at you after everything you’ve done to me. You sat back and let the tribunal slander my reputation, and then cast a vote that kicked me out of heaven. You were doing the SAME THING as me. You were fucking the King of Hell, but / got booted for my ‘sins and transgressions against the Heavenly

Order'? You fucking lied to me. You should have told me she's your daughter!" I shouted.

"Azazel, please believe me. I never meant to hurt her, but it had to be done this way. You're like a son to me, but I couldn't tell you everything—" Michael started.

"No. I'm not like a son to you. If I was, you wouldn't have betrayed me. You wouldn't have hurt the woman I'm falling for. Just leave. I'll contact you if she feels like talking to you."

Desmond gave me a quizzical look as he waved his hand. "I lifted the fading ward. You'll be able to leave now. We'll be in touch, Michael." His icy tone was final, leaving no room for argument. "Consider yourself lucky I'm allowing you to leave in one piece, with your wings still intact."

To rip an angel's wings off was not a light threat, but I couldn't care less. Michael deserved it. He faded out with his head hung low. I paced the room, trying to get myself under control.

"Someone should check on her. I can't right now... I'm too angry." My wings stretched out to their full span, and I could feel horns poking at my skin, itching to burst free. I was so close to fully shifting that a few of my feathers fell to the floor.

"She's furious at Mal, Bash, and Ares, but less so at me...so I guess I will," Desmond said.

As he walked up the stairs toward her, I tied my hair back into a bun and readied myself to leave. I needed to get myself under control before I saw Diana again.

# DIANA

## Chapter 6

*I'm immortal. Both my fathers ditched me, and I'm sobbing like a fucking punk-ass cry baby bitch in the arms of a man who simultaneously makes me feel dick-hungry horny and furiously angry. I have to save the world from some megalomaniac psycho-fucker, whether I want to or not. How do I get into these situations? I went from learning by day and slinging cocktails by night to living something out of a fucking paranormal romance book, but I can't turn my kindle off and walk away, because this diarrhea-shit-show-toilet-bomber falling apart around me is my life!*

Shallow, quick breaths rattled in my chest as a waterfall of tears cascaded from my face, soaking Desmond's shirt. The warmth from his body seeped into me and made me feel less shaky. Even though I was happy to be alive, it seemed like my life was falling apart. I snuggled deeper into Desmond's side, wrapping my leg over his while he pet my head. His nails raking against my scalp were oddly calming.

"Diana," he whispered, squeezing me. I felt a weird soothing feeling course through me. "Talk to me, dollface, you've been silent for three hours."

"I don't know what to say, my whole fucking life imploded," I croaked. A huge wad of snot slid back into

my throat, and I swallowed it. *Why am I an ugly, snotty crier? He probably thinks I'm so gross.*

He leaned away from me momentarily to hand me a few tissues. I dabbed at my eyes and blew my nose. He took the dirty wad from my hand and lobbed it into the trashcan across the room. I wasn't shocked that he made the shot. Desmond was the picture of perfection. He *always* had it together.

"I thought your life imploded when we kidnapped you?" he asked. I wasn't sure if he was joking or not.

"*Too soon.* And no, this is worse. Before tonight, I thought my life had a chance of going back to normal. Maybe I could defeat Red, re-enroll for the next semester, and finish law school a year later. I thought I would eventually see my family again and move back into my house. Now, everything has changed so much, I'm not even sure I could look them in the eye." My unexpected honesty surprised me, and I poked my head up to look Desmond in the eye. "Did you use your powers on me, after you promised you'd stop?"

The golden flecks in his eyes sparkled as he ran his hand down my cheek and over my throat. His thumb rested in the divot in the middle of my collarbone. "Yeah, but in this instance it's okay. You can't spend the rest of your life in bed wallowing in your own self-pity. I'm not erasing your feelings—I'm making it easier to feel them."

"Stop it, I don't want to feel them. It feels like a bunch of rocks are falling on me and crushing me right now," I whined, trying my best to talk through my hyperventilating breaths.

Desmond sent another calming wave through me, and I was able to breathe easier. I put a hand on his chest, feeling the muscles underneath. *How can a man who represses his own emotions so often be this gentle and caring with me?* He kissed my forehead and chuckled lightly to himself.



“Did you *honestly* think Bash, Ares, or I would let your life go back to normal, even after you defeated Red?” His question made me pause. “Looks like Azazel and Mal may have a problem with that, too.”

“Maybe not completely. But I did think I’d be able to have some parts of my old life back. I didn’t think I’d be an immortal world-saver with a bunch of men obsessed with me.”

He held my face in his calloused, steady hand, and verbally slapped me with some honesty I had to hear. “Well, guess what? You’re stuck with all of us, even if you wanted to leave. Whether or not you want to, you need to kill Red and save the world if you want any semblance of a life again.”

“I’m not sure if I really wanted to leave...” I admitted.

My feelings on the matter were complicated to say the least, and I’d barely had any time to sort them since waking up. The guys were controlling and possessive as fuck, but I loved that as much as I hated it, even if I wouldn’t admit it out loud. *I’m still trying to sound like a normal woman and not a dickmatized bitch who wants her Hot Pocket stuffed with man meat.* Michael’s little truth-bomb took up way too much emotional space for me to even consider how I felt about the guys. My boyfriends? My partners? I had no clue how this arrangement was categorized. Polyamory, from what Ares had explained before my disastrous trip to the airport, was much more common in the magical community compared to the human population, especially among immortals.

*But how do I feel about being in a relationship with five much older men? Is this because I have daddy issues? Omg, is Desmond a father substitute? Is that why I like how controlling he is?! OMG, is he going to ask me to call him Daddy?!*

“Diana, I can feel emotions, remember? You’re mentally spiraling so badly I can feel it like it’s punching me in the gut. Tell me what’s wrong.” His firm, commanding tone left no wiggle room for me. A peaceful vibe crashed into me, and I found it easier to unravel my mind and answer him. *Betty White, pray for me. I am so fucked with these guys.*

“I’m just not sure how I’m going to be with multiple men at the same time. Am I doing it because I have daddy issues? How am I going to deal with the fact that I have not one dad who up and left me, but two?”

“You just do it, dollface,” Desmond said. When I sniffled back a laugh, he rolled his eyes. “Beyond the sex, I mean. You just *be* with us. Take each day as it comes.”

“If I’m lucky, I’ll get to come at least once every day,” I quipped. As much as I hated him using his magic on me, I had to admit, it felt good to crack a joke.

He sighed, and carried on. *Always so serious, this one.* “My father left me, and my stepfather disowned me, so I feel you there. When my real father came back into my life, I let him because he had a lot to offer me as far as connections and business opportunities. But I chose how much I was willing to reconnect with him. I say you at least give them a chance, so we can use their clout to fight Red. The rest is up to you.”

Desmond made a good point. I needed to let them into my life, regardless of how I felt about their choices. They had way too much to offer us, and I needed to know more about my powers.

“I find it really hard to believe that abandoning me and binding my powers was the best course of action. I know they both have enemies, but wouldn’t keeping me close have been the best option?” I asked.

“That wasn’t Michael’s choice; he answered to a higher power. Lucifer...*ugh*. Diana, you need to understand something about him—he’s unpredictable. Dangerous. *Ruthless*. He was the founder and ruler of Hell for such a long time for a reason, and he still would be if he hadn’t given it all up. Imagine someone with Bash’s intelligence, my motivation, Mal’s stone-cold bitch-face, and Ares’ craziness, and multiply that by a thousand. Everything he did was for a calculated reason.”

“Well, when I meet him, I’m asking him about it,” I said. I needed to know why.

“As you should. What are you going to do about Michael?” he asked me.

“Ignore him...” I had no intention of forming a father-daughter relationship with him. “After what he did to Zaz and I, I’m not really fond of him.”

Desmond rubbed my back, and rolled me on top of him. I could feel his semi-hard dick beneath me and was contemplating whether or not I wanted to grind on it and make something happen. Charlie was always telling me that emotional sex was good in the moment, but not worth the fallout. I had also learned that lesson a million times myself, but I was feeling the dumb bitch vibes so strongly today that I just didn’t care. Maybe getting wrecked by his monster dick would make me feel better right now, and I was okay with that. He grabbed my hands, holding them at my sides, rendering me still. After sitting up, he kissed me. His tongue stroked lazily over mine, slowly tracing around the inside of my mouth. I suddenly felt sleepy, like I had taken one of Angie’s Ambien pills.

“You need a good night’s sleep, dollface. I’m sure tomorrow is going to be a busy day,” Desmond said.

“You did this to me,” I yawned. He pulled his covers back, and I jostled myself beneath them. “You play dirty,

demon.”

“That I do,” he said as he laid next to me, pulling me into his chest. “But sleep is going to make coming down from all my emotional manipulation magic a lot easier.”

The compulsion to sleep was so heavy that I had no chance of staying awake. Desmond’s arms felt so sturdy and safe that I didn’t want to fight it. The last thought I had on my way out was that Desmond was right. Whether or not I wanted to, I had to fight Red—it came down to survival. The war had to be fought and won so I could have a life after everything was said and done. Tonight was the last time I was going to cry about it. *Tomorrow will be a new day.*

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# SEBASTIAN

## Chapter 7

After Michael dropped that bomb on Diana at dinner, she ran away from the table sobbing, right into Desmond's bed. He followed her up and spent hours holding her while she cried. Part of me felt for her. I was born of hellfire thousands of years ago—I had always existed as I am now. But if I had two fathers who'd abandoned me, I imagined I would have reacted the same way. The only reason I let Michael leave without castrating him and jarring his balls in formaldehyde was because Desmond mindlinked all of us to stand down. No matter how fucking shady Michael was, we'd need him to locate Lucifer. Diana couldn't have chosen two more powerful fathers if she tried. With both of them on our side, we'd have a better chance of defeating Red. *Maybe we can even help Lucifer retake the throne.* Lucifer Morningstar was aptly named, because he was a beloved figure throughout the supernatural world, and Hell would surely support him reprising his leadership. That would be a conversation for another time, though.

Another part of me was furious at her for making me worry so much. She had run away from us, and we watched her die. I'd spent a month searching every corner of the globe for her, fretting over her constantly, and suffering through sleepless nights because the

thought of never seeing her again broke me inside. Just because I knew she was alive, didn't mean I knew she was safe. She could have been held captive and tortured by Red, or another one of our numerous enemies. She could have somehow ended up in the fourth realm, lost to us forever.

Then she had the nerve to be angry at me, refuse my gift, and ignore me the whole evening. No warm reunion. No *thank you*. No *I miss you*. She spent half of dinner flirting with my ex to make me jealous. I doubt Azazel told her everything about us, but I saw the heat in his eyes when he looked at her...the way he acted like she was the only person in the room. It went way beyond how a guardian treated their charge, and I suspected it had nothing to do with a soulbond either—that kind of bond didn't cause romantic feelings. He wanted her, just like we did. He and I both had an unbreakable connection to her, and I'd have to face how fucked up things were between us eventually.

Diana Rossi treated me like a *persona non grata*, not the man who claimed her heart and soul. She spent the night crying in another man's arms. I didn't care if it was Desmond's arms—she should have come to me. *I should be the man she needs more than anyone else*. She needed to learn how things were meant to be.

After he calmed down, Azazel faded home to pack his things. I wasn't sure how I felt about him moving in with us, given the bloody mess between him, Desmond, and myself. But I knew it was the right move. The more support Diana had, the better. Mal spent the rest of the evening in his room, doing whatever he did while he was alone. Ares left the house after he realized Diana wasn't coming back down. He had his own ragey, jealous feelings to work through, and I counted us all lucky he chose to do that elsewhere. We only had so many safehouses, and we couldn't afford for him to burn this one to the ground right now.

I waited until I heard soft breathing coming from Desmond's room. We never had the time to set up door wards, so I faded right to the edge of his bed. Desmond and Diana laid snuggled together, making a picture of domesticity. His arms squeezed her tightly as her head rested against his shirtless chest. There was barely any space between them. I slid in behind her, grabbing her free hand and wrapping my other arm around her. Inhaling her scent, I took a few minutes to lay with her, appreciating the curves of her body. A month was too long to spend sleeping apart. She hadn't restored her mental wards after she came out of equilibrium, and given how upset she was, her mind was rattled. Breaking into her subconscious was too easy.

The dreamscape I wove was simple. She laid on her back in bed, in nothing but a white tank top and black cheeky knickers. The Kindle in her hands absorbed all of her focus. She looked so innocent...so unsuspecting of the incubus lurking at the edge of her dream, ready to devour her. By the time I was through with her, she'd know exactly who she belonged to. Her anger would be a passing whim.

I got onto the bed, prowling toward her on my hands and knees until I was close enough to part her thighs. The creamy skin there erupted in goosebumps that felt cold to the touch. Her cunt looked so good in black silk, but it would look even better bare, wet, and swollen from being thoroughly fucked.

"Bash, what are you doing here?" she asked, shock evident on her fresh face. She set her tablet on an end table as she glowered at me. She tried to close her legs, but I held them open. "Did you seriously invade my dreams?! Get the fuck out."

I lowered my head, running my nose straight up the middle of her cunt, the potent smell of her pheromones and power turning me into an insatiable monster. "I came to visit you, since you didn't talk to me much at dinner," I

retorted as I ran one hand up her thigh, until my fingers skimmed just under the edge of the fabric. *So warm and soft.*

“Well, you can leave. I have nothing to say to you until you apologize. I’m done with your possessive, psycho bullshit.” *That’s what she thought was a firm tone?* The hitch of her breath and the way her eyes widened when I slid my finger along her cunt lips told me otherwise.

For someone who wanted me to leave, she didn’t fight me on it. All I did was weave a dreamscape. She could easily control the dream if she wanted to. If she chose to, this dream would end right here and now if she woke up. She could try to deny me all she wanted, but deep down, she *knew* she was mine. She *knew* beyond a doubt that she wanted me just as badly as I wanted her.

“That’s fine, you don’t need to talk for what I have in mind. I would rather you listen,” I directed. “I’m not apologizing to you, because I don’t regret what I did. I’ll never be sorry for claiming you.”

“You’re an arrogant, obsessive asshole... *I hate you,*” she breathed as my finger circled her wet entrance. She took a deep breath in.

“But I’m *your* arrogant, obsessive asshole, and you love it. You love that I’m so obsessed with you that I marked you for myself. You love that I’m arrogant enough to take what I want. It turns you on that my claim over you means I own you...your body...your *pleasure.*”

She shook her head, gasping as I plunged my finger inside her, feeling her tight, wet heat. Her entire body shivered. Being inside her after being apart for so long felt *right*. She had to feel the connection between us just as intensely as I did.



“Admit it, Birdie. You feel our bond. Even when you were spitting mad at me during dinner and refused to look at me, you felt the pull between us. The only thing you hate is that you don’t actually hate me or the idea of being mine at all.”

As I pumped my finger inside her and fingered her tight heat, she narrowed her gaze at me. Her hips rolled slightly with my movement, until she realized what she was doing and stopped. She was so precious when she tried to be mad.

“I do feel it, all the time, despite never asking for it. Just because you call me *Birdie* doesn’t mean I want to be caged. Did you ever consider that I don’t want to be yours? That the thought of being someone’s possession makes me sick? Treating me like this in bed is one thing, but you don’t treat me like this outside of the bedroom.”

I added a second finger, and she stifled her impending moan. “Oh, yeah, you look so sick. You’re not enjoying this at all,” I quipped as I ripped her panties off, throwing them on the ground. “I can give you everything, Birdie. Anything you want, except letting you go. I’ll *never* let you go.”

“Mmmmmm,” she gritted out, despite her best efforts to keep it in. Her eyes blazed through me as her determination took over her wanton desires. “I’m serious Bash. You want to possess me body and soul and say ‘*mine mine mine...*’ but are you *mine*? Do I get to claim *you*? Do you even love me? I’m not the weak little witch I was at your mansion in New York.”

“If you think love is everything it’s cracked up to be, you’ve never felt obsession. It runs deeper, darker, and is more all-consuming than love could ever be. I’m obsessed with you, and my claim on you was only the beginning,” I admitted. If she needed to hear how utterly gone I was for her, she’d hear it. “Of course, I’m yours—I have been since the day your perky ass passed by me in

the park. I searched the entire world for you, every fucking nook and cranny, and I killed anyone who got in my way. I'd only do that for someone who owned me, my every desire, and my black, cold heart."

At the mention of unaliving people, she gushed. I hooked my digits so they reached that tender spot deep inside her. I had barely started and already, her lust was satiating me. I couldn't wait to gorge on it and feel my power swell.

"*Oh yeah?* Did you just cream yourself over that, my twisted little slut? I ended men's lives with my bare hands and watched the life drain from their scared, quivering faces... Felt their blood run down my arms. Heard the snap of their necks and their screams for mercy. I'd do it all over again, too. I meant it when I said I'd do *anything* for you."

She writhed on my fingers, each tilt of her hips a desperate plea for more friction. Her greedy little cunt couldn't get enough of me. Dipping my head down, I inhaled her unique scent. Roses and a hint of something...*familiar*. It drove me mad. I split my tongue in two before lightly licking her clit and circling it in tight motions. My tongues worked her in tandem, running around the sensitive little bundle of nerves to drive her insane. A few stray beads of sweat ran down her forehead as her breathing quickened. I ran my fingers over that sensitive spot inside her again just as I bit down on her clit. She was so close...just at the edge of orgasm. It would only take a little more to push her off the cliff.

So I stopped. The recharge rush from her sexual frustration was a huge power boost.

I pulled my fingers out and sat back to take in her flushed, pink skin and parted lips.

"Who do you belong to, Diana?" I looked at her expectantly, but instead of telling me the truth, a wicked

smile curled her lips.

“No one,” she rasped as she slipped two fingers inside her cunt. The sight of her pleasuring herself was too good. I watched her for a few long moments before I waved my hand and her arms were instantly bound. *Perks of dreamweaving. Bash, one. Diana, zero.*

“Wrong answer.” I wanted to have patience. I knew she was angry, and Desmond had explained why, but the deep-seated need to claim her roared inside me. “Maybe I wasn’t clear enough before when I said I’d do anything for you. I take care of what’s mine. I’d give you your darkest desire.”

I closed my eyes and searched through her subconscious. *Tom Ellis...Paul Rudd...Leo DiCaprio... Idris Elba...that red-headed guy from Game of Thrones... Seems like she has a bit of a Daddy kink.* I eventually found some vivid daydreams of Azazel I could work with.

“You *Dirty Birdie*. Some of these daydreams are straight out of an erotic novel. Seems you spend a lot of time thinking about Zaz and what his mouth feels like...”

“What of it?” she asked, her voice dripping with defiance. I loved that my little cock whore had no shame about her desires.

I concentrated on Azazel, using our mindlink to breach his subconscious. Once I established a link, I formed a clear image of him in my mind. I thought of his cascade of curly hair, coy smile, amber eyes, and the peaks and slopes of his muscular body before I weaved him into the dreamscape. He appeared on a chair in the corner of the room dressed in only a pair of black joggers, surprised to see us.

Diana gaped. The shock that flitted across her face was *comical*. She had no clue what I was capable of...

the things she could experience with me if she'd only give in and let herself.

“Bash, is that actually Azazel?!” she whisper-shouted at me. “Does he know you're doing this?”

“Azazel's subconscious is linked, yes. He knows he's part of our dream, and he has full control over his actions in this dream. Hey, Zaz,” I flirted. Diana's nickname for him was cute. Desmond and I had just called him Az when we dated him.

“*Bash*,” he said my name like a warning. Like he was trying to curtail my mischievous ways. *Ah, just like old times*. He turned to Diana. “Is he making you uncomfortable?”

“No. Although this dream did take me by surprise, too. He searched through my subconscious and saw some daydreams I had about you...” she trailed off awkwardly, her face blushing. “And here you are.”

“Oh, yeah,” he said, cocky as all-fuck. All angels, disgraced or not, were full of themselves. He got up from the chair and moved to sit at the end of the bed. “And what was I doing in those daydreams, Bash?”

Diana tried to interrupt, but I moved my finger inside her again, agonizingly slow. A soft moan escaped her lips. “You kissed all over her sopping wet cunt. Then you flipped her over and gave her something *extra special*. A long, thick surprise.”

“Mmm, I don't know if I should do that...I'm supposed to be your 'guardian angel'...but technically, I'm not. Once we go there together, I won't be able to go back. My feelings for you run too deep for this to be a onetime thing. Do you want my mouth on you, you dirty little girl?” he asked, peering at my finger as it pumped in and out of her.

I picked up my pace, adding another finger inside her. She moaned and nodded her head. “Ah, ah, ah, use

your words, Birdie. Tell Zaz what you want.”

She shook her head as her blush crept over her chest to the tips of her ears. Her sheer stubbornness and will to defy me made me even more determined to break her. Dominate her. Consume her.

“I...I want you to eat me,” she said around a groan as I scissored my fingers inside her.

The molten heat in Zaz’s gaze was borderline feral. He moved up the bed to sit beside me. After he pulled his hair back, he leaned down, burying his face in her wet heat. As he teased his tongue around her clit, she flicked her gaze to me, bucking her hips off the bed. Her pupils were blown out, eclipsing her irises until there was nothing left but black. Edging her made her a livewire waiting to electrocute us all.

***Azazel, I’ve been edging her if you want to play along,*** I linked him.

***Oh, yes, I do. You’re the only person who loves edging more than I do, Bash.***

He ate her at a torturous pace, taking his time to explore her folds with his tongue as I fingered her. Every now and then he’d graze over her clit, sending her into a frenzy of overwhelming sensations. She lifted her hips in frustration, desperately trying to get some release. He finally sucked on her clit just as I hit that tender spot again. Sexual electricity pulsed through her whole body. I could feel its keening sharpness through our bond. Her thighs shook as her cunt gripped my fingers.

***Do you feel that?*** I linked him.

***Time to stop.*** For an angel, his grin was downright wicked.

Azazel pulled away, wiping his face dry with his forearm as she whined and pouted at us. I withdrew my fingers as well.

***Want to drive her insane?*** he asked me.

***Of course.*** This was too much fun.

He sucked my two slick fingers into his mouth running his tongue between them to get all of her juices off them. *Bloody. Fuck.* My power store was ballooning.

“Mmm, your tight little pussy tastes good. But do you feel good too?” he crooned. His voice...*Hells bells.*

What did he taste like? It had been too long since I knew the answer to that question. I grabbed the back of his neck, slamming my mouth on his. At first, he kept his mouth shut. I understood his reluctance. We had a lot of heavy, unsaid things between us. But once I got a whiff of how turned on he was, I slid my tongue across his lips, silently asking him to open up for me. He parted them, sliding his tongue against mine, but instead of the yielding, soft kiss I expected, he took charge. He grabbed my jaw, angling it so he practically sucked my face off. It was different than what we'd previously had, but such a fucking turn on.

“Oh my...” Diana gasped.

We parted, turning our heads toward her. She looked like an offering with her arms stretched above her head. Her tank top was thin enough that I could see her nipples pebbled beneath it. Her cunt still glistened with her arousal, and I wanted so badly to sink inside her to the hilt. Azazel crawled up the bed and laid next to her, slowly running his thumb over her clothed nipple.

“Once we go down this path, honey, there's no going back. I won't deny that I already think about what you taste like, feel like,” he whispered in her ear. “This will change us... You'll never be an innocent girl for me again. Are you okay with that?”

She tilted her head to the side, meeting his lips. Seeing them kiss did something to me. It made me confront some feelings I thought I'd never feel again

about Azazel while stoking my possessiveness over Diana.

“Things between us changed the day you kissed me in the river, Zaz. I want you,” she said before turning her gray-blue eyes on me. “And as much as I hate myself for admitting it, I want you too, Bash. I’ll always feel this pull between us, and even though I’m pissed off at you, you’re right. I do love that you claimed me. You *are* my arrogant, obsessive asshole, and your obsession with me runs so deep... I want it to consume me.”

Until she said them, I had no clue how badly I wanted to hear those words. I needed her to say that she wanted to be mine. I waved her restraints away and climbed on top of her, resting my weight on my knees as I carded my fingers through her curly hair and pulled right at the scalp. Just enough that she felt a slight sting.

“You’re mine, Birdie. I’ll always take care of you.” I blinked my eyes to remove my clothes and her tank top. I wanted to waste no time getting inside her. “How do you want to do this?”

“Hmmm,” she furrowed her eyebrows in thought, eyeing each of us until the corners of her lips turned up into a sly smile. The guys and I were turning her into a deviant, one day at a time. “I want your first time inside me to be in real life, Zaz, not in a dream. Can you be in my mouth? Then I want Bash behind me.”

Zaz smirked as he wrangled off his joggers, turning her over and pulling her on top of him so her mouth was above his dick. She gasped as she took in its silvery sheen.

“*It’s...silver.* It’s glowing,” she announced. It was still long, slightly less thick than my own. He’d manscaped around it, which was a change from the last time I’d seen it. He cleared his throat, side eyeing me.

***Yeah, you caught me looking,*** I linked him.

“Yeah, a lot of angels’ dicks match their glow. It’s not uncommon, and it won’t hurt you,” he assured her.

Diana already shifted to her hands and knees, so I got behind her. I didn’t want to hurt her either, but I was not as good a man as Azazel. Stopping myself from sliding right into her cunt would be torture. I ran the head of my cock through her folds, to gather her arousal and edge her a little more before I fucked her brains out.

***Just fuck me already! Please, I need you to lose control and fuck me into the mattress.*** Her thoughts rang through my head, loud and clear whether she meant them to or not.

“Well, it’s a dream mattress, so I can make sure I don’t break it when I fuck you into it,” I teased her.

“Wait, wha—” she said as I slammed myself inside her in one motion, until my knot sat right outside her. She moaned as I slowly pulled almost all the way out and sank back in a few times to get used to how tight she felt. I felt my power grow until it was about to burst at the seams.

***You heard her, too?*** Azazel linked me.

***You hear her?*** I asked, trying to keep the raging jealousy out of my thoughts.

***Yes, I do. Bash, you need to share better this time around,*** he chided me. ***I have a soulbond with her...I’m not going anywhere.***”

He smiled at me as he gently cupped Diana’s face, guiding her mouth to his length. She wrapped her hand around the base and took the head past her lips. As she sucked his cock, I saw her head bob up and down and heard the slurping noises she made. They were driving me insane. Seeing her with him made me want to ruin her.

With one hand on her shoulder and the other wrapped in her hair, I pounded into her hard and fast,



trying my hardest to make it last. Having her here with me after being apart for a month made me think of how much I fucking missed her, needed her. Wanted her. With each thrust I felt myself slipping further into my true form. My horns erupted from my head as my tail whipped behind me, cracking through the air like a whip. I leaned over her slightly so I could get a better view of her sucking Azazel's dick. His feet had moved so they were flat on the bed, his thighs parted enough that I got a prime view of the dark furrow between his cheeks. It gave me ideas...

"Diana, let Zaz fuck your mouth. I want to see it," I asked. She removed her hand, bracing herself on her forearms. Zaz paused, looking at Diana for confirmation. She licked her lips and nodded. He held her head and pistoned his hips, driving his dick deep into her throat.

The way I gripped her hips would leave bruises the next day, but I couldn't help myself. Watching her let go and fall deep into the throes of pleasure eroded my self control. I picked up my pace, punishing her with deep, hard strokes that had her mind going insane. I heard everything she was thinking because she couldn't control her mindlink.

***Fuck, fuck Bash! Mmmm, please. Wreck me. I want you both to wreck me, come inside me.***

I brought my tail to my mouth and sucked, drenching it with spit. I slid it under myself and Diana until I hit Azazel's asscheeks.

"Remember how much you loved my tail?" I asked him. ***I know you want it...***

He smirked at me, head tipped back, practically melting as he slid in and out of Diana's mouth. ***Yeah, but that won't change the fact that we still have shit to sort out.***

***I know. But I want inside that tight ass, Zaz. Just like old times, please? And don't even pretend you don't want it, too,*** I linked him as I rubbed the tip of my tail over his hole.

***You're still an egotistical bastard, you know that?*** he linked as he spread his legs further apart. ***Go ahead.***

I eased my tail into him gently, inch by inch until I bottomed out inside him. He was hot and tight like he had been all those years ago. Pure bliss eclipsed his face, his eyes widening when I hit his prostate.

***You better fuck me harder with that tail and treat my ass the way it deserves, because I may not let my judgement slip again,*** Azazel linked me. ***Fuck my ass, Bash. Hard.***

He didn't have to ask me twice. I pile-drove my tail into his ass, fucking him with an intensity that had him groaning. Diana moaned around him as she pushed herself back on me. I never wanted this to end, but I had a feeling none of us were going to last long. Feeding from two streams of lust was overwhelming me as is. I ruthlessly flicked her clit, trying to hurtle her faster toward a climax I hoped she was ready for.

***FUCK, Bash! I'm going to come,*** she screamed through the mindlink as she spasmed around me, gripping me tight enough to cause my own orgasm.

"I'm not going to last long either, honey. Your mouth is divine," Azazel said through a deep moan.

I pegged his prostate harder while Diana depthroated him all the way to the root. I saw the impending end on his face, so I held Diana's head down. He came down her throat, groaning as she swallowed it.

"Christ on a bike, that was insane. You did so well," he praised as he ran his fingers through her hair. She

grabbed his hand and kissed it, snuggling her face into it. “You’re the best, dirtiest cocksucker, honey.”

Her eyes drooped as she yawned. “Bash, I’m still not happy with you,” she said, her voice growing sleepy.

“I’m not sorry, but I’ll do everything in my power to make sure you never regret being mine. I’ll never let you go, Birdie.” I laid on the bed, pulling her into my arms. I needed to hold her, feel her against me. Azazel scooted in behind her, laying his hand over mine while he nuzzled his face into her neck.

***This hasn’t changed anything, Bash. We still need to talk and tell Diana what happened between the three of us. We can’t dance around it anymore if we’re going to be our best for her,*** he linked me.

***I know, you’re right. But for now, can we enjoy this moment before she falls asleep? Once she falls asleep, the dream ends, and she always falls asleep afterward.***

And right on cue, the dream ended. I was back in Desmond’s room, spooning her luscious curves. Her soft snores lulled me to sleep.

# DIANA

## Chapter 8

I woke up alone in bed, which didn't happen too often since I'd started living with the guys. Every morning I'd feel a manly, hairy body plastered to my own with sweat and a hard something knocking against my back door. As sexy as that was, sometimes it felt nice to start the morning alone with my own thoughts. I dimmed my superhearing, took some time to appreciate the silence, and stretched out, starfishing my limbs to the four corners of the bed. A note on a folded sheet of card-stock sat on the pillow next to me. Its textured, old world feel against my fingertips was a mark of a bygone era—*no one* left notes anymore. I opened it, and the contents surprised me, to say the least.

*Diana,*

*“There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion, even by the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equal jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made.” —The Masque of the Red Death, Edgar Allan Poe*

*You made me feel a way I thought I'd never feel again. I regret pushing you away and denying how much I want*

*you. I'll spend eternity proving it to you.*

*Yours,*

*Malcolm Knight*

*Oh Mal.* I sat up, staring at the card in my hands like it would give me an answer on how I'm supposed to feel. True to his word, he was trying to earn my forgiveness. Leaving a quote from one of my favorite authors meant he was paying attention to me. Claiming I didn't feel something for Mal, even privately to myself, would be a lie. I did feel something, no matter how badly I wanted to avoid or dislike him. Maybe we were both afraid of the feelings we had, but for different reasons. Even when he was choking me at the mountain house, I couldn't help but feel extremely turned on. We had connected in that moment of anger. Just like how we connected when I slit his throat. Thinking about all of that made me realize that I had serious issues. And that it was too early in the morning to ponder why.

Although I was confused and emotionally overloaded, I felt calmer than I did last night. I suspect Bash and Zaz had something to do with that. During a particularly large stretch, I felt a twinge in my pelvic floor. How could I possibly feel them the next morning? Did that stuff actually happen...like does dream sex count? I guess it did, since that's how I got Bash's mark. I'd eventually have to ask him about that, in addition to the more pressing questions I had. A mental checklist formed in my mind.

*How am I immortal?*

*Is immortality something I want?*

*What will I do about Mal?*

*How am I going to find my other dad...and did I even want to find him?*

*What happened between Desmond, Bash, and Azazel?*

*Should I forgive the guys?*

With the exception of Zaz, they all had wronged me before my month-long slumber hiatus. All the questions and thoughts bouncing around my head were organized. My first order of business this morning was to go downstairs, get an Olga-certified breakfast with tons of bacon, and gather all five of those knuckleheads at the kitchen table. They needed to catch me up to speed on whatever the fuck was going on. This time around, no secrets, no kid gloves, and no pulling punches. This Brooklyn broad floated like Snoopy at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and stung like a bank account after Black Friday.

After washing up and getting dressed, I only made it halfway to the kitchen before I regretted my decision to stay here with them. Even without my superhuman hearing, I heard them whisper-shouting in hushed tones.

"Who the dark fuck is that?!" Bash rasped. "She's gonna kill you, Ares."

"It's a surprise; I'm not spoiling it before Diana gets here," he coolly replied.

"I don't care about Diana ripping Ares a new asshole. How the Heaven are we going to handle the damage control? Ares exposed us!" Desmond huffed in an exasperated tone.

"You made a promise to her last night to involve her in decisions, Desmond. I'm waking her up," Zaz huffed. "She can give us more insight as to whether or not this is even a problem... I don't foresee it being an issue be—"

"Feathers is right," Ares interrupted, seeming to not have a care in the world about whatever they were

arguing about. “This won’t be a problem, stop overreacting. Diana will love my apology gift; it’s the best one yet. She’ll fall in love with me all over again, and you’ll all sleep in your own rooms for the next few days while I reap the rewards. If her bed frame is rocking, don’t you dare come knocking. If you hear her scream, it’s because of my Greek god peen.”

*His Greek god peen...wow.* Ares seemed pretty full of himself today. He actually was this ridiculously confident every day. A chair scraping and tapping against the tile floor and muffled screams caught my attention. *Who is that?* I ran into the room, and before any of them could explain, I screamed at the gagged, blindfolded man bound to the chair with golden magical ties. Was he hurt? How did Ares get him here? A burlap bag was fixed over the bridge of his nose as a blindfold, so I could only see the bottom half of his face.

“Little Goddess, do I have a surprise for you!” Ares shouted as he made his way around the counter and put his hand on the small of my back, leading me toward the chair. I froze, mouth gaped, because I was too overwhelmed to say anything. “I’m sorry that we miscommunicated about the fire tattoo, but I hope this gift proves how much I love you. How I can’t live without you and want to work on our relationship. I’d do *anything* to make you happy.”

The gagged man at the table screamed something that sounded a lot like ‘Diana, help.’ I tore my attention away from him and closed my mouth so I could talk.

“You *kidnapped* someone and thought that would be a good gift?”

I looked around the room at the guys, trying to see if anyone else found this as batshit as I did.

***Diana, the guy tied to the chair is human, and Ares used magic to get them here. That could expose us...*** Bash linked me.

“Not just *someone*...” Ares teased as he removed the bag over the man’s head. He could barely contain his excitement. “IT’S CHAD!”

“Oh my God! *Charlie*!!!!!!!” I screamed as I ran over to untie the gag and magically remove his restraints. “Charlie, I missed you so much.”

When I tried to hug him, he jumped out of the chair and backed away from me. His face paled, and I couldn’t blame him. I forgot, he thought I died two months ago.

“Charlie, it’s me. I know this is hard to believe, but I’m one hundred percent alive and okay,” I assured him.

“Babe, is that you?! You’re alive?!” he wailed through thick sobs. “My bestie is ALIVE, motherfuckers!” He almost knocked me over in his rush to hug me.

“This is truly a Hallmark moment,” Mal snarked. “Is someone filming this?”

I would never admit this to the guys, but no one hugged like Charlie. Nothing compared to an embrace from someone you’ve known since you were six. Char and I have been through everything together: breakups, makeups, ups, downs, our moms passing away, fake friends, and surviving elementary, middle, and high school together. I needed him now more than ever, because shit was getting way too real. We stood there, glued to each other for what seemed like eternity—swaying back and forth and crying together—until someone cleared their throat, breaking up our reunion.

“What do you think of your gift, Little Goddess?!” Ares’ entire face beamed. As wildly fucked up and inappropriate as this gift was, it truly was his best apology gift yet. I missed Charlie so much.

“Is this psychotic bear your boyfriend?! I was lying in bed last night, and somehow ended up here and *he*—” Charlie pointed at Ares, talking a mile a minute “—tied me up and made me sit in that rickety-ass chair for hours



while I screamed and begged to know what was going on. It was torture, Diana! WAIT, did they do that to you?! Is that why you're here?!"

I sauntered over to Ares, grabbing him by his shirt and pulling him down so we were eye level. "Ares, I missed Charlie very much. Thank you for bringing my best friend to me. But you're going to apologize, *now*. You can't treat someone I care about that way. That would be like me kidnapping your brother and threatening him."

"Which one? I'm fairly sure Apollo would be into that, since he's a kinky little fuck. And Dionysus would think it's all part of an elaborate joke. Everything is a party to him."

"Ares, stop trying to distract me. I'm never spending the night with you again until you apologize. And we are going to have a discussion about the appropriate way to treat friends at some point."

Ares sighed, looking like a chastised child. Which was fair, because he sure all Hell was acting like one. "Chad—"

"My name is Charlie, asshole," Charlie quipped, cutting Ares off mid-sentence. "Charlie Monroe."

"*Charlie*," Ares began again. "I'm sorry I kidnapped you and tied you to a chair. I was more focused on getting Diana to forgive me and didn't really care about your safety or feelings." Ummm...that was one way to apologize.

"...Is this certifiable hairball your boyfriend?" Charlie asked, the alarm clear in his baritone voice. "Diana, we talked about dating crazies, I thought you were past this phase? Who are the rest of these guys?"

"Excuse you—we aren't *dating*. Diana is my *adelph*  
*psychi*, thank you very much," Ares spat, his accent thickening with every syllable he spoke. "She's my

fucking soulmate, who I'm spending eternity with. And I'm not crazy. I'm—"

"Charlie, that's a really long and complicated answer, and there are parts to this story that I'm not clear on myself. I think we all need to sit down and start from the beginning," I interrupted as I steered him away from the guys, sitting him at the breakfast table next to me.

"Charlie won't be an issue. He isn't going to expose us or cause problems, and it may be good to get a human's perspective on all of this. Can we all sit down and straighten some things out?"

"Human? Di, you're either fucking with me right now, or you have a lot to catch me up on," Charlie sighed.



"Okay, so let me get this straight," Charlie said. "You're an immortal, witch-angel hybrid, and these guys abducted you to keep you safe and have you involved in their plan to assassinate your enemy, Satan. But not the same Satan that's your one Dad—that one is the OG Lucifer. You didn't actually die when you faked your death, and your psycho golden retriever burned down my favorite hookup spot, but you *did* almost die when the airport imploded. I still can't believe they passed that off as a gas leak..." he mused.

"You seem oddly calm for finding out the supernatural world is real," Mal commented. "Most humans would have a heart attack if they found out their best friend was an angel-witch hybrid living with four of the most dangerous supernatural beings in the Underworld, and a fallen angel who got kicked out of Heaven."

“You blond, handsome, sweet-summer-child. Diana, this one is funny, too. I teach first graders in the New York City public school system and bartend at a suspected mafia-owned jazz club at night. I’ve seen and heard some crazy shit. Y’all existing doesn’t surprise me in the least. What I am surprised about is that Little Miss *‘I’m going to be alone forever, and I’m done with men’* went and found herself a whole immortal basketball team of tall handsome men to play with. How did all of this happen...and for real *how does it happen?* You still haven’t explained that yet,” he sassed, quirking his eyebrow up and looking at me expectantly for the answer. Oscar jumped into his lap, rubbing his face into Charlie’s stomach.

“And in private I will clarify that—” I started to say before Bash interrupted.

“It’s not that hard to explain. We all share each other. Except Mal, but he’s trying to get in good with Diana and fix everything,” Bash said.

“Whoa, I’m not convinced I want to be shared at all; the last time, you and Desmond acted ridiculous,” Zaz said.

*So at some point there was a love triangle between Zaz, Bash, and Desmond...well that makes sense.*

“And I wouldn’t touch you with a thirty-foot pole,” Ares said, side eyeing Zaz.

“Well, it seems like y’all have some issues to work out, but it’s good you have each other, because that means you probably won’t destroy my bestie’s vagina,” Charlie laughed and he pet Oscar’s head.

*Oh, if he only knew. Their dicks could literally split me apart. I’m surprised my asshole wasn’t torn to shreds by Bash’s knot the last time he stirred my peach cocktail.* It literally took me a few days to walk right after that sexcapade.

Shifting in my chair, I stared at Charlie, wondering whether to ask him about my family or not. It killed me not to know anything about them, but finding out bad news would only make me feel worse.

As if he could read my mind, he answered the question for me. “Babe, they are fine. Still really depressed about losing you, but physically okay. Angela is taking it really hard, though,” he sighed, squeezing my hand between his. “I get that you faked your death and cut contact to protect everyone, but the jig is up now. They’re magical too, so maybe they can help?” He glanced around the table at the guys for support, and it warmed my heart how much he was already fitting in.

“It would be nice for Diana to have her family with her,” Mal agreed, smiling at me. I didn’t expect him to really give a shit about my feelings.

“Charlie and Malcolm have a point,” Zaz agreed. *I think Zaz and Char are going to get along really well.*

“Witches have good summoning magic, and they can probably think outside the box. Plus, Satan is injured, not dead. I think, for their safety, we need to move them out here.”

“Wait, you don’t think they’re safe?!” I panicked.

“Diana, we have eyes on them around the clock,” Desmond assured me, “But I do agree, it would be safest to hide them out here. I have friends that can help with that. We need to visit them anyway to get some information on your Dad. We can set up a safehouse for them.”

It felt as if an elephant lifted its ass off my chest. I missed them so much—every day without them weighed heavily on me and knowing they’d be here soon was emotionally freeing. A few tears started to fall, which promptly turned into sobbing like a lunatic. I tried my best to cover my face with my hands so no one had to see me ugly cry.

“Little Goddess, it’s okay,” Ares cooed as he pulled me into his lap. “I know how you feel. It sucks to miss your family. I miss mine all the time. We’re going to get them and keep them safe, okay?”

Ugh, why did he have to be so sweet and caring? Char was right, he was like a psycho-golden retriever-hairy Care Bear. Being mad at him was too hard when he held me like this and wiped my tears.

“Thank you,” I said around sniffles. Mal handed me a handkerchief, and after checking it was truly just a handkerchief, I blew my nose into it.

“Everything is going to be fine, dollface. Tonight, we’ll visit Judas at Fortuna’s Garden. That gives us enough time to get some weapons together and come up with a plan. We’ll ask him to find somewhere to house Angela and Nonna and then we’ll all sit down and make a game plan on how to find your other dad,” Desmond thought aloud as he paced around the island, swirling a glass of orange juice in his hand.

“As in the biblical Judas?” I asked. I wouldn’t even be surprised if it was.

Zaz laughed, slapping his knee. “No, that one was human, long gone. I assume you’re talking about Judas Costa?”

“Yeah,” Desmond said. “To take Red out, we’re going to need an army, and who better to have on our side than his coven?”

The group, spare Char and myself, considered that prospect. Most of them seemed in agreement, except Bash. He got out of his chair, plucking me from Ares’ lap on his way to an empty chair closer to Desmond. He sat me in his lap and stroked my arm while he hummed to himself.

“That seems like a great idea and all, but there’s a couple of weak spots,” he began. “One, he may be a

good friend of ours, but he's the craziest motherfucker we know, except for A-Bomb. How do we know they're going to truly be safe with him? He has a laundry list of enemies. Two, what about the daytime? Diana, your family's potential host is the leader of the largest vampire coven on the west coast. How does he protect them during the day?"

"That's not a concern; they've been able to daywalk for centuries since they found a stash of Despair Diamonds. We have almost the exact same list of enemies, and we kept Diana safe. I trust Judas, he'll take care of them," Desmond stated, his tone holding a finality.

"I trust you guys. If you think this could be a solution, let's at least see him and see what he says," I agreed.

I started to feel antsy. It made complete sense that if demons, angels, and other supernatural creatures were real, then so were vampires. But the idea of my family being protected by them creeped me out. Wriggling out of Bash's lap, I walked over to Charlie's chair and pulled him up. I tried to get Oscar's attention, but he was too busy trying to steal food from the kitchen island to give a flying fuck about me. *Little douche knuckle.*

"We're going to my room to hang out and catch up. Let me know when you come up with a plan." I led Charlie out of the kitchen, relieved to put some distance between myself and the guys.

Even though reuniting with my family was on the horizon, I had a bad feeling about the means we'd need to use to get them here.



## Chapter 9

The crew agreed that the Costa Coven would be a solid ally against Red. Judas Costa had been a good friend of ours for centuries, and he despised Red as much as we did. Since Red took power, the restrictions he'd levied on vampires made it harder for them to hunt and own businesses among the human world, especially for smaller covens. Most vampires didn't have access to blood banks, willing human donors, and Despair Diamonds to use as day charms like the Costa Coven did. They had to hunt among the human populations like incubi and sluaghs.

*Hopefully in a responsible way.* Although I can say with certainty that sluaghs were known for being ruthless hunters. They outranked incubi in what they were willing to do to feed.

Although Judas wasn't as badly impacted by the restrictions because of his coven size and wealth, he was very much an all for one, one for all kind of guy. I could definitely respect that—and his love of fireworks, explosives, and torturing those who wronged him. And his obsession was sweets. His fashion. Honestly, I loved everything about the man—he was one of the few people outside the crew I considered a friend.

It had been too long since we'd partied together. Paris, 1925. We got absolutely shit-faced with Ernest Hemmingway, Gertrude Stein, and the Fitzgeralds—all the American expat writers—and inspired their weird stories. We ended up double teaming a ginger-haired burlesque dancer under a bridge with a bunch of locks on it.

*But she had nothing on Diana*, the voice in my inner head said. He sounded like the guy from that weird cult classic movie that also starred the guy from *Grease*.

*Right you are, Voice. No one has anything on Diana.*

Maybe we could all party together after the meeting tonight. I'm sure Diana could use a good night out. Speaking of which, what were her and *Char* up to? Obviously, he wasn't interested in Diana as more than a friend, but I hated having to share her with anyone else, spare the guys. It was bad enough that fucking Big Bird Feathers McGee was here, with his angel nonsense and his constant sucking up to Diana...but to have another person here that wanted a piece of her time? For fuck's sake, how was I expected to share her? I shouldn't even have to, as her favorite.

I don't remember anyone teaching Diana how to cast a silencing spell, so I nodded along with the conversation the guys were having and used my superhuman hearing to focus on what she was talking to Charlie about.

"You're fucking all of them, except the blond one? Di, he's the cutest out of all of them, come on!" Charlie exclaimed.

*I wholeheartedly disagree with that. Maybe he hurt his eyes while I kidnapped him?*

"He is cute, but his personality was shit until yesterday. He was so mean to me; I don't even want to get into it. But he *did* apologize. And I haven't fucked Desmond yet, but we did fool around..." she shyly said.



“If we ever do fuck, I won’t walk straight for a while. He’s huge. And he’s not even the biggest out of them...”

*I am, I’m the biggest. Greek god peen for the win.*

“Mal is trying, you have to give him credit. He was the first to jump on the family train down there. Desmond definitely gives off strong AF Daddy vibes. And he has a big dick... I’m shocked you aren’t kneeling at his feet to be honest, you freak. How did you hold out this long?” he inquired.

“Again, it’s complicated. He’s a control freak, and that reminds me so much of Danny. I know they’re nothing alike—Desmond would never treat me that way, but it took a while to get used to his big alpha persona,” she admitted.

“I already know which one is your favorite.” Charlie’s voice had a dramatic Lifetime movie flair, like he was the narrator of this story. “Ares—your psycho golden retriever.”

“The funny thing is, his aura actually glows gold. I guess all Greek gods can do that? And I don’t have a favorite...” she said unconvincingly. “But Ares is the *sweetest*, in his own way.”

“I call bullshit. Diana, he tattooed his name on your thigh, and he’s obsessed with you. He coddles you and gives you presents. In his own psychotic way, he treats you like a queen. You love shit like that,” Charlie argued.

*That’s right, Charlie, make her admit it.* I needed to hear her say it, even if it wasn’t to my face. I loved my Little Goddess from the depths of my immortal soul, and I knew she felt the same way, even if she wouldn’t admit it yet.

*Everywhere we goooo...your penis wants to knooooow...*

*Is Diana’s vag open...for some sexual motion?*

Oh my Zeus, the voice in my head needed to stop chanting. I had to concentrate on two conversations already, and adding a third would be impossible.

“I’m not going to admit he’s my favorite, or that any of them are. They’re all unique and special in their own way. But I will say this, Ares and Mal are the only two who took it upon themselves to apologize. Bash just tried to fuck his way into my good graces, and Desmond gave me some shit apology and is pretending nothing happened. I expected better from him to be honest,” she lamented.

*Hmmm, I’m not her favorite. That’s okay, I have the rest of our long, immortal lives to win that spot in her heart.*

I’d be sure to share that little tidbit of information with Desmond later. He reminded her of that loser Danny who treated her poorly. The last thing he’d want to do is have that working against him while he tried to fix things between them. *And he would fix things between them.* If Diana wanted a better apology from him, I’d make sure she got one. I could care less that Desmond was like a brother to me; I’d force him to bow at her fucking feet if it made her happy. Zeus’ beard, I’d cut his giant fucking fingers off until he agreed to do whatever she wanted. *What’s it to me?* Most of the times we’d done that to people, we’d been able to sew them back on. The knuckles never bent quite the same way again, and sometimes the fingers got a little crooked, but he would be fine.

Once this Red business was all said and done, I’d find that little shit, Danny, and jar his tongue and nutsack for Diana to use as a table knick knacks. Yeah, a couple of those rustic Mason jars with the burlap and lace would look nice in the living room. No one treated my Little Goddess like shit and got away with it.

*She's our Queen, and we'll do anything she needs. Her enemies cannot live.* Voice and I were in total agreement.

I kept one ear on their conversation and another one on what the guys were saying. I must have spaced out, because Mal had left, leaving Desmond, Bash, and Zaz sitting at the table with me.

"We didn't do that to you, please believe us," Bash pleaded to Azazel. Hades' pajamas, he was still stuck on this asshole? "Neither of us would ever tell the Archangels that you were leaking information to us, because you weren't. What would we get out of lying like that?"

"Unlimited access to me. Once I got disgraced, I was forced to live on earth, where it would have been easier for you two to see me. We wouldn't have had to sneak around as much." He ran his fingers through his hair, leaning his head on his elbow and sighing. "You both always complained about the constraints of dating a high-ranking angel so much..."

"Az, we hate to burst your bubble, but we were fighting over you so much that we were barely talking to each other. We wouldn't have been able to coordinate a plan like that, let alone work together to accomplish it," Desmond reasoned. *Fuck him for being so logical.*

"That doesn't change the fact that someone told Raphael I was a double agent giving away pertinent information...if it wasn't you, it would have had to be someone close to you. The tribunal knew where we were meeting—what we were doing..." Azazel said, staring at the pensive look on Bash's face.

I had gotten away with this for centuries, but Bash was smart. He'd eventually figure out what I did. And then they'd tell Diana... *Shit*, I just started getting on her good side again after the tattoo stuff, I couldn't afford to have them rat me out and ruin all that progress.

*Slit the angel's throat, and get rid of him.* A wonderful plan, Voice, but not one I could carry out. Diana cared way too much about him for me to make him disappear.

"Guys, I did it," I confessed. "I sent an anonymous message to Raphael through my brother Apollo and lied about Azazel.

"What?!" Bash and Desmond said in unison. They both looked at me like I was a monster, while Azazel just rolled his eyes, like it didn't even surprise him. Did he think that little of me?

"I sent a message saying that I suspected Azazel was trading information with a demon, and that you were meeting at a specific time and place. That was it. They must have used magical surveillance after that. I was fucking this angel, Jophielle, at the time and complained to her about how you were both obsessed with this angel that was tearing our crew apart. She gave me the idea when I was drunk as fuck," I admitted.

"Of course she told you that; she fucking hates me for breaking up with her way back when," Azazel sighed as he ran his hands through his curly mane.

"You two slept with Jophielle, too? Well you're practically besties now, expert sharers," Bash snarked, rolling his eyes.

"And then what? You just forgot? You didn't think to tell us so we could fix it?" Desmond snapped. His horns sprouted from his head, corkscrewing all the way until they looked like a crown. That only happened when he was furiously pissed.

"Well, it was a bender. You both were spending so much time with him that I partied a lot more than usual. So by the time I sobered up and realized what I had done, Azazel was already in custody. I couldn't undo it. And I wanted him gone, so it seemed like a win-win." A

harsh truth. “I couldn’t stand having him around and seeing how he was destroying the crew.”

“You fucking piece of shit,” Bash snarled. “I can’t believe you did that.” He flew at me with superhuman speed, grabbing my shirt collar and punching me in the face. Even though his strength wasn’t as powerful as mine, he caught me off guard. *That shit hurt.*

Desmond started to shift, his skin turning red. I could feel his magic cresting and crackling through the air from his anger. He was going to lose control, and even though I was the strongest of us all, I wasn’t sure if I could take both of them. Azazel must have wanted his pound of flesh, because he stopped both of them.

“Guys, calm down. My disgrace isn’t solely Ares’ doing. They had a lot of fake charges at that trial; espionage was only one. They also accused me of mishandling my charges, sabotaging another guardian angel, and sharing fabricated visions,” Azazel said. He switched his gaze to me, but it wasn’t angry like I suspected it would be. His eyes were warm and full of sympathy. “Ares, you realize them fighting over me was *their* issue, right? I made it very clear to them that I was uncomfortable with how possessive and ridiculous they were acting. I even tried breaking up with them multiple times, even though they reassured me they’d work it out.”

“Truth, a lot of that rivalry was on me,” Bash said sheepishly, scratching the back of his neck and looking down at the table. “I was a possessive fuck back then and hated the idea of sharing. I caused everyone at this table a lot of pain.”

He thought he was a possessive fuck back then? *Compared to when, now? He must measure improvement differently than I do...* That was as good as an apology as far as Bash was concerned.

Desmond exhaled deeply, running his hands up and down his thighs and looking at all of us. “Yeah, I was a dick, too. I’m sorry I made dating us uncomfortable.”

“The past is the past. I think we all need to move on. I know we’re all trying to include Diana more and be honest, but I would prefer we keep Ares’ betrayal from her. He at least told us himself. She seeks out his comfort when she’s upset, and I don’t want to take that from her. This fight is going to get a lot worse before it gets better...” Azazel’s voice was ominous. I thought he’d be furious at me and run straight to Diana for revenge, but he didn’t. *He’s actually a good guy...fuck. Now I feel even worse.*

“Azazel, I’m really sorry for what I did. I’m an impulsive fucker sometimes, literally the Greek personification of chaos. And I was jealous, too, because you never even looked at me twice, but you went for Bash and Desmond without a problem.” It was embarrassing to admit that last part. People rarely passed me over, and I had never had issues getting who I wanted over the years.

“The funny thing was that when I met all of you, I was actually interested in you the most, but you already had a ton of men and women all over you. Then, when I realized your crew was poly, you seemed very standoffish toward me, so I just assumed you didn’t like me from the start,” he said. “Can we all just leave this in the past? Without being disgraced, I may not have crossed paths with Diana. Ares, you’re forgiven.”

I got up and hugged him. He was giving me a do-over, and not a lot of other people in my life gave me that chance. “Thank you, Feathers. I appreciate it.”

“This isn’t even the most fucked up thing Ares has done, Desmond. I say we follow Az’s lead and let it go.” Bash looked at Desmond, giving him the final decision.

“Okay. But you need to understand something, Ares. Azazel isn’t going anywhere. He’s a permanent part of Diana’s life because of their soulbond. We all need to get our shit together and get along, because eventually, she’s going to face Red again. She needs us beside her if we want to keep her alive.” Desmond’s tone of voice was deadly serious, and he was right. We all needed to be there for her.

I nodded my head, and hugged both Desmond and Bash. No matter how one of us fucked up, or how much we hurt each other, we were brothers. We’d always have each others’ backs.

“Get in here, Az,” Bash laughed. “Feel the peace, love, and happiness Mr. Hippie Hair.” He grabbed the back of Azazel’s neck as he guided him into the hug, laughing his ass off.

Azazel joined our hug with one hand, but out of the corner of my eye, I saw him grab a clean plate from the island. He brought it down on Bash’s ass and howled with laughter as he broke the hug and danced away. “Feel that... I *bashed* your butt...”

Bash chased him around the island, then out of the kitchen trying to keep up with Azazel. I got off lucky. That whole fuck-up could have imploded our group. I slapped Desmond on the back and went upstairs to get dressed. Before we met up with Judas tonight, I had some errands to run.

# MALCØLM

## *Chapter 10*

Desmond briefed us before we left to visit The Costa Coven's crown jewel: Fortuna's Garden Luxury Casino & Resort. The coven had different factions in cities and suburbs throughout the west coast, most of them located in California, Washington, Nevada, and Arizona. Judas Costa and his leadership team split their time between Vegas and Los Angeles. He suggested we meet him in one of his nightclubs, so we dressed to impress. I wore a Tom Ford charcoal gray suit with a pale powder blue dress shirt, no tie, and black wingtip shoes. Ares opened a few of my top buttons so I'd have a more relaxed look. I usually wore a tie and dressed to the nines in NYC, and it felt strange to relax.

I had spent the entirety of last night making more love notes for Diana to find around the house. They were all quotes from books she'd read. Before we left the NY house, I peeped through her Kindle. I was excited for her to find them at random times, because she would know I was thinking of her. She may not have mentioned the first note, but I knew she'd seen it. She wouldn't have stared at me the way she did without feeling the sincerity behind my borrowed words.

Diana walked down the stairs to meet us in the foyer, and my jaw almost broke from how hard it hit the floor. Ares had taken her and Charlie shopping earlier in the



day and bought her a skin-tight velvet dress with thin straps and a plunging neckline that went down to her sternum. The dress only came to mid-thigh and hugged her curves. Close woven fishnet stockings and black stilettos accentuated her long legs, giving her an hourglass figure that would have made Marilyn Monroe jealous. I had said some fucked up shit about Diana in the past, but the truth was that I loved her body. Curves were my weakness with women. I had no clue how her boobs were being supported in the dress, but they looked incredibly boisterous and precariously tucked into the fabric. I was actually surprised Ares didn't argue with her on wearing it with how territorial he could be. The whole look was topped with a gold rope necklace that matched the dead finger ring he gave her.

"Princess, you look stunning," I said, trying and failing not to stare at her cleavage. "You're a vision in blood red."

"Hmmm, too bad I can't stun you speechless," she quipped. "There's always next time, though."

She breezed past me without giving me a second look, but I gave her one. I *had* to see her ass covered in velvet. *Lucifer's daughter*, it was hypnotic. Every time I looked at Diana, I mentally beat myself up, because I still wasn't sure if she would ever forgive me. I should be real with myself and accept that she hated me, but the fact that she was talking to me at all was an improvement. Her verbal spars with me were even better. For some weird reason, I got turned on when we argued...it was like our love language. Eventually, I'd wear her down, and she'd start to like me. *We have all the time in the world now that we know she's immortal.*

Everyone held hands while we faded to a back alley behind Fortuna's Garden Luxury Resort & Casino, the sole supernatural-only destination on the Strip. Of course it wasn't only a casino-resort—they had their fair share of dark business ventures running out of the casino, the

most lucrative being their blood supply chain. They specialized in designer magical blood. If you wanted to drink angel, demon, hybrid, fae, or any other specific creature's blood, they could procure it. They even sold leprechaun blood imported from the Emerald Isle. The entire business model impressed me, and maybe when we were done striking our deal, I could ask him some questions about it.

Walking down the Strip to our destination was a mindfuck. In my 250-something years, I'd never seen the Vegas Strip before. The rare times the guys came out here to party, I volunteered to stay home and look after our business ventures. *I regret that decision now.* Thankfully, Desmond set everything up so that our managers could run things during our 'extended business trip'. None of us actually had to be on site, and I could enjoy the beauty of Las Vegas.

The casino lights shone brightly against the night sky, their vibrant glow radiating like fireworks. The whole aesthetic added to the vitality of the people, musicians, and performers who crowded the streets. The entire city seemed to be a frenzied ball of energy constantly in motion, overwhelming me in the best possible way. It blew my mind to think about the fact that electricity wasn't even in homes back when I was human, but now it was the hallmark of an entire city.

We reached the building, and Charlie looked at us all like we were insane. To be fair, most of us were.

"Why are we visiting a corny gift shop? I thought we were going to a casino?" he complained, arms crossed and foot tapping. He wore a bright yellow men's Prada jumpsuit, and as ridiculous as it looked on the hanger when he brought it in, he pulled it off. Paired with a black fedora hat and sunglasses, the whole vibe gave him an air of opulence.

“We are...” Diana said, as if it was obvious to a human. “It’s beautiful. Very Roman-Greek Goddess chic.”

“Diana, try holding Charlie’s hand?” I suggested. She raised an eyebrow at me but did as I asked. “Do you see it now?”

“Oh yeah, it’s gorgeous—the lights! The columns! Wait, I only had a couple of shots to pregame, but I swore this all wasn’t there a few minutes ago.”

“This is a supernatural-only resort. Humans can’t see it unless they’re accompanied by someone supernatural. And since this is a vampire led business, Charlie, Diana, and Mal need to register at the front and sign some paperwork. If you’re comfortable being bitten, you’ll wear a designated bracelet. If not, you go without it,” Desmond explained. Diana looked at him like he was insane. “That’s the custom, dollface. Vampires need to feed on blood like humans eat food. All new patrons need to fill the paperwork out.”

“That’s fine, Desmond,” Charlie said. Diana also begrudgingly agreed.

We walked in through the doors, and I heard Diana’s breathy gasp. It was an impressive space. All of the gold benches and armchairs near the check-in counter were carved with an intricate, meandering pattern. Marble columns and floors gave off a Greco-Roman feel. Frescos and busts tastefully decorated the space, contrasting with the palms, ferns, and bewitched moving flora. A golden-metallic shimmering mass swarmed the domed glass ceiling.

“This place always reminds me of home,” Ares commented, a thread of awe in his voice. He wrapped his arms around Diana from behind, pulling her in for a hug. “See that giant glittery cloud up there?” He held Diana’s hand, guiding her index finger to the disco ball-cloud.

She momentarily stopped staring at them to kiss Ares' cheek. "What *are* they? I've never seen something so beautiful."

Ares whistled, and one of the shiny entities broke off from the cluster and flew toward us, landing on his finger. It was a golden pixie.

They were rare magical creatures from the Mediterranean, measuring at just over a few inches tall. Everything, from her hair and skin to her metallic wings were varying shades of gold. She eyed Diana's golden necklace and licked it, nodding approvingly and giving her a little glittery kiss on the cheek before flying away. Diana giggled like a school girl, and the sound went straight to my heart. I loved to hear her laugh.

"Their appreciation of gold is how they refuel their magic. In Greece and Italy, you'll find them near natural gold sources, jewelry stores, and museums. If this group didn't live surrounded by gold, she would have stolen your necklace for herself. They can be shifty, but so beautiful to look at," Ares explained.

"Oh, that's why you insisted on buying me the gold necklace. I'm sorry I argued with you about it, I just wanted to wear the teeth necklace you got me." She turned in his arms and gave him a huge kiss.

How in Azrael's asshole could I ever get to that point with her? She barely looked my way, and after what I'd done, I wasn't sure she ever would. I'd wanted to kiss her ever since she came home. But no matter how hard I tried, I either didn't know what to say or she shut me down. The whole situation made me feel hopeless, and I found it more difficult to hide my feelings behind a mask of resting bitch face.

Desmond's stern tone broke me out of my musings. "Diana, Mal, Charlie—I got you all registered. Come on, we have to meet Judas downstairs."

We got in the elevator and watched the digital floor counter hit negative digits as we plunged into the subterranean levels.

“Underneath the resort is where the coven has their own personal offices, nightclub, and apartments,” Desmond explained to Diana. “They have an underground barracks housing 200 soldiers, and that’s just their casino security—a fraction of their forces. An alliance with them could help us destroy Red.”

Diana nodded her head tersely, barely giving Desmond a glance. “Okay.”

“It’s really important that we impress them, so could you—” Desmond tried to engage her in conversation again, but she walked to the other side of the elevator and snuggled under Azazel’s arm.

Desmond sighed, switching his gaze to the fluorescent lighting above. *I guess I’m not the only one she’s mad at?*

A *ding* sounded through the elevator. The doors opened to a lavishly decorated, dark nightclub. Booming dance music filled the air, but that was the only typical thing about this club. Uplighting and strobes around the walls gave off enough light that I could see the plush couches, gold fixtures, and opulent geometric designs all over the walls. Although it was eclectic, everything seemed to work together.

A man with dark hair and a low man-bun intercepted us. He shook Desmond’s hand and led us back through a door to where the real party was happening. This room looked similar to the room we’d just left, but it had a stage in the middle where a male and female performer were burlesque dancing to sultry, teasing instrumental music. Usually I enjoyed displays like this, because they reminded me of when I was still a warlock, but neither of the people on stage compared to Diana.

We arrived at a large, circular booth in the back where a vampire stood waiting for us. Peculiar didn't begin to describe this man. Tall, solid, and with a sinewy build, he wore low-riding leather pants that highlighted his victory belt. His black mesh tank top showed off two pierced nipples and a medley of tattoos: fire and regular. The whole look was topped with a pink feather boa that would have looked ridiculous on anyone else. His chin-length, curly hair was swept away from his face in a devil-may-care way that made his jade green eyes noticeable in the low lighting. He seemed to be in his mid-thirties, although I knew better. To lead a thousand plus member coven, you had to be beyond ancient. Maybe it was his relaxed posture, or his gleeful facial expression, but the man was magnetic. He drew us in without even saying anything. His whole vibe made him seem like the second coming of rockstar Jesus.

"Ares, you big son of a bitch! Did my favorite friends bring me a snack?" he dramatically sang after kissing Ares and Desmond on each cheek. He eyed Diana, taking a deep sniff in her direction. His smile widened, showing off a set of white, pointed fangs. "She's gorgeous *and* smells delicious. Wherever did you find her?"

"Judas!" Ares said in a gruff voice as he hugged the man and playfully grabbed him by the throat. "This is Diana, and she's at least four times spoken-for. You already missed the boat, bro."

"Oh well, a vampire can dream, right? I'll try not to reflect on my missed chance too much..." he trailed off, looking at us.

Diana cackled, drawing the attention of some of the vampires around the club. "Because vampires have no reflection! You're hilarious." Her smile was infectious, and it was working its charm on our host. "It's so nice to finally meet you, Judas."

“*And* you have a sense of humor. Gods, why didn’t I meet you first?” he jokingly lamented, wiping a fake tear away from his eye before he kissed the back of her hand. “The feeling is mutual, darling. How about we all sit and get to business before the night’s debauchery ensues.”

***Bash, Ares—please don’t get jealous and cause a scene. We need this to go smoothly,*** Desmond mindlinked us.

Even though he didn’t include me, I tamped my own jealousy down. After introductions were made, we all took a seat. Bash purposely sat on the other side of Diana, on the outside of the booth. He moved her to his lap, and she rolled her eyes before getting comfortable. *Dealing with Bash’s possessiveness must be second nature for her at this point.* She glanced at me with an unreadable expression before returning her gaze to the conversation happening at the table.

“Everyone looks so *serious*. Did someone die?” Judas laughed.

“Not yet, but hopefully soon. *Where to start,*” Desmond said, rubbing his beard.

He recounted our entire ordeal to Judas from the beginning. By the time he was done, a server had dropped off an ice bucket with bottles of champagne and a tray of glasses. Ares poured us each a glass, passing them around the table. Diana sipped her drink, taking in the conversation around her. I could see the wheels in her mind turning.

“*Well fuck me, Bobby McGee.* Bravo, Diana. Even injuring Red takes a considerable amount of power. My sources told me about some sudden unrest downstairs, but I didn’t know my wildest dreams were coming true. You don’t even need to ask—how do I sign up? I want this fucker gone.” Judas leaned in, a wicked smirk on his face.

“That’s why we came here. You’re one of our closest friends, and we know you hate Red as much as we do. Taking him out keeps our girl safe and gives you a chance to take out the vampires’ public enemy number one. You can start to undo all the restrictions he put into place and help us pick a new leader.” Desmond knew exactly what spot to hit. Judas’ eyes went wide, and he practically beamed.

“I’m on board. How do I help?” he asked.

“We need Diana’s aunt and grandmother, but we feel it’s safer if they, along with Charlie, are housed here,” Bash said. “We don’t have the room at the current safehouse we’re staying at.”

“Done. There’s always plenty of room at Fortuna’s Garden. Make sure they register at the front and make their preferences known. If they’re comfortable with being bitten, they need to wear their bracelets,” Judas noted.

“And we need your forces when the time comes,” Azazel added. He’d been quiet since we left the house. “My sight shows that there will eventually be a battle, and we’ll need all the help we can get to take Red and his forces down.”

“Fuck, yeah. I can’t give you a number of troops yet before talking to the different factions within the coven, but I can confidently agree that most, if not all, of the coven will be on board.” Judas’ gaze panned to each of us, his fingers running through his goatee. “I do ask for one thing in return, though...”

“Shoot,” Desmond said.

“If we’re going to fight, I want my forces in tip-top shape. The combined power signature at this table, spare the human, is enough to make any vampire salivate...Diana especially. You smell *intoxicatingly*



powerful. I want to build a blood store before the battle so they're at their peak."

"No," Bash snapped, tightening his hold around Diana's waist. "I'm fine with donating, but Diana will not be participating."

"Speak for yourself, Bash," she sassed as she wriggled out of his hold and retook her seat next to me. "I'm more than capable of making my own decisions. As long as Judas is responsible with the collection process, I'm fine with it. I'd also want to see the facility beforehand and get a contract in writing, including how much blood is to be taken, for how long, and how it's going to be used."

"You, miss, are as smart as you are beautiful, with a personality to boot. I respect your agency to make decisions and will have a contract for you to look over within a few days. I'll make one for each of you. Whether or not you give blood, Diana, I'm in." Judas shook Diana and Desmond's hands. Sparks flew from each handshake, which meant his word was magically bonded. He had to follow through.

"Thank you, I appreciate being treated like a person. Before they kidnapped me, I was studying to go to law school," Diana said. That kicked off a whole conversation between her and Judas, who had been a man of the law during his human life.

Everyone fell into different conversations while half watching the last few performers that came on stage. We drained bottle after bottle of champagne, and most of us were having a good time. Even though he had dialed back his anger, I could feel Bash's foul mood from where I sat. Once the last performer picked up her giant feathers and clothes from the stage, cages were lowered from the ceiling, filled with barely dressed dancers and props that would make a sex shop owner blush. Thumping dance music bounced off the walls. *Now this*

*seems more like a vampire kind of party.* They were renowned for throwing days-long ragers that usually ended in blood orgies. I'd gone to a few in New York, and they were intense enough to wipe an immortal out.

Vampires and supernaturals poured in through the doors, filling the room almost to capacity. Ares, Diana, Azazel, and Charlie flocked to the floor, while the rest of us stayed behind with Judas. This was my chance to ask him about his business and get some pointers, but all I could focus on was watching Diana as she ground her body between Ares and Azazel to a tech remix of Lady Gaga's "Born This Way." They both ran their hands up and down her back, her ass, and her arms. Ares' hand skimmed the bottom of her dress, delving under the fabric and pressing against her pussy to push her ass into his groin. Azazel tipped her chin up, kissing her as if she was the only source of air he could breathe. Watching them share her made my heart and my cock ache for her.

Just as I was about to stop torturing myself and focus on their conversation, she broke away from them, heading to the restrooms toward the back. Neither of them followed her, opting to head to the bar and talk. The guys at the table were too engrossed in planning the details around our new arrangement to even notice that she left, so I excused myself to follow her. Even though she wasn't wearing a bracelet, I still wanted to keep an eye on her. She *should* be safe, but it made me feel better to know she wasn't alone.

I kept my distance and planned to wait outside the ladies' room, until a stranger reached out and grabbed Diana's hand, pulling her toward his chest. She tried to reason with him and push him away, but he wasn't taking no for an answer. I closed the distance between us. Before she could say anything, I pulled the guy off her and slammed him into the wall outside the restrooms, shifting my face so he could see my fur, glowing red

eyes, and horns. He sneered his lips, baring his fangs to me, but he may as well have brought a knife to a gun fight. He was a young vampire whose potent fear filled my power reserves to the brim.

“It doesn’t seem like she wants to talk to you,” I growled. My voice took on a deep tenor as I wrapped a hand around his throat. “She was clearly pushing you away. Learn that no means no.”

I used my telekinesis to swiftly move his blood to his head, causing him to turn red from the neck up. He gasped for breath, and just as I was about to give him an aneurysm, Diana put her hand on my arm.

“Mal, I think he learned his lesson. Let him go,” she calmly ordered.

I released him, watching him run away before I turned to see the furious look on her face.

“He was—” I started, before she interrupted me.

“Why can’t any of you treat me like a capable person instead of making decisions for me and walking all over me? I had that handled,” she seethed.

“From my perspective, it seemed like he was ignoring what you were trying to tell him. I didn’t want to see you get hurt, so I stepped in,” I explained.

“Like you care if I get hurt—you tried to strangle me. You literally *murdered* me before we even knew I was immortal. You hate me, so why are you even following me?!” she snapped as she pushed me against the wall, bringing us nose to nose. Her eyes were ablaze with anger, and I mentally slapped myself for fucking up with her again.

“No one else noticed you were gone, and I couldn’t stand the idea of you being unprotected in a room filled with vampires who can smell how *intoxicatingly powerful* you are.” I used Judas’ phrasing on purpose. “And I didn’t hurt you of my own volition—I was possessed. You

made me feel things I never wanted to feel again, and I wrote you off out of grief and jealousy. I could never hate you. Why would I protect you if I hated you?"

I was rambling at this point, but who knew when I would get her attention again? Her glare was the sun. When it shone on me, it emboldened me and gave me the clarity I needed to tell her everything. The fire in her eyes smoldered, leaving a smokey, lustful gaze behind that confused me.

"You don't hate me, huh?" she asked, cupping my jaw and running her hand down my neck to my chest. She stopped over my heart.

"No, but I hate myself for what I did to you," I admitted, putting my hand over hers. My heart raced so fast I could feel it beat. I wanted to say so much more, but I couldn't. My lips locked as I waited for her to say something.

She didn't say anything right away, leveling a calculated stare at me as if she was taking my measure and trying to find out if I was bullshitting her or not. She pulled me into one of the single restrooms and locked the door behind us.

"Prove it. Prove that you don't hate me. Actions speak louder than words." Her husky voice raised the hairs on the back of my neck.

I took her face in my hands, kissing her with a ferocity that surprised both of us. She squeaked into my mouth, her tongue caressing mine as I ran my hands to her waist. I backed her into the wall while kissing my way down her neck to the divot above her collarbone. I nipped at her neck, sucking the mark and laving it with my tongue. A breathy moan escaped her lips when she pulled my hair, bringing me back up to her lips. I lost myself in her, not caring that no one knew where we were or that we were fucking each other's mouths in a public restroom. I wanted her so badly, and it was finally

happening. She broke our kiss and held onto my shirt so that our noses were almost touching.

“Get on your knees,” she commanded, her voice firm despite the smirk on her face.

Without even thinking about it, I lifted her, setting her on the vanity. She pushed her stockings down, taking them off one foot so she could spread her legs wide. I dropped to my knees and saw there was nothing between me and her pussy. Hiking up her dress, I nuzzled my face into her wet heat. She smelled like roses and a feminine musk that drove me insane. I slid two fingers through her wet folds softly, teasing her until she started canting her hips toward me.

“I want to feel you inside me,” she said as she leaned back onto her forearms so she could watch me pleasure her.

I slowly eased my fingers inside of her, massaging her inner walls as I pumped my fingers. “I wanna taste you, please?”

“Not until you make me come.” Her heels clacked against the vanity as she rolled her hips to meet my thrusts.

I picked up my pace and found a spot that made her body taut like a bow. Adding a third finger, I felt her stretch around me as her moans echoed through the small room. The light behind her head glowed like a halo, highlighting the beads of sweat rolling down her face. I’d never seen a woman look so angelic yet so devious at the same time.

“That’s right, Mal, keep going. Don’t stop,” she groaned.

When her thighs started to shake, I pressed my thumb against her clit as I switched to deeper, harder movements. She drenched my fingers with her release, and I wasted no time spreading her thighs further apart

and slurping up her juices. I devoured her like a starving madman, licking and sucking on her clit until she was practically screaming.

“Mal! Oh my... *fuck!*” she groaned as she smashed my head closer to her, gripping my top bun so hard I could feel the sting radiate through my scalp.

The pain only made me crazier for her. I nipped at her clit until her thighs clamped around my head. I ate her through her second orgasm, until she slumped against the mirror. Her hand untangled from my hair, and she rubbed my cheek. I swiped two fingers through her release, bringing them to her mouth and waiting for her permission. I *needed* her to taste the proof of how much I pleased her. She nodded and licked my fingers clean.

A loud banging on the door startled her, breaking whatever spell was between us. She bolted upright before I had the chance to ask her about what happened between us.

***Diana and Mal, so sorry to bust up your hate sex, but we need to go home. Someone breached our security wards on the house. We're leaving Charlie with Judas' second in command, August. We need to leave ASAP***, Bash linked.

Diana shimmied off the vanity and grabbed a wad of toilet paper to clean herself up. She pulled her stockings back into place and smoothed her dress out. Without so much as a kiss or a pat on the back, she walked toward the door and unlocked it.

“See you in the hallway, Mal,” she said without even turning back.

*Now I'm even more confused than before.*

# DIANA

## Chapter 11

I had no clue what the fuck had just happened between Mal and I. *I wish there was a window down here so I could check to see if pigs were flying.* And as pissed as I was at Bash, he did me a solid by busting it up before we had sex. That would have complicated my feelings for him so much more. Half the time I hated Mal for what he'd done, and the other half I respected him for trying so hard to make things right. I wiped myself off, pulled my stockings up, and rushed to the door without even checking my makeup. The longer I stayed in the bathroom with him, the more awkward it would be. *I may literally look like a wax figure at Madame Tussauds after they turned the heat on and wouldn't even know.*

"See you in the hallway, Mal," I blurted without even thanking him. *Awkward.* Eventually, I was going to have to face him, but hopefully not tonight.

Bash gripped my hand a little too firmly, pulling me through the hallway as Mal brought up the rear. When we got back to the table, everyone turned their heads to stare at me.

"Where did you go?" Ares asked accusingly. "I turned around, and you were gone."

"Ummm..." I diverted my gaze, looking at one of the intricate patterned art pieces on the wall. I wasn't sure if

Judas was going for an eclectic look, but none of the art seemed to match. Despite that, the pieces coexisted brilliantly together.

“You don’t have to answer, Mal’s face gives you both away,” Ares snickered.

I turned to find burgundy lipstick all over Mal’s mouth and my entire face heated with embarrassment. *Fuck on a bun, I seriously didn’t even check his face for makeup?*

Desmond clapped his hands once, silencing Ares and breaking me out of my shame. “We don’t have time to play *Who’s Diana Fucking*. We have to go home, NOW!” he barked. “Everyone hold hands—Mal, port us home.” *Um, rude.*

The guys, myself, Judas, and two vampires I didn’t know slammed into the ground in front of the safehouse, and I screamed in fury. At least fifty reptilian shifters were swarming the grounds as they vandalized our home. They had smashed in the windows on the bottom floor, ripped the doors off their hinges, and set the shrubs on fire. They tried to pool their magic to get inside the house, but couldn’t bust through the protection wards to gain access. My magic crackled beneath my palms as I charged those fuckwits.

“DIANA, get back here where you’re safe,” Desmond shouted after me. Too bad, so sad. I couldn’t give a shit less about what he wanted. Guess I didn’t have time to play *Guess What’s Up Desmond’s Ass* right now.

I was confused about what happened with Mal, angry that these scaly fucks kept popping up when we least expected it, and terrified that our location had been compromised. Emotional overload sent me into attack mode. I had never acted like a damsel in distress, and I wasn’t about to start now. The worst had already happened to me—I’d died. *What can possibly compare to that?* I picked up a splintered piece of wood from the front door and stabbed one of them through the heart.



My next assailant got a fireball through its middle. It shrieked like a fucking ghost as its body was engulfed in flames.

“It’s BOO TIME BITCH! Let’s ghost these fuckers!” Ares yelled, taking out his pocket knife and flicking it open, revealing his bewitched battle spear.

“Hashtag Scary Spooky Time!” Judas shouted as he exploded into a colony of bats that descended on the shifters, scratching their eyes out and biting them on their necks, right in their carotid arteries. The wounds would make them bleed to death if we didn’t kill them first.

Azazel’s wings sprang from his back as his entire body glowed silver. Long horns sprouted from his head, curling out slightly. *What the fuck? Is that part of his shifted form?* His facial features started to get distorted, and he barely held onto his human form. He flew into the air, raining silver magic onto our enemies that struck them dead. I kept cooking these fucks into gator-tots with fireballs while Mal held my back, making sure none of them could attack me from behind.

I lost track of Bash in the pitch-black sky, but could hear his wings beating against the air. Desmond wrestled a shifter to the ground and hogtied it for questioning. The two vampires faded away with it.

Eventually, we killed every last shifter. The property was littered with corpses and smeared with thick, inky black blood. The house had caught fire from the bushes, and everyone was trying to clean up or take stock of their injuries, except Judas and Ares...those two crazy fucks were using a shifter’s head as a hackey sack and having a *grand* time.

“Watch this!” Judas exclaimed as he kicked the head with the inner sole of his foot, bouncing it to Ares with the top of his head. “Beat that A-Bomb!”

Ares' body beamed, the familiar golden hue making him look like a beacon in the darkness of the night. He growled, taking the head in hand and serving it over the house like a volleyball. I heard it splash in the pool behind the house. "The land is dyed black with the blood of our enemies!"

*For fuck's sake those two are insane.*

Azazel distracted me from their madness. He landed next to me to try showing me how to conjure water to douse the flames, but I was still wired from the fight, my body shaking with the drop in adrenaline. Something felt off still, but I couldn't put my finger on it. *Snap*. I turned toward the house, in the direction of the noise and saw Oscar running outside the gaping front doorway at full speed while meowing like a lunatic.

"Hey kitty boy, what's wrong?" I asked.

I heard another *snap* behind me, and whipped around to find a shifter who had somehow hidden during the fighting. It lunged at me, and I barely dodged it in time. It came back toward me, swiping at me with yellowed claws, nearly gouging me. A warm hand clasped my shoulder.

"Diana, watch out!" Azazel yelled. I turned around again to see Oscar morphing into a ginormous, muscled-up, ginger-haired human. He wore a white t-shirt with black jeans, sans shoes. My jaw dropped to the floor as the stranger with familiar yellow eyes winked at me as he took my hand, and the entire scene around me swirled into darkness.

Within a few moments, I found myself in a strange room with cream walls, brightly colored furniture, and shelves full of books and strange paraphernalia. Weapons hung on the walls, and jars of body parts and strange ingredients were dispersed with some of the books throughout the shelving. One wall was completely covered in a tapestry with a knight that looked like he

was from medieval times. The room gave me a comfy vibe, and if we'd arrived under different circumstances, I'd love to read one of the books.

The stranger stood beside me, gesturing to a turquoise chaise like he hadn't kidnapped me. I felt an arm wrap around my waist and pull me back into a hard chest. I jumped, turning my head and sighing in relief as I saw Azazel's furious face. *He must have touched me while we faded. Thank the stars he's here.* I could tell he was snarling.

"Who the fuck are you?" he growled in a deep, ragged voice I didn't recognize.

"Oisín Morningstar, Diana's half-brother. Pleasure to finally make your acquaintance, Azazel," he said in a smooth, playful tone. "I heard a lot about you from my sister, mainly that you have the most *dreamy* hair...and she's curious if the carpet matches the drapes." His voice wasn't as deep as Desmond's or Bash's, but it had a strange calming effect. "I'm also known as Oscar, Kitty Boy, and Asshole Cat by Bash. But he only has the balls to call me that when you're not around, Diana."

Despite seeing him shift into a man with my own eyes, I refused to believe that this ginormous ginger was not only my pet cat, but my half-brother...as in we shared a parent? What in the Betty White was going on here?

"You're my brother...as in we share Lucifer as a father?" I asked for clarification.

"Yes. Lucifer is our father. Michael is like my step-dad. My mother was a Druid Priestess from Ireland he met on a vacation."

"I knew there was something off about your cat," Zaz fumed. He wedged between us. "But I thought he was probably a familiar. Diana, your brother is one of the most dangerous beings in Hell. A skilled necromancer,

hexer, and political manipulator, among other sick, twisted things.”

“I was a serial killer for a while, like a paranormal *Dexter*. I’m also an artist, an assassin, and I play the saxophone. Azazel forgot shifting among my many magical talents. The correct term is actually body manipulation, because I’m not a shifter,” he corrected himself before turning into a flamingo.

His vibrant pink feathers looked so real, and I reached out to touch them. Azazel took my hand and snatched it back before I could feel them. Oisín shifted back to his human form, and a blue and white fireball sprang from his outstretched hand. “Diana and I share the talent of fire magic. Although *every* Morningstar can do that.”

“Are you the one who’s been sending those shifters after us? Why did you fade us here? Where are we?” I rapidly asked the questions in as even a tone as I could manage. I would not give this weirdo the satisfaction of knowing he threw me off balance.

“I’m not sure if you noticed, but I saved your life. That reptile shifter almost killed you. Fading you here was the first thing that popped into my mind. It worked out anyway, because now I can tell you the truth without getting unalived. Your Penis Parade is a bunch of possessive, psychotic, unreasonable men with a combined power signature high enough to kill an immortal. I actually got lucky that Azazel was the one who accidentally tagged along, because if it were Ares, we’d be locked in a battle to the death,” he responded coolly. His reasoning was sound. Azazel was the only one who would have asked questions before attacking.

“Stop avoiding her questions. What the fuck is going on?” Azazel used such an uncharacteristically angry tone, and something about this entire interaction made me uneasy.

“I come in peace, promise,” Oisín sing-songed as he crossed his heart with his finger. His yellow eyes fixed on me. They seemed so familiar, yet so strange. “Long story short, we have another half-brother, Damon—same Dad, but we all have different moms. He wants to rule over Hell and had a whole plan laid out—that you put a huge wrench in, sister. He told Red you existed and were an all-powerful threat to his position. Damon manipulated Red into putting a hit on you so you wouldn’t be in his way anymore.”

“How did he even know about me?! Where do *you* come into this whole shit show?” I asked, trying to absorb the shocking information that I had not one half-brother, but *two*. And one of them wanted me dead. “How do I know you aren’t working with him to bury me six feet under?”

“I owed him a debt—*that I more than repaid*—but he insisted I do one more job for him. He scares the shit out of me, so obviously I wasn’t going to say no. His Seer had foreseen that we have a half-sister who would win an epic war against Red, and that our father would regain the throne. Damon didn’t like that, so through research and a lot of blood magic, he found you. I was sent to spy on you,” he explained.

“You’re spying on me?!” I shouted. “*What the fuck!*” A blazing fireball sprang to life in my hands unbidden, and I had to fight the urge to throw it at him.

“No! Well, not really. I realized you had a soft spot for animals, and turned into a cat to convince you to bring me home. I *hate* Damon with a passion, and I’m tired of having to cow to him, so I was hoping you were all the things his Seer said you were. When you turned out not to be, I gave him sufficient evidence that you had no magic, but he asked me to keep my post. Obviously, I grew to adore you. It’s weird, because you don’t know me, but getting to know you has been great—you’re the sister I’ve always wanted. Even though I couldn’t

respond, I listened to everything you said and tried to help you as much as I could.”

He sat down, and I followed suit. Azazel stayed standing, looming behind my chair like a sentinel of angsty protection.

“When you found your magic and your boys came into the picture, I told Damon nothing changed. I didn’t know he had an alliance with the reptile shifters and that they had other eyes on you. When he found out I was lying, I had to go into hiding. You and I parted ways for a bit when your Penis Posse took you, but Bash brought me to your new house, eventually. He said you missed me.”

“Okay, so why did you continue to stalk me as a cat?” I asked. “You should have come clean sooner... I let you sleep in my bed! I gave you tummy rubs and treats *all the time*. I carried you around for fuck’s sake! Charlie and I used to talk to you in funny voices and make up your replies...we made complete asses of ourselves in front of you! Angela made you special food because you refused to eat cat food...” *Which now makes sense, I suppose.* It was fucking embarrassing that I told all my deepest thoughts and feeling to a stranger...not a cat who couldn’t understand me.

“Those voices were hilarious. Thank Lucifer I never laughed or I would have given myself away. It’s true—I didn’t have to spy on you anymore, but I stuck around because I wanted to make sure they treated you right, especially because you didn’t have Charlie or Angela to lean on...” he looked to the floor. “Those four are no joke, Diana. They’re some of the most dangerous, ruthless, and powerful beings in Hell. *I’m sorry*, but I was scared you would hate me and think I was creepy. And I just really enjoyed being around family, since Dad has been MIA for years.”

This whole situation was an exploded, crusty microwave dinner mess. I had to weigh my options. He'd been in the house with us and followed Desmond everywhere. Chances are he heard a lot of stuff we didn't want him to know. Fuck, the guys were going to kill him, but I didn't want him dead because he was my brother. I wasn't even sure if he was telling the truth, but if everything checked out, I wanted to get to know him. It was also hard to deny that he'd be useful to us in finding our father and defeating Red and Damon.

"Azazel, how do I know he's telling the truth?" I asked.

"Bash could explore his mind, make sure everything checks out," he said aloud. ***I would ask to be included in Bash's search though, because he won't take kindly to having to share your attention with an additional man, even if he's your family. Sharing isn't usually in an incubus' nature. Bash is an outlier among his kind, and he's stretching himself by sharing you as it is.***

"Betty White, help us," I sighed. *Why did I have to fall for a bunch of psychotic pricks?* "This is a lot to deal with. Oscar—shit, sorry—Oisín, can you take us back to the house? The others are going to get really worried about us."

"The longer we wait, the more time they'll have to plot your death for *kidnapping* her," Zaz quipped with a healthy measure of sarcasm.

"That would be hypocritical...since, ya know, *they kidnapped her, too*. I meant what I said, Diana. After Bash checks me out, I hope we can build a relationship and be real siblings. I want to support you in taking Red and Damon down. We can rebuild Hell together."

The sentiment was touching, but until I knew for sure, I didn't want to get attached to him just yet.

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# SEBASTIAN

## Chapter 12

“Was that *Oisín Morningstar*? The most accomplished necromancer in all four realms? The man who resurrected Beelzebub after he was taken out by the other members of the Demon Summit, strung every member up by their feet, slit their throats, and painted a self-portrait as payback?!” Judas fangirled, jumping up and down like he was at a One Direction concert. “The man is a *LEGEND*! The use of organ texture to break up all the different shades of red was *chef’s kiss*. I want that portrait for my personal collection!”

“Yeah, yeah it was,” Desmond grumbled. “And with how fucked up the Morningstar family is, He may not be coming in peace to spend quality time with his little sister. What the *fuck* do we do now?!”

*Bloody great.* Diana’s psychotic brother decided to come out of the woodwork and stir shit up. A very typical Morningstar move. I closed my eyes, grounding myself in complete silence. The bond Diana and I shared was still intact, and I felt a strong sense of confusion through it. “Diana isn’t dead, or scared. But she does feel out of her element.” The read I got didn’t do much to ease my worries about her safety.

“I swear to Zeus and the entirety of Mount Olympus, I don’t care who the fuck he is or who he’s related to. If he hurts my Little Goddess, I will take his organs and hang him with them, just enough to almost cut off his air supply and keep him suspended between life and death for all of eternity!” Ares exploded.

His blood-red face scowled as he ripped a shutter off the window and hurled it into the house, taking out an entire wall. If we didn’t find a solution quickly, Ares would start a rampage and turn half the Underworld upside down looking for them.

“Okay, instead of freaking out, we need to figure out where he’s taken her. Does anyone know where he usually hangs out?” Mal suggested. He still had Diana’s lipstick all over his face, and the sight was making me salty. She didn’t want to sit on my lap and made me look like an ass at the table for trying to help her, but she’d kiss someone who almost killed her? The whole situation stoked the flames of my ire even more. “Azazel latched onto her at the last minute, so at least she’s not alone.”

“Does it look like I know where he fucking lives? He isn’t exactly the social type. He was his father’s assassin for Darkness’ sake! The man is a living shadow,” Desmond shouted.

He was getting so worked up that his skin was turning red, and his horns were sprouting from his hairline, corkscrewing back and out from his head. His control-freak tendencies were reaching a breaking point. I tried to mindlink Zaz, but couldn’t establish a connection. It was very possible Oisín faded them somewhere in Hell, where the link didn’t always connect if you were still upstairs.

“I have a coven member who hooked up with him a few centuries ago. I could ask him if he can contact Oisín,” Judas suggested.

“Yeah, see if you can track him down that way. I’m going to see if any of my supplies inside of the house are salvageable. Maybe we can summon Diana?” Desmond thought aloud.

He spent about ten minutes rummaging through the house and found a half piece of chalk, salt, and Diana’s tarot deck. Not a promising combo, but enough to work with. Right as he was about to spring into action, Diana, Azazel, and Oisín faded back to the house, a shield with an emerald glow surrounding them. Ares rained fire down on top of the shield, hitting it from all sides, but the flames died on impact. Diana’s magic was iridescent, and Azazel’s was silver, so the shield was Oisín’s doing.

“Guys, stand down, please. He isn’t dangerous,” Diana said in a controlled voice.

Oisín had his hands up, as if that did anything to ease our guard. He was a *Morningstar*, older than Judas. He could probably cast magic without even using his hands as a conduit. I weighed my options... Maybe we could take him out without Diana or Azazel getting hurt.

***Diana, are you being coerced? We can take him out through the shield if all four of us make a targeted attack,*** I linked her.

***Bash, seriously, we’re fine. He has a good reason for posing as a cat. Just hear him out,*** she replied.

I tugged at our soul bond again. Even if she was being coerced or possessed, her soul would tell me the truth. It showed no signs of distress or any emotion in contradiction to what she displayed. If anything, she felt the calmest out of all of us. I raised my hand, getting the guys’ attention.

“Okay, stand down. Don’t attack,” I said calmly to the crew. “Oisín, can you lower your shield? We can all go back to Judas’ and talk.”

“Sure, Sebastian.” Oisín’s voice was oddly detached, void of emotion. Something about it felt off to me, but I had to trust Diana. I urged us all to join hands, and faded us back to Fortuna’s Garden.



When we arrived back at Judas’s compound, we searched for Charlie. We had left him behind for his own safety, but we didn’t expect to find him in the middle of the dance floor, grinding all over Judas’ second in command, August. I tapped August on the shoulder, effectively breaking up their little party of two.

“Both of you, meet us in the boardroom. We have new developments on Project Divine Star,” Judas ordered. Even when he was giving orders, he was still the definition of eccentrically laid back. He walked away, his boa trailing behind him.

The project was a play on Diana’s name. *She may not realize it yet, but she was a Morningstar now; part of the most powerful, fucked up family in the Underworld.* For better or worse.

The ten of us found ourselves sitting around a large table in a closed board room. We explained everything to Charlie and August, and when we got to the part about Oscar actually being Oisín, Charlie’s jaw dropped. He sat in stunned silence for five minutes, the longest I’d ever heard him stay quiet since his arrival a day ago. Oisín took time to explain himself, answering our follow-up questions in the process. He then agreed to one of my vigorous mental scans. Diana insisted she witness it.

***Are you sure you want to see inside his mind?  
Oisín is one of the most dangerous, cutthroat beings***

***in Hell. He may not be the spitting image of your father, but he matches him in depravity, debauchery, and brutality,*** I warned Diana.

***That's funny, he said something very similar about you, Ares, Desmond, and Mal. He felt relieved that Azazel was the member of the Penis Parade that tagged along for the ride, because he was the only one that wouldn't try to kill him on sight,*** she replied.

***He seriously called us the Penis Parade? He is an asshole, even as a human.*** I marveled at how fucking ridiculous the man was.

He made a point though. All of us, including Azazel, have done some fucked up shit.

***Fair point. We have more in common with your half-brother than I realized. Just follow my lead, and be observant.***

Diana, Oisín, and myself joined hands. He dropped his mental shields, giving us a clear pathway through his mind. As I flipped through his memories, I found the meetings he had with Damon over the past two years. The first meeting took place in a retro pizza shop around the corner from Diana's house. Damon wasn't an intimidating man in size or appearance, but what he lacked in physical prowess, he made up for in cunning. His escapades were known far and wide. He was one of the most ruthless, vile demons I had ever had the misfortune of meeting.

***Damon asked about Diana, and Oisín gave a very concise summary. "She shows no signs of magical abilities, and she has zero clue who she is. Her own family is lying to her, passing as a normal mortal family. I doubt she'll get in our way."***

***"Good," Damon hissed. Damon's mother was a Greed Demon, and he had obviously inherited her need to possess everything. "That little bitch will be dead and***

*carved into pieces before I see her sitting on Hell's throne. You are to keep the same post and check in with me weekly." Every word out of his mouth dripped malice and negativity.*

Much to Oisín's dismay, he followed Damon's orders. They met in the same pizza shop for nearly a year, although nothing had changed. Even after we kidnapped Diana, he stuck to the same story, telling Damon that Diana was going about her daily business, still woefully ignorant as to her true identity.

At their last meeting, about two weeks after we had abducted her, Damon and a merry band of reptile shifters tried to take him out, forcing him to leave Diana's house and go into hiding, but not before setting magical alarms around their home to alert him if myself, Desmond, Ares, or Mal came to the property. He had *let me catch him and bring him back to the safehouse.*

I found a couple of additional memories of Oscar and Diana hanging out around her house in Brooklyn, watching movies, and lounging on her bed while she read. The last memory was of Oisín in his cat form sitting in the bay window of the safehouse that overlooked the front of the property, watching us fight the reptile shifters. He had seen the last shifter approach Diana and rushed to her aid, morphing into his normal form just in time to fade her to safety.

Showing Diana and I those memories allowed us to confirm that he was being truthful with us, and that he benefited from taking both Red and Damon out. Diana would see him in an entirely new light. He'd boldly risked his life by lying to their half-brother's face multiple times about the extent of her powers, where she was, and why she was missing for the first two weeks she was with us. He chose to stay with her in Vegas when he could have let her fend for herself. The results didn't lie; he was firmly on our side. I broke the mental link between the three of us.

“Everything checks out,” I announced. “Welcome to the team, Oisín.”

“You losers have a team name?” he wisecracked. “I’ve been calling y’all the Penis Parade for a while, but the name is turning out to be a two-pump chump.” *Ha ha ha, very funny.*

Desmond slammed his hand on the table, snarling as he eyed him down with an intensity as sharp as a blade. “This is how it’s going to be, asshole—” he started, but was interrupted when Oisín morphed into a giant boa constrictor. He slithered to Desmond with lightning speed and wrapped himself around Desmond from legs to throat. His cream and orange scales shimmered in the fluorescent lighting as he squeezed Desmond hard enough that his face turned purple. Oisín’s yellow eyes stared directly into Desmond’s, promising him a swift punishment.

“No, *you* listen, asshole. You fucking kidnapped my sister, let Mal get possessed and murder her, and acted like a complete douche to her because you think you’re above emotional maturity,” he hissed. His tongue flicked out, vibrating through the air before it licked Desmond’s cheek. “You are not worthy of my sister’s affection. But she continues to waste her time with you. If you don’t treat her right, I’ll come for you when you least expect it and end you myself,” he threatened as his grip around Desmond’s body tightened enough that his hands started to turn purple too.

“I’m not sure if I’ll waste any more time with him, actually,” Diana said offhandedly. In her anger, she looked just like her father: the same searing gaze, raised brow, and tight jawline. The resemblance in her face was unmistakable, and I kicked myself for not realizing her parentage sooner. “He apparently thinks I’m a slut who plays games. Thanks for the backup, but I’ll handle him...*for now.*”

Oisín unraveled himself and morphed back into a man again. The sight unsettled me, even when I reminded myself how useful he could be down the line. “Diana, I’ll always have your back—that’s what family is for. I promise we’ll find Dad and take Red and Damon down.”

Desmond rubbed his hand over the inflamed red marks left behind. Those would take longer to heal because of Oisín’s power signature. Charlie leaned into Diana’s side, whispering in her ear.

“Ooooooh, Diana, the gingers have drama,” he teased. “A beef between them could put Wendy’s out of business. My money is on your brother—he’s a savage.”

“Thanks cutie, but if you really wanna see me go savage, take me to bed,” Oisín flirted, winking at Charlie from his seat on Diana’s other side. Charlie looked down at his hands, blushing tomato red.

“Oisín, is that a magic unique to you, or did you teach yourself to turn into different animals?” Diana asked, ignoring her brother’s comment.

“Some of our siblings have the gift, others don’t. Either way, you can teach yourself bodily manipulation up to a point,” he replied as he took stock of Diana’s shock. She had no clue how extensive her family actually was. “Oh sister, you have no clue how big and crazy our family is. Dad apparently doesn’t believe in wrapping it up, so we have siblings alive and dead all over the place. We have so much to talk about.”

***Is he going to tell her that he killed some of them?*** Desmond linked me. I didn’t have the patience for his alpha male bullshit right now, choosing to focus my attention on Diana instead.

“That may have to wait until after we take care of Diana’s family back in Brooklyn,” Ares reminded us all. “Little Goddess, I thought about how to get them out



here safely, and I planned a strategic way to get in and out without alerting anyone of our presence.”

“Truth, you can never be too careful with all the enemies you four made in Brooklyn, let alone the entirety of NYC,” Oisín snarked. “What’s your grand plan, God of War & Chaos? Are we going to Trojan Horse our way through Brooklyn, pretending to be hotdog vendors?” The smirk he wore made Ares’ crazy face pop up—the one with the eye twitch and scowl that made lesser beings piss themselves—but one stern look from Diana had him quelling his anger.

“Not quite, but a similar principle. All of us pass for normal, everyday humans unless we shift. The weather is cool enough that we can wear winter gear and walk around with Christmas gift bags. We’d pass as merry shoppers, spreading the holiday spirit,” Ares explained.

“Ares, I can feel Diana’s power signature from a mile away. Once she goes back to Brooklyn, she’s a walking target,” Mal said as he got up and paced around the table. “We could temporarily mute her power signature, but that involves binding her powers, which leaves her defenseless if shit hits the fan.”

“I hate to burst your bubble bun boy, but *all* of our power signatures scream ‘*come fuck around and find out, fellas!*’” Oisín sing-songed in a high-pitched falsetto. It was such a stark contrast to his beefy stature that I started laughing. “*Wow*, so happy you find this funny Sebastian. This isn’t going to be easy like when you broke into my sister’s bedroom and crashed her dreams for two months.”

“Actually... it could be that easy. He faded through my family’s wards and snuck into my bedroom like a psycho stalker for months. Thanks for warning me about that, by the way,” she reprimanded her brother before turning her attention to me. “You keep a low profile. Sneak in, disable the wards, and we’re in.”

“So, technically, I couldn’t fade into your house. The ward they had to block fading would alert them. I disabled other wards and physically broke into your house through your window, *Romeo and Juliet* style, Birdie. However, I could use a summoning circle and loop it to make a portal we could travel through. It’s doubtful that your family would be able to protect against that.”

Everyone looked at each other for a few seconds, pondering the idea. It was stealthy enough for sure, and could work. There were a few caveats though, as Desmond so bluntly pointed out.

“What if your family changed their wards after you passed away?” Desmond asked. “What if they aren’t home? What if someone is surveilling their house? There are a lot of what-ifs this plan hinges on, and I think we need to sit down and look at all the possible options before we decide on something.”

“Nonna and Angie are home all the time nowadays. Frankly, they’re depressed as fuck. They legit think Diana died in that fire and have zero reason to suspect anything foul. Also, tomorrow is Monday, so their butcher shop is closed. They’ll be home all day,” Charlie piped up. He had been unusually quiet throughout the whole meeting and kept staring at Oisín with wide owl eyes. I guess a bomb like that was a lot for a human to take in, even one as open-minded as him.

“I can always do a test run before the mission. It’s actually a great idea. We lower our risk of exposure, and there are enough wards on their house that any lower-level beings won’t be able to tell we’re there,” I mused aloud.

“The longer Diana’s family is in Brooklyn, the more danger they’re in. We can ignore the elephant in the room, but Red isn’t dead—he’s just laying low. He’ll eventually come out of hiding and get revenge. Diana’s

family is the perfect target,” Oisín said as he rose from his seat and looked everyone at the table in the eye with a lingering gaze. “What do you think, Judas? What we do from this point out impacts your coven as much as does us.”

“I’m not worried about Red. Hell is a fucking mess right now. My sources told me there’s open dissent, and the factions are restless, which should take up a lot of his focus for a while. *I’m* worried about Damon. How do the reptile shifters keep popping up unannounced when they’re least expected? First at the bar Diana worked at, then the airport. Now at their safehouse?” Judas rubbed his goatee, a pensive expression on his heart shaped, angular face.

“Great question,” Desmond spat as he glared at Oisín with open suspicion. “Why not ask Damon’s spy?”

“You know they share blood, right? He’s already used blood magic to find her once,” Oisín told Desmond like he was an idiot.

“Maybe Desmond should ask himself why he’s so openly hostile toward someone we already proved is telling the truth. Seems like *someone* doesn’t like not being in control of everything.” Diana gave Desmond a saccharine smile as she delivered the blow, crossing her legs for emphasis. “I say we vote. This is a unit where everyone is going to put their life on the line—we should all have a say.”

There were affirmations of agreement around the table, and Desmond sat back down. The scowl on his face did not bode well.

“Raise your hands for Diana’s plan,” Ares stated. Everyone but Desmond and Charlie raised their hand.

“What’s your concern with the plan?” Desmond asked him.

“Nothing; it’s a solid idea. But I’m going to stay behind where it’s safe,” Charlie said as he cut a look to August. Judas’ second smiled at him from across the table.

“Yeah, I can stay behind, too and keep an eye on everything while you’re gone, Judas,” August offered.

“Charlie should come with us,” Oisín demanded. “A bunch of random, dangerous dudes are about to break into their house unannounced... it would go a long way for them to see a familiar face so they know we come in peace. Witches may not be the most powerful beings, but they are resourceful and nothing to trifle with.”

“Don’t worry, Char, I’ll keep you safe,” Diana said as she hugged her friend.

Charlie rolled his eyes at Oisín, huffing out a long sigh. “I hope you do, babe, cause I’m not trying to die right now. Things just got interesting,” he whispered as he cut a look toward August. Someone had to explain supernatural hearing to him. He wasn’t being inconspicuous at all.

***This plan feels wrong. I don’t trust him, Desmond linked me. He’s already influencing Diana, and he’ll get us all killed.***

I wasn’t touching that with a ten-foot pole. His issue was equally about his own ego and whatever fight he had brewing with Diana. I did not plan on pissing her off. When I barged in on her secret bathroom excursion with Mal, I smelled her cloying desire. And...I knew she wanted more. Tonight, I planned on capitalizing on her wants.

***Desmond, he’s her family. He isn’t going anywhere. We just have to wait and see.***

# DIANA

## *Chapter 13*

Turns out, there's no way to counteract blood magic. No matter what I did, Damon would always be able to find me because we shared DNA. Even if we moved safehouses, we'd always be vulnerable to his attacks. Judas had been gracious enough to move us to Fortuna's Garden earlier this morning after our house burnt down. There were fortified apartments underneath the resort and strict security protected the entire property like a giant fortress. Vampires were so different from the fictitious ones in movies, TV, and books. They didn't sparkle, and not all of them were attractive. Most vampires weren't loners, preferring to travel in covens. The Costa Coven ranged in 'forever ages' as Judas explained, because within the past few centuries, many of them had to apply to become members. There were very few circumstances where anyone from the Costa Coven could sire a new vampire without approval from Judas and his executive board. And once you were in, you were made for life. There was no going back. With all their businesses—both above and below board—they were sort of like a mafia. A big, blood-sucking vampire mafia led by an eccentric, reincarnated rock star. By the time we had made it to our suite, it was close to 4am. I picked a bedroom, shucked my clothes, and passed out. Too much had happened, and I desperately needed sleep.

The next morning, I woke up, finding another note on my pillow in a similar cardstock.

*Diana,*

*“You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever.”*

*Jane Austen, Persuasion*

*Last night gave me a renewed sense of hope. I cannot begin to imagine a life without you now that I tasted you, had you if only for a moment. It may be too late, but I'll try for eternity to find a way into your heart.*

*Yours,*

*Malcolm Knight*

I eventually needed to sit and figure out how I felt about Mal, because there was definitely something there that wasn't previously. But every time I tried, I couldn't shake that even if he didn't mean to, he had almost killed me twice. Some of the things he said to me were awful, too. I wasn't a stranger to men making derogatory comments about me, but that didn't mean I enjoyed them. Despite all of that, he was trying so hard to earn my forgiveness and it caught my attention. He had been nothing but nice since I came back. After I woke up and had breakfast, I would try to sort it out.

On my way to the kitchen, I realized how beautiful our new home was. The guys and I were set up in a luxury suite with four ensuite bedrooms, a living room, game room, a full kitchen, and a locked room. Olga would have loved the simple, yet elegant design. As soon as the reptile shifters attacked the house, she escaped. Thankfully she was able to mindlink Desmond from her new location to let us know she was safe. We all agree that it's the best move; until we took out Red and Damon, we didn't want to put Olga in the crossfire.

Charlie has an identical suite next door that he'd share with Nonna and Angie when they got here. It would be good to have my family so close. Oisín had a single-room suite on another floor.

"Ares, why is this door locked?" I asked him.

He was sitting at the kitchen island, eating a breakfast burrito he got from a patisserie in the casino. He'd gotten me one, too, but I was trying to use my magic to pick the digital lock on the mystery room. Without a fingerprint for the scanner, it wouldn't budge.

"Newer vampires sleep during the day, leaving them open to attack. I'm assuming that's a safe room for them to rest in, if one was staying here." Ares wrapped his arm around me, pulling me in for a deep, drugging kiss that had my toes curling. I should be furious with him still, but as fucked up as his method for getting Charlie here was, I was so happy to have my best friend again, safe under our care. "Come sit with me and eat your burrito—I'll heat it up for you.

He grabbed the oblong container in his massive hands, covering the entire thing. They glowed gold for a few seconds before steam peeked through where the top and bottom of the container met. He put the burrito on a plate, picked me up to place me in the seat next to him, poured me a glass of orange juice, and handed me a napkin.

“I wasn’t sure what you’d like, so I kept it simple: eggs, cheese, bacon, and onions,” he purred into my ear. How did he manage to make food sound sexual?

“Thank you, Ares.” I had no clue how hungry I was until I took my first bite. The salty flavor of the melted Mexican cheeses combined with bacon and creamy eggs tasted orgasmic.

We sat in companionable silence until I was done eating. It was nice, until Ares started talking again.

“What’s going on with Mal?” he tried to ask nonchalantly, sliding his chair over so our elbows were touching.

“Um, nothing.” I was *not* talking to him about this.

“So he just happened to have your lipstick all over him...and you just happened to smell like sex.” I ignored him, choosing to finish my orange juice and stare at the muted TV instead. I would rather watch the weather report than talk about this. “You also have a hickey on your neck that didn’t come from me. I doubt it came from Desmond. If it came from Bash, it would be bigger, and he’d have a smug smile on his face. Azazel doesn’t seem like the type to leave marks...so *who gave it to you?*”

I rolled my eyes, getting up from my chair. Before I could walk away, Ares grabbed my arms and spun me to face him, backing me up against the island. He ran his hand through my hair, pulling the strands taut and tilting my head up so I was gazing into his bright hazel eyes.

“Tell me Little Goddess, what did you and Mal get up to in that bathroom?” He smoothed his other hand down my back, under my borrowed oversized t-shirt and into my underwear. He groped my ass cheek, digging his fingers into it before massaging it out again.

The little stings of pain in my scalp and ass gave me goosebumps. “Why are you so interested?” I teased,



giving him a sly smile. “Are you jealous?”

Ares contemplated the question as he nudged my legs apart. He slid his hand around the front of my underwear and ran his finger in between my folds to my entrance, gathering my wetness. Two of his fingers circled my clit as a deep chuckle escaped him.

“Not in the way you think. I want to see you two kiss and make up so all this awkwardness is gone. I would only have an issue with you being with someone other than the five of us. But knowing Mal got a taste of you and I didn’t makes me a little jealous,” he admitted as he torturously switched between tapping on my sensitive bundle of nerves and rubbing it. “I haven’t slept in your bed since you came back to us, and I miss you. Sharing a bed with Desmond last night wasn’t the same.”

“Well, if you drop this, you can sleep in my bed tonight...” I suggested, trying my hardest to keep a straight face as he plunged two fingers inside me, his thumb pushing into my clit. His fingers speared me open while he nuzzled my neck, leaving feather-light, searing hot kisses that drove me insane. *I love when he warms his lips and tongue.* I was losing myself in him, sinking further into his seduction second by second. My nipples stiffened to peaks, grazing his chest. His hot breath brushed against my ear and he licked that spot right behind my jaw.

“I *should* stop then,” he threatened.

He shifted back, putting some space between us as his fingers slowly slid from inside me. I grabbed his hand before he left, shoving his fingers back in and kissing him. I needed to feel him inside me; he was right, it had been too long. He broke away and stared at me expectantly. His shoulders shifted as he braced his other hand on the counter top, staring at me with a demanding expression.

“He told me he was trying to make things right, and he never hated me. So I told him to get on his knees and prove it,” I recounted in a breathy voice as Ares fingered me again. The more I said, the faster he went. “Then he picked me up, put me on the bathroom vanity, and showed me how much he liked me.”

He palmed his hard dick through his sweatpants with his free hand, and I couldn’t help but stare at how large his erection was. “How did Mal show you?”

“He fingered me, and once he made me come, I let him eat my pussy. Bash interrupted us before we could do any more,” I admitted.

“Hmmm, sounds like you two are working things out...” Ares brushed both his hands up my thighs, spreading them apart. He took my underwear off, throwing them on the counter.

“My feelings are complicated, and I really don’t want to talk about it,” I said. “I can think of *something else* I’d rather do instead.”

“That’s fine for now, Little Goddess,” Ares conceded as he pushed his sweatpants down, freeing his thick, ridged cock. The tip dripped with precum that he smoothed down his shaft. “I don’t feel like talking anymore.”

He shoved himself inside me in one smooth motion, stretching me almost to the point of pain as he bottomed out. I wrapped my legs around him on instinct—somehow, I knew this was going to be a rough ride. Rendering me speechless with deep, hard thrusts that jostled me further onto the counter top, he pulled me closer to him, entwining me to his chest as his lips hovered next to my ear.

“I missed you so much when you were gone—it was *painful*. Like getting sliced open with a knife over and over again. It felt like half my heart and soul were ripped

away from me,” he rasped, his voice cracking with emotion. “Nothing will ever keep us apart again. I’ll chase you to the ends of the earth and destroy every one of our enemies and dye the world in their blood.”

*My word.* He pummeled me with every word he said. The delicious friction from his ridged cock sliding inside me brought my pleasure to a boiling point. No matter what Ares did, or how reckless he acted, it always came from his feelings for me. He took one of my nipples between his heated lips, sucking on it for dear life until he started talking to me again.

“I want to spend the rest of eternity making love to you, worshiping you the way you deserve. You’re *mine*, in every way. I’ll spend our days filling this tight little cunt with cream until you’re carrying a piece of us inside your womb. After you and Mal make up, the two of us can take turns making you come. I want to watch you two fuck each other, then take my time unraveling both of you thread by thread until you pass out from the pleasure.”

*Oh. My. Stars. He says the filthiest things.* The mere mental image of the three of us together and their cum dripping out of all my holes had my heart beating out of my chest and my eggplant eater throbbing. It was like a rave downstairs.

*Wait, carrying a piece of us...what does he mean by that. I told him I was on birth control.*

Ares’ entire body glowed, the golden hue softly outlining his muscular frame. His cock warmed inside me, distracting me from my thoughts as waves of heat shot through my body. It felt so sensually erotic that my toes curled. His filthy words made me moan as I melted against him. I clenched around his cock, feeling myself spiral into an orgasm I didn’t see coming. He fucked me through it until I was boneless, then laid me out flat on the kitchen island as he threw my legs over his

shoulders. A tingly, kinetic energy surged through me, to every part of my body. I heard the front door open, but couldn't care less. This felt too good, too addicting, and I was anything but modest. *Fucking demons and a Greek god destroyed any sense of modesty or shame I once had.*

Ares held my shoulders, pinning me to the counter while his hips snapped against me with every punishing drive.

"She's glowing," I heard someone say, but their voice sounded distant. The only thing I could focus on was Ares.

"You're my *adelfí psychí*, Diana. Forever, always," he growled, rubbing my clit with his thumb. He pounded into me until I could barely see straight.

"Yes," I groaned as another orgasm ripped through me. It felt like an out-of-body experience, as if every atom of my being collided with him.

A rush of wet warmth scalded my insides as Ares dropped my legs and collapsed on top of me. Closing my eyes, it took a few minutes to catch my breath.

A lone clapping sound caught my attention. I turned my head to see Bash smirking at us in pure delight. Zaz and Mal stood there with shocked faces, whereas Desmond frowned at us like he disapproved of our kitchen escapades.

"I could recharge for a week on just the pheromones swirling around in here, bravo," Bash exclaimed as he moved toward us. "But even catching the tail end of that show makes me feel like I'm at the brim."

Ares pulled out of me and used his fingers to push his cum back inside me. I swatted his hand away, sitting up to stare Desmond down. I didn't appreciate him facially reprimanding me with that judgmental Karen-expression on his face.

“Don’t you *dare* fucking look at me that way, you judgmental asshole,” I reamed him. “I guarantee in your hundreds of years on this planet you’ve had sex in a kitchen before. I would even wager you’ve fucked one of the guys in a kitchen at least a few times.”

***He most definitely has, Birdie, Bash linked me. He shoved the handle of a wooden mixing spoon up my ass once, too, while we were role playing as chefs.***

*I fucking knew it.*

“Just make sure you use some Clorox wipes and clean up after yourselves,” he drawled, glancing at Ares’ release running down my thigh and raising an eyebrow.

“You didn’t mind having my cum all over your face before I died. I guess some distance from me really gave you some perspective as to how much of a hoe I am. Hey, at least you don’t have to guess who I’m sleeping with today...” I made sure my tone dripped with sarcasm. Petty spaghetti didn’t even come close to how I was feeling.

Even after all the shit that happened yesterday, I still thought of that comment and how much it wrecked me. You would think a man who fucked all of his friends and swore he wasn’t going to hide his emotions from me anymore would be less judgmental.

“Stop being a brat, Diana. That’s not how I meant that comment,” he said. *Thanks for dismissing my feelings, Desmond.*

“Really, how did you mean it then? I’m not sure if you remember, Desmond, but you almost slept with me too. We would have if we weren’t interrupted. I’m not sure why you have an issue with me sleeping with any of the men in this room, since you’ve fucked *all of them*, but it’s not a good look for you,” I spat.

“That’s not my issue with you—I have no issue with any of the people in this room sharing each other or

you,” he responded.

“Then what’s your issue with me? Why are you micromanaging me and treating me like a child? I thought that shit was going to stop back at the mountain house!” I shouted. I felt my face heat and a coursing anger settle over my heart.

His jaw tightened as he stood in place, eyes never wavering from me. The guys stood around, volleying their gazes between us waiting for one of us to say something. After a prolonged silence, I stepped up to break it.

“Cool, more denial. I guess I’m not worthy of a response. You said you wouldn’t hide from me—that you’d do better by me—but you barely apologized about what happened back in New York! You treated me like a pawn on your grand chessboard, making decisions about me without even consulting me. Then you micromanaged me and treated me like a child at the casino. The worst part is that you acted like nothing at all happened between us. It took me almost dying for you to admit your feelings, but then I actually die, and you conveniently forget about anything happening between us. But you’ll get pissy over walking in on Ares and I having sex.”

I could feel my temper rising, bubbling inside me like a vat of hazardous chemicals just waiting to explode. The feeling scared me, because I’d never had issues controlling my emotions or felt this intense anger before. A tear rolled down my face, and I could feel my body practically vibrating from trying to hold myself together.

“Diana, I think this is a conversation we should have in private, when you’re calmer,” Desmond suggested.

“Fuck you, you emotionless piece of shit. Don’t hurt my feelings and tell me to calm down when I react to it. You don’t like having to answer to anyone or losing control of anything, but guess what? You’ll *never* control

me,” I yelled, my voice taking on a deep timber I barely recognized. I was *done* with this conversation.

Storming down the hall to my bedroom, I slammed the door and threw myself into bed. *Fuck, I guess that doesn't do shit to prove I'm not a brat.* I tuned my super hearing so I could eavesdrop on their conversation.

“She has a point—you *are* an emotionally closed off bastard,” Bash conceded. Like he had any room to talk.

“You’re part of the reason she felt she needed to run away, and you should have apologized for it already,” Ares spat. “Instead, you ruined a beautiful sexual experience between us with your bullshit. We should be cuddling together in bed, maybe even going for a round two, but you fucked any chances of that happening.”

“Diana and I are my business. I didn’t ask any of you for your opinion, so stay out of it,” Desmond growled.

“You may not have asked for my opinion, but I’m going to give it anyway,” Zaz said matter-of-factly, completely ignoring Desmond’s macho-man shit. “Your guarded bullshit and inability to express anything remotely emotional ruined our relationship just as much as Bash’s possessiveness. I saw the way you held Diana in your sleep the morning after her father’s visit when I woke up and checked on her. You obviously care about her, so don’t you think she deserves better?”

“Yeah, but I don’t think she wants to hear anything I have to say now,” Desmond lamented, the defeat obvious in his voice.

“If I can get past almost killing her—twice—and work for her forgiveness, you can certainly do it,” Mal stated, his tone a smidge snarky. “If you exercised half the effort into fixing this that you do in trying to control everything, including your emotions, you’d be fine.”

Mal made a good point. He fucked up way worse than any of the guys did, but he still tried to fix the chasm

between us.

I heard heavy footsteps coming toward my room, but before I could think to lock it, Desmond opened the door and invited himself in, sitting on the edge of my bed. I rolled over to avoid him, earning one of his derisive sighs. He held my shoulder, rolling me to my back so he could lean over me. His peridot eyes bore into mine, begging me to acknowledge him, but I chose to stare at the ceiling instead.

“I didn’t want to overwhelm you after you reanimated. I knew Ares and Bash were going to be all over you, and I wasn’t sure how you felt about me. Apologizing while you were falling apart over your dad’s didn’t seem right either, so I decided to let you come to me. I should have given you a more heartfelt apology sooner, for everything that I did wrong,” Desmond said, blowing out a breath of frustration before continuing. “I’m sorry, Diana. You deserve better from me. I just find it difficult to express how I feel, especially to people I care about. To do so seems like a slip in control to me.”

“You are a control freak...you forgot to apologize for that part,” I reminded him.

“I can’t—that’s just who I am. In the future, I’ll try to be more mindful, but you’ll have to call me out on it when it’s too much.” It may not have been exactly what I wanted to hear, but I could appreciate Desmond’s honesty.

“I don’t mind you being controlling in bed,” I said, as I rolled into him and rested my head on his chest. “It’s a good time. In day-to-day life, it’s annoying as fuck,” I admitted.

“I guess I can deal with that compromise,” Desmond said as he ran a hand up my thigh.

I removed his hand from me, giving him an expectant look. “You don’t get to touch me again until



you apologize for the comment you made last night. That made me feel like a whore.”

“I didn’t mean it that way. It’s just hard to get us to focus on anything aside from you—you steal everyone’s attention. I got frustrated because instead of being worried about the house, Ares and Bash were trying to figure out what you and Mal were doing.”

“You don’t care that I’m with your friends?”

“You have a mortal’s perspective on monogamy. No, I don’t care, because so am I. If you went to someone outside of this apartment, then I would care.”

“To be fair, I thought I was a regular human woman up until a few months ago. See how easy it is to communicate with me?” I leaned up to kiss his mouth, and he climbed on top of me, grinding himself into me.

“You’re naked. Everything between us is easier when you’re not wearing clothes, dollface,” he joked. His smile reached from ear to ear.

“I ripped you a new asshole in front of everyone naked...” I trailed off before cracking up. “Can you find me something to wear or get the tee shirt I was wearing so I can go back into the kitchen to get some coffee?”

“Hmmm, I don’t know,” Desmond mocked as he kissed my neck. “I don’t think I want to let you go. Definitely don’t want you to get dressed. If it were up to me, you’d walk around naked all the time.”

“Well I guess I could go over to Charlie’s later sans clothing. He wouldn’t appreciate it as much as you all would, though,” I laughed as Desmond disarmed me with tickles before pinning me to the bed. “You’ll wear clothes if you leave the suite. I have the feeling you’re not the Morningstar Charlie wants to see naked anyway.”

Before I could comment on whatever was going on between my brother and my best friend, Desmond kissed me. The kiss felt so passionately overwhelming

that my pussy literally tingled. I suddenly forgot what I was going to say.

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# DESMOND

## *Chapter 14*

I'd lay in bed with Diana indefinitely if I could. Holding her supple body and listening to her soft snores while she slept gave me a quiet pleasure I'd missed out on. Was it creepy? Yes. This was Bash level stalker shit, but I didn't care. It felt too good to have her in my arms. Her face nuzzled into my chest as little drops of drool leaked from the corner of her parted mouth to wet my t-shirt. I ran my fingers through her curls, watching them straighten before they sprang back to their normal shape. I had wasted so much time avoiding my feelings for her before she disappeared. Then I wasted time giving her space and sitting on the sidelines, letting my anger and reluctance to let go of control take over. I couldn't tell her why I was really angry because the thought seemed ridiculous, even to myself.

I was furious with her for leaving me.

Originally, I had thought my feelings for her were painful. It was a sick kind of torture to watch a woman you had feelings for—but convinced yourself you couldn't touch out of duty—flirt and develop relationships with your friends. But that was nothing compared to her absence. I had just gotten over my hesitations, finally let myself feel something for her, then fucked everything up by letting her down. I fucked everything up and let her die.

When she came back, I understood why she was angry, but I couldn't apologize to her. I was furious with her for running off with Mal to the airport and putting herself into danger. I was even angrier at myself for being part of the reason she felt the need to escape. Her actions made me take a hard look at myself, at *my* actions, and I didn't like what I saw.

We eventually needed to meet the others to plan out Angela's and Nonna's departure, but I never wanted to leave her bed. I ran my hand up her thigh, squeezing her ass until she gave a half-hearted moan. She rearranged herself until she was half on her stomach and hid her face in my armpit.

"Time to wake up," I said, shaking Diana's shoulder a bit to get her attention. She groaned, refusing to move. She jolted awake when I smacked her ass. The cherry-red handprint on her cheek made me grin.

"Hey!" she shouted, smacking my arm. Her nap was firmly over now. "Just because you're an ass, doesn't mean you have to smack the asses around you. Hasn't anyone ever told you not to spank a sleeping woman?"

"Dollface, hasn't anyone told you that when I say wake up, it means *wake up*? We have plans to make, family to extract. *Chop chop*," I ordered, swatting her ass again and leaving another hand print. She scowled at me, grabbing the blanket and rolling over onto her back, cocooning herself in it.

"Azazel!" she whined. "Help me, Azazel, I've been attacked!"

Azazel faded into the room with a *pop*, scanning his surroundings before finding Diana and I in bed. He saw that I was in my boxers and rolled his eyes before ripping the covers off her.

"You seem fine to me," he stated in a sarcastic tone.

“But you haven’t seen what this heathen has done to my ass,” she pouted, rolling over to show him the fading marks.

“Honey, that’s *nothing* compared to what he’s done to *my* ass. And Bash’s ass. I would wager every ass in this suite has been through worse—he’s a complete beast.” The fact that Azazel said that with a straight face had me roaring with laughter. He wasn’t wrong. “It’s 3p.m. Diana. We’re running out of time if you want to extract your family tonight.”

“I know...but...I’m just so nervous,” she admitted. She sat up in bed, shifting around until her knees were bent and her head rested on top of them, blocking her eyes from our view. “They’re going to hate that I did this to them.” She sniffled, and although I couldn’t see it, I knew she was tearing up.

“Nervousness isn’t going to bring them back. We need you on your A-game tonight. They won’t hate you because I’ll make it clear that you didn’t have the choice. That was the only sensible option at the time,” I explained.

Azazel walked around the bed, sitting on her other side and pulling her into his lap. He wiped her tears away with his thumb and tipped her chin up. I hadn’t seen his eyes light up like that in a long time.

“I promise you, your family will make it here. I saw it. I’m not sure what happens along the way, but I know they’ll make it here in one piece.” Azazel’s words soothed Diana, and she finally seemed less anxious about the entire operation.

She hugged him and kissed his cheek before he turned her chin to kiss her lips. He deepened their kiss until she moaned into his mouth. Pulling away, he said, “Ares and Charlie went shopping for you today while you were asleep. Turns out, you can’t rescue your family in the nude.”

She laughed as she left the room to grab some clothes.

“You’re good for her...” I said rather awkwardly.

It seemed Bash and Azazel had picked up where they left off, from what Bash told me, but things between us had been strained since he’d returned to our lives. I had no clue what to say to him, and he hadn’t taken any steps to address the rift between us. I thought apologizing to him would help, but he still gave me a wide berth.

“Sometimes she needs encouragement, not tough love. Having been a guardian angel for so many centuries comes in handy sometimes,” he quipped, an edge cutting through his calm tone.

If I could talk to Diana about my feelings, I could do the same with Azazel. “You deserve better from me, too, you know.” His drawn brows and squint betrayed his confusion. “You said Diana deserved better from me, but you do, too. I don’t like that things are weird between us.”

“I don’t know what to do with you and had never anticipated having to deal with you again after we broke up. Then I had visions of your crew, Diana, and myself fighting Satan’s army, but nothing could prepare me for actually being around you and Bash again.”

“Seems you don’t have an issue being around Bash...”

“Yes, because he made an effort. He also charmed the pants off of me, literally. Desmond, I’m waiting for you to let go of your hangups and show me you give a fuck. It’s hard to tell sometimes because you have to control everything, including your emotions. *It’s frustrating,*” he huffed. “Diana and I have a soulbond, so I’m not going anywhere. When you’re ready to let go, I’m here.”

He got up from the bed and left, leaving the door open behind him. I stared out into the empty hallway, losing myself in thought until my concentration was broken.

***Chop, chop you giant Hell demon. Didn't you say we have plans to make and shit to do?*** Diana linked me. ***Move your ass!***

***I'm coming, dollface. Have some patience.***

Azazel had a point. Neither of us planned on going anywhere. We both had feelings for Diana and each other. I just had to do the work to show him that I could let go of the control I desperately needed.



“You’re all taking this way too seriously. This is a straightforward plan. I B&E, draw a summoning circle to act as a portal, and we take Diana’s family and get the fuck out of there. We don’t need multiple exit plans,” Bash grumped, impatiently tapping his foot on the floor. “Az even said he sees them getting here in one piece. It’s already 10 in Brooklyn, and eventually they’re going to go to sleep.”

“He has a point,” Charlie agreed. “Since you left, Nonna has been closing the shop earlier and sleeping more.”

Diana winced, twisting her mouth into a grimace before looking at the floor. The pain evident on her heart-shaped face tore me up.

“Sister, you had no choice. Your boys are a fucking mess, but you were safer being dead under their protection than alive at home. Your family will understand,” Oisín said as he gave Diana a hug. “It’s

weird to hug you...I'm so used to sitting on you and stealing your food or rubbing my face into you."

"Don't remind me. I shared all my snacks with you..." Diana rolled her eyes.

"I actually made this ass-cat little plates of food for dinner every night while you were gone. He had a spot at the table and everything..." Bash seethed. He *hated* being duped, and Oisín had pulled the fur right over his eyes.

"And I appreciate it," Oisín cackled. His laugh sounded just like Diana's... it was off-putting to hear it come from someone else's mouth. Everything about him was unsettling.

"How do you think I feel?!" Charlie exclaimed. "I carried him all the time and bought him little Christmas costumes. I would babysit him for Diana when her family went on vacation and he slept in my bed..."

"Trust me, if I didn't have a cover to keep, we wouldn't have been sleeping," he flirted as he winked at Charlie.

"Okay, back on topic," Mal steered the conversation. "We need two exit plans. Bash is right, we don't need six. With Nonna and Angela, we would out-power any reptile shifters if they decided to crash the reunion."

"Mal's right. Nonna may seem like your average witch, but she was born and raised in Italy. The woman is hardcore Tuscany, even if her accent has faded over the years." *I can only imagine*. If Nonna's attitude was anything like Diana's, she would be a force to be reckoned with.

Everyone wore head-to-toe black to blend into the night. Oisín even changed his hair, turning it black to match his turtleneck and black jeans. Bash didn't seem the least bit nervous, ready to break into Diana's house like he had done dozens of times before.



“Are you good to go?” I asked him.

“Bloody born for this, just like old times. Breaking into Diana’s house and into her dreams was my favorite pastime before she came home with us,” Bash grinned. “I took you on some really good dream dates, remember?” he asked her.

“Yeah, you were the perfect dream boyfriend...but then I met you in person, and you ruined it,” she smirked. Oisín high-fived her, and they cackled together.

“Sleep with one eye open, Birdie,” Bash promised before he drew a large circle in white chalk on the floor. “This is where we’ll all fade back to when we come back. It’s imperative that once you’re done fading, you get out of the circle. That way no one can pull you back.”

Bash stepped into the summoning circle and winked before he disappeared. We all waited for him to mindlink me with the all-clear, some of us more patiently than others.

“What the fuck is he doing over there? Raiding the fridge?” Ares huffed, pacing the room. For fuck’s sake, he was annoying sometimes.

“I would be,” Charlie deadpanned. “They keep the fridge stocked with some bomb-ass stuff. If we have time can we pack a basket, Di?”

“No, we’re getting in and out. I’m sure Nonna will make you whatever you want once she’s settled here,” Diana responded.

Ten more minutes passed before Bash checked in with me.

***I had to wait. Some guy with platinum blond hair was at the house with Angela. He smells magical, but he’s low level. The way he left makes me think they left things on bad terms... She doesn’t look much better. I’ll be in shortly.***

“Bash said some guy was at your house with your sister. He has platinum blond hair and seems to be in a bad mood. Is he a problem?” I asked her. I wanted to make sure this random guy wouldn’t be an issue for us later on.

“Ugh, that’s her douchebag ex, Cris. He’s a garbage human. Probably came back around after I died because she was vulnerable. He’s a cheater, stole from us, and lied to her. Fucking scumbag,” Diana twisted her face in disgust, her pouty lips curved downward.

“I’ll murder him for you both,” Ares stated plainly, like he was telling Diana about the weather. “If he bothers your sister, he bothers you, which means he doesn’t deserve to breathe. Do you want his head on a pike or his fingers and toes in a plastic bag? You could always use them as bait when fishing.”

“Because Diana fished all the time when she lived in the middle of Brooklyn,” Azazel deadpanned. Ares eyed him, then busted up with laughter.

“True, but there’s a first time for everything. You look like a mountain man; teach her to fish, Feathers,” he quipped.

***Get in the circle everyone, it’s time.*** Bash linked me.

“It’s time,” I announced. “Let’s cross over in pairs so we don’t crowd it.”

Diana put her game face on, steeling herself for the task ahead.



## Chapter 15

I took Diana's hand as I led her to the circle. Despite the brave warrior's face she wore for us, her whole body shook with nerves. Her boobs jiggled with the movement, and I couldn't take my eyes off them. The little shit-stirring voice in my head took notice, too.

*Mmmm, they're so round. Juicy. They'd feel so good in your hands. Suck on them.*

*Olympus' nutsack, this seriously wasn't the time to think about sucking on Diana's titties. Shut up, voice. I have to pay attention.*

*Mhm, but you can still think about fucking her... getting her pregnant. Tying her up with a pretty blood-red ribbon while you feast on her perfect pussy. Her clit, her folds, lick that pussy like its gold...*

The voice inside my head needed to chill the fuck out and stop singing about Diana's pussy. *Take a chariot somewhere, ASAP, you filthy fuck.* I had to focus so I could keep Diana safe. We stood right on the other side of the line, and she squeezed my hand.

"Are you ready?" I asked her, squeezing her hand back. "I'm sure your family has missed you."

“I hope so, but they’ll probably hate me for lying to them,” she spoke, barely above a whisper.

“Little Goddess, I just met you, and barely made it a month without you. This is your family, who has known you your whole life. I *know* they’ll understand, because it’s impossible not to.”

“You’re the sweetest, Ares. You always make me feel better.” She nuzzled her face into my arm and kissed my bicep.

*Yeah, when I’m not thinking of tearing your pussy apart right before a serious mission.*

The minute we crossed the chalk outline, we appeared in a bedroom lined with bookshelves. The cream walls with pops of color and flower decor gave the room a distinct feminine touch. *This is Diana’s room.* It felt weird to think of her living in this space without us. It felt like she had always lived with us—like she belonged with us.

Bash raised his finger to his mouth, motioning for us to stay silent.

***They’re in the kitchen downstairs arguing over Angela’s douchebag ex,*** he linked me.

I saw Diana’s mouth widen, her face falling into a stern concentration as she used her super hearing to eavesdrop on what they were saying. *Wait, can she and Bash mindlink?* She turned her head to him, and they locked eyes without speaking a word. I felt super left out, and quite frankly, this was fucked up. I was obviously her favorite, so why couldn’t she link me?

*You’re not her favorite. You’ll never be her favorite because you’re not good enough.*

That fucking voice again. If I could, I’d rip it out and drown it in a fifth of vodka for good measure.

Desmond, Charlie, Oisín, Mal and Azazel came through the portal after us, fanning out around the room. Everyone took a moment to look around, taking in Diana's space.

"How do we want to approach them? They're already arguing, so emotions are heightened. It may not be a good idea to go down there and interrupt them," Mal noted.

"I say Charlie leads them up here," I suggested. "He's not a stranger, so they would follow him."

Charlie took his phone out, dialing a number and bringing it to his ear. He put it on speaker phone, and we all stared at him with wide eyes when we saw that he was calling Angela. Desmond went to grab for the phone, but he swung it away.

"This isn't a great time Char, what's going on?" Her clipped voice made Charlie's eyes roll.

"Somehow, I ended up in Diana's room. I know it sounds weird, but I fell asleep in my own bed and woke up here...please tell me you know what's going on because I'm FREAKING OUT," he exclaimed, faking a surprised, frantic voice. "Please come upstairs and tell me what's going on?!"

Oh, he was smart. They didn't know he knew about the supernatural world. I heard another, deeper female voice in the background that I assumed was Diana's grandma. Angela whispered something to her, then muted the phone. I used my superhearing to focus on what they were saying, but they must have cast a silencing spell, because I heard nothing.

***They used a silencing spell to shield their conversation. They're suspicious,*** I linked Desmond, Mal, and Bash.

She unmuted the phone. "Don't touch anything or move. We're coming up to see what's going on."

I heard their footsteps as they slowly climbed the stairs. If they were truly worried about him, they'd run up. They definitely knew something was off. When they opened the door, my suspicions were confirmed. Their faces paled as they eyed the group of freakishly large, random men in their dead family member's bedroom and immediately took a defensive stance. Nonna cast a shielding spell, and a blue fireball sprang to life in Angela's hands. When their gazes landed on Diana, their brave facades cracked. Angela looked like she was about to burst into tears.

"Don't go to her, this could be a trap," Nonna said, holding her daughter back. "Charles Monroe, what the fuck is going on?! Who are all these men?" she yelled. As much as I wanted to knock her out and drag her back to Vegas, she was Diana's family. We had to *play nice*... get them to come willingly. She eyed Diana skeptically as a tear ran down her face. "My granddaughter died almost two months ago. Prove that you're her."

Diana frowned, so I held her hand, squeezing it so she knew I was there for her. Her aunt spied our joined hands, and glared at me.

"I'm not dead. It's a long story, but I swear to you it's me, Nonna. Angie, tell her it's me. How can I prove it to you?" Diana looked to all of us for ideas.

"Tell us something only the real you would know?" Angie suggested.

"Nonna, you keep fifteen grand in cash in a locked box in your closet in case of emergencies. Angie, you used to have a matching tattoo with Cris, but you had it covered over with a giant flower. At my mother's funeral you told me that the universe gives and takes away, but that she would never truly be gone from my heart. Our family's secret ingredient in chili is cinnamon. *Oh*, right before I had to leave, Nonna, you revealed that the entire family lied to me about who I was for years—I'm a

witch. Well, I'm one-third witch...it's another long story I'll explain later."

"Only Diana would be petty enough to bring up an argument you feel guilty about to prove she's herself," Angie scoffed. She smiled, before remembering herself and crossing her arms across her chest. Her eyes jumped to each of us, like she was sizing us up. *Get an eyeful, I have nothing to hide except bodies.* "Can you explain why you felt the need to bring all these men with you to come home? How are you standing here if you died in a fire? Excuse our skepticism, but none of this checks out."

"Satan put a hit on her because she's Lucifer's daughter. We"—Desmond said, gesturing to himself, Bash, Mal, and I— "Were supposed to carry out that hit, but Bash, who's an incubus, had been stalking her for a while because he could smell her power signature through the block Lucifer and her other father placed on her. We decided if she was powerful and dangerous enough for Satan to go after her, we could use her to overthrow him. So we abducted her and faked her death to keep her safe. But that all went to shit, so we moved to Las Vegas. We used a summoning circle to get back here," he finished, taking a breath before looking at Diana.

"I fell in love with her, though, so it wasn't for nothing," I said. "Diana is my *adelphi psychi*, end game."

"I fell for her, too," Bash agreed.

"Same," Desmond and Azazel both said.

"I have feelings for her, but we have stuff to work through," Mal said.

"I'm her half-brother and gay as fuck so I'm not part of her Penis Parade, in case you were curious," Oisín added. "Lucifer is my father, too, so we're basically

family, Angie and Nonna. I'm a real blast for the holidays, so get ready."

Angie glared at her new family member, before walking out of the shield and grabbing Diana's face in her hands. She locked eyes with her sister, turning her head this way and that. "This whole thing is insane. Charlie, is it really Diana? This isn't a trick?" she asked him with hope in her voice.

"One hundred percent real. I'm sorry for tricking you into coming up here, but this is an awkward situation. Diana didn't want to leave you, but she did it for her own safety and yours," he replied. "She's scared you both hate her."

Angie pulled her sister in for a bone crushing hug, her tears running like the River Styx. "*Belissima*, I could never hate you. I'm just so happy you're alive, here with us. We don't have to say goodbye."

Nonna grabbed both her girls, hugging them and giving Diana a kiss on the forehead. "My baby girl! You need to tell us everything. How did all of this happen? How do you have two fathers? Better yet, who are these *men*?"

They both gawked at us, and I would have been lying if I said I didn't enjoy the attention a little bit. We were a handsome crew.

"I promise, I will. But you both need to come back to Vegas with us. I have more enemies than just Satan, and it's not safe here for either of you anymore. Can you please pack up and come with us?"

"How much danger is she in?" Nonna asked Desmond.

"Enough that NYC isn't safe for any of us anymore. The sooner we get out of here, the better," he replied. "When we get back to Vegas, I'll call Diana's other father,



and we'll debrief everyone so we're all on the same page."

"How is it possible that she has two fathers?" Angie asked. She looked at Oisín. "Do you have two fathers, too?"

"No, Lucifer is my only father, and my mother was a Druid Priestess. You should both be packing. Let's walk and talk. I want to hear stories about this firecracker as a kid. I have a feeling she was a handful," Oisín cackled.

Mal and Bash went with them, while Desmond followed Nonna to her room to help her pack. Charlie, Azazel, and I stayed with Diana. She ran into her closet, pulling out luggage bags and throwing them on the bed. She gathered items from all over the room: pants, dresses, shirts, books, shoes, and a blanket that had seen better days. Charlie and Azazel packed them while I looked out the window to check the perimeter. I didn't see anything, but I had been waging wars my entire life. I had been on both ends of the fight—the attack and the defense. Something felt off, but I couldn't put my finger on it.

***Checked the window, and I don't see anything. I don't hear anything either. But something feels wrong. Hurry up and get everyone back in here quickly,*** I linked the crew.

The guys replied with affirmatives, and I caught Charlie and Azazel up on my suspicions. They hurried, and in no time, she had two neatly packed bags with her stuff. Eventually, everyone filtered back to Diana's room. Nonna and Angie both had a couple of bags that we placed next to Diana's. Mal closed his eyes, waving his hands to teleport them to the suite.

"They're safe. I teleported them to our place in Vegas," he explained to Angie as she raised a brow at him.

Sounds of glass shattering rang out around the room as a group of masked men crashed through the windows. They wore half masks over their eyes and were dressed in black tactical gear. Their ears were long and pointed, but their skin, save the pale green around their eyes, was completely covered. One lunged for Diana, but she hit him with a blast of energy that knocked him on his ass.

“Bash, please get my family and Charlie out of here!” she screamed as more identical men came in through the door.

He grabbed Nonna, Angela, and Charlie’s hands, pulling them into the circle and disappearing back to Vegas. One of the men tried to follow them through, but Mal stopped him by using telekinetic magic, causing the bastard’s head to explode all over the room. Desmond stood in front of Diana, blocking her from the fight as he shifted into his demon form. One of the ninja wannabes charged him, but Desmond bent forward, bull-gouging him with his horns. He threw the corpse into another attacker, knocking him over.

Oisín turned into a tiger, using his emerald-colored magic to create a cloaking shield. It protected him as he tore one of their throats apart. Blood sprayed all over Diana’s bedspread, and he licked some of it off.

“I don’t think that’s going to come out of the fabric,” Diana said as she petted his head. Oisín shrugged her off as he stalked toward the window. He roared at Azazel to get his attention.

Azazel ran to the window, eyes going wide at whatever was out there. “Oh *fuck!*” he shouted over the melee as he looked out to the street below. He shot silver streams of magic outside. “More of them are scaling the walls, and there are at least twenty more outside.”

I turned to find that more of them were coming in through the door. I felt a knife plunge into my back, and whipped around to see one of the insurgents, cocky as fuck with a smile on his face. *Oh, you dumb fuck, knives don't hurt me.*

“Your head is about to become my newest plaything. Thank you for the gift,” I said as I grabbed the sides of his head, twisting it until his neck broke and his head popped clean off. It was like opening a bottle of Cherry Coke.

I lit the head on fire, tossing it in my hands before whirling it at another masked moron. He fell like a sack of bricks as his clothing burned. The fire took out two other enemies before Mal snuffed it out.

***Good job, but we can't let their house burn down with us inside it,*** he linked.

He wasn't wrong.

Whoever these dramatic fucks were, they were more advanced than the reptile shifters, although not as skilled as us. I scanned the room, and saw Diana and Desmond fighting a few of them. Diana kicked one in his nuts, yanked him to his knees, and shot a line of fire into his mouth, burning him alive from the inside. *She's so hot when she's torturing people. My Little Goddess' bloodlust is strong.*

Desmond magically bound another assailant's arms and legs before throwing him onto the bed. Mal teleported him away with a wave of his hand. I was dying to question whoever we caught. The thought of tearing them apart limb by limb and beating them to death with one of their own legs made me feel *giddy*. I was ready to fuck shit up.

Azazel and Oisín sealed the windows, their silver and green magic providing a transparent shield. We made quick work of whoever remained. I threw fire balls

at the last two masked mystery intruders, then worked on gathering everyone.

“It’s time to leave,” Azazel urged. “The seals on the windows aren’t going to last forever.”

We all scrambled to the circle, jumping inside to teleport back to Vegas.

When we stepped out of the circle into our suite in Las Vegas, everyone seemed confused. Nonna looked around me, and her mouth gaped as she ran her fingers through her curly, black hair.

“Where’s Diana?!” she screamed. “Why isn’t she with you?”

I spun around, but the only people I saw in the circle were me, Desmond, Azazel, and Oisín. Diana and Mal were missing.

“Something isn’t right...” Azazel looked between us all. “Desmond, what’s going on?”

“I have no clue,” he responded. He stepped back into the circle, but nothing happened. He didn’t cross over the linked circle in Brooklyn.

“I never closed the summoning circle,” Bash said with a tinge of panic to his voice.

He grabbed Desmond’s hand and they disappeared. Everyone started talking at once, and it was difficult to keep up with all the separate, frantic conversations. Oisín cut me a look from the other side of the suite. He may have been silent, but I knew what he was thinking. There was a good chance that when Bash and Desmond got to the house in Brooklyn, Mal and Diana wouldn’t be there.

They appeared a few minutes later, concerned looks on their faces.

“We couldn’t fade into the house. The closest we can get is a few townhomes over,” Desmond reported.

“Someone locked the house down, and we believe Diana and Mal are trapped inside.”

“Diana is scared; I can tell through our bond,” Bash said. “Az, what do you feel?”

Feathers concentrated so hard that his marbled wings sprang from his back. His entire body glowed silver, and Angela and Nonna looked like they were going to pass out. One of his wings almost hit me in the chest before I backed away. The furrow in his brow and clenched jaw didn’t bode well.

“My soulbond doesn’t work the same way your claim bond does, but I do pick up on some fear. I can confirm she’s in the house and that the house is locked down. I can’t use our soulbond to fade to her.” Feathers was the most easygoing out of the entire group, and if he was upset, that was *not* good.

*How the fuck did I let this happen? I was supposed to protect her. I failed her...*

*This is why you’re not her favorite. You’re not good enough for her. You can’t even protect her.*

Maybe the voice in my head was right. Diana was trapped in that house with Zeus knows who. This shouldn’t have happened. We just got her back and now she could be gone for good.

# MALCØLM

## Chapter 16

As we stepped into the circle, I felt a force pulling me back, knowing immediately that something wasn't right. I tried to let go of Diana's hand so she would be able to cross through, but we were both caught.

"Mal, what's going on?" she asked me.

Her voice wavered, and when I tilted my head down to look at her face, she was sweating bullets. I held her hand, keeping her in place next to me.

"I'm not sure, but don't leave the circle. Bash may have rigged this to act as a portal, but it's still a summoning circle. We're protected from outside forces as long as we're in here."

"*He isn't wrong,*" a snide, pitchy voice said from behind us.

We whirled around to see an average-sized man dressed in a navy blue suit. He had chocolate brown hair, pale skin, and a run of the mill Wall Street douchebag haircut that was so common in NYC's business district. At first glance he appeared like a normal, sour asshole you'd find hanging by a pool table in a bro bar. But as I looked at him closer, I noticed his dark hair and his nose. *They look just like Diana's.*

“Let me guess...” Diana drolled. “Damon Morningstar? My half-brother who’s been trying to kill me?”

“Wow, you’re *smart*. It’s going to be a shame to waste all that brain power when I kill you,” he laughed.

*Not today, you fucking asshole.* “You won’t touch her unless you want me to rip you apart and feed your flesh to Ares’ three-headed dog, piece by piece.” I grabbed Diana’s hand, pushing her behind me and trying to fade back to our suite in Las Vegas, but we didn’t move. My magic sizzled and died on my palms. I tried again, using my telekinesis to port us out, but it seemed as if we were stuck.

Damon villainously chuckled, as if he was pleased with himself. “Not so scary when your crew isn’t here to back you up, huh? I locked down the house with anti-travel wards, so your telekinesis and fade won’t work here, Malcolm. The only way to escape is to leave the circle, but if you do, I’ll kill you...*if you’re lucky.*”

Diana smiled at him. I thought she’d be more upset by that development, but she seemed to find it hilarious. She giggled at him, covering her mouth like she had some big secret. She peered into my eyes, and although we couldn’t mindlink, I knew she was trying to tell me something. She had an idea on how to get us out of here, which was great because neither of mine had worked.

“What’s so funny?” he asked. Her failure to take his threat seriously obviously rubbed him the wrong way. Diana squeezed my hand as Damon walked all the way to the circle line to sneer at his sister. “You’re about to die. You should be *begging* me for your life.”

“I don’t beg,” she stated. “And you’re woefully misinformed, because Mal and I aren’t dying today, or ever, actually. I’m immortal, you dumb bitch.”

A flash of surprise crossed Damon's face, but only for a moment before it was replaced by cold indifference. He puffed his shoulders and shifted his stance so he appeared larger and more in control, still only coming up to my pecs. His eyes were dead, disconnected from the world.

"That can be circumvented, young lady. I'm surprised your boyfriends didn't teach you that," he sighed. "I'm more powerful than you could ever hope to be, and my power signature alone could level you, and your loser man-bun boyfriend too. I'll be damned if you ever sit on Hell's throne."

"Now I want to do it, just to piss you off. You're giving off such forgotten-middle-child vibes, it's fucking pathetic. Before we go, hear me loud and clear, fuckface. Stop sending your shifters and masked morons after us. Stop trying to kill me. You're a fucking meager excuse for a demon who's been alive almost as long as Lucifer himself has been," she laughed, definitely tipping her chin up and looking down her nose at him.

Damon seemed like he was going to explode, his temper boiling right at the surface. *He did not like being compared to his father...somebody has some Daddy issues.* His entire face turned beet red as he launched a bolt of magic directly at her heart. It sizzled in the atmosphere around us as it was absorbed by the circle's protection. Before he could try anything more, my entire body vibrated with a magical current so powerful, it radiated in my joints. The entire room went black, and I closed my eyes. I could feel myself moving, overtaken by inertia so strong it made me nauseous. Before I could gather my thoughts, we landed in the middle of the Las Vegas strip, about a mile from Fortuna's Garden.

I took Diana's shoulder, spinning her to face me and holding her at arms' length to get a better look at her. She was fine, not a scratch on her. "How did you get us out of there?" I asked.



“We time-hopped. Hopefully we’re only a day or two in the future from when we originally left for Brooklyn, but I’m not precise... My magic isn’t that focused, yet. I need to get back on track with my lessons and figure out how to lift the remaining magical bindings my fathers put on me. I need to be able to fade.”

She walked to the edge of the street, looking up and down it for the sign for the Costa Coven’s casino.

“We should go that way,” I suggested, guiding her to the right with my hand at the small of her back. We walked at a quick pace, wasting no time in case they somehow found us here. “How did you know that would work?”

“Had a hunch. He obviously did his research on you if he knew you could teleport and fade, but Oisín never told him anything about me. There was no way he’d know to ward against time traveling. I’d even bet that because it’s such a rare, unknown form of magic, there’s no way to really block it,” she said, smiling at me.

At that moment, I was reminded of how I had severely underestimated her. Her intelligence and ability to read people was astounding. Guilt over my previous behavior flooded me, and I pulled Diana into a shop so we could stop walking for a minute.

“Diana, you’re beyond smart. You’re a good judge of character and able to think outside the box. I can never say it enough times, but I’m so sorry about the way I treated you before. The stupid shit I said about you...the beyond fucked up shit I did...”

“We didn’t get off on the right foot, but you’ve been trying to make it right. When shit hit the fan back there, you protected me. You’ve been making such a huge effort to be supportive of me, too. You let me act like a total asshole after our bathroom romp, even though you didn’t deserve that. You obviously care,” she said as I pulled her closer to me, wrapping an arm around her

waist. “You also apologized to me, as soon as I came back. And that means something to me, even if I wasn’t able to show it at the time.”

“Well, you had a lot going on after we took you out of equilibrium. I didn’t expect you to ever forgive me, so it’s ok.” It was the truth. I didn’t expect her to ever let my transgressions go and had made peace with that. I was awful to her, and she didn’t owe me anything.

“Mal, I’m willing to put everything behind us and start over. Yes, you disliked me, but you trying to kill me—that wasn’t you. There are feelings between us, and we both deserve to experience them. I only have one thing to ask of you,” she said, carefully looking at me to gauge my reaction.

“Anything.” I would literally do anything to make things right between us.

“It would make it easier for me to trust you if I knew more about you. The guys told me not to bring it up, and I know it is a sore spot between us,” she paused, looking at the floor, “But can you eventually tell me why you’re a hellbound? I need to know what happened—it’s part of who you are.”

I tipped her head up, rubbing my thumb under her chin. “I understand. Part of the reason I was so wary of you is because I was convinced you were lying to us about being a witch,” I admitted. “In time, I promise I’ll tell you. I just need to work up to it.”

She smiled at me, nodding. I lifted her off her feet, crushing her to me so I could kiss her. I didn’t let go until a patron asked us to move so she could look at the snowglobes behind us. Diana laughed, glowing in her happiness. I made a vow to myself at that moment. I would do whatever it took to make sure she was always happy. No matter what it took.

***Mal, can you hear us? Please contact us asap,***  
Bash linked me.

“I just got a link from Desmond. I told him we were en route back to the casino,” Diana said. I could see the wheels turning in her head as she pulled me out of the store.

“Yeah, I got one from Bash. Let’s find an empty spot and fade back. Can’t wait to see the looks on their faces when we tell them how you got us out of that jam.”



The minute we walked through the front doors of Fortuna’s Garden, three vampires in black suits and shades apprehended us, pulling us in another direction as they talked through their earpieces. They must have thought they were the agents in *Men In Black*.

“Taco Terminator and Smartass have come home,” the blond one said as he led us toward an elevator cab. The other two brought up the rear.

“I love my code name, because it’s 100% true—tacos are my favorite food. Since you have fangs and are wearing black diamond jewelry, I’m assuming you’re Judas’ people, but for my piece of mind, can you prove it?” Diana stopped dead in her tracks, smiling at the men, who looked at her like she was insane. “We were just accosted by an enemy, so excuse me for doing my due diligence.”

The shorter one with umber skin pulled his suit and shirt sleeve up, showing us a tattoo of an ace playing card with a black diamond suit on it. “Is that proof enough?” he asked politely.

“Yes,” I answered, turning to Diana. “All members of the Costa Coven have that tattoo—it’s some kind of magical bond they all share, like a hive mind. Desmond mentioned it to me before.”

“Ah, okay,” she said as we boarded the elevator. We both stumbled as it shot down to the subterranean levels.

The men in black suits stood in front of us, looking ahead. I could still see their reflections in the mirrors surrounding us on the walls. One was on his phone, playing some colorful game, while the other two seemed to be lost in their thoughts. Diana reached up, standing on her tippy toes to pull my low bun. I raised an eyebrow at her, but she didn’t get the memo. Instead, she did it again, with a mischievous glint in her eyes. I snaked an arm around her waist and under her shirt, partially shifting so my claws came out. Lightly digging into the curve above her hip, I dragged them across her midriff, just enough so she felt a chill rush across her skin.

“My, what big claws you have,” she crooned in a low, seductive voice. Her eyes were wide, a mock look of fear on her face. “What do you plan on doing with them?”

“Nothing, I’ll never hurt you again. I just wanted you to feel them,” I bent over a little so I could whisper into her ear. “But that little sensation you felt...think of how good that would feel in other places...” I trailed off as my claws ran behind her and down over her ass. She filled out her black jeans perfectly, making them skin tight.

One of the Men in Black blushed, clearly eavesdropping on our conversation. *Listen at your own risk.*

The elevator halted, the doors opening up to the board room we were in before. Everyone, Judas and August included, waited for us with relieved facial expressions. Diana ran up to Nonna, hugging her.

Angela joined in on the hug, and eventually they broke apart.

“I knew you were fine!” Angela exclaimed triumphantly. “You’re dating a bunch of old men, Diana. They worried way too much. If they weren’t immortal, they’d have gray hair.”

“Because they were gone for almost four days!” Desmond shouted. He came over to hug and kiss both of us on the cheek. “We had no clue where either of you were, and our mindlinks stopped working until you came back to the present because of the summoning circle.”

“Well, I was aiming for two days into the present when I time-hopped, so I was close,” Diana pointed out. “That’s better than the last time, when I was gone for a month.”

Azazel got up from his chair, wrangling his curly mane into a ponytail before hugging Diana and myself. I didn’t know him very well, but his hug made me feel... *safe*. Like I could tell him my deep, dark secrets.

“Bash and I could feel you through the bond, so we knew you were alive. We assumed Mal was with you. The fear you felt is what set me on edge,” Azazel’s light hazel eyes swept over both of us. “I talked to Judas, and we booked a magically proofed room they use for combat training. You’re taking up lessons again now that we’re in a safe location.” Judas gave a thumbs up in our direction, but his attention was solely on Angela. The intense focus he gave her gave off major creeper vibes, like serial killer/stalker/preceding a Dateline special kinda vibes.

“Even a day without you is too long,” Ares stated, deadly serious. “I failed you. You held my hand, and somehow we got separated...” His shame was evident on his downcast, somber face.

“Ares, it wasn’t your fault. Damon magically sealed the building from fading and teleporting. Diana and I just happened to get left behind. There was nothing you could have done,” I assured him.

“Damon was there? What the fuck happened?!” Oisín got up from his chair, storming over to Diana. “Are you two okay?”

“Our half-brother is a complete douchebag with daddy issues. Aside from being exposed to his bullshit, we’re fine. He caught us in the summoning circle, and thought that warding against fading and teleporting outside the building would trap us. The only way he thought we could get out was by leaving the circle, which would allow him to attack us. But I was able to time-hop us out,” Diana generally recounted. She gave her brother a hug, and after a few moments, he melted into the embrace.

“If anyone has any doubts about Oisín’s loyalty, get rid of them. The only reason we were able to escape was because he was true to his word. He didn’t tell Damon anything about Diana’s powers,” I said. “She caught him completely by surprise.”

He nodded at me, giving me a crooked Cheshire smile over Diana’s shoulder.

“You went from being an only child to having siblings out the wazoo, *Bel*,” Nonna said to Diana. “At least you know one of them is solid.”

“I don’t like that he was able to isolate you two,” Bash thought aloud as he paced along one end of the board table. “Tomorrow, we should have a meeting and get everyone together. Michael, the Costa leadership, Nonna, Angie, Oisín. Any other allies we can one hundred percent count on,” he said to Desmond and Judas.

“Done,” Judas switched his gaze to August. “Can you book a tech-smart conference room that can fit up to forty people? Make sure we serve a food lunch and a blood lunch, too.”

“On it,” he confirmed before he left.

“I know it’s only mid-afternoon, but I’m exhausted,” Diana yawned. “I’m going to take a nap until dinner. I’m sleeping over in Angie’s suite tonight.” The idea was met with frowns and groans from the guys.

“But you *just* got back,” Ares complained.

“I miss my family, and I need time with my aunt,” Diana explained. “I’m sure you’ll all keep each other company while I’m away. Have a guys’ night or something.”

If only it was that easy. None of us looked particularly pleased with the idea. Nonna and Angela laughed, like our predicament was so hilariously funny. I think they seriously underestimated how obsessed we all were with Diana.



I faded Diana back to our suite while the rest of the guys got in contact with everyone for the meeting tomorrow. She gave me a kiss on the cheek, and I felt like I was going to melt. I hadn’t had feelings like this for someone in a long time. The whole thing felt... bubbly as fuck. *What was happening to me?*

“I’m going to hop in the shower,” she said. Her smoldering gaze looked me over from top to bottom. “I’ll be in my room if you need me...”

She sauntered away, looking over her shoulder at me. Was that an invitation? I wasn’t used to Diana

treating me with anything but contempt, but there was definitely a sexual undertone to that... *I think?* I hoped there was. I wanted nothing more than to bury my face in her cunt and taste how sweet she was again.

Women confused the fuck out of me, and it was hard to trust them after what happened, which was why I gravitated toward men. Men were much more upfront about what they expected. When I was still a warlock, 250 years ago, courting a woman was easier. There were rules and customs to follow. You could have a match made for you, or your family could set you up in an arranged marriage. But Diana was a modern, independent woman. I didn't dislike that, but it did make it harder to read her. What did she want? Did she look over her shoulder to invite me into the shower with her? I was so scared of fucking things up between us that I froze there, caught up in indecision and doubt.

"Hey Mal, can you help me?" I heard Diana call from her ensuite bathroom.

I hesitated for a moment but made myself move. This was definitely an invitation...right? When I arrived at her bathroom, she was standing in the stall, with just a fluffy white towel wrapped around her. The slit in the side went to her upper thigh, showing me a peek of her pussy if she turned the right way. She eyed me as I stood in the doorway, white-knuckling the frame. Her gaze dragged up my body, landing on my face.

I cleared my throat. "How can I help?"

"I want to use the waterfall showerhead, but I'm not sure how to turn it on," she pointed to the larger showerhead in the ceiling.

I stepped in, and she moved to the other side while I checked the levers and faucets. The knobs to turn on the side showerheads and the adjustable one were clearly labeled, but there didn't seem to be an option for the waterfall. I was about to tell her I could use my



telekinesis to fix it, when the showerhead sprang to life, soaking me with warm water.

“Oops,” she said, her blue-gray eyes alight with mischief. She smiled at me as she smoothed some wet hair away from my face. “I didn’t realize this lever did that—it’s not labeled properly.”

Stepping toward her and away from the water spray, I pulled my shirt off, teleporting it into the hamper outside the open shower door. My socks, pants, and underwear followed. I crowded her until her back was against the tiled wall.

“If you wanted me, you could have asked,” I pointed out.

She stared at my hard, knotted dick, reaching a hand out to stroke it lightly from base to tip. My breath hitched, because even the small motion made something deep in my gut stir. A blush crept from the tips of her ears to her chest. She bit her bottom lip, contemplating her response while she removed my hair tie. Wrapping a lock of my hair around her finger, she smirked before pulling it, bringing me close enough to her that I could steal her deep breaths for myself.

“I can do a lot of things...but I was hoping maybe you could do some of them for me.” The room’s acoustics gave her husky, silky voice an echo.

I watched her plump, bowed lips as she spoke. When I ran my thumb over them, they felt like plush, smooth satin. The thought of them rounded in an O as I made her scream—hearing her cry out in ecstasy as I worked her body over—flipped a dormant switch inside me. I needed her more than I needed air to breathe. Something about Diana quieted the rage inside me. My existence seemed less like a miserable, eternity-long punishment when I was this close to her. Her body was the salvation I had been looking for, and I wanted to

worship her body until she couldn't walk anymore. I made her towel disappear with a flick of my hand.

"I would do anything for you," I vowed, running my fingertips from her lips down her throat until I cupped one of her breasts in my hand. I stroked my thumb across her nipple, feeling it pebble beneath my touch. Her gasp hit me bone deep. "Tell me what you want."

"I want you to blow my mind and make me come," she said with no hesitation. "I want to still feel you tomorrow when I wake up."

"That I can do," I promised.

I maneuvered her under the shower spray, doling out shampoo to wash her hair. I shifted my claws out, lightly grazing her scalp as I worked the lather into it. Her entire body buzzed, lightly vibrating from the feeling. She exhaled a deep sigh, relaxing into my touch. After tipping her head back to wash the suds away, I worked the conditioner in the same way, slathering it from root to tip. I took my hair tie back from her and secured her hair so it could sit. I lathered soap in my hands, running them over her arms and kneeling to clean her legs. The sensation of my claws skating across her made her skin erupt in goose bumps. Retracting my claws, I trailed my fingertips back so I could knead and grab her ass, digging them into the bouncy, round globes that drove me insane until she moaned. Her flesh felt so supple and warm.

I rose again, taking the shower wand and pressing the button until the water flowed in a concentrated spray. "Spread your legs," I croaked, my voice coming out hoarser than normal. "Please," I added, because I needed her to know that this was all on her. This was her show, and I was just a puppet for her pleasure. She spread them, allowing me to direct the torrent of water between her pussy lips, right on her clit. I held it steady

until she started squirming, a high-pitched whine tumbling from her mouth.

Then I dipped my head, taking one of her nipples into my mouth, running my tongue over the stiff peak until a whimper fell from her lips.

“Mmm, Mal...” her voice sounded breathy. “Make me *come*.”

“Do you trust me?” I asked her. “I have an idea.”

She nodded, her knees shaking as she struggled to keep herself upright. I put the wand back on the wall and stepped back to give her room, the spray from the waterfall showerhead hitting my shoulders. I used my telekinesis to raise her off the ground, slowly rotating her until her toes pointed to the ceiling. Her breasts looked like an offering as she hung upside down, suspended by my magic. Her brows raised as her mouth parted in surprise.

“Don’t you dare drop me...”

“I would never. I’m using my magic to pin you in place, so to speak. Even if I get lost in the moment, you won’t fall,” I assured her. She nodded, and I took that as a green light to blow her fucking mind. “Get ready to come all over my face, princess.”

I spread her legs, levitating her a few inches higher so her sweet, wet pussy was right at mouth level. Wasting no time, I licked from her clit to her entrance, tongue-fucking her as I rubbed her clit with my fingers.

“Mal, harder. M-m-more,” she moaned.

I switched to sucking on her clit and finger-fucking her. My long fingers reached that sweet spot inside her perfectly, rubbing it until she was practically incoherent.

“Fuck! *Fuck, fuck, fuck*,” she groaned.

I kept going, eating her pussy like a fucking five course filet dinner until she came all over my face.

Slurping her juices up, I gave her clit a few soft licks, making her whole body quiver before I pulled away. I rotated her back so she was upright, and she leaned against the wall to steady herself.

“Holy shit...that was amazing...” she rasped.

“I one hundred percent agree,” Ares’ voice rumbled from behind me. I turned around, finding him naked, standing in the shower doorway. “But why not add another and make this a party?”

“She’s *mine*,” I growled. I didn’t want to share her right now. Ares’ eyes burned right through me, the fire in them hard to miss. But fuck it, I was so amped up from making her come, I’d fight him for her.

“I was thinking I could fuck *you*...while you fuck her. Seeing you go Spartan on my Little Goddess’ pussy lit me up. I want to batter your hole, Mal.”

I turned to Diana, leaving the decision to her. This was her show.

“Yes,” she said. “As long as you’re okay with it.”

Ares stepped away to get a bottle of lube out of the medicine cabinet, stepping into the shower and immediately dwarfing the place because he was larger than life. His rippling muscles, manic smile, and large stature always absorbed all the attention in the room. But when I glanced at Diana out of the corner of my eye, her focus was on me. Licking her lips...her chest heaved as she caught her breath. She wrapped her hands around my neck, and I backed her into the tile wall again. I levitated her body high enough off the ground that my dick could slide in without an issue. Her thick thighs squeezed my hips just right. Knowing she trusted me enough to hold her body made my heart swell.

“You murdered my pussy, Mal. That was incredible. You’re so *good*,” she praised. Her words coated me like

a warm blanket, making me feel fucking fantastic. *How can words make someone feel so hard?*

“I felt you clamp down on my fingers when you came,” I whispered in her ear. “I want to feel that a hundred more times. A thousand more times. I want to feel it for eternity.”

She groaned into my ear, grabbing my face and smashing her lips onto mine in a frenzied passion I had ached to feel since the minute I saw her in that club. We clashed, all lips, teeth, and tongues. I lost myself so deeply in her, consumed her so voraciously, that I didn't feel Ares' rough hands spread my cheeks. He ran his warm, wet tongue over my pucker, laving my hole until every nerve ending was set on fire. Diana's soft hand wrapped around my dick. Her thumb swiped through a bead of precum as she worked me up and down, from tip to knot. Ares' tongue dipped inside me and opened me up. They worked me over until I was right on the edge of exploding.

“Get inside me. I *need* to feel you,” she said in a needy voice that evoked all kinds of fucking emotions I didn't think my numb, void self was capable of feeling.

She lined my cock up against her dripping, velvety skin. Sinking into her tightness inch by inch was excruciating torture I couldn't bear a second longer. I slammed home, earning myself a gasp. She cried out, and I swallowed her moan as I slowly started to drive myself in and out of her. Two cold, lubed fingers press against my hole, sliding past my rim. I fucked myself onto Ares' fingers with each snap of my hips.

“Why did we spend so much time missing out on this?” she asked in a breathy voice, digging her fingers into my ass. “You could have fucked your anger out on me instead.”

Ares replaced his fingers with his cock, thrusting into me with a rough familiarity I'd grown to love. Pleasurable

pain splintered through me when he bottomed out, and I bit down on Diana's shoulder to stifle my groans. She tangled her fist in my hair, pulling me up to bite my bottom lip until she drew blood. *Fuck*, these two together would destroy me. We fell into a brutal rhythm of me hammering myself into Diana, then meeting Ares' thrusts on my slide out. His ridged cock brushed against my insides as he skimmed over my hip, to grab my balls and squeeze.

"I thank the stars you two finally buried your shit," Ares growled. "We're going to have *so much* fun together. I can't wait for Mal and I to double team you, Little Goddess. Stuff both those fucking holes with cum so you're dripping with our seed for days. We'll fucking tie you ass-up so we can watch it drip down your thighs. Then we can take turns licking you clean."

"Yes," Diana mewled. "I want all of you to take turns fucking me, filling me up until I pass the fuck out."

"You're filthy," I rasped, slamming myself into her like I was trying to break her.

"Fucking do something about it, Mal. Fuck me harder. Make me scream," she demanded, laying down a challenge I couldn't ignore.

I moved my hands from her hips, pinching her nipples as I rolled them between my thumb and forefinger. My magic kept her suspended in place. When I twisted her body slightly so I hit a different angle, her face lit up like fucking fireworks, and I knew she wouldn't hold on for long. Ares switched to deep, long drives as he held my neck, which only made me fuck deeper into Diana. She squeezed her legs tighter around my hips, holding me against her and whining into my ear.

"I'm wrapped around your little finger, princess," I whispered, hitting that sweet spot inside her. Her body glowed, a soft golden haze that bounced off the metal fixtures in the shower stall, mingling with Ares' and filling

the space with ambient light. “You could own me, and all you’d have to do is say the word.”

“You’re mine, Mal,” she whimpered. “I’m so close, make me come, right now,” she demanded.

I snaked a hand down to pinch her clit, finally setting off her climax. She screamed so loud the entire hotel probably heard it. I shoved my knot inside her as I finished, letting it swell and stretch her, plugging up her pussy so that every drop of my cum stayed inside her. *I could sort of see why Ares has a breeding kink... The thought of my cum coating her insides is alluring.*

Ares wasn’t done yet. He held me still, pummeling me into Diana as he jackhammered my prostate. Despite finishing, I felt like a live wire—a million bolts of electricity buzzing through my body. She held my face, locking eyes with me as I fell apart again. Ares’ hot seed filled my ass, and he thrust through it a few more times for good measure.

We all stilled to catch our breaths. Without the grunts, groans and moans bouncing around the room, I could hear the water hitting Ares behind me, dripping onto the floor. He pulled out and slapped my ass, the sting traveling all the way to my toes.

“That better not have been sex talk, Diana, because now I’m going to talk the guys into running a train on you, so I can make your wildest fantasy come true,” he warned her.

“Mmmm,” she yawned. “Plan it, and I’ll be there. Make sure there’s water and snacks though. It’s not a party without snacks.”

I laughed as I loosened my telekinetic hold on her to cradle her to my chest. She was about to fall asleep on her feet, and I wanted to make sure she was safe. When my knot loosened, we made our way out to the bedroom.

***Can you grab some towels on the way to her bed?*** I linked Ares.

He nodded, following me to her bed with the towels. We dried her off together and helped her into bed before drying ourselves and cuddling on either side of her.

“She fell asleep,” I noted. “Guess I blew her mind after all.”

“You blew mine, too,” Ares said. He tangled his fingers through my loose hair as he kissed me over Diana’s head. “You’re a good man, and your past doesn’t define who you are, Mal. I know you’ll do right by her.”

Despite the edge to his deep rumbling voice, I knew Ares wasn’t threatening me. That’s just what he sounded like—he was always serious when it came to Diana. She rolled to her side, nuzzling her face in my armpit as I thought of all the ways my love for this woman would be different from my late wife, and how happy we’d both be because of it.



# DIANA

## Chapter 17

The guys all bitched and moaned when they dropped me off at Nonna and Angie's suite. I had no clue why they were so dramatic, as I'd be right next door to them. I was more than sure they'd survive one night without me. Angie and I said our goodnights to Nonna and Charlie, rushing into her room. A gold-plated ice bucket with a bottle of Dom Perignon awaited us, right next to her bed. Angie carefully removed the note tied to the bottle's neck, rolling her eyes when she read it silently to herself.

"Who did that come from?!" I asked. The Fool had served Dom to high profile clients, but I'd never tasted it before.

"*Judas*," she sighed. "He creeps me out...the way he stares at me is extra as fuck."

*Seems like I missed something interesting when I time-hopped.*

"He stares at you..." I repeated. "Sends champagne to your room... I don't know Ang; it seems like someone has a crush on you. You gotta vampire-admirer. A bloody boo. A gentleman caller of the night. He's gonna suck your blood and then suck that miserable look right off your face, hopefully with some freaky blood play shit."

She mocked offense, hitting me with a pillow before cackling like a Sanderson sister. "All of a sudden you get

five boyfriends, and now you let that hidden freak flag fly. Please tell me how that all works...do they share you or take turns? Like does Ares get you on Saturday and Desmond on a Tuesday? I think Mal is a Monday kinda guy.”

“They’re friends...so they play well together and with me...” I blushed, not knowing how to explain this to her without sounding like a total slut. “Even with immortality, I can’t seem to keep up with them.”

“Holy balls and jizz, Diana, you’re living a real life porno, and you don’t even need to ‘meet a pizza delivery guy’ or ‘become a librarian and walk in on a group of frat bros being too loud in the library’! Like, your life is probably a giant orgy all the time. I’ll make sure to knock when I come over.”

“What kind of porn do you watch? Seriously...a librarian walking in on frat bros....”

She ignored my question, continuing on with her own excited line of questioning. So, how much of what Desmond said was true? The guys filled us in on most of the stuff we missed while you were gone, but is that how you all really got together?”

“Yeah, pretty much. He left out the part where their possessive bullshit and crazy fuckery drove me away. I was at the airport trying to get away from them when Red found me,” I explained. “But I’m happy we’re working things out. The deeper their possession gets... the more I want to be possessed by them. I love their crazy. How fucked up is that?”

“I’m not judging. I wouldn’t mind my own group of demonic, bad boy hotties. Girl, they are truly obsessed with you—like in a loving way? Ma wasn’t too happy about your peen squad, but after seeing how they worried about you and searched for you, her tune changed. She found Ares’ bloodlust for your enemies a little off putting, until she realized exactly who he is.”

“I can see that. Yeah, it took me a bit to piece together that he’s an actual god and not some Greek lunatic named Ares,” I laughed.

I popped the bottle and filled up the two flutes on the table, holding my flute to my nose so I could feel the little bubbles fizz and pop. The topic of my sex life came up multiple times throughout the evening, because Angie had to know everything about them—from their likes and dislikes to their freaky little fetishes. *So nosy*. She asked about Oisín, and I told her the little I knew. We ended up talking about why Cris was at the house, and just as I suspected, he was trying to use her vulnerability to insert himself into her life again. Angie would eventually find her man, I knew it. She deserved nothing less.

Hours had passed, and the entire bottle disappeared. So did some of the alcohol in the minibar. I held the empty champagne bottle up to my eye, watching the light filter through it as we laid in her bed.

“I wish my mom could meet them. She would have liked them,” I lamented. I thought about her everyday and all the things she had missed in my life so far.

“Especially Desmond,” Ang said. “Marilyn always went for the daddies.” She peeped the look of disgust on my face and chuckled to herself, snorting like a nerd.

“I can confirm that. Bash showed me a picture of Lucifer yesterday, and he gives off David Gandy vibes for sure.”

“I feel guilty sometimes. I got to spend so much time with your mom when we were growing up. She was my favorite sister and did everything with me. You barely got nine years with her.” Tears cascaded down my face, and Angie rolled over to hug me. “Oh, fuck, I’m sorry, Diana. I didn’t mean to say it like that.”

“It’s true, though. Sometimes I have to strain to remember what she looked and sounded like. The older I

get, the more my memories of her erode, and one day they'll be gone," I wailed. The snot running out of my nose was not attractive in any way, and the way I wiped it on my hoodie sleeve was even uglier.

"I wish I could hear Marilyn's voice again, too." Angie petted my hair and held me for a few minutes while I tried my hardest to stop sobbing.

"Wait a minute!" I cried, snapping up into a sitting position. "We totally could! Angie, I can time-hop us back so we can see her."

She grinned, bouncing up and down in excitement before reigning it in. Her gaze lost focus, making her look as if she was staring off into the distance.

"Is that safe? In the movies, it's really dangerous to go back in time. What if we mess with something important?" she asked.

"Valid point, but as long as we aren't talking to our past selves or her, and are super careful, we should be fine." Azazel told me so much during our dinner the first night I got back. *He also told me not to time-hop unless you absolutely needed to, but this was an emergency, for fucks sake.* "Come on Ang, let's do it. Don't you want to see your favorite sister? I *need* to see my mom again."

Angie took a few moments to think about it, but shook her head. "We better not regret this. You're already in such deep shit with this Red guy and Damon after you. Your vagina is probably partially broken from all your crazy orgies and sexcapades. I don't wanna add more drama to your plate." Her concerned voice was appreciated, but she needed to lighten up.

"The guys and I will find a way to defeat both of them, don't worry. My vagina is absolutely fine. She lives at the Cock & Balls Buffet—eats three squares and two or three snacks a day, too. Bitch is satisfied. But we won't be *emotionally* satisfied until we see my mom!" I

encouraged her. Maybe it was the champagne, but I felt buoyant as fuck. Nothing could get me down, and everything was going to be fine. This did not seem like a bad decision at all.

“Great Goddess!” she exclaimed, giggling like a schoolgirl and reaching for my hands. “I can’t believe you can time-hop, this is complete insanity. Bananas as fuck, Diana. Let’s do it.”

Closing my eyes, I thought of a memory of my mom, Angie, Nonna, and I at the park I went to growing up. Nonna pushed Angie on the swings at the playground, and my mom pushed me in the bucket seat next to her. I was four years old at the time, which would make Angie eleven or twelve. This would be the perfect place to watch her. It had thick, overgrown bushes we could hide in, and I don’t remember it being a crowded place, as we went early in the morning most days. And kids weren’t very observant, so I doubted they’d see us. Perfect conditions for watching them and going unnoticed.

I held the memory in my mind, focusing on my mom’s face and how happy she seemed. Magical currents vibrated through us, shaking the ground beneath us as inertia took over. Although I couldn’t see us moving, I felt us fall backwards through time. It felt... weird...like a million little hairs tickling you as you fell deep down a rabbit hole. Very different from traveling forward in time. Instead of a white rabbit waiting for me when I opened my eyes, I saw the trees and benches of my favorite childhood spot. Angie gasped when she came to, her face looking a little green from the ride. I shushed her, dragging her behind some bushes. We had a clear view of the empty swing set from here.

“If I timed it right, we’ll get to see Nonna, my mom, you, and me walk up to the swings in a few minutes,” I whispered, keeping my voice low. “Oh, Mylanta, I can’t fucking wait.”

A few minutes passed, and a familiar tall man with long curly hair sat on the bench on the other side of the playground. He also had a good view of the swingset. He was reading a book, keeping to himself.

“Isn’t that your fallen angel hunk?” Ang asked. “What is he doing here?”

“It’s complicated. Azazel has been watching over me my entire life. A lot of the time he was hands off, just having visions about me. Sometimes he watched me more closely, according to him. Especially if Michael asked for a report.”

Ang shook her head, sighing. “Your other dad sounds like a fuckwit. They both do, actually.” She belched loudly, and the foul stench of alcohol wafted into my face. I waved it away, groaning at her grossness before remembering that we had to be quiet.

“Shhhhhhhh, you filthy slob, here they come!”

She quieted when our family walked onto the playground. Angie held my hand, dragging my four-year-old self toward the swings with a huge smile on her face. She picked me up, helping me into the bucket seat. Nonna told her to get on the swing, and she and my mom pushed us while talking to each other. My mom was beautiful. Her long, curly black hair and perfect skin shone in the morning sunlight. She wore a massive black hoodie and flared jeans that hugged her thighs and hips, very typical early 2000s fall fashion. Nonna must have said something funny, because her laughter rang out through the entire space. It was infectious, so we all laughed with her. Hearing her voice after all this time made my heart clench.

I felt tears burn the backs of my eyes, but tried my hardest to stay strong. A heavy weight sank into my stomach, like an anchor. Maybe drinking so much before such an emotional experience wasn’t the brightest idea. I

should be happy to see my mom, not on the verge of sad tears.

“You look and sound so much like Marilyn,” Angie said in awe. “When we go back to our time, I can just look at you when I want to remember her.” A few tears rolled down her cheeks, but she held herself together, wiping them away on her shirt sleeve. She was always more emotionally stable than me. I found it much harder to hold myself together.

My mom was strong. She pushed me higher than Nonna pushed Angie, making airplane sounds that made me giggle.

“Vroooooooooooooom, Diana! You’re flying!” she shouted in a fun, high-pitched voice. “It’s a bird, it’s a plane. It’s Diana Rossi!”

Zaz would glance up at them every now and then before returning to his book. I had to give him credit, he was hiding in plain sight, getting the job done. It made me wonder how many times he had watched me, and I never even knew it.

A fuzzy static filled my ears, and I winced at the harsh crackling sound. A male voice was muffled in it somehow, but I heard it say my name. I tuned my mind, trying to focus on what it was saying. After several seconds, I was able to get a mostly clear link.

***Diana, where are you?! Bash’s angry voice filtered through my mindlink. You’re not in our suite or Angie’s, and we don’t feel you in the casino at all. Come back immediately.***

What was I, a dog that followed commands? He could be a little less of a dick about it.

***Diana, could you please come back from your time-hop? I think you’re at the playground in Brooklyn, right? I saw you both in the bushes that day,*** Zaz said. I switched my gaze to him, and as if on

cue, I saw the past version of him raising a brow at me. *Fucking great. I can't get anything past these assholes.*

“The guys know we time-hopped, and they're super mad. Azazel just saw from the bench, by the way.”

Angie looked over at him, peeking her head around the bush. He rubbed his temples with his hand in frustration after he saw her. “Shit, angel-boy caught us. Let's get back before we see us.”

I held her hands again, focusing on her suite in the present day. The trip didn't feel as awkward as the first time. Traveling forward in time was much easier than traveling back. When I arrived, five angry men and a very concerned looking Nonna stood in Angie's room, frowning at us.

Bash's face was beet red, and his veins blackened around his face. His swoon worthy midnight eyes turned black, and I had the feeling he was beyond mad at me. Actually, all the guys except Azazel looked furious. Desmond sat in a chair, rubbing his face with his hands in frustration. His horns were out, curled around toward the back of his head.

“What were you thinking, taking off like that without telling anyone? Do you know how dangerous time travel is, Birdie? You have assassins and dangerous people after you... and you thought your secret time-hop escapade was a good idea? Your magic isn't developed yet—you need training! You acted foolishly and could have hurt yourself and your aunt with your reckless behavior!” Bash was one decibel down from yelling.

His growly, disciplinary tone, paired with his posh British accent had the opposite impact on me than he intended. It just turned me on. *Seriously, I gotta get him to scold me more often, my undies are wet as fuck.* Who knew I had a punishment kink?



“Yeah, it was dangerous. How did Azazel know where she was?” Desmond inquired. He didn’t seem mad, per se, but frustrated. “If you knew she had time-hopped there, why not stop her beforehand?”

“Diana and Angela not going back in time could have altered the original timeline. So far, I’ve only ever caught them time-hopping together that one time, so it wasn’t hard to assume where they were,” Zaz calmly explained. “And I know how it feels to miss your family. I wasn’t an original guardian angel...I was given the choice to become one after I died in my human life. So I’ve been there. They were safe and inconspicuous about it, and I knew they left for the present without doing damage. The risk seemed minimal to me.”

“Thank you, Zaz, for being so understanding,” I said, peering up at him from under my lashes and sniffing, trying my best to sound like I was upset.

Bash was way more likely to let this go if he thought I was about to run into Azazel’s arms like a hurt little girl. If I could get Ares on my side, too, I bet I could get this all to go away by tomorrow night. Manipulative? Yes. But I had no time for them to ruin this for me. I just saw my mom and wanted to enjoy it.

“*Diana Stella Madonna Rossi*, don’t you dare play that game. All five of them are smart enough to see through that shit,” Nonna reprimanded me, cutting me down to size as she glared at both of us. “*Angela*, you know how dangerous that was; they explained it to us while Diana and Malcolm were away. What the fuck were you thinking?”

She waved her hand, and both of us screamed. A stinging pain hit my ear, as if she flicked it. *That witch pulled my ear. She just treated me like a five-year-old in front of my boyfriends.*

“Tell them, Nonna! I can’t believe you did this, after we spent days worried about you already. I know what it

feels like to miss your family, and if you had told me about it ahead of time, I would have gone with you to keep you safe.” Ares’ disappointed tone riled up my guilt, cutting me deep.

I didn’t think about the fact that Mal and I had just returned from being MIA earlier that day, nor the fact that I went missing for a month before that. We just really wanted to see her, damn the consequences. I made them worry about me again, and that was a shitty thing to do. I fucking hated feeling guilty; it was like sitting in a wet puddle and having to carry that grossness around with you all day until you dried off.

“You’re right. Next time you can come with me,” I agreed. Even though I knew I was wrong, I didn’t want to apologize, because I didn’t regret going to see my mom.

“There shouldn’t be a next time. Time-hopping is too dangerous,” Bash huffed. He inhaled deeply, and his nose crinkled as he frowned. He glanced around the room again, seeing the empty bottle and mini bottles. “You were both drinking. You time-hopped *intoxicated?*” he rhetorically asked. His voice was raised, and the black veins in his face throbbed. He reminded me of a teapot, except he was tall and lean, and if I tipped him over with one more misstep, he’d pour a shit-ton of piping hot anger on me.

“Okay, how about we all calm down, go to our respective rooms, and talk about this tomorrow?” Mal chimed in. “I don’t think Bash throwing a tantrum—where he’ll most likely say shit he doesn’t mean and piss Diana off even more—is going to help the situation.” I smiled at Mal, because I was really digging this ride or die level of support. “Oh no, don’t smile at me like that. I’m not happy about this either. I’m diffusing the situation because I don’t feel like hearing you two go at it until you’re burning furniture to a crisp.”

Okay, then. I guess Azazel was my only ally, not that it really mattered. Sometimes I loved having a whole group of men who were obsessed with me and dicked me down like the world was ending. Other times, it was a pain in the ass trying to balance everyone's feelings and expectations. *Do I have to run things by five different people now? Am I expected to follow rules?* If there were rules for me, were there rules for them too?

"Fine," I tried to say without pouting, failing miserably. "I'm still sleeping here though."

"Probably for the best," Bash snapped. He spun on his heels, fading out.

Ares bent down to kiss my cheek. "I'm mad, but I still love you, Little G." He faded out too.

Desmond nodded at me, following him. Mal hugged me, kissing me on my other cheek. He smoothed some of my hair off my face and gave me an awkward look. "I know you didn't set out to ruffle feathers, princess, but you just pissed off a whole group of peacocks," he sighed, scratching the back of his head. "I know you didn't mean to, and you and I are fine. This will all blow over tomorrow." That made me feel a little better. Mal really was trying to be supportive, even when I was a complete asshole.

Azazel waited for him to leave, before he sat on my other side and gave me a huge hug. He rubbed my back and waited for me to let go. He always knew what I needed, sometimes before I even did.

"How often have you watched me? I have a feeling that wasn't the first time." He was too skilled for that to be his first time.

"No, it wasn't. Part of my job as your guardian was keeping an eye on you, being there when you needed me. I tried to be hands off, so you could have a normal

childhood, but sometimes I had to keep a closer eye,” he vaguely explained.

“A few days before we took you to the park, your mom broke up with a warlock she had been seeing for a few months. She felt like something was off about him, and he didn’t take it very well,” Nonna revealed. “He showed up at the house the next day and threatened her. Thank you, Azazel, for being there that day. At first, I found it creepy that you were with my granddaughter—you watched over her almost since she was born. But now I understand how perfect that is, especially with all the danger she’s in right now.”

“If it makes you feel better, I didn’t start having feelings for her until well after she turned eighteen. My feelings changed recently, and I don’t regret it,” he admitted. The declaration warmed my heart. He kissed me chastely on the lips, and stood. “Goodnight, Diana. We’ll talk about this tomorrow.”

“You’re fucked,” Angie laughed after Zaz faded out. “They’re all so mad.” She laid back on the bed, snorting with laughter.

“Oh, I’m mad too, so you’re just as fucked,” Nonna promised, side-eyeing her. “Both of you go to bed, and don’t pull any more stunts for tonight.”

I didn’t bother brushing my teeth or changing out of my sweats, opting to just burrow under the covers instead. The booze buzz was wearing off, giving me a sharp headache. Angie fell asleep almost instantly, which wasn’t a surprise. That bitch could get eight hours of sleep on a swaying bridge in a hurricane and wake up well-rested. It was weird falling asleep without someone’s arms around me, holding me against a rising and falling chest. Just my luck—I would miss my guys when they were all mad at me.

I closed my eyes, hoping that sleep would eventually find me.

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The title 'AZAZEL' is written in a large, black, serif font. The letters 'A' and 'L' are flanked by a pair of white, feathered wings that appear to be spread out, giving the title a supernatural or angelic feel.

## Chapter 18

2019, Brooklyn, New York City

*Sitting behind the desk, I straightened up the mountain of assignments the teacher had left behind for me to grade while I waited for my twelfth grade AP Literature class to arrive. School had changed a lot since the last two times I attended. There were metal detectors, checkpoints, and no corporal punishments. It was also cliquier, the separation between student groups painfully obvious. Everyone seemed to have a problem with someone, and they had no issue taking it out on each other.*

*Fate was on my side. One of Diana's teachers was unfortunate enough to get the flu. I was able to sweet talk her principal into letting me fill the substitute teacher position until the end of next week. Diana had been going through a rough school year, and this was the perfect way to keep an eye on her, especially given what I'd seen. In every vision I had of her recently, these mean girls from the cheerleading squad were bullying her. Last night I saw them do something truly heinous—something that would devastate her. Diana had recently won first place in a short story contest that was open to*

*all the high schools in Brooklyn. During the April assembly, she would read an excerpt from her short story in front of the entire school. The bullies somehow used a net to haul dozens of pastries over the microphone stand, and would drop it at the end of her reading. They rigged a gallon of chocolate sauce to drop afterward. Then the entire cheer squad had little pig stuffed animals they planned to throw at her.*

*If I were still a guardian angel, I wouldn't be able to do anything about it. Guardian angels were there to guide their charges through difficult periods of their lives, offer them meaningful advice, and watch over them to ensure their safety. A guardian angel would have to sit on their hands, merely watch from the sidelines. Then, depending on how they insinuated themselves into their charge's life, do damage control after the fact. But not me—I had fallen centuries ago. I could stop it from happening and make sure those bitter bitches got what they deserved.*

*The bullying had gone from manageable to out of control over the course of the school year. In some of my visions, the bullies knocked Diana's books out of her hands, or stole her lunch and called her some tired fat insults. In another, they stole her clothes from her gym locker, forcing her to wear sweaty, dirty clothes all day. In my second-to-last vision, they went too far when they gave her a chocolate brownie with laxatives in it. They crowded around her bathroom stall, berating her for getting sick and blowing up the bathroom. After seeing that, I vowed that the next time I'd be there to protect her. So here I was, in a high school, impersonating a substitute teacher to prevent irreparable emotional damage.*

*I had no clue why they felt justified in tormenting Diana. She was a sweet, shy girl. At least she was the last time I saw her. I hadn't seen her in person since she started high school when she was fourteen. I can't*

believe she's eighteen now; time really flies. *Unless she truly needed me, I tried my best not to interfere. She needed to grow up and learn her own hard lessons so she would become the woman she was meant to be. She needed to build her emotional and mental strength for what was to come. If I watched her too closely like I did after her mother passed away, I knew I'd be too tempted to butt in and help. I had kept my distance for long enough though. I couldn't let her go through this and suffer the long-term trauma it would cause.*

*The bell rang, signaling the end of the period. It's almost time. I straightened my corny bowtie and pulled my long, curly hair into a low bun. Donning my fake, oversized nerd glasses, I hoped they would be enough to conceal my face from Diana. If my visions were right, she'd eventually start traveling to me, and I didn't want her to recognize me right away. Students started to trickle in and take their seats. I went to the board and wrote my fake name on the wall— Mr. Azel. Before she walked through the door, I felt her presence. A static electricity shivered down my spine and through my wings. Even though they were hidden, I could still feel the current travel all the way to my wingtips. The air shifted in a way I couldn't describe. When I looked up, I saw Diana standing across from the open doorway. She was talking to a young man with glasses and swooped back hair. I haven't seen him in any of my visions before... would definitely look into him.*

*She held a canvas tote bag at her side with the school logo on the side. It was loaded with so many books I could see the outline of one pressed against the side of the bag. She wore black skinny jeans, a white tee shirt, a demon jacket, and red Chuck Taylors that matched her blood red lipstick. Her curly hair was tied into a top knot and her skin glowed with a natural radiance. Diana had done her fair share of growing since the last time I'd seen her in person. My visions were*



*usually snippets, rarely full events unless they were pivotal moments in her life. They didn't do her justice. Somehow the sweet little teenager I saw four years ago had turned into a beautiful young woman. This Diana possessed a lot more confidence, carried herself in a way that commanded the room. Everyone turned her way and looked at her when she walked by. Many of her classmates said hello to her, spare the two Beverly Hills bimbo wannabes sitting in the back. They just glared at her. She glanced at the board and strode over to me.*

*"Hi, Mr. Azel, my name's Diana Rossi," she said, extending her hand to me.*

*"Nice to meet you, Ms. Rossi," I replied as I lightly shook her hand. My hand swallowed hers, and it was so small compared to mine that I could barely see the tips of her red fingernails.*

*She giggled, most likely at my formality, as I lost myself in her steel blue eyes. How had I never noticed how enchanting they were before? Framed by dark, full lashes, their swirling mix of blue and gray reminded me of Celestite crystals. They sparkled with a vitality I rarely saw these days.*

*"Oh, my God, you're such a suck up. Why don't you suck his dick, you pathetic teacher's pet," one of the girls in the back of the class shouted at Diana. The girl closed her fist and pumped it in front of her mouth to mimic her suggestion.*

*Her little sidekick got a good laugh out of that. Every seat in the room was almost full, and all eyes were on Diana.*

*"I don't make a habit of seducing teachers, Torie," Diana replied coolly. "I guess you have to, though, considering how you've already sucked all the male students' dicks at this school. At least the ones that don't care about getting herpes." Diana dropped her bag on the desk and sat down, front and center.*

*My mouth dropped. This was not the Diana I met four years ago. Some students smiled at her, and a lot of them laughed at her barb. The girls in the back huffed, whispering to each other with sour faces. Diana took out a book and a notebook with a leopard pen, and acted like they weren't even there, as if they were beneath her.*

*I had thought she may need me to protect her from bullies, but maybe she didn't need me, afterall. Her newfound confidence led to a smart-ass mouth that was bound to either get her into trouble, or be her saving grace. If she learned how to wield her words like a sword, they could serve as protection for what was to come.*

### *Present Day*

I woke up, rubbing the sleep out of my eyes. Sometimes I'd get flashback visions in my sleep, but it hadn't happened for a while. *Maybe sleeping next to Diana triggered it?* Either way, I took it for what it was—an omen. Seeing a flashback of Diana conquering her enemies was hopefully prophetic. Diana would need every kind of weapon and strength in her upcoming fight against Red, but if she was properly equipped, she had a chance at changing the world's fate for the better. Her wit and intellect were her greatest strengths, and so was her ability to think on her feet. But her lack of magical knowledge was a weakness. So was her lack of familiarity with the magical world. We needed to get a jump on her magical education, ASAP. *I'll talk to Desmond about that today.*

Diana's prone form was peaceful in sleep and blissfully unaware of the drama I foresaw going down at

the meeting tonight. Not all of my visions held true; the present was forever shifting, hanging by a thread of possibilities like a flame in the wind. The tiniest of actions could have ripple-effect consequences that changed everything. Hopefully, tonight worked out in our favor.

I wasn't supposed to wake up next to Diana, but she had mindlinked me sometime last night, unable to sleep alone in bed. I suspected that would happen, so I faded in to get her without waking her sister up. Diana was a fiercely independent woman, no doubt, but she still enjoyed being cuddled at night. She craved love, support, and approval—even if she wouldn't admit it—and I was more than happy to give her that.

The other guys were all different shades of red, from furious to mildly annoyed, about what happened. I was the only one that wasn't mad at Diana. She was twenty-two-years old and had just found out that she was not only magical, but was set to change the world's future. Her immortality, fathers' legacies, and family drama hadn't even begun to sink in for her yet. I knew those emotional break-downs were coming, and I would be there for her when they did. She was going to make mistakes and hopefully learn from them. The next year would be a huge period of growth for her. I guessed it helped that I had the Sight, and could see that her time-hop had no negative impacts down the road, too. I had a lot of insight on her actions for the next few months, actually.

We slept in her bed together. Last night and tonight I shared with Bash, and doubted she wanted to sleep next to him in his current mood. I also warded both our minds against his intrusion for the night, in case he felt like being petty. He claimed to have changed since the last time we dated, but it was always better to be safe than sorry with him. It was ironic how he faulted Diana for her impulsivity, when he was one of the most impulsive people I had ever met.

She yawned, turning away from me and snuggling her back into my chest. Her ass sat firmly against my groin, making it hard for me to focus on anything else we had going on today. Forget about last night's drama and today's impending meeting. I simply wanted to snuggle with Diana under my wing and listen to her talk in her sleep more. She had said my name last night, and for a moment I wished I knew what she was dreaming about. I wanted to know everything about her, from how her mind worked, to her favorite icecream flavor. Being with her in real life was so much better than watching over her from afar. I meant what I said last night to her grandma—I didn't regret starting a relationship with her. Yes, it came with some unexpected surprises—and my exes—but we were all stronger as a unit. And my feelings for Bash and Desmond had never completely faded either.

“Good morning, honey,” I cooed as I nuzzled my face into her hair, licking the outer shell of her ear to wake her up. I brushed my wing against her bare arm, leaving goose pimples in its wake.

“No,” she said, burrowing herself deeper into me. Heaven in a handbasket, her ass was so warm as it molded to my dick. “It's not time to wake up until my alarm goes off.”

“Diana, you didn't set an alarm...you never do,” I pointed out. We really needed to get her on a better schedule for her training.

“Exactly,” she whispered.

I beat my wing, trying to use the air to wake her up, but she didn't budge. She just put her hand over her face to block it. Then I tried to rub her thigh to wake her up, but couldn't help myself from trailing my hand around to her ass. Her top leg was bent, her knee close to her stomach, giving me the perfect access to press my fingers to the soft flesh between her thighs, right over her pink panties. She had fallen asleep last night in them

and one of my tanks, like a present wrapped especially for me. I ran my fingers under the soft cotton, between her pussy lips, and gently stroked her.

She stirred, lightly moaning. **Zaz...**

I brought my fingers to her entrance, pushing on it but not letting them sink into her heat. I wanted her consent first.

**Zaaaaaz**, she groaned through the link. **Why did you stop? I want you.**

**How badly? Tell me how badly you want me to shove my fingers inside that creamy pussy and make you come first thing in the morning?** I loved the whiny whimper she made afterward. Her neediness called to the part inside me that wanted to give her everything.

She backed her ass up against me, pushing the tips of my fingers inside her. Turning her head over her shoulder, she gave me wide, pleading eyes that melted some of my resolve to make her ask nicely. Sue me, but I loved hearing my partner beg a little.

“Please,” she said sweetly. “I want you to make me come so hard I leave a stain on the bed. Then I want to return the favor.”

No sarcasm or snark—she was as sweet as honey. How could I say no when she was being so agreeable? I threw her leg over mine, turning her slightly onto her back to give myself better access. Sliding a finger inside her, I marveled at how silky and smooth she felt as I stroked her walls.

“Mmmmm,” she moaned. I used my thumb to rub her clit, and she bucked against me. I banded my other arm around her breasts so she couldn’t get away. Her hard nipples grazed my forearm and I *wanted* them. In my mouth, around my dick, on my face. I added a second finger, and she ground her hips on me. Curving my

fingers, I hit that sweet spot inside her. She rode them, chasing her bliss with every cant of her hips. Her pussy stretched around me as a gasp fell from her lips.

“You said my name in your sleep last night,” I taunted her, slowing my pace and holding her tighter as I added a third finger. Her whimpers melded with the wet sound of my fingers moving within her. “What were you dreaming about?”

She whined as she wriggled around, trying to find more friction. I pressed my thumb against her swollen clit, and she groaned. “I dreamed about riding your dick. Ever since I had it in my mouth, I’ve wondered what it would feel like inside me...how it would feel if I took it in my ass too...”

*Christ. Fuck.* Where did that come from? She was just as filthy as the five of us. “Those are some unholy thoughts, honey. You’re fucking *dirty*.”

“You’re a fallen angel, I’m sure you’ve done worse things,” she retorted.

And how right she was. I did a lot of those dirty, filthy things before my fall from grace, too. Hearing her talk like that made my blood run hot. I loved her confidence in everything, inside the bedroom and out. I removed my fingers, slapping right over her clit. Her mouth dropped and she moaned, her hooded eyes gazing at me with a silent plea. I did it again before moving off her and scooting to sit on my knees. I flapped my wings a few times, giving them some room to stretch.

“Change of plans,” I directed as I rolled her all the way onto her back and pulled her toward me, situating myself right between her spread legs. “You’re a filthy little thing, and I want to lick you clean,” I rasped, my voice low. I tugged at her panties, intent on ripping them off.

***Please don't rip them, I only have so many pairs,*** she requested.

I respected her wishes, taking her panties off for her and placing them on the other side of the bed. She pulled her thighs up toward her chest, and I held them open. Her pussy glistened, wet and slightly swollen from me finger-fucking it. I sucked on her lips, licking and nipping everywhere but the one place it mattered most. When she started breathing heavier, I slid two fingers inside her, scissoring them apart to open her up for later. I didn't want to hurt her.

"Fuck, *fuck*," she cursed in frustration. "Zaz, lick my clit, *pleeeeeaaaase*," she groaned.

***What did you say?*** I asked, taking my fingers out and plunging my tongue into her passage. She tasted so sweet. So good.

"Zaz, please suck my clit, I'm so close." Her voice sounded like a symphony of sexual rapture, all breathy and whiny. "*Please!*"

I ran the flat of my tongue up her center, flicking her clit with it in sharp motions until her knees started shaking.

***Play with your nipples, twist them, you dirty girl. Lick your fingers, get them wet.***

She did as I asked, twisting her nipples with her spit-covered thumb and forefinger. Her thighs shook as her hips bucked wildly beneath me.

***You're my filthy, slutty angel on earth, huh honey? So good, and yet so fucking bad,*** I linked her while switching to long, deep sucks on her clit. I put three fingers inside her, thrusting them in deep.

Some hoarse, mewling sound came out of her as she tried to clamp her thighs around my head, but I held them. *I'm not done with you yet.* I wanted that wet spot on her bed like a fucking trophy, and then I wanted to

make her sit in it later like the bad girl she was. She clenched around my fingers, her pussy spasming as she squirted everywhere.

Licking her a few more times, I sucked up her juices and moaned to myself. She laid there, panting with her head thrown back. There was a soaked spot on the bed from her release, and I smiled to myself. *Fuck, yeah.*

Positive vibes rolled off her in waves, and I felt them all over the room. I rubbed the soft flesh of her tummy, below her belly button before resting my head on it. Running my finger tip up to her nipple, I circled it.

***I want to put my dick inside you. Do you need to rest?*** I wanted to make sure she was coherent. Sometimes when two angels had sex, they overwhelmed themselves with positivity and bliss, and needed time to come down from it before they could function properly. It was akin to a drug high.

***That was amazing; I feel like I'm floating on cloud nine. Get inside me, Zaz,*** she linked me, sitting up on her elbows to look at me. Her pupils were blown out, black almost completely eclipsing her irises, and they reminded me of Bash's. Her lazy, sated smile looked goofy, contrasting oddly with her eyes.

I got up and took my shirt, boxer-briefs, and sweatpants off. My cock bounced, excited for what was to come. Her eyes went wide as they zeroed in on my dick. Smiling, I walked over to her side of the bed to give her an up-close look, even though she had seen it before in our dream-fuck with Bash.

"Why didn't it look that vibrant in the dream with Bash?" The silvery glow was so strong that it made me wince a bit.

"Because this isn't a dream—it's real life," I answered. Her curvy, luscious body was such a distraction that I



lost some of the control I had over my shift. I felt my eyes change to their white, pupilless form.

“They looked like that when you had that vision over dinner,” she noticed. “What do you look like completely shifted?”

“One day you’ll see, but hopefully not today. It takes a while to shift back, and it’s...*a lot*. Fallen angels don’t look like they do in the television shows and movies you watch, honey.”

“But I want to see—” she started to say, but I pounced on her, kissing her quiet before she could finish her thought. I hated doing that to her, but I didn’t want to talk about it, or show her. A shifted angel was one thing to explain, but a shifted fallen angel? That was for another time. Right now, I just wanted to fuck her senseless until she was smiling like a lunatic.

My wings flared out, shielding us from the recessed lighting in the ceiling. I ground myself against her as I stared into her perfect face. In the shadows, she looked sultry, with her puffy cupid’s bow lips and blown out eyes. I could have sworn her canines pointed slightly. I kissed her from her jawline to her collarbone, dipping down to suck on one of her hard nipples.

***Are you ready for an experience?*** I asked her.

She nodded, licking her lips in anticipation. I pushed inside of her soaking-wet, hot sex, and she grit her teeth. She was *snug*. The deeper I got, the more I could feel her squeezing me. I started with slow, deep thrusts until I bottomed out. Her little moans and whimpers were so vulnerable sounding. Beads of sweat beaded on her forehead, and I licked them off.

***You’re everything, Diana. Perfect in every possible way.*** I had to tell her, because by the time this was over, she was going to be a crying mess.

***I can't describe it—you make me feel so... good. I feel so happy.***

I slammed into her harder, throwing her knees over my shoulders to go even deeper. She beamed, her smile reaching from ear to ear. Every time I drove into her, I could feel the positive vibes growing, swirling around the room and pushing against us. Her golden glow took over her entire body, setting off my silver one. I wrapped my hand around her throat, not to choke her, but to keep her still. Seeing our skin glowing together was beyond beautiful.

She threw her head back, groaning. I could feel her body start to vibrate from the inside out. It traveled through me, creating a ringing sound frequency.

“Zaz...” she said, her voice full of concern, “I can feel myself vibrating, but it’s not like when I time-hop. Do you feel that, too?”

“Yeah, honey, I have the same feeling. It happens when angels have sex, especially soulbonded ones. Can you feel the positivity crashing through you?”

“Yes,” she said as tears welled in her eyes. “I feel so good. So happy, I could fucking burst. It’s overwhelming.”

I tipped back, sitting on the bed and taking her with me, so she bounced in my lap.

“I want to make you feel like that all the time. You’re my perfect, filthy-mouthed piece of Heaven on earth,” I rasped.

She pushed me flat against the bed and rode me, slamming herself down on my dick. I held onto her hips, moving her forward with every slam so my V brushed her clit. I reached back, rubbing my thumb against her puckered asshole. Her moans reached deafening levels.

“Next time, I’m going to take your ass and let one of the other guys have your pussy. We’ll fuck you until

you're fall apart in our arms," I promised her.

She fluttered around me, squeezing me until I busted inside her. I held her close, kissing her neck when she collapsed on top of me and started crying. She was coming down from the massive amount of positive energy in the room, and it would take her a while to reach equilibrium again, let alone a tolerable level.

"You okay?" I asked her.

Before she could answer, Bash let himself in without knocking. He looked at us, saw the tears on Diana's face, and then glared at me.

"She's supposed to feel guilty about her behavior, not thoroughly fucked and high as fuck on dopamine and positive angel vibes," he snarked.

I flashed a huge smile at Bash while I gripped her ass. "Seems like you're jealous that you slept alone. Don't waste life being mad over spilled milk and what-ifs, Bash."

He huffed and left the room, leaving the door open. I felt the positivity trail after him as it spread throughout the suite. The others wouldn't feel it as acutely as we did, but they would get a mood-boost.

"Zaz, how come I didn't get like this when we had that threesome in my dream with Bash?" Diana was curious about everything.

"When Bash visited me in my dreams in the past, it never translated the same as it did in real life. The vibes are at their strongest between angels, so if more people are added, it dilutes."

"In the past, huh? I think I figured it out. You dated Bash and Desmond before I was even thought of, didn't you?" she asked me.

"Yeah. I met them all in a club, in New York actually. I tried to get together with Ares, but ended up hitting it off

with Desmond. Then after a while Bash just weaseled his way in, and it became three people instead of two. Malcolm wasn't born yet, either," I laughed. "They weren't as good at sharing or expressing their feelings back then, so it was a clusterfuck of drama."

"Bash *is* drama," she replied. "The second coming of William Shakespeare, accent and all."

"Midsummer Bash Dream," I snickered.

"Bashius Caesar," she giggled.

"The Taming of the Bash," I full-belly laughed, slapping Diana's ass.

"Oh! Much Ado About Bash," she cackled.

***When you two are done talking shit, Ares is making enough pancakes to feed a Spartan army, Bash snapped. Your brother is here Diana, so put some clothes on.***

"I'd ask where his sense of humor went, but he didn't really have one to begin with," she wheezed through her cackling laughter. She rolled away from me, rushing into her ensuite bathroom to clean off.

I picked a pair of leggings and a long tank top from her closet. One of her drawers had a sports bra and some underthings. When she came out, she smiled.

"I'm not sure what I did to deserve someone as sweet as you," she commented, smiling at me. Her skin had a radiant glow, and she seemed delighted. "I'm so glad you're here, though."

"I am too, honey."



Diana and I walked into an open floor space full of raucous talking, hand gestures, and smiles. Even Bash's grumpy mood seemed to lighten. *It seems all the positive vibes paid off.* Now the guys could forget about being mad at Diana for her time-hop escapade. Oisín smiled at us after we sat down on the empty couch. I got up to make us plates, and he started laughing.

"I wonder where all of this positivity and happiness came from?" he said in an obvious tone. He didn't seem to think it was funny, but he wasn't outwardly angry. Reading him was more difficult than I cared to admit.

Diana looked at him with a puzzled expression, not putting two and two together right away. I sat next to her and handed her a plate of pancakes and bacon.

"Oisín is half angel, Diana," I pointed out. "He can feel the positivity more than the others..."

She scowled, raising an eyebrow at her brother. She leaned back in her chair and took a sip of her orange juice. "Don't go all protective big brother on me. I made it almost twenty-three years without you—don't you dare scare off my guys or try to tell me how to live my life."

"Whoa," he said, holding his hands up in a mock surrender, "I wasn't. I actually like that one. Well, I like most of them," he said, scanning us all. I had a feeling Bash was the one he didn't like, given the way his mouth frowned a bit when his gaze landed on him. "I was just teasing you. Go get laid and have fun—that's the Morningstar motto."

"Um, thanks..." Diana said.

"Little Goddess, you gotta try this," Ares said, passing a little white bowl to Desmond, who smiled at Diana as he passed it to her.

"Oh, is this blueberry syrup?!" she exclaimed. "I love blueberry syrup. Thank you, Ares."

“You’re welcome. I woke your sister up and asked her what you put on your pancakes,” he said before stuffing a whole piece of crispy bacon in his mouth.

“I’m sure she appreciated that,” Diana said, biting her cheek in an effort not to laugh.

We ate our food in relative silence. Ares hit the nail on the head with the pancakes. They were light and airy, but didn’t fall apart in the syrup. Mine always came out thick and heavy, a product of being in several armies over the centuries.

“What should I expect at this meeting today?” Diana asked. “I want to come prepared.”

“We’ll all be there, along with your family, Michael and some representatives from upstairs, Judas and his people, and some allies we have,” Bash said. “It can either go well, or be a complete shit show. Your dad is the unpredictable factor. What do you think, Az?”

I thought about it for a minute before responding. “He answers to God. And they can be cryptic at the best of times. Works in mysterious ways and all that jazz.”

“What allies are you inviting? I want to know if I should come armed or not,” Oisín said.

“You’re Diana’s family, which means you’re part of our family,” Desmond stated. “I only invited allies who can at least tolerate you. Also invited some Morningstar supporters, because we need all the help we can get.”

“Morningstar supporters?” Diana asked.

“Yeah, sister. Our family is like royalty. There’s a core group in hell that wants a Morningstar on the throne, whether it’s dear old Dad or one of us. Aren’t you five teaching her history?”

“No, we were too busy being attacked by reptile people and moving across the country. You’ve been falling out of the loop since you stopped cat-creeping,”

Mal joked, his humor extra dry this morning. “But you are the most knowledgeable one here when it comes to history, considering how old you are. You should teach it to her.”

Oisín smiled, and I swear it was weird how they spoke each other’s sarcastic language. “I’d like that. It’s a good way to spend time with my littlest sister. Well, currently my only sister. Paladria passed away a while back.”

“I’m sorry, Oisín. Sucks I’ll never meet her. How did she pass?” Diana inquired.

“Damon snapped her neck and burnt her remains. She was half human, so she wasn’t as strong as the rest of us, and he saw that as a weakness...” Oisín seemed genuinely sad about it. “He may not seem like a threat, but he’s just as powerful as all of us. He’s fucking unhinged, and that’s coming from *me*.”

Diana shifted forward, taking her brother’s hand, as she spoke to him. “Don’t worry, we’ll end him. No one fucks with me, my guys, or my family and gets away with it.”

“Hades as my witness, I’ll turn his blood into dye for my war uniform,” Ares said. “The cape and feather on the top of my helmet are due for a spruce-up.”

“That’s why I like you, Ares. You’re resourceful and have a can-do attitude,” Oisín commented. “And when I was a cat, you always gave me snacks.”

“You reminded me of the tiger I had when I lived on Olympus, Bruce. He lived for fifty years, and I owe it to his diet. I exclusively fed him the organs and entrails of my enemies.”

“An iron rich diet does a body good,” Oisín quipped.

“And there goes my appetite,” Diana sighed, bringing her plate to the sink, shaking her head. “Charlie and I want to go for a walk around the resort, maybe hang out

by the pool for a few hours. Can someone prep me when I get back, so I know who the major players at this meeting are? How they think?”

“Yeah, dollface, I got you. Bring one of us with you, please? Just so we know you’re safe.”

She looked around. “Does anyone want to come to the pool?”

“I do,” Mal and Oisín said together.

“I’ll see both of you in thirty minutes. I gotta get changed,” she said over her shoulder as she walked toward her room.

Oisín faded out, presumably to get ready. I had a feeling hanging out with his sister was only one of the reasons he wanted to go.

“Az, do you want to come see Judas? We’re going to get some last-minute things together before the meeting tonight. We can grab some lunch afterward?” Desmond asked me, a nervous redness spreading over his cheeks. It was cute to see a scary, grown ass demon who assassinated and tortured more than his fair share of people blush.

“Yeah, give me a few to get out of my sweats.”

When I went into the room I’d been sharing with Bash to get dressed, I couldn’t help but smirk. That was Desmond trying. Maybe this whole arrangement wouldn’t blow up in my face after all.



# DESMOND

## *Chapter 19*

“Emilio Cordova is the head of the Mala Luna Pack. They’re based in Central America, and his ancestors were strong supporters of your father’s reign because he loosened restrictions on recruitment and pack growth, which Red has since restricted. I don’t know much about them, except that they have alliances with werewolf packs in Mexico, Texas, and Florida. Judas trusts them.” I recounted all of the information I knew about them to Diana as she put the finishing touches on her makeup.

She wore black winged liner, mascara, a smokey eye, and crimson lipstick that perfectly accentuated the curve of her bottom lip. She was stunning without it all, but with it, she looked badass as fuck.

“Anyone else I should know about?” she asked, rising from the vanity in her bathroom and walking to her closet. Her black satin robe swayed as she moved, and I had trouble focusing.

I had spent so much time strategizing our next steps and pulling this meeting together that I barely had time with Diana since we arrived in Vegas. I was trying to take the talk we had seriously. Instead of controlling everything, I asked her opinions. I stopped treating her like a child, and if I asked her to do something that seemed excessively controlling, I gave her the reason why—usually because of safety. Despite how angry I was

with her for time-hopping, I didn't freak out or blow up at her. I swallowed my feelings instead and threw myself into planning the meeting and reaching out to contacts we'd made throughout the centuries.

"Your brother invited some of his people. I don't know them all, but I know they'll be loyal to you because you're related to him," I responded.

"That's comforting..." her voice quivered slightly, and her shoulders were stiff. She let out a deep breath as she eyed an outfit on the hanger.

I crossed the room and stood behind her, close enough that I could feel her body heat and smell the perfume she'd dabbed on her neck. She smelled sharp and spicy, with a hint of floral undertones. I held her against me and undid her robe, pushing it off her shoulders and letting it pool on the floor. She exhaled, her shoulders loosening up as she melted into me.

"I've missed you these past couple of days," she confessed as I teased her neck with kisses. "You've put so much work into planning this meeting and gathering people we can count on, and I appreciate that."

Knowing she appreciated my hard work made the time I spent away from her worthwhile. I still heard the uncertainty in her tone and heard the rapid thumping of her heartbeat. She needed to relax before the meeting, find her confidence again. The men and women in that room were some of the most powerful supernatural beings in the world, and they'd smell her insecurity a mile away. I ran my hands over her exposed breasts, kneading the soft flesh until she moaned. Running my teeth over the tendon in her neck, I turned us around and bent her over the bed.

"If you didn't spend so much time getting ready for such an important occasion, I'd take my time fingering and feasting on your pussy, stopping every time you came close to finishing. Every time I'd let you get closer

and closer to the edge, making it that much more painful when I denied you the orgasm you desperately needed,” I whispered in her ear. My gravelly voice washed over her, making her breath stutter. “That would be the beginning of your punishment for your time-hop stunt.”

“Then what would you do to me?” she said, her voice husky, full of desire and anticipation.

I knelt and spread her folds, so I had a good view of her sex. I licked from her clit to her hole, dipping my tongue inside her and fucking her lightly before switching back to her sensitive little nub.

***I would tie you up, so your elbows touched your knees and your round, jiggy ass was in the air. I'd spank you until your perfect, milky skin was covered in red welts and marks, and then I'd fuck you. I'd have my dick in your pussy and my tail in that tight asshole. You still wouldn't be allowed to come, I licked her, flicking her clit until she started quivering. Then I switched back to tongue fucking her.***

“Desmond,” she moaned. “*Please...*”

I wanted to throw her on the bed and fuck her senseless so badly, but the meeting was in a half hour, and I knew she wouldn't have the time to right herself again.

***Then I'd let Ares or Bash fuck your face until you were choking and crying around their cocks. We'd all take turns fucking you, denying you any release until you sobbed and begged for forgiveness.***

***And then what would you do?*** she asked, thrusting her hips into my face. I held them still, only giving her so much.

***I'd finger you until you finished all over my hand. Then I'd paint your lips in your own cum before making you kneel and coming all over your face and***

***tits. We all would. Then you'd have to stay there and let it dry before servicing us all over again,*** I linked.

She was so close to coming. Her thighs convulsed as she leaned further onto the bed. I ran my tongue back to her tight little hole, licking it while I rubbed her clit. She groaned, the primal, feral sound bouncing off the walls.

“Fuck, that feels so good!” she screamed. “Fuck, I want that. I want you all to fuck me until I’m out of it and covered in cum!”

I dipped my tongue inside her, loosening up her hole while I shoved two of my fingers inside her pussy. It was wet, and within a few minutes she was clenching around me. She came on my beard, and I wiped it off on one of her ass cheeks.

Her chest was flat against the bed as she breathed in and out, each breath getting slower and deeper. She had a faint golden glow. I pulled her up and turned her around. Her eye makeup was a tad smudged, but her lipstick was perfect. The flushed redness on her face was what gave her away.

“I’d kiss your lips, but I don’t want to ruin your lipstick. Know that while we’re in that meeting, and you’re impressing everyone and being a complete badass, I’ll be cheering you on, thinking of ways to celebrate your success with you afterward,” I cooed in a deep, raspy voice laced with desire. I chastely kissed the corner of her mouth over her beauty mark.

Diana hugged me. She didn’t let go for a few minutes, and when she pulled away, she grinned. Her confidence was back in full swing. “Thank you, Sir. I’m going to get dressed and fix my makeup,” she said as she eyed her face in the mirror on the opposite wall. “I’ll meet you and the guys in the living room.”



The five of us sat in the living room, making small talk. Everyone was on pins and needles, except Ares. He thrived in high stress situations.

***Has anyone brought up who takes the throne if we successfully overthrow Red?*** Bash linked me.

***A few people, but most of them assume Lucifer will take it over. Why?*** I asked him.

***That's if he wants to take it. He willingly abdicated his position for a reason. We need another option, and we have one,*** Bash explained as he pointedly glanced toward Diana's room.

***You'd do that to her...put her in that position?*** I balked. ***Are you so callous that you'd throw her into the line of fire so quickly?***

Before he could reply, Diana stepped out of her room, pulling everyone's attention to her like a magnet. Her curly hair fell in waves down just past her shoulders, and her makeup was back to normal. She wore a long, flowy back dress with a high waist that was slit up the side. Her wrist-length billowy bell-sleeves fluttered as she moved, and the light caught the teeth necklace Ares had given her.

"I don't have a suit like you guys do, but I don't think suits are my thing, anyway," she said. "Is this okay?"

"You look perfect. Dark, mysterious, dangerously beautiful," Mal complimented. "I did get you something you can add to the look though." He waved his hand, and a black shoebox appeared on the coffee table. "Open it?"

Diana's mouth dropped as she sat on the couch. She held the box in her hands and smiled up at Mal. As

she opened the lid, I saw the golden Prada emblem. Mal was the best dressed of the five of us, and sometimes I wondered why he wasn't on a runway with his body build and bone structure. Designer shoes as a gift were the perfect way for him to express his feelings. She held up a pair of brushed, black leather booties. They had a thicker heel and laces in the front. They weren't quite combat boots, but they also weren't super dressy either—they had a perfect balance of functionality and class.

“*Prada?*” she asked in disbelief. “Mal, I've never owned a pair of designer shoes before. I threw every last penny I made at my tuition. Thank you.”

“Princess, you deserve all the designer shoes. You've been through so much in the past two months, and a lot of it was my fault. This is the least I can do,” Mal said as he bent down before her and took her plain black heels off.

He waved his hand again, and a pair of sheer black ankle socks appeared. He put them on her feet and then each boot, lacing them up and tying a bow at the top. Diana pulled him up by his shirt collar and gave him a kiss. I never thought I'd see the day those two sat at a table without fighting each other, let alone kissing each other with that much passion. Mal practically ate her face, smudging her lipstick in the process.

“Awww, that's so fucking sweet, Mal,” Ares crooned, sitting next to them and wrapping them up in a huge hug. “Hold on, lemme get a kiss in before you fix it for her, Mal.” He licked Diana's lips, biting the bottom one before plunging his tongue in for a wildly sexual kiss that had the whole room readjusting themselves.

Mal used his telekinesis to move Diana's lipstick back into place before opening the camera app on his phone and showing her how she looked. “Good as new.”

“I never thought to use telekinesis for something so ordinary. I guess because it's so hard for me, I imagine

using it for ridiculously involved tasks,” Diana admitted.

“We’ll work on it. You may not have telekinesis, but I can teach you how to move and teleport objects. It’ll take time, but we’ll get there,” Mal assured her.

***Time she may or may not have, depending on how everything unfolds,*** Bash linked. The way Mal whipped around to glare at him made me think that Bash linked everyone that thought but Diana. Where the fuck was this sour attitude coming from today?

We faded to the meeting room and waited outside the door. We were right on time, just as I planned. We walked into a room filled with at least forty beings from every corner of the globe and all walks of life. They turned to face us, and all eyes landed on Diana.

“Welcome, Diana,” Judas boomed, his voice jovial and laid back as usual. He leaned back in his chair, his posture relaxed. I didn’t miss how he sat next to Angela. Something was definitely going on there. “Gentlemen, good to see you all. Take a seat.”

I guided Diana to sit at the other head position at the table, across from Judas, with Ares and I sitting to her left and right. Then the rest of our crew sat in the empty seats on either side. I scanned my gaze up and down the length of the table, and saw some familiar faces. Tyran Sullivan, the most dangerous Sluagh in Ireland. Apollo, Ares’ brother. Nostra D’Amico, the leader of the deadliest vampire clan in Italy. They acted as a source of vigilante law among the supernatural world there. He was Judas’ cousin and sire. Wren Black, the leader of the notorious Blackfeather Murder, the deadliest group of Crow Shifters in North America. Mother Lorraine, the de facto head of Witches and Warlocks in New York City. She sat next to Nonna, so I assumed they were friends and that connection was what brought her here. Oisín sat with Beelzebub, his close friend and one of the most powerful demons in Hell. He had friends in the darkest,

most depraved places and behind the scenes in Hell's political machine. In the middle of the board table was Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Cassiel. They were the highest-ranking archangels in Heaven and to have them here boded well for their support of Diana.

"I think a great way to start the meeting is to go around the table and introduce ourselves. Many of us are strangers, or have only heard of each other in passing," I said, making sure to speak loudly so my voice carried.

One by one everyone went around and gave a quick introduction of who they were. Diana introduced herself last, saying exactly what we had practiced to garner the crowd's favor. "My name is Diana Rossi Morningstar, daughter of Michael the Archangel, Lucifer, and the late Marilyn Rossi. I'm from Brooklyn, but recently relocated to Las Vegas for my and my family's safety. Red put a hit on me, and I'm being hunted by my half-brother Damon Morningstar. Thank you all for coming today."

"Any chance I have to rid the world of Damon Morningstar, I'll take. Thank you for having us," a tall, slim woman said from a seat toward the middle of the table. "My name is Mariah Malone, and I represent the Druid Groves of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Before we go further, can you explain how you're both Lucifer and Michael's child? How is that possible?"

"Michael, I think that's something you could explain," Az jumped in, saving Diana from having to answer the awkward question.

"I've been having an on-again off-again affair with Lucifer Morningstar since before he fell from grace. We met Marilyn, a witch, at a club and made Diana. She has a third of each of our DNA," Michael explained to a staring, flabbergasted crowd. "For Diana's safety, Lucifer and I temporarily bound her powers until she turned



twenty-two. That's why she recently came into her magic."

"So that would make Diana two-thirds angel, and one-third witch," Mariah said, a thoughtful look on her face. "Hmmm..."

"And one hundred percent perfect," Ares chimed in. He grinned, giving Diana googly eyes.

"Thank you, Ares," Diana said. "Does that ratio mean anything?"

"It's a unique mix, and many feel that it may make you more powerful. Angels rarely, if ever, reproduce. Lucifer and I are among the few exceptions. Most angels are created, not born," Michael explained. "For example, Azazel was made into an angel after he passed over from his human life, because of the circumstances of his death."

Diana didn't seem surprised, and I wondered if Azazel had told her the entire story of his death. Did he show her his shifted form?

"Maybe that explains some of my magical capabilities," Diana commented. "But I don't want to get off topic. We called everyone here because Red is dangerous, unstable, and ruining Hell and the communities that belong to it. He's bringing about the demise of the world as we know it by trying to expand Hell on earth. That impacts everyone at this table. I want to stop him."

"How do we know this isn't a grab for power? The men you've aligned yourself with have worked as Red's personal assassin team for centuries. They're also known instigators and have stirred the pot to get their way in the past. Now all of a sudden, they want him gone?" D'Amico said, directing his question more at the six of us instead of just Diana.

“Yes, we do. We’ve seen the damage he’s done to Hell from the front row—how he kills those that merely think of disagreeing with him. How he’s tortured people and infringed on their rights. Vampires are one of the groups he’s fucked over the most, especially smaller covens,” Desmond said.

“Saying he’s bringing about the ‘demise of Earth’ is a bit of a stretch though, isn’t it?” Cordova asked, his suspicion clear in his voice. “Surely, Ms. Morningstar is exaggerating on that front?”

“Diana never lies or exaggerates,” Ares said, rising from the table with a stone-cold glare on his face. “Azazel has had visions of Diana for centuries, since before she was born. He’s seen the potential damage Red can do. He’s also seen Diana fighting him.”

“I’ve heard of your visions... Weren’t you disgraced over fabricating visions?” Tyran said. I was surprised he’d say that. I could have sworn he’d be on our side, given his friendship with Judas. He slyly winked at me, and I caught on. He wanted to address the concern before someone else brought it up.

I leaned over the table, pointing my gaze at Michael. He’d have to come clean over what happened to Azazel if he expected any help from the rest of the magical community. “Again, I think that’s an explanation Michael needs to give.”

Raphael cut a scathing gaze at Michael, silently begging him not to speak. The man was so selfish that he’d rather us lose support than admit his wrongdoings. *Unbelievable*. Now I know what Azazel meant when he said *‘Heaven is a contrived perfection.’*

“Those charges were fake,” Michael admitted, holding his head high. “Heaven wasn’t ready to accept the world’s impending fate, and it was easier to get rid of Azazel than prepare for what he had seen. He was sentenced to death by wing removal, but I fought for him

to be disgraced so he could keep an eye on Diana when she finally arrived. Little did I know she'd be my daughter.”

Whispers and sounds of disgust rang throughout the room at the revelation. People openly regarded Michael with hostility, and he dropped his gaze to the floor. Diana rolled her eyes, shifting in her chair so her right leg crossed over her left. We'd have to talk about body language at some point. She couldn't be seen throwing an attitude in public meetings, as it could be a sign of disrespect.

“If Ares and Apollo don't mind helping me, I can show you all two key visions I've had,” Azazel offered. “They could broadcast it to the room, maybe like a projector?”

“Oh, we definitely could,” Apollo quipped. He stood from his seat, walking over to Ares and Azazel. His Santorini-blue shirt highlighted his brilliant, ocean blue eyes. Apollo was barely shorter than his brother, but whereas Ares was packed with muscle, he had a runner's build—slimmer, but still muscular in his own right. His golden blond hair was tied in a low man bun.

He held hands with both Ares and Azazel, and they broadcasted two starkly different visions to the room. They flickered against a blank white wall on the opposite end of the room, like a movie theater projector. The first was short, under a minute long. Diana was dressed in golden body armor, fighting Red in what looked to be a destroyed Times Square. The five of us were there, along with some of the allies in this room, and others, battling his army. The backdrop of the city was on fire, smoke and ash falling from the sky. Azazel flew above her, his wings covered in ashes.

The second vision was a little longer. The plaza in Pandemonium, Hell's capital city, was filled with demonic soldiers, standing in neat rows from corner to corner.

There had to be hundreds of reptile shifters, masked fighters, trolls, vampires, and other paranormal beings gathered. They listened raptly as Red talked about how magic had been suppressed and hidden away on earth for long enough. It was time for supernatural supremacy, to take back what had once been ours.

Until now, Diana hadn't seen the visions for herself. I'd summarized them for her while prepping her for the meeting, so she knew what she was up against. The stunned look on her face let me know I should have done it sooner. *Not in a room full of people.* Thankfully, Judas deflected attention away from Diana.

"The Costa Coven were not the vampires in that vision," he bellowed, "And any coven that sides with someone who treads on vampires' freedoms is no ally of mine." He looked at D'Amico, silently measuring him. "Stand with me, cousin. Let's align ourselves on the right side of history. Help me unite the American and European covens against Red."

"I only questioned them to better understand their motives, Judas. I'll always stand with you," D'Amico declared. "Diana, you have full disposal of my coven's forces when the time comes to fight."

"Thank you. I look forward to this being a prosperous alliance for both of us," Diana agreed as she shook his hand. Magical sparks flew from their joining, sealing his promise in a magical contract.

"Let's say you're successful in taking out Red... Who takes the throne?" Wren Black asked. "I support a woman on the throne, although there hasn't been one in my lifetime. I do foresee some factions of Hell not agreeing with your reign. They'll use your inexperience and gender against you."

"Thank you for your support, but I have no plans of taking the throne. My father, Lucifer, will retake his position. We're currently searching for him so he can join

the fight and hopefully lead our army, just like he did for the Battle of Heaven.”

Gabriel laughed, drawing everyone’s attention. “Some would say your father lost that battle,” he guffawed. “Your other father literally kicked him out of heaven and watched him fall. Doesn’t seem like he’d be that great of a General.”

“Love is complicated, as anyone who has experienced it can attest,” Diana said, drowning her words in a dangerously saccharine sweetness that knocked Gabriel down a peg. “Him losing is *your* perspective. I’m sure many of the people in this room would see his disgrace as a win. Lucifer created free will, a place for the less than holy to congregate and build something truly beautiful. Spoiler, Gabriel, more of the world falls short of your standards than you think...and they end up *downstairs*.”

My smile reached from ear to ear, practically splitting my face Joker style. Diana came up with that all on her own. And her delivery was beyond perfect. If Lucifer didn’t want his throne, and Diana somehow ended up with the position, she had the bullshitting down pat.

“Anyway,” Mal said, steering the conversation along, “We do have a surprise for everyone. Earlier in the week, we were attacked by Damon Morningstar. We were able to detain one of his soldiers, and figured we’d question him in front of you all. He may know something, he may not. Either way, torturing him should be fun. Who’s in?”

“Me!” Ares and Judas yelled. Their faces beamed with glee as they jumped around like it was Christmas morning.

“Yeah, why not,” Bash said, standing from the table and patting Ares on the back. “This can be like the time we ran into Judas when we were dumping that body in the Mojave desert.”

“Yeah! We were dumping bodies from the same gang. Turns out they fucked us both over. Their mistake. The murder spree we went on that afternoon was one for the books, boys,” Judas threw his arms over Ares and Bash.

“That vacation was so much fun. We got to meet Cher, and we ate at that buffet afterward, remember?” Ares asked, his vision glazing over as he remembered what was probably one of the best days of his life. He was *obsessed* with Cher.

“I’ll go get him out of the holding cell. Let’s have some fun!” Judas exclaimed before he burst into a cloud of bats and flew from the room.

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## Chapter 20

Everyone in the room rose from their seats, congregating toward the outskirts of the room while Mal rearranged the furniture, teleporting all the tables away and moving the chairs in a circle around the perimeter. A few more people spoke to Diana while we waited for Judas, and I saw her shake hands with them. The little sparks that flew out from their joined hands meant that a deal was made. She was a natural at forging alliances for our cause. Beautiful, smart, political, and thick as fuck. *Diana is the perfect woman; thank the stars she's mine.*

*Her tight cunt is yours. You should fuck it after this meeting is over,* the voice inside my head whispered. Today, he sounded like that comedian with the stand-up special on Netflix about machines. *Better yet, instead of torturing this useless foot soldier, why not publicly fuck Diana in front of all these people. Show them who she belongs to and who'll be annihilating them if they so much as think of crossing her.*

Those were some dangerous thoughts, partly because I wanted to do that so badly. The only reason I didn't was because this meeting was important. People needed to take Diana seriously, and that would be hard to do if her ass was in the air, covered in handprints with jizz dripping down her thighs.

*You're no fun, the voice whined. Eventually, you'll give in... you can only hold your crazy in for so long before it erupts and hits everyone with lava.*

Judas came back with two guards and the masked soldier. Our prisoner smelled like piss, fear, and defeat, a heady combination for sure. We'd been holding him in the dark, with minimal food and water, since we took him hostage from Brooklyn. The guys wanted to question him right then and there, but I had persuaded them to wait.

Keeping him in the dark and letting his fear take over would make our jobs easier in the end. I also wanted Diana to see it, and she had been MIA at the time. She deserved to watch her enemies die. Good thing we'd waited, because torturing and killing him at the meeting was a stroke of genius. A show of strength and conviction? *Brilliant*, as Bash's fancy British ass would say.

Judas knelt our prisoner in the middle of the room, where everyone could see him. He still wore his original outfit, clad head to toe in combat black. His magical cuffs and the blindfold over his mask meant he couldn't move or see anything. The light tremor that overtook his body meant my tactics were working. *I bet we can crack this nut wide open in less than half an hour.*

"Make him sing like a fucking canary," Diana ordered from her front-and-center spot in the audience. "I didn't appreciate them trashing my fucking bedroom."

*What LG wants, she gets.*

I removed his blindfold while Mal worked on his mask. He struggled against it, crying out against the ball gag we had in his mouth, but Mal chuckled to himself when he teleported the mask away, revealing a human-looking creature with light green skin, beady black eyes, and pointy ears. His visible skin was covered in tattoos and symbols, with barely any blank space.



“A moon creature?” Oisín asked. “All of those pointy-eared fucks attacking us in Brooklyn were *moon creatures*?”

Moon creatures were an anomaly for sure. They didn’t actually hail from the moon, but were descendants of elves. The name came from the fact that they worshiped the moon as a deity. They weren’t high on the magical food chain and seemed like a weird, unexpected alliance for Damon to make...seeing as how they lived in the shadows or underground to avoid the human population.

“Seems so. Why would they align themselves with Damon of all people? I thought they were all about peace and understanding? *The moon loves and nourishes us all,*” Bash quoted their scripture, which had become a slogan for their people over the years. He removed the ball gag from the moon man’s mouth so he could answer our questions.

“Oisín, get your ass up here! You should be fucking shit up with us, not sitting on the sidelines,” I yelled over to him. Diana’s family was my family now, and Oisín radiated BDE—Big Deranged Energy. That made him my people regardless of who he was related to.

“Yeah, O! Get over here and get the first dig in!” Judas was so excited that he practically erupted. Another guy with thick BDE.

“Well, if you insist,” Oisín said. He got up from his chair and walked over to his sister. “Diana, pick a deadly land mammal. Something *scary*.”

“Hmmm, a moose,” she answered, not joking in the least.

“A moose?” Desmond asked. “You want to pick a *moose*?”

“Have you seen those things in internet videos? They gouge people with those big rack antlers. Charge

like they're running into Nordstrom Rack on Black Friday. I'm immortal, and I still wouldn't want to cross one out in the wild. Those giant fucks mean business." Diana put her index fingers to her head like horns to demonstrate her point.

"She has spoken," Oisín declared before turning into a moose. His antlers were as long as I was, and he had to be over eight feet tall.

"You're absolutely terrifying," Diana joked as she patted her brother on his moosey snout. "Go forth and fuck shit up, brother."

He trotted toward the hostage and swept him off the floor with his antlers, throwing him high into the air. His screams turned into shrieks when I hit him with a fireball to the chest. He burned for a few seconds after he hit the ground before Azazel put him out with his angel magic.

"Try to keep him alive for questioning, guys," he said gently. "Remember, moon creatures aren't immortal, just hard to kill."

I enjoyed how he kept us on track without stunting our creativity. I'd really misjudged him all those years ago. I looked to Diana for confirmation. This was her rodeo, and I was a hot AF cowboy who was hoping to have a Brokeback themed orgy after this. Diana could be the prize pony we took turns riding between riding each other... *Oh I'm so glad I brought my ten gallon hat with me from the NY mansion!*

She nodded, giving me the thumbs up.

"Sure thing, Feathers," I replied.

Mal levitated the hostage off the ground, holding him midair. After a minute, the captive's head turned red. He convulsed, clawing at his throat while gasping for breath.

"If you want to be able to breathe, moon man, you'll answer my questions," Mal ordered in a bored, over-it tone. "Your life is in your hands."

He let the moon man down, sitting him on the floor as the rest of the Scream Squad—as I had so aptly named us—gathered around him. We weren't done until this moon man screamed for death.

“What's Damon's next move?” I asked. The moon man shook his head, remaining silent.

“Why are the People of the Moon aligning themselves with Damon?” Bash asked as he bent down, getting eye level with the hostage.

Again, more silence. This just wouldn't do. We needed answers. We needed to show the people in the room that we meant business.

“Mal, can you port the wax warmer from my room in here?” I had a devious idea. One I'd been thinking about all day.

Mal snapped his fingers, and the wax warmer appeared on the table. I took the wicks and the explosives out of my pocket and placed them next to the warmer. I grabbed the hostage by his ear and dragged him over to the chair near my materials, but I pulled too hard and ended up ripping his ear off. I didn't mean to Van Gogh him, but why not go with it? He screeched in pain, blood gushing out of the open wound as he thrashed on the ground.

“Hey, now, I don't want to *hear* any complaints from you,” I joked. Laughter rang out around the room, and I smiled. *That's why I'm here, to torture fuckers that mess with my woman, and laugh in the process.*

*If you're not laughing, are you really torturing people?* The voice in my head asked me.

*No, Voice, you're not. No laughter means you're not having enough fun. And torture is just a synonym for a good time.*

As annoying as Voice could be, he understood me at a molecular level, and that was a comfort.

The wax in the warmer was melted just enough to form around each of the moon man's slender fingers. I made sure to add a wick and a mini explosive right where his fingertip started before closing the wax with a little fire magic. There was a little more than six inches of wick at the end of each of his fingers. By the time I was done, he had five finger bombs. I lit each one with the tip of my finger, blowing it out for dramatic emphasis.

"Here's how it's gonna go down, moon man. Each fingertip has an explosive capsule. Made by yours truly. When the wick runs out, your fingers go BOOM," I spelled out, crouching so I was at eye level with him. "You attacked *my* Little Goddess. And my friends. Really my family. My fucking *family*. They mean everything to me. So you have until the wick reaches the explosive to answer our questions. If you don't, you won't have fingers on your dominant hand anymore. Then I'll move on to your left hand. Then your toes. Then your fucking nose. I'll saw your other ear off and your shriveled moon stick dick and feed it to my fucking three-headed dog on Mount Olympus. Unless you answer our questions..."

"Why are the moon people working for Damon?" Bash asked.

The moon man started hyperventilating, staring at the wicks as they slowly burned, creeping closer and closer to the explosives at his fingertips.

"He's giving us a settlement," the man rattled off in a high-pitched shrill voice that was the norm of his kind. "Instead of having to hide on Earth like vermin, we'll have a whole state to roam free and worship the moon whenever we want!"

"Interesting," Mal said. "What's his next move?"

The man shook his head, remaining silent.

"Come on, moon man, tell us all your secrets!" Oisín chuckled. His moose voice was even deeper than his

human one, and it startled me a bit.

He morphed into the same boa constrictor he had become during our last meeting and slithered beside Bash, rising so his head and most of his body were off the ground. “If you think the explosive fingertips are bad, you haven’t been crushed to death by a snake.”

Oisín slithered over to the chair, as if he was about to wrap himself around our hostage. The man screamed and started rambling. I barely understood it over his sobbing. “He-he-he’s gathering up forces in NYC. He knows Diana is in Vegas, but isn’t sure where. Once he finds out, he’ll attack.”

“Interesting...” Bash said. “Ares, the explosives won’t kill him, right?”

“Not right away,” I said backing up. I motioned for the others to do the same, and we gave the moon man a wide berth. “He’ll lose a good amount of blood, but he’ll have a while before he croaks.”

The first few fingers exploded, sending scraps of the hostage’s bone, skin, muscles, and blood spatter everywhere. Some got on my shoes, which pissed me off. Olga wasn’t here anymore, and I’d have to clean them myself or throw them out. The audience was far enough away that they were clean. If you included torture as part of a meeting, and your guests got bodily matter on them as a result, cleaning the affected item for them was the right thing to do. *Duh.*

The moon man bellowed out agonizing cries of pain as the rest of his fingers exploded, soaking his shirt in blood. The pain must have been too much, because he slumped forward.

Bash checked his pulse, and nodded. “He’s good, just passed out.” He placed his hands on the man’s head and closed his eyes, concentrating. “Just collecting some memories and information I can sort through later.”

“Seems like Diana doesn’t do her own dirty work,” a burly, giant man near the door said. He stood, revealing a body that was covered in thick, wiry hair. *Hera’s hat, I’m Greek and I’m not even that hairy.* It poked out from under his shirt sleeves and collar like it was searching for a way off his body. “She just gets her fuckboys to do it instead.”

I stood up, immediately moving to stand between them. He was not allowed to talk to her that way.

“Stand down for now, Ares,” Diana asked, her voice eerily calm. I moved behind her, keeping close in case he tried anything sly. “And who are you, exactly?” Diana asked. She didn’t rise from her seat. On the contrary, she leaned back, acting like the man’s insult didn’t bother her in the least. “You didn’t make an impression earlier, so I’ve forgotten your name already.”

The man glared at Diana, puffing his chest out and clenching his fists. I placed my hand on her shoulder, a silent warning he understood because he eased up his posture. *I fucking DARE you to touch her. I’ll turn your ass into a hide and make a lampshade out of it to match my human skin blanket.*

“Bjorn Bearson. I represent the Alaskan Bear Shifters. You’re a fraud!” he shouted as he stood from his chair. “You sit there on your fat ass and let the competent men around you do all the work.”

“*Thank you*—it took a lot of work to get an ass this fat. It’s a shame you feel that way. Maybe a demonstration is in order?” Diana inquired. I had a feeling she was going to go postal on this asshole.

She stood from her seat and strolled over to the man. He opened his mouth to say something, but nothing came out. With a wave of her hand, Diana bound his hands and feet and gagged him. Her magic created iridescent bindings that would be impossible for a being

with his weak-ass power signature to escape. His face winced in pain as he fell to the floor with a giant thud.

Diana raised her palms either side of her so they were waist height and facing the ceiling. Bearson levitated off the ground, turning so that his front side faced the floor. Diana's eyes went completely black, and the skin around her temples turned red and splotchy. The tense set of her jaw and steely glint in her eye was mesmerizing.

*Omg, she's so hot when she's about to wreak havoc.*

A few people rushed to come to his aid, but Desmond and I blocked their path. This bear-minimum piece of shit was going to get his just desserts. *Then hopefully I will get some dessert. That sweet fucking pussy.*

"Let her handle this," I commanded. I planted some waist-high barrier fire, so they couldn't get past without seriously hurting themselves in the process. That was enough to keep them waiting in the wings, eyes on the fight in front of them.

*She's maaaaad*, the voice in my head sang.

*Oh, I know, and I'm mad about her. We'll get to see her bloodlust come out and play today.*

"Hmmm, what kind of dirty work can I do, since I seem to do none of it myself?" Diana pondered. "Sorry about your chair, Judas." Diana threw a ray of magic at the chair next to her, blasting it into pieces. She levitated the pieces underneath Bearson and lit them ablaze. Her laughter as she lowered him so his body was just above the flames sounded so malevolent that it gave me a hard-on. I readjusted myself, catching Bash's gaze out of the corner of my eye.

***Don't fucking judge me, you're probably just as hard***, I linked him.

***True, but I do a way better job of hiding mine. Hold onto it, though, and maybe we can take care of it after this meeting,*** he replied, winking at me. *Fucking tease; he better have his own hat for the Brokeback orgy because I'm not sharing.*

Bearson's screaming and thrashing brought my attention back to Diana. She had somehow magically rigged him so he rotated over the flame.

"Bjorn, was it? The reason I let my men torture people is because they enjoy doing it. It makes them *happy*," she emphasized the last word. "I'm perfectly fine torturing people, but I'd never want to take the opportunity away from them. Now, you have a choice. You can shut your fucking mouth, and align yourself with us, or I can ask Mal for an apple so we can spit roast you properly. You may be a bear shifter, but your squeals of pain sound like a pig's to me."

Matte black horns sprang from Diana's head, and our mouths dropped. Everyone stared at them, some in awe and some in terror.

***Where the fuck did they come from?!*** Desmond asked.

***They look like smaller versions of your horns,*** Mal pointed out.

The horns were enough to scare Bearson into submission. He changed his tune real quick.

"I'll join you!" he shouted. "Please, let me go. I'll shake on it and make it magically binding!" The panicked expression on his face was a work of art. I took a mental picture so I could remember this day forever, the day my Little G publicly tortured her first victim. *Diana should be proud of herself.*

Diana levitated him away from the flames, placing him on the floor. She undid his magical bindings, and Bearson took his time standing. He walked over to us,



with his hand outstretched. I watched the interaction closely, making sure he didn't make any sudden moves to attack her. She waited, her hands at her sides, as she eyed Bearson with a raised brow.

"I was mistaken. It will be a pleasure to support you," he grumbled.

"I'd rather you support me than get annihilated by one of my *fuckboys*," she snarked, shaking his hand. Sparks flew out from their joined hands, and I relaxed slightly.

She was right. Anyone that opposed her would get torn apart by her fuckboys. Her Penis Parade? / *definitely prefer Penis Parade.*



The meeting had ended on a positive note. Most of the people there agreed to join us, with a few saying they'd have to go back and put it to a general vote. Mal moved the table back to its original place in the center of the room, along with all the chairs. Charlie met up with us, as he chose to forgo the meeting. Our crew, Judas' people, Diana's family, Tyran, and my brother Apollo stayed behind to hammer out some of the finer details over a catered buffet dinner. Stir fry, beef Wellington, twice baked potatoes, cheesy cauliflower au gratin, and bread. The guys would have to roll my ass out of here by the time we were done.

"Damon is becoming a distraction," Judas commented, pushing his stir fry around on his plate with a fork. He sipped a wine glass of blood, before continuing. "We need to get him out of the way so you can focus on Red."

“And we need to continue Diana’s magical training,” Bash said. “It makes me nervous that she’s so far behind. We have no clue when Red will strike or how, and I want her to be as prepared as she can be.”

“He makes a solid point, dollface. Tonight’s magic was powerful because it fed off your emotions. Emotions are fleeting, and you can’t rely on them to power you through,” Desmond agreed.

“How about I put together a team to take out Damon so you can focus on everything else?” Judas asked. “A lot of my intel through the grapevine is about Damon, so I already have some leads.”

“Who else would be on your team?” I only wanted the best if they’d have anything to do with Diana.

“Me, duh,” Apollo said. “I hate that fucking prick, and your *alephi psychi* is family now. Sign me up.”

The only person I trusted as much as my crew was my brother. Out of all my family on Mount Olympus, he was the only one who kept in contact with me. He had never disowned me like they had, and he didn’t pretend to disown me publicly while talking to me on the sly. He had integrity.

“I’m always down for a mission. Plus, my services could be useful,” Tyran offered. He finished his whiskey, smiling as he placed the glass back on the table. “What better way to punish an immortal pain in the ass than sucking out his soul?”

“I can call Bain and see if he’s willing to help,” Judas said. “The man is a magical powerhouse and has personal vendettas against Red and Damon.”

“I’m in.” Angela said. “Don’t you dare try to talk me out of it either, *Belissima*. I can’t just sit here in a resort all day while you’re fighting for your life. I love you too much to sit on my hands.”

“I love you, too,” Diana said. The expression on her face was serious. “If you need this, I won’t talk you out of it. But Judas needs to be okay with you coming. It’s his mission.”

*She says I love you to her sister, but not to you...*  
The voice teased. *Are you sure she even likes you at all?*

*Shut up. You’re so gods damned dramatic. I’m trying to pay attention.* Stupid Voice.

Nonna and Charlie glared at Judas, who pointedly ignored their ire. He pretended to think about it and put an arm around Angie.

“Of course! I can’t think of a safer place for you than with a vampire, Greek god, slough, and hopefully a renowned necromancer,” Judas said through a smile, his entire face alight with gushy romanticism. He had it bad.

She shrugged his arm off and got up from the table to get more food. Diana, Nonna, and Charlie followed.

“You want more food?” Nonna asked me before leaving the table. She snatched my plate without waiting for an answer. *She is so nice.*

“Is anyone going to bring up Diana’s surprise headgear, or am I the only one who noticed that?” Mal asked. He pointed two fingers out from his forehead. “She didn’t have those yesterday...”

“She shouldn’t have them at all...she’s a witch-angel hybrid, not a demon,” Bash commented.

“They did sorta fit though...ya know because of how horny she is all the time.” I slapped my knee, laughing more to myself.

Oisín punched me in the shoulder. “Shut the fuck up. Don’t talk about my sister like that until I’m out of earshot, asshole. They did disappear, at least, unlike your immaturity” he commented, glaring at Ares before

turning to the rest of the group. “I have a theory. Have there been any other strange occurrences where her appearance changed?”

“Well, she bloody glows gold–like Ares does–which is odd because angels usually glow silver. In all my times visiting her in her dreams, she has never done that,” Bash mused aloud.

“Yeah, her eyes turned pitch black earlier today when we were...spending time together,” Desmond added. “They actually reminded me of Bash’s eyes.”

“Did anyone notice that her hair has grown *a lot* since we arrived in Las Vegas?” Azazel asked. “It used to hit her shoulders, but now it’s down to her breasts. That seems fast...”

“No, probably because you’re all too busy staring at her breasts. Don’t forget, I was a cat in your home for a while. I saw the way you animals looked at her. You’re lucky she didn’t notice,” Oisín said. He crossed his leg so his ankle was resting on his opposite knee. “Have some fucking chill.”

“Ha, says the man who stares at Charlie like he’s a walking, talking steak,” Mal quipped. He handed Diana’s brother a bottle of steak sauce. “Here, just in case he gets bored talking to August and comes back to the table.”

*Ouch.* Mal had been on his best behavior so much with Diana I forgot how brutal he could be. Oisín refused to turn around and look at Charlie and August, choosing instead to carry on with the conversation.

“Diana told me at the pool that she thought all of her powers were unbound, but that Michael said he and Lucifer needed to be together to unbind the rest. I’m thinking that she may have body manipulation powers like I do. I imitated other people’s features often as a kid, before I grew into the power and could morph my entire

body. She's obviously not doing it on purpose, only when her emotions are heightened—when she's stressed, angry, or passionate.”

*That makes sense.* Time traveling, fire magic, superhuman abilities, and bodily manipulation. When she did come into her full powers, she would be magnificent. And she had made earthquakes happen a couple of times, too. Before I could ask Oisín for his opinion on that, Diana and her family came back to the table.

“Nonna has some ideas on finding Dad Number One,” Diana announced.

***Ha, neither of her Dads are number one. I wouldn't even give them the courtesy of calling them number twos,*** Mal linked me. Ha, that was a *shitty* joke...

Everyone turned their attention to Nonna. She leaned forward, commanding attention much like her granddaughter did. She reminded me of a sterner version of 80s Cher, with her curly black hair and badass Brooklyn attitude.

“Diana said that Damon keeps finding her using blood magic. I say you all start there. If that doesn't work, you can find Diana and Oisín's other siblings. I'm sure they're out there somewhere, and he had to have kept in touch with at least one. Every parent has a favorite child,” she whipped around to Angie and Diana's surprised faces, “Except me. I love all my children, and grandchildren, equally.”

“Those are good places to start. Thanks, Nonna,” Desmond said, topping off everyone's glass of wine and killing the bottle.

“I could use Diana, Michael, or Oisín's energy to help me get a vision or flashback of Lucifer,” Azazel said.

“That’s a safer plan, although not an entirely accurate one.”

“I have an idea, too. I think we need to figure out when the last time Lucifer was seen publicly was, or find out from Michael when they spent time together last. Then I can time-hop us there and explain to him, in just enough detail that it doesn’t change the timeline, that he has to meet us in present day, at Fortuna’s Garden,” she said.

“Absolutely not,” Desmond and Bash said in unison.

“Diana, way too much can go wrong, with the timeline and your safety,” Desmond said. “Your father is unpredictable and may not believe us.”

“Agreed,” Bash growled. “I’m already worried sick about you, and I don’t need this on top of it.”

*She could hop back in time and never return again. She’d be trapped. Can you imagine her surviving in ancient Greece? They’d eat her alive,* Voice cackled.

“No. You could get stuck in the wrong time period. Not every time period was safe for women. I should know, since I came from one,” I offered.

“I don’t think that should be our first plan, and I see where Desmond, Bash, and Ares are coming from,” Azazel said. “But I think if we run out of options, there are ways to arrange your idea so it’s less dangerous and keeps the timeline intact. Let’s put a pin in it and see what happens.”

“Agreed. Let’s exhaust every option possible before we even think about doing that,” Mal said. “It’s a great idea, princess, but you being in one piece is more important.”

“Okay,” she huffed, rolling her eyes. “It’s a solid plan, though, if everything else fails and we’re shit out of luck.”

“Language at the table,” Nonna reprimanded her. She pointed her salad-filled fork at her granddaughter, with a *don't fuck with me, fellas* look on her face I had only ever seen on my own mother. “I don't care what you say in your own home with your men, but the table is family time.”

“Yeah, Di. Family time,” Charlie sassed.

“Especially since our meals together are going to be limited. I'm leaving for Italy at the end of the week,” she announced as her glance swept down the table. She took a sip of her wine, and continued. “Diana, I don't want you or Angie worried about me while you're trying to save the world. I have family and friends there who can keep me safe.”

“That was something I planned on bringing up with you after dinner tonight. Things are going to get ugly sooner rather than later, and I want to make sure you're safe. Diana cares about you so much...” Desmond said to Nonna. He got up and sat in the empty chair next to Diana. Her eyes welled, and I could tell she was about to burst into tears. “Red is a psychopath, and he plays dirty. I wouldn't put it past him to get to you via your family. Nonna going into hiding is in her best interest.”

“She can always stay with my cousin, Nostra,” Judas added. “His compound in the Italian Alps is locked down like Fort Knox, and he can give us updates every day. You can even use our enchanted mirrors. We haven't used them since FaceTime and Zoom were invented, but they work the same way. If you're both standing in front of them, you can see each other and talk. It's encrypted too, so only you two are privy to what you're saying.”

“Little Goddess, I love having your nonna here with us, but I think she'd be safer in Italy,” I added. “And she would be with her people, surrounded by pasta and prosciutto...and cheese, wine, and fun little donkeys she can ride. Italian people have all the good food.”

“Ma, I support your decision,” Angie said. “But you better talk to us every day. If not, I’ll fly over there and find you!”

Diana gave Nonna a weak smile. Both she and Angie hugged her, and the sight sent a pang of pain through the mend in my heart. *I wish my family felt that way about me.*

“Don’t act like it’s my funeral. You still have a few more days left with me. I want to help you with the blood magic ritual. I’m going to get a good night’s sleep so I’m fresh and ready for the morning,” Nonna announced before she said goodnight to her girls and left the table.

“Yeah, I am, too. It’s late,” Diana murmured.

“I’ll walk you to bed,” I said as I picked Diana up bridal style and took us toward our suite. I had the feeling she needed me, and I would always be there for my Little Goddess, no matter what.



# DIANA

## *Chapter 21*

I would usually hate being carried like a fucking doll, but Ares' strong arms were the only thing holding me together. As soon as we got to the suite, I broke down, sobbing so hard I thought I was going to forge a river that would wash us away. We'd end up like those stupid people who go tubing and get carried too far downstream and end up getting lost in the woods.

Ares sat us down on my bed, cradling me against his chest on his lap. "Shhhh, it's going to be okay," he cooed as he ran his fingers through my hair. "Everything is going to be okay."

"No, it isn't. I just got her back, and she's leaving again!" I cried. A huge wad of snot shot back into my throat, and I sputtered, nearly choking on it until Ares patted my back.

"You're going to miss her, but her leaving for Italy is better than her dying here if we're attacked. Diana, things are going to escalate quickly. Red and Damon know what city we're in, and our friendship with Judas is no secret. It's only a matter of time before one of them makes a move," he explained to me in a measured tone.

I knew her leaving was for the best, but it didn't mean I had to like it. I had no clue how Angie acted so

nonchalant over it. She was just as attached to Nonna as I was.

“I’m going to miss her so much. She’s like a mother to me,” I cried. Ares wiped my tears with a tissue from my night table. “I feel like I haven’t seen her in eons, and she’ll be gone again in a few days.”

“You’ll see her again. Just think, once you get rid of Red and Damon, you’ll see her all the time. We can build her a rancher on the property back at the mountain house if you want.”

Ares was *too sweet*—so considerate, too. He always spoiled me and thought of our future together. No man had ever included me in his future plans before so naturally, like it was a given rather than a possibility.

“She really likes you, you know,” I pointed out. “She likes all of the guys, but she has a sweet spot for you.”

“What can I say? Grandmas love me. She said she’d make me her homemade sauce soon. I’ll have to take her up on it before she leaves,” he said.

He licked his lips, salivating a tad. *He’s probably thinking about lasagna*. The only person who loved food more than me was Ares. No wonder he got along with my nonna so well.

“I just realized that the day will come where I have to live without her,” I croaked. “Angie too. And Charlie. They’re my family...but because of my immortality I’ll outlive all of them.”

And there went the floodgates again. I didn’t think I could cry this much. I *despised* crying; it made me feel like a whiny, weak ass bitch, but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t stop. Thinking about life without my family, even in the distant future when they would be long gone, ripped my heart in half.

“Diana, we’re your family, too. The guys and I are always here for you. When this war is over, and the

battlefield is littered with the remains of our enemy, we'll spend all of eternity together. You'll never get rid of me." His arms cocooned me in warmth, making me feel more relaxed. "I'll always love you, even if you never say it back or feel the same way for me." He murmured the last part against my hair.

What could possibly make him think I don't feel the same way for him? Ares was the most passionate of the bunch, always wearing his heart—and his psychopathic golden retriever energy—on his sleeve. *Of course I love him...I just suck at expressing my feelings because I'm scared they'll all get sick and tired of me.*

***Little Goddess, you can tell me you love me, because I could never, ever get sick or tired of you. You're my everything. You're our everything. We're fighting this war for you, because you complete our family.***

"Ares, I heard you. In my head!" I wriggled in his lap, kissing his cheek.

"I heard you, too. It's about time we mindlinked, seeing as I'm your favorite," he said, his tone dry. I wasn't sure if he was kidding or if he really thought he was my favorite.

***I love you, you crazy giant.***

***I love you too, Little G.***

I shifted so I straddled him. His warm hazel eyes stared into mine, and their corners crinkled when he smiled. He kissed me, devouring my mouth with a ferocity that made me squirm against him, feeling his hard length taunting me. The thought of his ridged, massively thick taco-splitter slamming inside me made me soak my thong. I wanted to rip his pants apart and bounce on it until I fell apart.

"When you spit-roasted that bear asshole, I got so fucking hard. The way you made him beg for mercy...his

groans of pain,” Ares said through a deep moan. “The way the flames licked his skin,” he whispered before licking the column of my neck with his hot tongue to that sweet spot right below my ear. “The devious look on your face,” Ares rasped in my ear, his Greek accent more pronounced. He unbuckled his pants, giving himself more room. His dick poked harder against my pussy, and every time I swayed my hips against him, it got caught beneath me. “Seeing you be a badass boss while dominating your enemies is insanely attractive.”

“I thought you wanted to protect me?” I teased him.

“I do, and I always will. But knowing you can stand with me on the battlefield and wield your own weapon—the thought of us causing carnage together and fucking shit up because we can—that’s what I want. I want your strength and love by my side while I run into the fray.”

“Do you want me underneath you?” I asked, my voice strained with need.

“You’re the *only woman* I want underneath me,” he growled as he dug his fingers into my ass, grabbing it as he lifted me, turned us, and dropped me into the bed.

I bounced up, pulling his shirt so he came down with me. Our mouths clashed as we kissed like the world was ending, and in a way, it was. All the traumas of my past fell like bricks as he pinned me beneath him. The world with the old me—the one who wasted her time with loser guys who couldn’t give a fuck about her—was gone. This new world was something entirely different. I had never told a man I loved him before, in a romantic way. Ares was my first.

***You’re the only man I’ve ever said ‘I love you’ to romantically,*** I linked him.

He took the hem of my dress, ripping it in half all the way up until it came apart completely. The shredding sound of the fabric made my entire body quiver in

anticipation. I loved when he was rough, handling me like I couldn't break. His passion was always front and center when he took me like that. He tore my thong off and tossed the lacy scrap across the room.

***Knowing you feel the same way I do is making it hard to control myself***, he admitted.

"Then don't," I encouraged him. "Let loose. I can't break, Ares."

"Oh, we're letting loose, huh?" Desmond said as he walked into the room. I was so focused on Ares that I barely heard him and Bash come in. "After the fright you gave us all with that time-hop shenanigan, I want to let loose on your ass."

"None of you seemed mad about it this morning." They truly hadn't seemed to be mad at all.

"The positivity you and Az made this morning flooded the entire suite. Non-angels can be impacted by it, even if we don't feel it as strongly as you do," Bash said. "It's super hard to be angry when you feel so... *happy.*"

"I'm super sensitive to it. Being a Greek god is very close to being an angel," Ares pointed out. "But now that I think about it, I wasn't happy with your actions either. I don't enjoy worrying about you. You're too precious to me."

"Agreed. You're important to me, too... so I think a punishment is in order. You'll never learn consequences without one," Desmond reasoned. *I think he just wants an excuse to join in on the fun.*

"It's *definitely* in order," Bash agreed. *Oh fuck.* Desmond probably meant an actual punishment, like a spanking or something that leaves behind marks. Bright red marks...the kind that make you remember. *Why can I feel myself turning into a slip 'n slide just thinking about it?*

“Well, if you insist,” I accepted without reluctance. I should have protested, but ever since I met these guys, I had been finding out so much about myself. Punishment actually sounded like *fun*. Every time they slapped my ass or grabbed me a touch too hard, my pussy felt like a geyser.

I laid across Ares’ lap, ass up with my arms crossed under my face as I awaited my fate. Desmond let a raspy chuckle slip while he rolled me back over.

“Dollface, get up and take your clothes off. You’re not getting off that easy,” Desmond ordered in his usual wry tone.

I stood, removing my bra and the remains of my torn dress. I was completely naked before them, and their gazes ate me up like hungry tourists at a Vegas buffet. Desmond turned me around, bending me over the bed until the side of my face rested against the mattress, leaving my ass high in the air.

“Birdie, if you seriously thought you were going to get away with just a spanking, you’ve lost the plot,” Bash mocked.

I saw him move behind me, feeling the caress of blunt fingertips over my ass cheek. A hand came down against the flesh of my backside, and I whimpered at the delayed sting.

“Moon and stars, look at that ass jiggle,” Bash said excitedly. “That’s fucking poetry in motion. Diana deserves way better than a hand across the ass—it wouldn’t do her justice.”

I heard the rustling of something behind me, and a warmed tongue ran along my slit. Thick, hot fingers spread my folds open, then plunged inside me. *Ares*. My hips pushed back to meet the fingers of their own volition. My greedy body knew exactly what it wanted. I heard belt buckles dropping to the floor and shirts

rustling. Then a whooshing noise resounded through the air, followed by a harsh *crack*. Something thick and hard came down on the center of my ass as Ares finger-fucked me. Pain sizzled from my cheeks to the base of my spine as an orgasm started to rise inside me.

“Wha-what was that?” I asked through my own panting.

“That was my tail cracking across your ass,” Desmond said. “You need something more than a firm hand, dollface. You’ve been a very bad, inconsiderate girl.”

Ares licked and sucked on my clit after the second spank from Desmond’s tail. I tried to buck against his face to chase my orgasm, but he held my hips in place so I couldn’t move. I whined as the pleasure built. Every time Desmond spanked me, Ares switched up his style. He tongue-fucked me, sucked my clit, and nipped at my folds. Every touch from these men made me feel like I was burning up—it was becoming too much for me to handle. Just as I reached the brink of climax, they stopped.

“No release for you, dollface,” Desmond admonished. “Girls who time-hop drunk without thinking of how their actions impact others don’t get to come, especially when they don’t apologize properly.”

“Like any of you can talk about proper apologies,” I sassed. “You’re all the kings of doing whatever the fuck you want without thinking of consequences. You’re all lucky I’m enjoying this so much.”

Bash knelt in front of me on the bed, lifting my body up so I balanced on my hands instead. He put the head of his dick against my closed mouth, and I drew his cock in between my lips, giving it a sharp nip.

He pulled my hair taut, the sting traveling through my scalp, down to my nipples, and straight to my pussy. I

wasn't even going to examine why his rough, demanding behavior was making me so hot and bothered. *I'm going to roll with it.*

"You're not escaping this," Bash growled as he forced his dick further into my mouth. "I dare you to use your teeth again; it will only worsen your punishment."

***That's a tempting promise, Bash-A-Smash.*** Lucky for him, I suspected I'd love a good punishment.

At first, I licked and teased at his head, reveling in the salty, tangy taste of his precum. Then I worked my lips down over his shaft, running my teeth down it until I hit his knot. He sucked in a breath, grunting at their sharpness. I worked him at a slow, steady pace, letting the tip of his dick hit the back of my throat every so often. Then I bit down, laughing at him through our mindlink.

***Hahahahaha,*** I cackled. His fingers grazed my scalp, clasping around my hair to steady my head. He face-fucked me, crooning words of encouragement.

"That's right, take it all the way down. Suck my cock until you milk me, you bad, reckless slut. You're my misbehaved little cocksucker, *and you're going to get punished tonight,*" he promised, his echoing voice a deep, vibrating timber that danced around the room.

I shuddered at his promise of retribution, looking up at him with wide eyes. His horns sprang from his head, and black veins webbed from his temples. I popped off Bash's cock to peek over my shoulder, and Ares was sitting with his back to the bed, head tipped underneath me. He caught me looking and teased my clit with his tongue. Desmond had shed his clothes, coming up behind me and pressing his thick, hard length against my dripping wet hole. Bash guided my face to his length again, and I sucked him down.

"Remember when I was working your thirsty cunt over before the meeting, you said you wanted to be



coated in cum, kneeling before us.... Should have been careful what you wished for,” he quipped as he pushed just the tip in. This was his first time inside me, and the burning stretch of my skin around his girth was a blissful kind of pain I relished. I tried to push back to impale myself onto him, but Bash and Ares kept a firm hold on my head and hips.

“You’re going to be screaming how sorry you are by the time I’m done with you,” Desmond said.

I panted with frustration, desperately needing him to move. A stray tear ran down my face, and I did the only thing I thought would help.

***Zaz, help me!*** I linked him.

He faded into the room and snickered as he took in the scene before him, crossing his arms over his chest. He walked past me, probably to stand next to Desmond.

“What’s going on here? I see you’ve found a cozy spot to rest your dick,” Azazel asked in a curious tone.

“Diana is getting a fair punishment for the time-hopping stunt. Your angel magic was only going to keep her out of trouble for so long,” Desmond replied.

“Yeah,” Zaz sighed. “I was hoping tonight would distract you all. Then Diana went full-on Laura Croft at the meeting, and it was a mass scale Viagra pill—y’all popped some serious wood that dashed any hopes I had for leniency. Honey Bunch, are you being coerced?”

Bash removed himself from my mouth so I could answer the question. “No,” I replied.

“Are they physically harming you?” he asked. “Like real pain and distress, not the pleasurable kind.”

“No,” I said again.

“Do you want them to stop, because you’re literally trying to fuck yourself on Desmond as we speak...” he

gestured to me, waving his hand in the general direction of my undulating sex.

“I want *more*. Make them stop fucking around,” I whined. I hadn’t even realized I was moving until Zaz pointed it out.

“Well, you did worry everyone, even me. I think Bash was right when he said I spoil you, so I’m not going to intervene. But I am going to watch, to ensure that justice is carried out appropriately,” Zaz said in a mock-serious tone. He stood behind Desmond, pushing him forward so his dick slid deeper inside me. “If you bottom out in her and don’t move, it will drive her further up the wall.”

“Thanks,” Desmond said. He grabbed Zaz’s face, kissing him on the cheek. “If you change your mind, we can make this a party of five.”

“I’ll let you know.” Zaz sat on the bed near the headboard, grabbing the bulge in his pants while he waited for the show to start.

Bash drove himself back inside my mouth. He adjusted his grip, holding my hair with one hand and dancing a finger from the other around my sensitive nipple. Desmond’s fingers gripped my hips harder as he worked himself further inside me, until his knot was pressed against my folds. Ares licked around where Desmond and I joined, and the thought of him tasting both of us made me clench. The beginning buzz of an orgasm built inside me again, and only got worse when Desmond started thrusting into me with sure, steady strokes, hitting me with his knot on every drive. I glanced in the mirror and saw how my breasts smacked together as he thrust inside me. The sight was downright pornographic.

***Little G, you’re so tasty***, Ares linked me. I heard squelching and felt how wet I had become.

Zaz stuffed his hands down his sweatpants, working his length as he watched them ravage me. A keening wail slipped from my lips, because I was beyond trying to hold myself together. I was putty in their hands, and I didn't care how pathetic I sounded.

A heavy tail cracked against my ass, making me cry out around Bash's length. "You may have been used to dating guys who didn't give a fuck, or being alone to do as you pleased. But now you're with us, dollface. We definitely give a *fuck* about you," he said as he picked up speed, slamming into me. "You need to be more considerate and act like you're part of this team."

***I said I was sorry, and I am sorry,*** I whined. ***Please let me come, I'm getting so close,*** I implored them all.

Ares hummed in agreement as he started flicking my clit again. One of his fingers prodded against my hole as he wedged it inside me next to Desmond's cock. The pained feeling of him spreading me wider made me groan. I must have been a hundred shades of mentally fucked up, because I was on my hands and knees getting stuffed and roughed by three guys in front of an audience, and I had never felt sexier or more turned on in my life. *I feel alive, motherfucker.* With every one of Bash's and Desmond's tandem strokes, I felt as if I was being buoyed by this indescribable swell of feverish sexual energy. It pressed against my insides, threatening to make me burst.

Right before I exploded, they stopped again. Bash pulled his cock out and Desmond stilled, his thick cock resting inside my throbbing pussy. Ares stopped working magic with his tongue, opting to work a second finger inside me. He pressed around the edges of my hole, stretching it as he moved them around Desmond's cock. The third finger made me downright scream. Holy shit, I felt like one of those squirrely-looking taxidermy jobs on the wall at the country club I worked at a few years ago. I

was stuffed to the brim and it was a special kind of sexual torture, an agony in which I reveled.

I cried, whimpering in frustration at being denied a release, yet again. "You're all fucking monsters!" I screamed.

Desmond pulled out of me, and the cool air hitting my wet, used sex made a shiver run up my spine. He picked me up, turning me around to face him. I wrapped my legs around him for purchase so I could balance myself. When I looked at him, he had completely shifted. His matte black horns curved around his head like a crown instead of flaring out like they usually did. His skin was tinted red, and his tail whipped behind him. I ran my gaze down his thick, muscular body, all the way to his hooved feet. His demonic form should have scared me and sent me running, but it only made my lady bits more slick.

"Right you are," he cackled. The gold flecks in his peridot eyes shone under the recessed lights, highlighting the mirth on his face. "We're *your* monsters. Here to protect you, even from yourself. You need some discipline, dollface. You thought you had daddy issues? Well, let me be your Daddy and show you right from wrong," he boomed, slapping my ass with his tail again, the blunt edge hitting me right on my swollen, dripping pussy. The sting radiated through my entire body, making every hole I had clench.

I cried out. "I'm SORRY!"

He laid on the bed with me on top of him, facing him. His face was pure want and evil desire, as he slammed himself back inside me and rocked me back and forth on top of him. Tears trickled from my eyes, but they weren't sad ones. No, they were the kind you had after a cathartic cry or binge-eating cheese fries. They were tears of relief.

“Enjoying yourself?” Desmond asked. He pulled Bash closer to us until he knelt beside Desmond’s head. Taking Bash’s cock into his mouth, Desmond groaned. ***I know I am.***

“Hmmmmf,” I groaned, lifting myself up and down on Desmond’s cock, meeting his movements as much as he would let me.

I ran my hands down my swaying breasts, rubbing and plucking at my nipples. The thrilling jolts that coursed through me went straight to my poor lady bits. Ares opened my top bedside drawer, fishing out the lube and slathering his dick from tip to base in it. His entire body glowed gold, making his dick shimmer from the reflectiveness of the slick liquid.

*Were they going to double team me? Fuck yes, I wanted this so badly.* Wetness gushed from my cunt, and my muscles twitched in excitement.

“Oh, A-Bomb she loves that idea. I can feel her drenching me,” Desmond said through a grunt. “Ares just mindlinked me the filthiest thing, dollface...”

Ares knelt on the bed behind me so closely I could feel the heat radiating from his body. His warm hands gripped my hips, and I felt his cockhead brush against me, right next to where Desmond was seated inside me.

“You’re going to put it *there*?” I squeaked. I had assumed because of all the lube he was going to put it in my ass.

“Unless you say no. Even during a punishment, I’d never cross any kind of line with you,” he sternly said. “But I’d be a liar if I said the thought of Desmond and I slamming our cocks inside of you together and making you scream like a banshee wasn’t one of the hottest fucking daydreams I’ve ever had. I want us to coat your pussy in so much cum you’ll smell like us for *days*.”

“The sight of it dripping out of her... *ugh*,” Bash groaned.

“Is it going to hurt?” I asked. That was the only thing holding me back. I wanted to try this so badly...

“We’ll be gentle, Little Goddess. I would never intentionally hurt you. It may be uncomfortable in the beginning, but it’ll feel good. If it doesn’t, say ‘cactus,’ and it stops.” Ares rubbed my shoulders as he talked. His strong hands made me feel safe. I couldn’t believe the man who chased me through the woods—the one I spat at—was the first man I’d say *I love you* to.

“Let’s try it,” I agreed. ***I trust you, Ares.***

***You have my heart***, he linked me. For fuck’s sake this mushy shit was going to make me cry again.

One of Ares’ hands firmly gripped my ass cheek while he inched inside of me. The feeling of his ridges wedging against my tender insides was just on the tolerable side of agonizing. More cool liquid hit my hot skin, and my whole body bowed. He rubbed my clit as Desmond played with my nipples, rubbing the stiff nubs and adding to the strange sensation swirling around in the pit of my stomach.

Zaz got up from his spot on the bed and knelt beside me, cupping my cheek. “How are you doing, honey?”

“Okay,” I breathed. Ares pressed inside me further, and the feeling of his warmed cock inside me soothed some of the stinging burn.

“You’re taking them so well, such a good girl,” he said, kissing me gently. Positivity swirled inside me, easing some of the pain. He sucked on my tongue as he caressed the swell of my breasts. “You’re so good at taking cock, because you’re my dirty, angelic little slut, right?”

“Yes, I am,” I agreed. “I love taking all your cocks. One day I want all five at once.” ***Holy shit, Diana, you’re***

*a-dick-ted and need serious help. My holes would split with five.*

***I'm going to move inside you,*** Desmond linked me. I broke my kiss with Zaz to find him lazily sucking on Bash's dick, teasing his head.

Desmond moved, and my entire pussy quivered around them. Holy *fuck*—it felt euphoric. Ares slid inside me as Desmond slid out, and the rhythm they created was enough to throw my entire body into a state of bliss, like my soul was coming out of my body. The ridges...the knot...I loved special peens so much. *I am never going back to normal dick.* Bash took Zaz's face in his hands, kissing him with a ferocity that only added to the hurricane of pleasure brewing inside me. He reached down and released Zaz's dick from his sweatpants.

"Suck his dick, Birdie?" he requested. "I need to see you completely stuffed."

I leaned down as far as I could without losing my balance or dislodging the guys, and took him into my mouth, sucking him down. I envisioned Bash's tongue, and how intense the split would feel against Zaz's shaft, wishing I could copy it. I felt twinges of pain as my own tongue split down the middle, wrapping around Zaz's dick as I suctioned around him. I'd done the same thing earlier today with horns growing out of my head. Was it scary? Yes. Was it abnormal? Fuck yeah. But nothing about my life was normal now, so I'd deal with that drama later and reap the benefits of a bifurcated tongue right now.

***Honey, what are you up to down there?*** Zaz linked as he audibly groaned. ***That feels incredible.***

I popped off him, sticking my tongue out and wriggling both parts at him. The shocked expression on his face was *priceless*. I swallowed him down again, sucking out the positive vibes like a milkshake through a straw. It gave me a heady, intoxicating feeling that paired

so well with the hard rods ramming in and out of me. Bash licked a trail up Zaz's neck, nipping and sucking along the way. *Fuck*, I loved watching them together.

***Hells bells, Ares, I can feel you***, Desmond gritted out, digging his fingertips into my sides as he jackhammered up into me.

***I'm so sorry, but I'd be way more sorry if you made me come***, I taunted them all.

"Fuck, I want us to breed her so bad. I want her so full of cum it's coming out of her mouth," Ares growled as he collared the front of my neck, squeezing the sides and pummeling into me until he lost his rhythm. "I want to rip that fucking implant out and get you pregnant so bad, Little G."

*That's mildly disturbing bedroom talk.*

Zaz's dick sliding further down my throat distracted me, and I swallowed it, working him until he panted. His release tasted so sweet, and the blissful feeling he gave made me feel like I was soaring. My entire pussy clenched like a vise, making Desmond and Ares both moan. An orgasm burst through me out of nowhere like a tidal wave, gushing from me. My entire body convulsed, and I couldn't hold myself upright anymore. Ares banded an arm around my waist, holding me steady while he and Desmond continued their mad race to their own finishes.

I fought to keep my eyes open, but the aftershocks of my climax brought me into a headspace where I felt as if I was floating through clouds. My eyes closed, and a warmth spread through my body. Ares finished, and his scalding jizz made me feel like a cream puff. He pulled out quickly, in time for Desmond to force his knot inside me, splashing my insides with enough cum that I upgraded to an éclair. Ares gently lowered me onto Desmond's chest, and I couldn't even get up or move if I wanted to.



“Are you okay, Birdie?” Bash asked, tracing his finger along my bottom lip, catching a stray drop or two of cum and forcing it between my lips. “Desmond, her eyes are closed...” His voice sounded so far away, like the British announcers on the soccer games Nonna always made me watch. Easy to tune out.

“Dollface?” Desmond asked, rubbing my back. “Diana?”

**Sorry. So good.** I barely scraped a reply together. I wasn't even sure I actually said anything.

Three fingers swiped up my inner thigh, gathering the cum that trickled out.

***I wish you weren't on that stupid implant, Little G. I want nothing more than to see you round and swollen with a piece of us inside you.*** Ares parted my lips with his warm, sticky fingers and crammed them into my mouth. I was so far gone, I mindlessly licked his and Desmond's salty release, cleaning his digits. Then I kept sucking on them, because the feeling of having something in my mouth was so comforting.

“I think she's cum-drunk. The orgasm, my vibes, and everything at once overwhelmed her,” Zaz said as my consciousness left me.

I came to when I felt strong arms pick me up and lower me into the tub. At some point I fell asleep, but my body felt fresh and slightly damp when I woke up. I was under fresh, dry sheets, snuggled close against a pale muscular chest. Ares' chest hair scratched at my back, and his tattooed hand firmly grasped my boob. I wanted to know where Bash and Zaz went, but sleep took me over.

# SEBASTIAN

## Chapter 22

I sat at the kitchen island, eating an inferior avocado toast that some twat half-assed. The poached egg on top was overcooked. The avocado mash wasn't chunky or spicy enough, either. *Sriracha never killed anyone, so why the fuck are people so afraid to use it in food!* As soon as Red and Damon were dead and buried, I was going to personally pick Olga up myself and bring her home so I didn't have to eat shit food anymore.

Az sauntered into the kitchen in a pair of plaid pajama pants, beelining it straight to the coffee pot and pouring himself a mug he grabbed off the open rack. After adding cream and sugar, he took a prolonged sip and exhaled, smiling to himself.

"Yes, Bash?" he asked me, taking another sip of coffee as he leaned against the Island. His abs were on display, and they seemed more toned since the last time we were together. "I could feel you staring at me from the moment I walked in."

"You're practically naked, so it's difficult not to stare. Especially after last night." I got up, moving around the island to stand in front of him. Crowding him against the counter, I inhaled his scent. Woodsy pine trees and something spicy. "I can smell the lust on you. I wouldn't be surprised if you came out here in bare feet, no shirt,

and these low-slung pants just to get a rise out of me,” I said as I slipped a finger under his waistband and pulled the elastic out, peeking down to find him semi-erect.

“Yes, that was my plan, to seduce you right here and now in the half hour Diana has before her training.” His sarcasm made me realize that seducing me was never part of his plan. “Did anyone wake her up yet? She’s already late if she’s still in bed.”

“We just got in from Judas’ quarters. He woke us up in the middle of the night because he got some good intel from his cousin on Damon. He and his team are already working on a plan,” I summarized. “Desmond will probably fill everyone else in over dinner.”

“Oh, that’s why you were gone when I woke up,” he realized. “I thought you went to sleep with Diana. I tried to after you left, but Desmond and Ares barely fit in bed with her. There was no chance for me to cram myself in there.”

“Yeah, especially the way Ares practically barnacles himself to her. It’s like he’s trying to crush her ribs,” I joked.

“Desmond isn’t much better. His thighs feel like a lead weight if he ends up swinging one over you. Good luck escaping that.” He looked at the clock on the wall, then kicked off the counter and smirked at me. “Well, fuck it, we’re already late. Let’s see what she’s up to.”

“Someone is feeling *unholy* today,” I teased him. “So bad...we’re gonna be late!”

“Keep your shit up, and you’re never getting inside my ass again. Dick, tail or otherwise,” he jokingly threatened. “I have no issue topping you.”

The thought of either option made my blood rush south. *I can be versatile.*

We walked to her room and stood outside her door. I didn’t need superhearing to know that she wasn’t alone. I

could smell her and Mal's pheromones. I knew they had made up, and Ares told me all about their shower threesome, but I didn't expect them to be at the point where they were fucking first thing in the morning. I went to turn the doorknob, but it was locked. My magic could unlock it, but before I could try Mal linked me.

***We're occupied right now,*** he said.

***Yeah, I'm a bit tied up right now, so you two will have to come by another time,*** Diana added.

Well, if I wasn't wanted, I wouldn't bother. I stomped off, going to my and Az's room to get dressed. He followed me, enveloping me in a hug from behind. He rested his head on my shoulder.

"I'm proud of you for giving them the space they asked for, even if it hurt your feelings," Az commended me.

I flitted through the clothes in my closet, settling on jeans and a t-shirt. I wasn't in the mood for a suit in such hot weather. This place was fucking unnaturally hot for the winter. If I wanted to sweat like a ballsack in December I would have visited Hell for the holidays.

"I'm fine," I scoffed. I was not going to get mushy about my feelings.

"Bullshit. I can sense your hostility and deflated pride. I know how possessive you can be, especially since she bears your mark. You walking away is a big deal," he said as he rubbed my stomach.

"I just didn't expect not to be invited..." I admitted. "I don't mind sharing her, even though it goes against my nature. I like what we all have, but sometimes I have to check that urge to be completely possessive and claim her just for me. I want to lock her in her room and tie her to the bed so I know where she is at all times. Fuck, the other day I told her I wanted to tie her elbows to her

knees so I could have her holes at the ready... I could feed whenever I wanted..."

"That's some dark shit, although it does sound hot if it's consensual," Az commented.

"Yeah, especially if we get Desmond to tie the rope with all those intricate shibari knots. She could be a rope bunny," I daydreamed. He slid my sweatpants down so they hit the floor, and palmed my cock. I grunted as he smeared my precum over my shaft.

"More like a rope *tiger*. She's really come into her own since y'all abducted her," he whispered. His tongue ran along the shell of my ear, inching down to my neck. "You've changed, too, and I like it."

I stopped him, turning to face him. I held his hand when he reached for my cock again. "Unless you want our first time since reuniting to be a quickie, I'd stop teasing me like that. I want us to have enough time to devour each other and savor the experience." He was right. *Who the fuck was I, and where did the real Sebastian Black go?*

"Wow," Az exaggerated, not in an insulted way, but in shock. "You *have* changed. I'd like that, though. I want to take my time with you, too."

Az and I got dressed, and met up with everyone but Mal and Diana in the kitchen. I could still hear Mal pounding into her, and judging by the erection threatening to rip the crotch of Ares' pants in half, so could he.

*"You better not come in my ass yet, Mal. Don't you even think about it. Keep my holes stuffed. Your tail is so thick,"* she cried out. *"You're fucking mine, and I'm never letting you go."*

*"Trust me, princess, I'm not stopping until you tell me to. Whatever you say. I never want out of these holes,"* he growled.

“Lucifer’s ears, you can almost hear them through the walls without any magical assistance,” Desmond said in disbelief.

“Don’t kill my mood by bringing her dad up, ew,” Ares said in disgust as he palmed himself through his joggers.

“It’s an expression,” Desmond argued. “It’s not my fault her dad is an infamous household name our entire society is obsessed with.” He stilled Ares’ hand, scowling at him. “We’re not going to jerk ourselves off or break out into an orgy in the kitchen. We have shit to do.”

***Hypocrite, he instigated the last kitchen orgy,***  
Ares linked me. *That was a meal, for sure.*

A throaty, feminine scream came from the direction of Diana’s room. A hoarse masculine grunt followed. Fifteen minutes later, they ambled out of her bedroom, Mal’s hair disheveled and Diana’s lips puffy and red. Her activewear was tight as skin around her bottom. Her midriff showed beneath her cropped top, showing me glimpses of little scratches I was sure Mal had left behind with his claws. The whole outfit reminded me of what she wore that day I saw her in that park in Brooklyn, which made me less pissy. Mal was smiling...not a snide one, but a happy one. He actually looked *elated*, cum-drunk as fuck in a band tee, sweats and Converse trainers. *Is this the fucking Twilight Zone?*

“Sorry to keep everyone waiting,” Diana coyly smiled. “Mal taught me how to levitate myself...then he ate me out while I was floating, I sucked his dick, and time got away from us.” She lifted herself off the floor by a few feet as a demonstration, then lowered herself back to the floor.

“Yeah, I make learning fun,” he bragged, kissing a bite mark on her neck. He backed her into the island counter and hoisted her up, shoving his tongue down her throat.

She slid her hands down his sweats, grabbing his ass. They seemed to be gearing up for round two. “Diana...” Az said, barely audible over their lips smacking together. “Nonna, Angie, and Oisín have been waiting for us in the training room. It’s time to give it a rest for now.”

Mal broke it off, stepping back from her and frowning slightly. “He has a point, princess. I can’t get enough of you, but we have a day full of plans. Maybe later we can work some of that training tension off though...”

She took her hands out of his pants and pouted. “Yeah, you’re right.” Hopping off the island, she hugged him and made her way to her trainers by the door.

“You went from barely being able to stand her, to promising her a quickie because you *can’t get enough of her*,” I razzed him, mocking his very American accent. I liked taking the piss out of Mal; he was so easy to get a rise out of.

“I know. There’s a fine line between love and hate. Crossing it for her was worth checking my pride and admitting I was wrong.” He patted me on the back, giving me a knowing look over his shoulder as he followed her. Kneeling at her feet, he tied her laces for her. He had never done anything like that for someone before, and it spoke to how far he was willing to go to make our girl happy. *Fuck, I feel bad for trying to fuck with him.*



The training room looked like a state of the art combat gym. It had sparring dummies, boxing equipment, blue mats, and tons of open space. The walls were spell-proofed, so any magic created in this room would stay in this room. *That feature will come in*

*handy when Ares teaches Diana about larger scale ways to use her fire magic.* The one corner had free weights and the opposite one had a jacuzzi-sized pool of water. The far wall had a rock-climbing structure that reached the vaulted ceiling. Judas had hooked us up with a great space.

We had been here for a few hours already, and Diana was doing well. She full-body glowed as she floated off the floor, throwing energy bolts shaped like lightning at me. I managed to block or dodge most of them, but she cackled when one grazed my ribcage, leaving a deep cut behind.

“Good work. You can come down now,” I instructed her. The cut was already starting to heal, so I ignored it. She flew through the air, using swimming motions to propel herself forward.

“Never! I feel like this siren, Loralie, from a book I read last year called *The Siren’s Seduction*. All I need is a mermaid tail and red hair and I can be just like her!” she exclaimed.

“Oh! This may be hard because it’s a book with a character you’ve never actually seen, but try to envision what you think she looks like. Then turn into it. I want to see how far this body morphism goes,” Oisín requested. He had told Diana his theory earlier and she agreed with him. We wouldn’t know for sure until her powers were unlocked. “Some people truly have the gift, while others can just slightly manipulate their features.”

“Worth a shot,” Angie agreed. She sipped her water bottle, her other hand on her hip. “If that’s too hard, try to turn into someone you see regularly.”

Diana focused, closing her eyes as she paused her floating. Scales erupted on her hands and neck, while her legs were partially trapped in the beginning of a mermaid tail. She held the look for a minute or two, but



lost it. She almost came hurtling toward the ground, but I caught her at the last minute and set her on her feet.

“Be careful,” I warned. “Just because you’re immortal doesn’t mean you can’t get hurt. Not every wound heals quickly.”

“Try turning into one of the guys?!” Angie asked excitedly, bouncing back and forth on the balls of her feet.

Diana curled her lips to the right, deep in thought as she pondered her choice. She closed her eyes again, and the curls in her hair became less frizzy and tightened into more uniformed spirals, cascading down her back instead of at their normal length. She grew several inches, and her body shape changed to a lean, muscular one very reminiscent of Az’s. Her eyes turned to a warm amber brown as her facial shape became more oval.

“Az, come here and see this!” I yelled over to him. He sprinted from the other side, where he was sparring with Ares.

“*Whoa*, hold on” he declared in surprise. He tied her hair in a top knot. “Now we’re practically twins.”

Diana closed her eyes again, turning back to herself. The hair tie fell to the floor as her regular hair came back. She looked at Ares, and tried to morph into him, but her glow short circuited. She pouted, and even though I knew she was frustrated, I couldn’t help but think it was insanely sexy.

“No worries, Birdie, you’re doing great. Your magic is already so much more controlled and focused than it was the last time. You’ve made so much progress,” I praised her, throwing my hand over her shoulder and bringing her under my arm.

“I just feel so...good. So happy. I think I just woke up on the right side of the bed today,” she giggled, looking

over at Mal, who was already staring at her from the chairs set up by the far corner near the rock-climbing wall.

***So, all we have to do is keep her well-fucked and rolling in orgasms, and she'll be a magical whiz?*** I asked Az and Ares. They both looked at me with thoughtful expressions.

***Her magic is miles ahead of where it was when we were all at the mountain house...and I would fuck her every second of everyday if I could,*** Ares linked me. He got this weird crazy gleam in his eyes as he directed his focus on Diana, but I let it go. I wouldn't even pretend to understand how his mind worked.

Zaz didn't respond just yet, but that was typical for him. Sometimes he needed time to reflect on something before he spoke on it. Diana walked over to her nonna, who sat by the rock wall with Mal. While they had a conversation, I got the guys' attention, and we all huddled together near the sparring mats.

I casted a silencing spell, since not all of us were mindlinked. "I think the reason Diana improved so much is because she was freshly fucked before she came here."

"That tracks. Her magic is based on emotion, unfortunately," Desmond lamented. He ran his hand through his thick, fire-red hair, sighing.

"No, *fortunately* for us, Des. There's five of us, and we all love fucking her six ways to Sunday. You think emotions are bad, but making her feel good is a lot more sustainable than the random anger or stress outbursts she was having at the mountain house," I explained.

"Is she using sex magic?" Mal thought aloud, rubbing his cleanly shaven face. "I'm aware she doesn't know much about it, but she could be doing it

subconsciously like she does with the feature morphing.”

“If she’s capable of growing horns out of nowhere, then she’s more than capable of using sex magic. It’s not a particularly hard medium... *Although, some of us need to be hard to do it.* Am I right?!” Ares cackled.

“That’s a thought...” Az said, smiling at us all. “It very well could be, or she could be using sex to boost her overall mood and frame of mind. I think we need to do more research on this. Test out our hypothesis.”

“The Greeks invented science,” Ares proudly stated, puffing his chest as he lifted his shirt, pointing to a male bust on his left rib cage. I had seen it before, but never really paid it much attention compared to his other tattoos. “Aristotle, the first scientist and originator of the causation method of observation, where he explains natural phenomena through cause, effect, and change.” We all looked at him in various degrees of shock. It wasn’t every day the crew’s resident psychopath spouted off scientific theories. “I’m not just a pretty face, sculpted muscles, and winning personality. I know *everything* about Greek culture and history.”

*Bollocks*, he truly did. Diana walked back over to us, and I ended the silencing spell. She stood in between Az and me, with a tiny frown on her face.

“Nonna thinks I need to spend more time on mastering time travel. I think she’s scared of all the things that could go wrong...” She worried her bottom lip, peering up at Az through thick, black lashes.

“I’m working on getting my friend over here to give you lessons. He works for the Magical Bureau of Investigations and is mid-case, so we have to wait until he’s free,” he replied.

“Okay. Are we going to eat anytime soon? I’m getting hangry.” Diana said. “I can’t live off jizz and water all

day.”

“Well, no, not if you’re only drinking jizz from one of us. We’d have to do a circle jerk for it to be a full meal,” Ares debated.

*Where the fuck did he come up with this shit?* Diana blinked at him, zoning out for a minute and then snapping out of whatever daydream she had. She looked to the rest of us for support on getting some real food.

“How about we call room service and have them bring food up here, that way we can keep training. Time is of the essence, honey,” Azazel commented.

“Fine,” she huffed. She threw an energy ball at Desmond, using the element of surprise to hit him square in the chest and knock the wind out of him. He doubled over in pain, wheezing. “I’m going to attack you all one by one until I get some food then. Someone better get me some tacos from room service before I do some serious damage.”

She geared up to attack me next, but I materialized a blocking shield right before her magic made any impact. “As long as all of us make it to the spellcasting tonight, do whatever you want.” I went to the corded phone on the wall, and ordered a taco platter, with beef, chicken, and vegetable fajita fillings and a topping bar for us all. I added an assortment of water and drinks, with guac and chips as a side. I never thought I’d claim a source again, let alone be the kind of guy who doted on them, but taking care of Diana felt good. I wanted everything from her, including her gratitude and the knowledge that she was taken care of because of me.

While I was ordering, she had cornered Desmond, who retaliated by trapping her in a bounce-back shield. Any magic she cast within the shield would come back to her. She caught on quickly and was already looking for ways to get out. She cast a white-hot flame at Desmond,

ducking before it could get back to her. It hit the other side of the shield and cracked it, allowing her follow-up shots to penetrate and short circuit it.

Something told me that even with the five of us protecting her and taking care of her, she would be more than capable of doing it on her own soon.

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# MALCØLM

## *Chapter 23*

Desmond and I left training early to help Angie and Nonna set up the summoning spell. As the only experienced members of our crew with witch powers, it seemed fitting that we'd facilitate the spell and funnel everyone's combined powers. Diana, Angie, Nonna, Desmond, Ares, Bash, Azazel, Oisín, and myself would all be participating tonight, so hopefully our combined power could somehow find the elusive Lucifer. We planned to use blood magic to summon him. Was it a sound plan? In theory, yes, but we had no clue if it would work or not. Lucifer was one of the most powerful supernatural beings of all time. If he didn't want to be summoned, he would block it.

"Okay, do we think this salt outline is thick enough to contain him?" Angie asked. The salt-chalk she used to draw the circle was about three inches thick, and left a reasonably thick line behind.

"Yeah, I think so," I replied. I used my telekinesis to round out an edge, so the circle was perfectly round.

"So you were allowed to keep your magic, even after becoming a hellbound?" Angie asked as she noticed the change I made to her circle. Nonna shot her a stern glare, but she dismissed it. "Sorry to ask, but I've never

met a hellbound...and I'm curious about you, since you're with my niece."

"That's understandable. Yes, I'm still a warlock with complete use of my powers. I can also fade now, like a demon can, and I'm immortal. The caveat is that I'm bound to Hell for eternity, and I have to recharge my magic by feeding on the fears, sadness, and anxieties of others. When I feed, I experience their fear." *And the fear of the victim I wronged when I committed the atrocity that made me this way...but she didn't need to know that.*

"That sounds intense. How have you been recharging your power since you arrived here?" she inquired.

"Oh, it's been easy pickings. Gamblers have so much anxiety and fear when they're on a downswing. I just wait around until I find someone who's really messing up, and then I'm set."

"Angie, stop asking him such personal questions," Nonna snapped at her. Angie didn't even have the shame to look contrite about it. She just shrugged and went about her business. "Thank you for coming around last night and helping us sort everything. That was kind of you."

"Anytime. I enjoyed shopping for ingredients with you. That apothecary shop on the third floor put the shops we had in my heyday to shame," I remarked. It was good to get to know Diana's family. I wanted to show her I was serious about us and not just with her for sex. Although that was a huge bonus.

***That's what you were up to last night,*** Desmond linked me. ***I was wondering why you weren't home. You missed a great time.***

***Yeah, a great time you were able to have because I lured them away from their suite. You're all fucking lucky they don't have superhearing. Angie***

***wanted to come over and hang out with Diana, but I heard you all pounding her pussy into an early grave so I suggested we get stuff ready for tonight.***

I was fine with it. Let them have their fun. I was in this for the long haul, and the best way into a woman's heart was through her family. So, no matter how much Angie pried and didn't mind her own business, I would let it go.

"When was your heyday exactly?" Angie asked.  
"You're all old as fuck."

"Angela!" Nonna shouted.

"No, it's okay. I'm about 250 years old," I said, trying my hardest to hold my sarcasm back. It was hard to remember the exact amount because once you get past 200 it's all a blur until you hit 300. "Desmond was born in the fifth or sixth century. Bash is like, ridiculously old, and Ares is a Greek deity, so I have no clue how old he is."

"Well, Diana definitely has daddy issues..." Angie said, raising her eyebrows. Nonna waved her hand in the air, hitting Angie in the ear with magic and making her double over. "Ow! What the focaccia, Ma!"

***I never want to be on the receiving end of that,***  
Desmond linked. *Agreed, my friend.*

I placed a few more candles around the circle, to add to the ambiance and increase the spellcasting power. That was one assumption that human movies and television got right—the more candles, the more powerful the magic. Desmond had finished writing the spell an hour ago, so he helped Nonna set up nine crystals around the perimeter of the circle, one for each participant. They had to be placed equal distances from each other and couldn't touch the salt line. When everything was done, we mindlinked everyone to meet us.



Diana looked like a wet dream straight out of *The Craft*. She wore a high-waisted black skirt, a white, tucked-in Nirvana band tee, suspenders, and a chunky black choker necklace. The boots I got her completed the look perfectly. She caught me checking her out, and came straight for me, tilting her cheek toward me for a kiss. She didn't even need to ask me. I was jonesing for her so badly that a peck on the cheek would barely take the edge off.

Ares followed her, slapping me on the ass, then grabbing my face in his fucking trashcan lid sized hands for a grossly inappropriate kiss. "Who's ready to meet their father-in-law, The Daddy of Darkness?"

"Ew, please don't refer to him that way," Diana said, wrinkling her nose.

"Yeah, and your crazy ass is the only one excited to meet him. He's not going to take kindly to us dating his daughter," I reminded him. Ares had no sense of self-preservation or fear, constantly running toward danger like a man with a death wish. *Thankfully, he's immortal and can't actually die... although if anyone could kill him, it would be Lucifer.*

"No one, not even Lucifer, could separate me from you, Little G," Ares cooed, his heart eyes almost bugging out of his head. He lifted her off the ground, crushing her to his chest and spinning her around. "Don't be nervous if we end up summoning him."

"Nervous isn't the emotion you should all be worried about," Desmond chimed in. "Diana, if we *do* summon him, don't hit him with the third degree right away. Give him a minute to get acclimated and for us to explain what's going on."

"I guess I can do that..." She walked over to Bash and Azazel, who were talking to Oisín. He was trying to explain to them how Druid magic was different from

witch magic; it was much more based in nature and the elements.

“Alright, everyone, let’s get this started,” Nonna’s voice carried throughout the casting room. “We all need to take a seat on the floor at a crystal that calls to us, and join hands. Please be mindful not to touch the candles or the salt line,” she said, eyeing Diana as she said the last part. “Come here, *Belissima*.”

Diana sat between Nonna and Angie, in front of a larimar stone. I knew Diana wasn’t into crystals, so I found it ironic she chose to sit in front of one that helped extinguish anger and connect to your voice and heart. *Hopefully that helps her with the resentment she holds for Lucifer and Michael.* Nonna held Diana’s hand, palm up, and took a pocket knife from her jeans pocket. She slit the center of Diana’s hand quickly, letting the blood well up in her palm. “Malcolm, a little help?” I used my telekinesis to lift the blood off Diana’s hand, letting it fall in the dead center of the circle. The wound on Diana’s hand closed before the blood even dried on the floor.

I took a seat in front of the golden topaz, so I could sit directly across from her and have a good view of her face. The stone’s meaning wasn’t lost on me. It helped manifest good intentions. I wanted all of my dreams with Diana to come to fruition. Hopefully, this little yellow rock would help me with that.

“Mal, which one should I sit in front of, none of them are saying a word to me,” Ares asked.

“How about the amethyst stone, big guy? That way your crazy bullshit can be at a minimum if we actually manage to call Lucifer,” I sarcastically replied.

Bash laughed over by his side of the circle, and I wished I was actually joking, but I wouldn’t put it past Lucifer and Ares to start something. From what I’d heard about the *Daddy of Darkness*, he was batshit. Having

those two in a room together could be like dropping a lit match in gasoline.

“Okay, now that everyone is seated, let’s go over how this works,” Desmond’s booming voice said, catching all of our attention. We all need to hold hands and chant the incantation aloud. I took the liberty of placing sheets of paper with the spell around the circle so you can glance at it. At Nonna’s insistence, I’ll lead the spell.”

“I think the most powerful practitioner in the circle should lead, even if you’re only half warlock,” she explained to the group.

“Understandable,” Bash agreed. “Do we need to shift? My magic is stronger if I’m shifted.”

“Yes, but shift now, so that anyone who isn’t used to seeing shifted demons can get used to it. I need everyone’s focus on the spell,” Desmond said.

Desmond removed his shirt and shifted first, the seams of his sweatpants ripping with his increase in size. He almost hit me with his left wing, but remembered to close them right before they made impact. Thankfully his junk was still covered.

Bash took off his shirt and shifted next. His wings weren’t as big as Desmond’s, but the bright indigo color drew everyone’s attention. Ares took off his shirt for no reason, seeing as he had no wings, and shifted. His golden glow radiated through the room, somehow making him even more handsome than he already was. I think out of the crew, he had the most attractive shifted form.

When it was my turn to shift, I braced myself for everyone’s stares, even my own crew’s. I rarely fully shifted, because my shifted form wasn’t fear or awe inspiring. It wasn’t even cute. Part of the punishment for being a hellbound was a grotesque shifted form. For

those of us who committed more heinous crimes, our non-shifted forms changed too. *I guess I'm lucky to only look ugly in one of my forms.* Closing my eyes, I willed my body to change, feeling my curved horns sprout from my hairline. The fur on my face and arms came next, followed by my bare tail that curved over the waistband of my joggers. My claws were last. I tapped them on the floor, waiting for the comments from everyone.

***I love your tail and claws. I can't help thinking about what they did to me this morning,*** Diana linked me, batting her eyelashes and giving me bedroom eyes. Her voice sounded husky over the mindlink, and it settled something deep inside me. I took a good look around, and realized that yes, I wasn't as fearsome as Desmond, as eye-catching as Bash, or as handsome as Ares in my shifted form, but if Diana didn't mind looking at me, then my shifted form wasn't that bad.

Azazel was the last to switch. I hated to be the pot that called the kettle black, but his shifted form was hideous. Truly, it drew every gaze in the room. He had long, curled horns that sprang out of a goat's head. The long fangs protruding from his mouth gave him a perilous edge. His eyes were milky white, glowing with an opalescent radiance that captivated me. The rest of his form looked human, with normal arms, hands, and legs, and his wings reminded me of feathered marble, with the swirls of gray and black weaving through the dull whiteness. He closed them, looking at all of us. But rather than stay silent and embarrassed like me, he spoke first.

"Before anyone makes jokes, this is what a shifted fallen angel looks like. It's part of the 'shame' aspect of the punishment. My eyes glow like this because I have the Sight. Any questions?" he asked.

"Yes. Is that why Lucifer is depicted as a goat sometimes?" Diana asked. "Is this a shifted form common among all fallen angels, or is it unique to you?"

“There aren’t that many of us, actually, maybe a handful? Most angels who are exiled get their wings ripped off, and are doomed to a mortal life. So from what I know, yes. It’s a standard thing,” he answered with a gentle tone, despite how prickly his posture was. His eyes locked with Diana’s, and something unspoken was said between them. Something about the way she smiled at him seemed to make him relax.

“I would never make a comment about how any of you look,” Nonna said, sweeping her gaze at all of us and letting it linger for a few extra seconds on Azazel and me. “The only thing that matters to me is how you treat my granddaughter. As long as you’re all good to her, I have no problems.”

“Thank you for the sentiment,” I said.

“Okay, has everyone gotten a good peep at each other? We need to hurry this along because we’re about to hit midnight. That’s prime witching time,” Desmond pointed out. We all nodded, and he started chanting the spell.

*Prince of Darkness, we summon you*

*Our intentions are pure and true*

*Grace our circle, as we hold hands*

*Lucifer, your presence we demand*

We all joined in on the second chant, making sure to pronounce each word clearly. Thankfully, Desmond wrote the spell in English instead of Latin, so it wasn’t too hard to say. We spoke at a measured pace, not rushing through the words. By the fourth time we chanted the spell, the lights in the room cut out, leaving us in the warm, golden, flickering light of the candles. A rogue wind wound its way through the room and tickled the back of my neck. The temperature skyrocketed, and

the room became flame hot. I could feel the sweat rolling down my back but continued chanting. Something was happening here, and we needed to follow through.

A tall blaze of fire erupted in the middle of the circle. The flames shot out toward us, but were blocked by the line of salt surrounding it. Everyone around the circle sat with gaping mouths and shocked expressions on their faces. Diana gazed into the flames, trying to see the black mass within them. The flames extinguished, and a holographic, translucent version of Lucifer appeared in the middle of the circle. I had never seen Lucifer in real life, and only knew his face from the guys' memories and pictures I had seen of him. He stood at least six and a half feet tall, with dark, wavy disheveled hair. He looked forty at the oldest, although he had gray around his temples and in a wisp at the front of his head. He wore black jeans, a white t-shirt, and no shoes. His face commanded attention, not due to how attractive his angular, masculine features were. No, he drew focus because of how calculated he stared at us all, like he was trying to remember and break us down piece by piece. His roguish handsomeness didn't hit the same way Bash's or Ares' did. It just made him look fierce, menacing even. Like he could cut through you without moving a muscle or giving a single fuck about the pain it caused. When his gaze fell on Diana, his entire face dropped, and he backed away from her, all the way toward my side of the circle.

"No," he said, his medium-toned voice regal sounding even in his panic. "You aren't supposed to find me."

"Well, I need to. Shit really hit the fan, *Dad*," Diana said. "I'm not safe."

Lucifer looked around the circle, his eye landing on Ares. Ares had said he met Lucifer a few times, so maybe he recognized him? He opened his mouth to speak again, but the connection started to fizzle out.

“Hell’s Kitchen, 2010!” he shouted, right before the connection was lost. His form fizzled out, leaving only the scorch marks on the wooden floor behind.

Diana shot up, running into the middle of the circle. She only stood there for a moment before Desmond pulled her back out again. “Diana, no. You never run into an active summoning circle. The magic in there stays active even after our hands are broken. It needs to be cleansed before it’s safe.”

She shrugged out of his hold, whipping around in a state of panic. “Is he dead?! He looked like a ghost!”

“No, he’s not dead. *Belissima*. The dead cannot be summoned via blood magic—you use a séance for that,” Nonna said. “My guess is that he’s being held somewhere or trapped so that he cannot physically travel. He did send his consciousness, though, which makes me think that whoever cast the magic to keep him there isn’t as powerful or skilled as they think they are.”

“My thoughts exactly,” Desmond agreed. “Hell’s Kitchen 2010...”

“That was the year of the first Hellfest. Remember, they opened the portal in this little hole-in-the-wall bar there, and it took you to this party spot in the Catskills?”

“Oh, yeah, I remember that. I had to leave my cabin for a month because there were so many stragglers in the woods,” Azazel said through a laugh.

“We need to find him!” Diana shouted. “I can jump us back in time, and we can try to find out what the fuck happened and free him.”

“Hold on, hold on,” Oisín said as he rounded the circle to stand next to his sister. “Diana, that may not even be Lucifer. Nonna and Desmond could absolutely be right...but they may also be wrong. Someone could have magically rigged that to happen if anyone summoned Lucifer, to trap anyone looking for him.”

“Yeah, honey, your dad has a lot of enemies. I say before we do anything, we consult with Michael. They may have been together around that time, and he could shed some light on whether or not he was even at Hellfest.”

“*Okay*,” she sulked, hugging Nonna and her aunt. She walked toward the door with a defeated look on her face. “I’m beat, so I’m going to bed. Goodnight, everyone.”

“I’ll fade you to your room,” Bash offered, taking her hand and disappearing.

As upset as she was about not taking immediate action, Oisín had a point. We needed to sit and talk about everything and make a plan before we potentially jumped into a trap.



# DIANA

## *Chapter 24*

As soon as Bash faded us to the suite, I ditched him, slamming my bedroom door behind me and locking it for good measure. He had the common sense not to follow me, which was good for him because I was in no mood for his possessive, controlling nonsense. I stripped all of my clothes off and hopped into the shower in my ensuite bathroom, sighing when the hot water hit my back. Charlie had picked out some lavender shower tabs when Ares brought him along to shop for me. They dissolved when they got wet, releasing a woodsy, floral scent that made me feel more relaxed. By the time I washed the conditioner from my hair, I was able to feel past the impatient anger that clouded my judgment and think about what I wanted our next steps to be.

The fancy soap matched the bath tabs. The lather felt so rich and creamy against my skin that I lost myself in the luxury of it all. I ran my hands over my breasts, squeezing each of them and circling my thumbs against my nipples. A light breath, something between a sigh and a moan left my lips. The shower door opened, startling me out of my brief reprieve. Bash stepped in, uninvited, completely nude. His hard cock bobbed between his legs. Had he been watching me?

“Get out, please. I want to be alone,” I said, scowling at him. He held me in a tight grip, bending down so our

foreheads touched.

“No,” he said, kissing my throat and lowering his hands to my ass cheeks. His fingers dug into my flesh as he backed me into a wall.

“Yes, Bash, I want to be *alone*. I’m not in the mood for your controlling, psychotic, possessive, alpha-demon bullshit tonight. I’m going to bed.”

“You want to go to bed?” he asked, his eyes turning black as if he dared me to answer him. I could feel the irritation I’d just banished rising within me tenfold. *Is he serious right now?* Only Bash would interrupt someone’s quiet time, act like an insensitive *twat*, as he’d call it, and then get huffy about being asked to leave.

“Yes, I want to go to bed. Did you mishear me? Are you just that fucking controlling and possessive that you completely disregard what I want on autopilot?!” I raised my voice, because I was that emotionally fucked. I finally made contact with my other dad and the first thing he said to me was *no, you’re not supposed to find me*. It hurt.

Bash picked me up by my ass cheeks, hauling me over his shoulders like a fucking neanderthal. He slapped my ass across the middle, the sting smarting so bad that I jolted. I pounded on his back, screaming at him to stop as he carried me to the bed and dropped me on it, soaking wet. He didn’t even have the fucking decency to let me dry off first.

“You’re so fucking feisty, it only makes me want to claim you more.” He laughed maniacally, climbing on top of me and pinning my hands above my head. “You can fight me as hard as you want, but you’re mine, Birdie. I know what you need more than you do.”

I put my hand on his side, hitting him with a surge of magical energy that made him wince. Unexpected, but

necessary. Sometimes it was hot, but I was in no mood for his shit right now.

“Well, you’re mine, Bash. And I’m telling you that I’m a mess right now and don’t want to interact with you, or your dick,” I snapped.

I kicked him in his side, expecting him to roll off me, but he only smiled like he enjoyed it.

“That doesn’t work on me like your magic does. Superior strength, remember? He held my wrists in one hand, using the other to cup my face. “Tell me why you’re so tense and angry. I’ve felt it since we arrived at the suite.”

“No, get the fuck off me, and stop bothering me,” I spat.

I wanted a night alone to stew in my own frustration. Just when I thought we took one step forward, we got kicked back three steps. Was I really asking for so much to be left alone in my room? Bash licked the pulse point on my neck, biting into it softly. I hated my body’s response, how I melted into it so easily despite how fucking arrogant and annoying he was acting.

“You’re only delaying your own pleasure, acting like a spoiled brat, Birdie. We have a bond. You bear *my* mark. Your body wants my touch—it calls to me, even if you don’t mean it to,” he rasped. His voice lowered an octave as his horns sprouted from his head. “It knows what you need, even if you don’t want to admit it.”

“You have no fucking clue what’s going on—you don’t even know how I feel. *My body calls to you?* And what exactly do I need, you arrogant fuck?” I wanted to piss him off, poke him until he got sick of me and took a hint to get the Hell out of here.

“You’re upset about your father’s reaction to seeing you. He obviously knows what you look like, which means he’s been keeping tabs on you, yet he never

made contact. You're frustrated that no one wants to jump on the lead we have right away without thinking all of our options through. You're young and impulsive, so I totally get it. You're mad at me because you think I'm a controlling piece of shit. And finally, you're mad at yourself because you hate how much you care about your father, even if he doesn't care about you. And about how your body reacts to me. It's beyond your control, or even mine."

My face cracked. I didn't think Bash was perceptive enough to know how I felt, let alone be able to articulate the reasons I felt that way. He chuckled, dipping down to lick my lips. I snapped at him, trying to bite his nose, but he pulled back before I could.

"Oh Birdie, don't be surprised. I always know how you feel. As far as what you need, you need to be reminded of who you belong to. Who owns your body on the deepest, most primal level. You need to let go and be handled, and believe me, I'm going to handle you."

He let go of my wrists. Before I could wriggle out of my spot in the middle of the bed, black rope wound around them, spreading them to the far corners of the bed in a V shape. Bash held onto my thighs, pulling them apart so the outsides were touching the bed. He bit down hard on my inner thigh, over his mark, then licked the inflamed skin and cuts his sharp canines made. I wailed, not expecting it to feel so arousing. The pain made me feel a simultaneous burst of fury and wanton need. I wasn't sure if he was manipulating my pheromones or if it was our bond, but the surge in desire took my breath away. *What the fuck is wrong with me? Seriously, why do I get turned on by this man acting like a complete jerk?*

"That's your first reminder, Birdie," he sing-songed, his voice deepening as the veins in his face darkened.

Moons and men, maybe an angry fuck was what I needed to feel better. I bucked my hips at his face,

silently begging him to devour my pussy. I wanted him to eat it so good he cleaned the fucking plate. His wicked smile and the mischievous sparkle in his blacked-out eyes led me to think it wasn't going to happen.

"They spoil you, but I'm not giving in so easily. You'll get what you want when you admit who owns you. I'll only ask you three times, too. If you don't admit it, you get nothing," he said. He ran his tongue around my nipple, lapping at the stiff peak before taking it into his mouth to suck on it. A twinge of lust shot straight through to my gut, pooling right at my weeping pussy.

***Who owns you?*** he asked as he continued to suck on it, flicking my other nipple with his fingers.

***No one,*** I answered. He bit down on it, digging his nails into the soft flesh of the thigh he still held.

***Liar, I can smell your lust. I feed from it.***

He changed his position, kneeling so that his knees were on either side of my shoulders. He placed his dick on my mouth while he collared my throat with his hand and squeezed it enough to cut some of my air circulation off. His other hand held my head still so it didn't move when he started thrusting in and out of my mouth. My lady bits *gushed*. Holy fuck being used as a willing hole felt orgasmic. My fury melted away with every slide of his cock between my lips. Once he got a rhythm going, he reached back and twirled my nipples, pinching them lightly as his thick demon meat rammed down my throat, making me gag around him.

***I feel like only someone who owns you would dominate you while he fucked your face. Tell me, my little filthy whore, who owns you? Who makes you feel good?***

When I heard him call me that, I moaned around his mouth, sucking his dick in with every thrust. Something about hearing the guys call me that made me feel so

erotic. I could feel myself getting wetter by the second. My clit was throbbing with the need for him to lick it, stroke it, suck on it—*anything*. He was right, my body knew it needed him.

He thrust a few more times before he stopped, stilling inside my mouth, all the way in so his knot was pressed against my lips. My mouth and throat felt so full I could barely breathe.

“I’m not fucking around with you anymore. Who. Owns. You?” he asked, each word punctuated with a deep, punishing thrust.

***We own each other!*** I mentally screamed, gagging around him and enjoying it like a good little whore. I refused to think of it any other way. ***My claim on you is just as valid as your claim on me.***

“There you go! That didn’t take long,” he said, removing himself from my mouth. He waved his hands, and the rope vanished. Bash laid down next to me, patting my thigh to get my attention. “Ride my face. I want to drown in that cunt.”

I climbed onto his face, hovering above his mouth. He pulled my thighs down, so my pussy and ass smothered him. I tried to pop back up, but he firmly kept me in place.

***I told you to sit on my face. Not hover. You’re not going to hurt me, Birdie,*** he growled through the mindlink, shoving his tongue into my folds.

He ate me with a ferocity that had my thighs shaking. One part of his tongue licked my clit while the other fucked me in tandem. Within a few minutes, I was a quivering mess. I rocked back and forth over his face, riding him as I tipped my head back and moaned. I *loved* when he ate me this way—I was in control. My orgasm snuck up fast, hitting me out of nowhere. Bash sucked up my juices before nudging me to move down his body,

so my pussy was over his hard, dripping cock. The stubble around his mouth gleamed with my release, and I smiled to myself proudly. He slid me down, so I sat over his cock.

“I want you to pick one of the other guys to come in here. We need a third for what I want to do to you,” he ordered.

“Hmmm,” I thought. Not Desmond. He would likely piss me off more. Mal was an option, but something inside me wanted Zaz, too. “I can’t choose between two...it’s because my body knows it needs three dicks, not just two...”

Bash rolled his eyes at my use of his own words. “Yeah, fine. Mindlink them and ask them to come in here.”

***Can you come to my room, please,*** I linked them separately.

Zaz faded into the room, whereas Mal opened the door, walking in and closing it behind him. They looked at each other, then at Bash and I in bed. Zaz laughed, because he automatically knew where this was going. Maybe he saw it ahead of time or he was just extra perceptive. They both sat toward the foot of the bed, waiting for one of us to explain what was going on.

“Diana feels angry and frustrated about what happened earlier, and she needs to mellow out,” Bash detailed. “I think another orgasm would make her feel better.”

Zaz took his clothes off, dropping them on the floor. He climbed in, sitting on top of Bash’s mouth so he was facing me. Bash’s hands gripped his thick, muscular thighs, and the sight gave me the twat-tingles. Zaz massaged my breasts, grabbing huge handfuls and rubbing them in his palms.

“I’m in,” he said, his face slackening when Bash started eating his asshole. The audible sound of him pleasuring Zaz made me grind on Bash’s hard length so it slipped inside me. “Fuck, your tongues. Eat my hole,” Zaz moaned as he slowly ground his hips.

***Open up her asshole, Mal. You’re gonna knot that tight little hole for her and make her feel full,*** Bash linked us.

Mal came behind me with a bottle of lube in his hand. ***I’m ready to stuff you, princess. Are you?***

“*Mhm,*” I groaned. Bash’s fingers had found my clit, and the soft strokes on my over-sensitive nub while I rode him were *torture*.

Mal pushed one finger into my ass with little effort, working the lube inside me as we eased my hole open. The second finger took some time, but it eventually fit. He scissored them inside me, stretching me so I could try to take his cock. He wasn’t small, and ‘a tight fit’ would be an understatement.

“Mal, lay on the bed while you fuck her ass,” Bash said.

Mal nodded, laying flat next to Bash and turning me so I faced away from him. I lowered myself onto him as his hands grasped my hips, helping my tight hole envelop him inch by inch. Once his knot was pressed against me, I finally exhaled a breath. My asshole stretched around his girth like a tightly wound rubber band. All of the nerve endings there sang with a glorious mix of pain and pleasure that had me buzzing. I salivated when I thought of how good it was going to feel to have his knot crammed up there, too. *I’m filthier than a New York City street, damn.*

Bash got up, positioning Zaz so he was kneeling in front of me on the edge of the bed, while he stood



behind him. “Okay Birdie, Zaz is going to fuck you, while I fuck him.”

Zaz grinned at me. ***This is going to be fun***, he linked me.

Zaz’s dick glowed silver in the low light of my bedroom. I assumed Bash chose this arrangement because he knew I needed a dose of positive energy to help me get over myself and focus on our next steps. Zaz lined himself up, sinking into me with a groan. His strokes were deep, bottoming out every time. Every movement was intentional, not too fast or slow. Mal started to move in deep, measured thrusts beneath me. I felt so full with both of them inside me, it was overwhelming. Every time they rammed into me, a jolt of pleasure ran up my spine. I had only been fucked in the ass a few times before I met the guys, and those experiences paled in comparison. I could hear the snick of lube as Bash quickly prepped Zaz’s ass. He lathered his dick up, slamming himself into Zaz’s ass without any preamble.

“Fuck, yes. Destroy me, you fucking animal,” Zaz said through a deep groan.

I had *never* seen this side of him. He had always been so gentle with me...but knowing he liked it rough, too, had my pussy gripping him. Zaz thrust into me on Bash’s outstroke; the rhythm my guys set made a slow but steady orgasm rise inside me. I never wanted to go back to being fucked by one man ever again—it would never feel this good, this freeing. Each of my guys offered me something unique and different that I craved. They cared about me, made me feel special. A buzz of overwhelming positive feelings took over, ballooning inside me until I felt like I was going to explode. Tears streamed down my face and onto Mal beneath me as I moaned.

“That’s right honey, let it out. You’re a good girl, so good at getting stuffed,” he cooed, grabbing my breasts as he rammed into me.

“She’s *such* a good girl—good at taking cock and moaning like my little slut should,” Bash said as he leaned over Zaz, collaring his hand around my throat and cutting off my air supply almost completely.

Hearing them call me a good girl made me melt inside. I craved the praise. Mal snaked his hand around to rub my clit, and the intense sensation made me groan. I saw stars sparkle in my vision.

**FUCK!** I screamed, coming all over them and coating Zaz’s dick with my release. Zaz came quickly after me, groaning as he let Bash finish inside him. Mal furiously pounded up into me before knotting me and filling my ass.

“Stay where you are, Birdie. I’m not done with you yet. Zaz, stay inside her,” Bash ordered. We all listened, too tired to move.

I rode out my post orgasm haze, and eventually Mal’s and Bash’s knots loosened. Bash pulled out of Zaz, moving him out of the way so he could lift me off Mal and lay me on the bed. He took my hands, placing them above my head again so Mal could hold them for him. I felt their releases dripping out of me, and wondered what Bash could possibly do next.

He spread my thighs apart, and stuck his tongue out of his mouth. It split down the middle into two separate tongues, but before I could ask him what he planned on doing, he used them to lick me clean. He *ate* Zaz’s cum out of my pussy. Like fucking frosting off a cake. His hungry sucks and licks turned me into a panting, needy mess. Even after being eaten out twice, I still wanted more. He used his thumb to flick my clit as he moved down to eat Mal’s cum out of my asshole. I never

thought watching him consume another man's cum from me would turn me on this much, but fuck was I wrong.

"Ooooooh, fuck," I moaned, straining my neck so I could watch him. "I don't think I could come again, Bash."

He lifted his head from my lady bits, and his shiny, cum-stained lips quirked into a half smile. His eyes lit up, like I had challenged him somehow instead of asking for a reprieve. "Oh, you can, and you will. Because I know you want to," he decreed.

He was right. I wanted to come again. My fantasy was all five of them fucking me with their monster dicks, tails, fingers, and tongues over and over again until I couldn't physically cum any more. He shoved two fingers into my swollen sex, using my own wetness and whatever was left of Zaz to ease his passage in. He glanced at Zaz, directing a pointed look at my sex. Zaz put two of his fingers inside me too. They pumped them in and out of me in a fast rhythm together.

"Mal, you want to hit the red button for us?" Zaz asked.

"I love pushing buttons," Mal replied. *He has no clue how true that is.*

He dipped two fingertips in my mouth, then used the tips to tease my clit, rubbing it in fast, light motions. Letting go of one of my hands, he took my nipple into his mouth, switching between sucking and biting on it. Agonizing pleasure vibrated through me as my body convulsed off the bed in its attempt to escape an overload of pleasure it didn't know how to process. My brain short circuited, and I swore I saw my soul floating away when I looked at the ceiling.

"Yes, yes, yes," I moaned, thrusting my hips to meet every pump of their fingers. My eyes closed as I succumbed to the lush energy coursing through me.

“Come for us, Birdie. Unravel for your men,” Bash ordered me. And like his good little slut, I obeyed. It simultaneously felt as if a thousand pins pricked me at once and like my skin was burning up with heat.

“RIP my fingers,” Bash said, pulling them out and pushing them past Mal’s lips. “You clenched so hard that I thought they broke for a second there.”

“Your orgasm face was beautiful, honey,” Zaz crooned, kissing my cheek.

“You taste delicious, too” Mal said, kissing my mouth so I could taste myself. I was so tired that I couldn’t even respond to them.

Mal cleaned me with a wet washcloth he teleported from the bathroom, throwing it into the hamper by the wall before snuggling against me. I remember feeling another body press against my back before passing out.



It had been four days since the blood magic summoning. I had been working my ass off in training, getting better every day. We assumed we’d never hear from him, but Michael finally replied to us, offering to meet us around dinner time today. I spent days stewing in my own anxiety about the unknown and debating with the guys on possibilities that might never come to pass. Michael must have had *important things* to attend to upstairs. *Whoopy-fucking-do Michael, so do we.* He couldn’t even bother getting to know me when I was growing up, so I wasn’t surprised that I didn’t rank high on his priority list. He showed up two hours late, and didn’t even have the decency to eat with us. He just sat at the table in the same meeting room we were in the

last time we saw him, staring at us with an expectant stare as if *we* were wasting *his* time.

*Whose bright idea was it to invite him here anyway?*

“Nice of you to join us, Michael,” I barbed him, looking at the time on Bash’s phone. Seeing as all of the people I wanted to speak to were here, I had yet to replace my iPhone that was ruined in the bar fire.

“*Diana,*” he warned me.

“Good to know you remember my name, since you couldn’t say hello to me at the meeting.”

“You came in last and glared at me the whole time. After you made an example of the bear shifter, you talked to everyone but me. I got the impression you didn’t want to talk.” He looked at me, and actually seemed sad. Or he was a manipulative liar. Either way, I didn’t give a fuck.

“We didn’t ask you here to argue,” Desmond said, putting a hand on my arm to flood my mood with neutral vibes. I slapped him away.

***Don’t you dare use your magic on me,*** I linked him. He removed it, sighing as he shifted in his chair.

“We used blood magic to summon Lucifer, and it worked, sorta,” Zaz began to explain. “He was only able to send his consciousness, not his entire form, which leads us to believe he could possibly be trapped, or is unwilling to be summoned.

“I think he was trapped because he shouted ‘Hell’s Kitchen, 2010’ at us before the connection fizzled out. He recognized me for sure,” I added.

“Or, this could be a trap he or someone else set to lure people who want to summon him,” Desmond argued.

“Either way, we want your thoughts on it and some more context. What was going on between you two

around that time?” Zaz gently inquired.

Michael looked surprised, maybe by Zaz’s directness? He leaned back in his chair, tapping his fingers on the desk as if he was contemplating what to say. The light reflected off his white-blond hair.

“Your father and I broke up in 2010, in Hell’s Kitchen. We had gone to the festival, and everything seemed fine. Then he faded to Brooklyn to check on you. Your mother had just passed away not even a year prior, and despite his better judgment, Lucifer wanted to move to the city so he could watch you. I told him God wanted us to stay out of your life, for your own good. He didn’t trust God’s plan like I did. He always found it hard to stay away from you for long periods of time...” Michael took a deep breath, rubbing the back of his neck. “We got into a huge argument about it. Lucifer wanted to take you with him. He knew about Zaz’s visions, and thought that training you himself was the right move to keep you safe. He didn’t want to leave your education solely to your *boyfriends*. He promised me he would stick to the decision we made. The plan was in place for a reason. I just couldn’t deal with him anymore. He was manipulative, controlling, and no matter what I did, it wasn’t good enough for him. So I faded back to Heaven. After I had a few hours to calm down, I tried to use our soul bond to find him, but it was blocked; he had somehow altered it. I knew he was alive, but I couldn’t sense how he felt or where he was.”

“You two actually kept track of me...even though you weren’t supposed to see me?” That made me feel slightly less angry with both of them. I was still hurt that they had to stay away in the first place, but that lessened the sting. “Wait, you’re soulbonded to him?” I asked. Why in Heaven and Hell would Michael do that to himself after everything he had told me about their relationship?

“I told you, we have a very complicated relationship, but that doesn’t mean we didn’t love each other. I still

love him, despite everything,” Michael said wistfully, looking into my eyes. I saw the hurt there, and I felt sorry for him. If any of the guys broke up with me it would break my heart. I felt like I’d grown so attached to them, even in the short time we’d known each other.

“He altered a soulbond?” Bash asked incredulously. “That’s permanent magic. Impossible.”

“He’s one of the most powerful supernatural beings in existence. Of course, he can,” Michael scoffed. “If I could use it, we would know where he is by now.”

*Lightbulb.* I stood from the table, opening the door. “OISÍN! Get in here!”

“OISÍN!” Ares copied me. “Treats boy!”

Mal cackled until he saw the confused look on Michael’s face. “Diana’s half-brother Oisín posed as a cat and watched Diana for almost two years. He lived with us at our old house, and we all constantly fed him. You had to be there I guess...”

“I know Oisín, he’s practically a son to me,” Michael said in an impassive tone. “And that sounds like something he would do.” He shook his head, crossing his arms in front of him.

Nothing happened, so I dug into Ares’ pocket, trying to find his pocket knife spear.

“Whoa, Little Goddess, simmer down. I am not letting you jerk me off in front of your dad. That’s where I draw the line.”

“You’re a Greek god, and *that’s where you draw the line...*” Michael snarked. “Aren’t your parents siblings? Didn’t you literally fuck your sister...”

“I swear to fucking Zeus, you don’t even know what the fuck you’re talking—”

“Found it!” I screamed as I waved the pocket knife at them all, choosing to ignore the conversation happening

at the moment. I pushed the sister-fucking comment out of my mind, making a mental note to ask Ares about that at a later date and time. We had shit to do, and that was a lot to unpack.

I slit my hand open, letting the blood drip to the floor in front of me.

“Diana, what are you doing?” Desmond said, taking the knife from me.

“Oisín! I’m summoning you, brother!” I shouted. “Family emergency!”

A loud crack resounded throughout the room, like a clap of thunder. Oisín appeared on the table, buck-ass naked with his forearms on his thighs. His dick was soaked with...spit? *Oh shit, did I interrupt something?* He gave each of my guys a profoundly psychotic death glare.

“What did they do?” he accused them as he jumped off the table, striding toward me with a furious look on his face. His eyes winced, and he was walking funny. His hulking muscles looked extra threatening as he cracked his knuckles. The guys sat there, looking at him like he was insane. Mal rolled his eyes, probably trying his hardest not to say something that would stir the pot. They all started mindlinking me at once.

***Lucifer’s left nut, what the fuck is in his ass?*** Mal cackled. He slapped his knee and doubled over, wheezing from a lack of oxygen.

***Whoa, whoa whoa, it has a BEJEWELLED TAIL?!?!?! Ares*** shouted as he pointed in Oisín’s direction. Again, volume control, you Greek megaphone. Even mentally, volume matters.

I rubbed my ears, as Desmond’s raspy voice cut through their noise. ***Didn’t know Oisín liked to play with human toys. Maybe he’ll stop being such a mentally clogged tight-ass now...***



They all started roaring with laughter. I thought I knew what they were talking about, but I turned my head, taking a peep anyway. Crammed in a very visible fashion between Oisín's asscheeks was Priscilla Plugsley, Charlie's pink butt plug with a tail covered in cotton candy pink crystals. I'd seen it before on his bedside table and asked about it. And unfortunately, this isn't the first time I'd seen it in action. I really needed to perfect the art of knocking on doors. *Hopefully with superhearing, that would no longer be an issue, because I did not want to walk in on my best friend fucking my brother. Or vice versa. And Charlie accused me of having Daddy issues... Oisín was way older than most of my guys.*

As they all laughed at him, Oisín's face turned a bright red. "Which one's throat do I slit first? Michael, what's happening?"

"I assume Diana summoned you in a moment of... *passion*...and maybe you weren't thinking clearly. Look at your body," Michael calmly instructed, as if he was talking to a toddler on the verge of a meltdown.

Oisín took in his appearance, and clenched his asscheeks. I never thought I'd ever have a brother, let alone an older one. Or that I'd see him clench his pale white asscheeks and scrunch his face and frown in extreme embarrassment. He quickly fixed himself, though, slipping on a mask of confidence and snapping his fingers. He went from naked hoe-rat to wearing jeans, Nike sneakers, and a t-shirt in a flash.

"Calm down, brother, they didn't do anything to me. I have an idea," I quickly said, trying to grab the reins on this crazy horse of a situation before I got bucked off and lost focus completely. After explaining what Michael told us about Lucifer blocking their soulbond, Oisín's eyes lit up.

“You want to see if we can reverse engineer the magic on Michael’s end and unblock their soulbond?” he guessed.

“Yes!” I exclaimed. “Can we do it?”

“In theory, yes. If we get a high enough power signature behind us. You, me, and Michael have a deeper connection with Lucifer, so that could bend the magic in our favor,” he speculated.

“Okay, let’s try it,” Michael said. “Mal, could you move the furniture?” he directed.

Mal teleported the furniture away, and we all corralled into a circle, holding hands on instinct.

“If this works, we still need to pause and figure out our next move. I don’t want to act on impulse,” Desmond said.

At this point, I nodded just to get him to shut up. Something deep in my gut was telling me to find Lucifer, that he needed me. Time seemed to be of the essence, and I could *feel* the clock ticking the seconds away.

“How do you want to work this?” Oisín asked me. “Witches typically use spells, whereas angels chant in Latin.”

“What do Druids do?” I was curious about how they channeled magic, but never had a chance to ask him about it.

“If we were outside, I’d suggest drawing from the elements, but a mix of chanting and drawing from the energy in the room should work. That may be a good move, considering the combined power signature in here,” he suggested. “We all radiate some big magical energy, especially Michael.”

“Okay...” I had no clue how to get this to work. I barely understood my own magic. But casting spells... good luck.

“Dollface, close your eyes, and feel the energy in the room with your heart. Channel it, like you were picking it up with your mind, and bend it to your will,” Desmond instructed me, squeezing my hand.

“Yeah, as far as the spell goes, you can do it. They don’t *have* to rhyme like Desmond’s did. That’s an old school thing from the Renaissance period he’s used to because of how ancient he is,” Mal encouraged me.

“Unblock Michael’s soulbond, reveal Lucifer’s place. Transport us to him, so we’re face to face,” I said. It was the best thing I could come up with on short notice.

As we all chanted the words, I closed my eyes and concentrated on opening myself up, trying my hardest to feel the magic in the room. A hot, bold magic clashed with my own. It was familiar, but different...ancient-feeling, powerful. I knew it was Oisín’s, so I merged with it, trusting my instincts to carry me through. Our combined power made it easier to collect the others’ magic and act as a conduit. The sheer power coursing through me felt like I was about to tear apart—I could barely hold onto it. I envisioned a wall between my fathers, directing all of the magic to crash through it. After a few tries, I heard a *BOOM* and saw the bricks crumbling through the air. I *felt* the dust fall on my skin. It was surreal. The magic receded from me, returning to its original holders.

I opened my eyes, and everyone stared at me in astonishment.

“Something definitely happened. I felt it,” Ares said. “Little Goddess, I think you undid the impossible...”

“Michael, try to sense him. Where is he?”

We all stared at Michael with a mixture of confused and anxious expressions, waiting for him to say something. Several long seconds passed, and I was on edge waiting for him to reply.

“He’s...at his house? He’s at his house in LA...” Michael said in a disbelieving tone. “I can’t believe that fucker is hiding from me at his *house!*”

“Dad wouldn’t do that, Michael; he would confront you,” Oisín said. “Something about that seems off...”

“Yeah, well I want to confront *him*,” Michael huffed in an annoyed tone.

This was my chance. People made impulsive decisions when they were caught in their emotions. I had to convince him to use his soulbond to teleport us to Lucifer.

“Then let’s do it. Let’s go find him, and you can figure out whether or not you need to confront him,” I said.

“Diana, no. We need to sit back and take everything in. Make a plan.” Desmond looked at me like I was insane.

“We may not have time for that,” I argued. “Time is running out. You said it yourself, Red is biding his time. Damon is searching for me. He’s going to figure out where we are, eventually. Desmond, something inside me is telling me that we’re right on the edge...something is coming. I want both my dads with me when it happens.”

“I have the same feeling...it’s like an omen. My visions have been getting darker recently, too,” Zaz added. If Zaz’s feelings matched my own, I felt even more justified in wanting to take immediate action.

Dragging my gaze over everyone in the room, I asked, “Anyone with me?” I put my hand out, like we were huddling in some kind of sportsball match or whatever.

Michael, Oisín, Zaz, and Ares immediately put their hands in. I wasn’t surprised by that. What surprised me was that Mal didn’t.

“*Mal...*” I coaxed him.

“No Diana. I want to give you everything, but not at the expense of your safety. I think Desmond is right. We need to take at least a night to brainstorm and go in with a plan.”

“Okay, then. We go without you three,” I decided.

“Oh, the fuck you will!” Bash yelled. “Diana, if you go anywhere, you’re in for it.” His eyes turned black and thick black veins spidered from his temples.

Michael’s face turned stone cold, and he aimed his wrathful stare at Bash. He was shorter and smaller than my incubus, but he was scary enough that Bash took a step back.

“You sound like her other father when you speak to her that way, and I don’t appreciate it. Watch your tone,” he said in an eerily calm voice.

“Bash, I’m over your bullshit, and I’ll do whatever the fuck I please. *We’re going.*”

The five of us on board with the plan linked hands. Michael’s magic pulled at me as he faded us out, and at the very last second, I felt two arms wrap around my waist before the whole room went dark.

# DIANA

## Chapter 25

The two arms wrapped around my waist squeezed me a little too tightly. I could tell from their weight that it was Desmond latching onto me to hitch a ride. We arrived outside a lavish, ranch style home in the Hollywood Hills with stucco siding, a sloped roof, and greenery surrounding it. I turned to see Desmond's angry, tomato-red face glaring at me. Mr. Control Freak was not feeling this lack of planning and go-with-the-flow style, but tough shit, *Desi Douche Knuckle*. *You chose to tag along, so you can shut the fuck up about it.*

"I thought you were staying home?" I teased him, trying to lighten his mood. I wasn't feeling his attitude, and I doubt Azazel was either.

"If you're going to be foolish enough to do this, I need to be here to save you when shit hits the fan," he grumped.

"*If* it hits the fan," Ares corrected him. "And I'm here to protect her, so if you're going to be negative and start a fight with her right now, go home," he threatened in a steely tone.

Fuck, that made my insides quiver a bit. The accent...the veiled threat. I needed to think with my head and not my eggplant eater, because now wasn't the time to drool over my personal Greek dildo...even if he was fine as fuck.

I saw Mal and Bash had hitched a ride with us too. Mal had his hand on Ares' shoulder.

***I support you, princess. Please just promise me we're going to be careful,*** he linked me.

He had done such a one-eighty since the day I met him. He went from being a nasty asshole with an attitude issue to being a supportive boyfriend. I gave him a hug, and thought about how I had changed, too. Putting my trust and faith in him was a huge step for me. It could be hard to trust those who'd hurt us, even if they were sorry, but I was glad I did.

"Okay, the house is locked down, but I should still have access to open the magical ward on the door," Michael said as he led us up the front walkway.

It was weird to think of the most evil, powerful man of all history—*my father*—living in a house with flowers along the walkway...and a bird feeder. It felt so normal. I half expected to see a pit of dying, suffering souls in the front yard and a gaggle of gargoyle keeping watch over the property. Michael put his hand in the middle of the door, and a flashing green light beamed out from underneath his palm.

He opened the door, stepping inside. He held a hand out to keep us back as he looked around. I guessed he was waiting for booby traps or some type of attack. When he was satisfied at the lack of commotion inside, he let us in. I was flanked so closely by Ares and Desmond that I was surprised I could even walk. Azazel's eyes bounced from the walls to the furniture. When I followed them, I realized exactly where we were.

"This house looks familiar..." Bash announced. "I've been here before."

"Yeah, we have. This is the house we went to in the dream where you claimed me," I reminded him with a

frown. “Azazel saw me here too, if only briefly. It seems so different without the music, the party, and the drugs.”

“Yeah, about that claiming, Diana, we’ll talk about it later,” Michael promised her, his voice stern. “Hopefully, we can find your other father, and he can undo it. I don’t even want to know why or how that happened.”

“Well, it happened, and it’s permanent. We own each other, mind, body and soul, so get used to it,” Bash said through gritted teeth. He took my hand and held it, staking his claim like a dog with a bone. But he was *my* dog, and hopefully those bones were ribs. *Wish we ate before leaving.* I wouldn’t be surprised if Bash pulled his pants down and pissed on my leg.

“Okay, let’s get back on topic. Do you feel him here, Michael? I feel something strange, but I don’t know if it’s him,” I said, leaning against a bookshelf.

“I definitely feel him here. Couldn’t miss that dark, menacing energy even if I tried.” Oisín smiled, spinning around to take in the whole open floor plan. “I’ve never been to this house before. Dad has good taste.”

Michael walked up to the book shelf, scanning each book as he ran his finger along their spines. He stopped at Machiavelli’s *The Prince*.

“Diana, can you stand with Ares please, away from the shelf? *The Prince* was one of your father’s favorites, you know,” he commented as he pulled the book. I heard a latch loosening, and he pushed the shelf open. A long, dark staircase that curved down was visible from where we stood. “He’s down there...”

“That doesn’t bode well. Nothing good ever comes from descending a creepy, hidden staircase,” Mal warned us.

Ares took a torch that was leaning against the top of the staircase. He used his fire magic to light it and handed it to Michael. “You take point, and I’ll stay with



Diana. Someone should stay up here and be on the lookout, in case this is a trap.”

“I’ll stay up here,” Mal offered. “I don’t mind waiting to meet your other father, Diana.” I could sense how nervous he actually was. I felt the same way. Michael accidentally revealed he was my father, but I’ve had time to hear rumors and tales about Lucifer. The image I formed of him was terrifying to say the least.

“Okay, here goes nothing.” I straightened my sweatshirt, which I stole from Azazel earlier. Taking a deep breath, I stayed behind Michael as we descended the stairs carefully, step by step. Ares followed me closely, and the rest of the guys lined up behind him. He lit sconces on the wall as he went so we could at least see how narrow it was.

“How deep is this thing, Michael?” I asked.

“We’re almost at the bottom. Have some patience,” he teased.

When we finally reached the bottom, we were in a dark dungeon room with stone walls, scant light, and... *BDSM equipment?* Floggers, whips, chains, a vibrator-packed shelf, the whole kink and caboodle. There was a Saint Andrew’s cross...a spanking bench...a locked chest with who the fuck knew what in there... *Christ on a bike...*

The dots connected and I felt like I was going to hurl. “Oh...Ewww. My fathers used this stuff!” I shrieked, burying my head in Ares’ chest. I felt it rumble with his signature booming laughter. *Glad you think my life is funny, hummus human.*

“You’re in for it then, Birdie. Your father is known for his...activities. Get used to it now,” Bash suggested.

“This wasn’t down here when I still lived here...” Michael explained, taking in all the equipment... “I guess he didn’t want to see it anymore after we broke up?”

“I don’t want to see it anymore, period. I obviously can’t judge,” I said as I gestured to the five of us, “But I also don’t tell you about my sex life.”

“It’s really good, if you were curious though,” Ares offered, smiling to himself. “That’s the truth, not a brag.”

“ARES!” I screamed.

“A-Bomb, shut the fuck up,” Desmond said, smacking him upside the head. “That’s her dad...”

I felt my whole face and neck tint red with embarrassment. As unfortunate as it was, the guys found it hilarious. Ares and Bash laughed like they were front row at the Comedy Cellar. Zaz didn’t really look affected at all. I guessed after seeing a vision of your pseudo-father in a threesome, your perspective changed.

“I don’t even feel like we could judge, considering we’re all part of the Penis Parade, as you so aptly named us, Oisín,” Zaz commented.

“It’s the nicest among the terms I floated around,” Oisín deadpanned. “Diana, Dad is an absolute deviant. If you think I’m bad, you have no clue what you’re in for.”

Bash pointed to a wooden door at the far end of the room. “This is the only door aside from where we came in.”

Michael slowly approached the door, his mouth lifting in a half smile. He put his hand on in the center, and a green light glowed from beneath it. The door swung open to what seemed to be an office. He gestured for Ares’ torch, using it to light the sconces on the wall so we could get a closer look. There was an oversized, cherrywood desk with a high backed, tan leather chair. Bookshelves lined the wall, holding an assortment of old, collectible quality leatherbounds. His collection, from what I could see, was impressive. Shakespeare,

Hemingway, Thompson, to name a few. Lucifer himself was nowhere to be seen.

The room was small, only allowing a few people in at a time. Michael, myself, and Azazel went in first, searching the room for a clue or lead.

“I know he’s here,” Oisín insisted from outside the room.

“He is...but something isn’t right...” Michael agreed.

I ran my hand along the shelves, inspecting all of the items on it with a careful gaze. There had to be a trick book or lever that led to another hidden passage. I saw a clear quartz crystal the size of my fist at the end of the middle shelf, and paused. It felt...*weird*? There was a magical aura about it that felt angry and uncentered. It stood out from the other items around it because even with just the little amount of light the flames allowed, it still had a brilliant sheen. I picked it up, holding it in my hand for a moment before an electric shock bolted up my arm. I winced and dropped it.

“Ow! That crystal zapped my hand, what the fuck?!” I exclaimed.

Ares came up to the door, taking my hand. He sniffed the red mark and kissed it. “All better,” he said as he handed it to Desmond, who gave it a much closer look.

Azazel picked the murder rock up, giving it a thorough inspection. If he got zapped, he didn’t react. “Y’all are going to want to see this...Michael take a look,” he said as he handed over the stone.

His gray-blue eyes bugged out when he peered into it, as if he saw something in its depths. Then his whole countenance morphed into a scathing scowl. *Is something wrong...?* He tapped on the stone as his brows drew together.

“Diana, your other father is trapped in there. The arrogant fuck went and got himself caught in a stone...” Michael snapped, handing it back to me.

I held it in my hand, trying to reflect the light from the fire sconces so I could see clearly. In the middle of the clear crystal was a tiny Lucifer grimacing at me with his arms crossed, seeming completely unamused with me. The stone must have been hollow for him to be able to move around. He was wearing the same outfit as when we summoned him.

“Well, we found Lucifer...” I said reluctantly. “He’s trapped in here. Oh my stars, how did this happen, and who put him in there? How do we get him out?” I asked. Inside, I felt a little panicky, but I didn’t want my father’s first impression of me to be that I was a crazy, out of control worry wart, so I tried to play it cool.

“I have no clue. We’ll take him home and figure it out. I don’t like it down here...” Desmond stated as he scanned the room again. “Let’s get out of here.”

I was about to agree with him, when Zaz gasped. I turned around, and saw his eyes shift to a milky white.

“Azazel...” I cautiously called his name while I ran my hand up and down his arm.

“Diana, he can’t hear you,” Michael said. “He’s mid-vision. Give him space so you don’t accidentally pull him out of it.”

I backed up, standing a foot or so away from him. The room was so small, that was the farthest I could be unless I wanted to get in Michael’s personal space. No, thank you.

Zaz came to, whipping his head around as he searched for me with a frantic look on his face. He grabbed my arm roughly, pulling me toward him. “We need to get home, NOW,” he shouted.

“Whoa,” I said, prying his fingers off. “What did you see?!”

Zaz’s eyes lost some of their focus as he recounted what he saw. “Images of Fortuna’s Garden in ruins flickered around me, smoke and fire everywhere, and people were running through the resort, screaming for their lives. Columns were smashed, crumbled on the marble floors. Judas’ security had their hands full evacuating people and fighting a horde of magical attackers. Some guests fought back, but I couldn’t see who the assailants were because most of them were masked...” He trailed off, looking away from me. I tried to turn his head toward me, but he wouldn’t budge. Something was up, and I didn’t appreciate him keeping secrets from me. The sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach was too strong to pretend otherwise.

“Zaz, don’t keep things from me. I value your honesty. Please tell me...” I begged him.

“The last part of the vision was what scared me the most. Nonna’s and Angie’s horror stricken faces flashed by me, but I had no idea what was happening to them. The image came and went too quickly for me to get a good look.” His face fell in defeat.

My mind spun with infinite possibilities of what could have happened to my family. I put the crystal in my pocket and bolted up the stairs, so we could get Mal and leave. The guys, Michael, and Oisín followed behind me, trying to catch my attention before I reached the door at the top of the stairs that would let us into the main living space.

***Diana!*** Ares whisper-shouted through the mindlink as he bounded up the stairs, taking them two or three at a time. He stopped me with a hand on my shoulder. “Mal is in trouble up there. I mindlinked him to tell him we’re on the way, and he said there are demons in the house. I

told him to hide so we could have the element of surprise,” he whispered.

*Fuck on a fence, we may not get to the casino in time.* We hovered near the door on the stairs, waiting for the right moment to strike. I tuned my superhearing, listening for signs of movement.

“Sounds like there’s at least a handful of people... and they’re looking for someone. They know we’re here...” I shared.

“Fuck it,” Ares stepped in front of me. “Get further down the stairs,” he said before kicking the door in. When he ran out, there were men in red soldier uniforms with gold buttons and fixtures.

“Hell Guards. These are Red’s men. Heads up!” Ares yelled.

The rest of us ran out after him, ready to fight. Desmond took my hand from me, leading me behind a couch. “Stay there, and keep your head down,” he ordered her before shifting and jumping over the couch to slit a guard’s throat.

I listened for all of five seconds before popping my head over the couch. I used one of the tricks Oisín had taught me in training, bringing my open palm to my lips as if I was going to blow a kiss. I aimed my puckered lips at a guard who was attacking Ares and blew a line of white-hot fire at him, hitting him in the back. He had no clue it was coming, wailing as he burned alive. I ran across the room, with Zaz hot on my tail.

***Diana, be careful. I have your back,*** he linked me.

I gave him a thumbs up, climbing the stairs to the balcony above. The view we had from up here was the perfect vantage point, allowing us to see everything unfolding below us. I threw fireballs at the guards, hitting most of my targets. Zaz shot lightning bolts at them, burning them to a crisp on impact. It seemed that every

time we struck one down, two more popped up. They were seeping in from the front door as a black, opaque smoke and materialized as their full form once inside.

***Zaz, you need to block the door somehow. That's how they're getting in,*** I linked him. He shifted his wings out, flying over to seal the door.

*That should hold them off for a while.* The foul stench of burning flesh and death wafted around me, tickling my nose as my eyes watered. Masculine groans and screams rang out around the room, immediately putting me on high alert. Those could be my guys' agonizing cries... Zaz had to be a mind reader, because without so much as a mindlink, he knew exactly what I was feeling. He flew over the open-concept ground floor, staying as close to the chapel ceilings as he could to get a better visual on the guys.

***Desmond and Bash are outnumbered two to one, aim your fire magic there,*** he linked me.

I dropped fire bombs on their assailants, covering them in bits of blood and bodily chunks, while Zaz flew closer, dropping lightning bolts on the guards inching up behind them. I checked on Michael, who was holding his own at the bottom of the stairs. He used water magic to drown his enemy. Ares and Oisín had severed guard heads in their hands. They lit them on fire and boomeranged them, sweeping flames across the furniture and the guards who couldn't duck or get out of the way in time. Oisín used an enchanted purple fire that hopped from guard to guard, burning them within seconds.

His pyrotechnic tricks, along with Zaz's door seal, turned the tide. The number of guards diminished rapidly, as charred bodies hit the floor, adding to the putrid scent of death hanging in the air. The uninjured guards and the wounded that could move somehow bypassed the wards, fading away. An eerie silence fell

over the house for a minute or two, until the front door flew open with a bang.

We froze as Red strolled into the room. He was just as tall and statuesque as I remembered. His blood-red, hooded cloak hid his face, but his olive toned hands were free. Even as I physically looked down my nose at him, his powerful presence was unmistakable.

“How did you find us?” I asked him, not letting him speak first. I stood tall, refusing to cower in front of him like I had at the airport. Rounding up the magic left inside me, I readied myself for an attack.

“I will always find you, Diana. You and your band of mutinous traitors cannot hide from me,” he said. His voice sounded similar to Nick’s, but it wasn’t quite the same. It had a deeper, echoing tenor that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

“Good detective work Nancy Drew. What are you going to do now that you’re here?” Maybe egging on the ruler of Hell wasn’t such a great idea, but it kept me from following the little voice of insecurity in my heart and becoming a useless, nervous wreck.

The air crackled with electric energy around us, and I knew something was about to happen.

***We’re leaving—get out now,*** Desmond linked us all.

Everything happened in an instant. Ares vaulted up the stairs with superspeed, grabbing my hand. Zaz flew over to us grabbing each of our hands in his and picking us up. He flew right through the window on the second floor, crashing through the glass to escape. He faded as soon as the outside air hit our skin. We landed outside of a burning Fortuna’s Garden. Half of the above-ground portion was engulfed in an epic inferno, while the other half was covered in billowing smoke. I fought my way out



of Ares' and Zaz's grasps, digging my nails into Ares' skin so he would let go.

"Why did we leave them back there?!" I screamed.

Before they could answer, I broke into a run, right through the front doors. I heard them run after me, and I tried to ditch them, but Ares caught me. He threw my body over his shoulder like a prisoner and hauled me back outside.

"Absolutely not, Little Goddess. You'll stay out here, where you're safe." He held me in his muscled arms, squeezing me despite my flailing.

"Let me go! My family could be in there!" I cried burying my face in his chest and soaking it with tears. I needed to know if they were okay.

The desperate, frantic anxiety swirling inside me was about to bust me open and burn me alive like the building before me. My men were left behind to deal with Red and could be dead right now. My family could be charred like fucking BBQ in a raging fire, and I felt like there was nothing I could do. The strong, confident girl from moments ago melted, leaving behind a complete mess.

Zaz flagged down one of Judas' security people and asked him about the status of my family.

"They're with Judas at one of his safe cells. We were instructed to bring your crew down as well if we found any of you," he said.

He showed us his tattoo to prove he was part of the coven, and we followed him around a part of the building that was done burning. Smoke smoldered from the ashes of what used to be the side of the casino. He led us right to a back door. All four of us stepped through it, and a sensation similar to time-traveling took over me. *This must be some kind of portal...* When we got to the other side, we were in a secured safe room. There was

sparse decoration or luxury. Aside from a couple of couches, a table, and a fridge, there was barely anything here at all. Charlie and Angie were there, holding each other and sobbing. I didn't see Nonna...

I ran up to them, launching myself into their arms. My breaths hyperventilated as I cried with them.

"I thought you two were dead," I murmured. "Thankfully, you're okay."

Neither of them smiled, which didn't bode well for what I suspected. If she wasn't here... Michael, Bash, Mal, and Oisín barreled through the door with Judas and August, sealing it behind them and distracting me from my thoughts.

"Where's Desmond?" I asked, my voice a deadly calm.

"Diana..." Michael started, trailing off.

"WHERE IS HE?!" I shouted. This couldn't possibly be reality right now. My face heated, and smoke plumed out of my ears. Zaz took my hand, trying his hardest to influence me with positivity, but I yanked it away.

"He's gone," Mal said, his voice small and lacking the sarcastic bite it usually had. "Red attacked us, and Desmond made us go ahead so we could get out alive. He said he was right behind us... Red took him."

I shut down, staring out into space as tears cascaded down my face. Angie hugged me, patting my hair as she tried to bring me back into the present. All of her motions seemed so muted and distant, even though she was pressed against me, squeezing me like I would float away if she let go.

"*Belissima*...I have some bad news. Nonna was captured, too," she said through her own tears.

I suspected as much, but hearing the words aloud felt like a knife to the heart. "Where is she?" I croaked,

not understanding what Angie said.

Judas took my hands, squeezing them so I lifted my head from Angie's hair and focused on him. "Diana, dear, I'm so sorry. Damon's forces stormed the casino. They used magical bombs to level the place. They tried to take Angie and Nonna hostage, but Angie was able to fight her way out. Nonna wasn't so lucky."

"I wasn't strong enough to fight them all off," Angie choked out through her tears.

"It's okay," I said in a lifeless voice. "I'm just glad *both* of you aren't gone."

"I already have a team of my best on it. We'll find Nonna, I promise," Judas said, hugging Angie from behind. He handed her a tissue from his pocket, and she broke from me to blow her nose.

The entire room went silent. No one dared to speak a word. I stood there for several minutes, not saying anything as I stared at the floor. My whole world was crumbling around me like the bricks and mortar of the casino above us. The woman who raised me was captured by a vindictive psychopath. One of the men I loved could be dead or captured by a megalomaniac who wouldn't hesitate to take his life, if he was lucky. We had nowhere to stay, and all the work we'd done over the past few weeks was ruined. Could things possibly get any worse?

Ares tried to hug me, but my arms wouldn't move. My tears stopped falling, and all the sadness and despair inside me grew, morphing into a rage I couldn't control. Everything was my fault. I led our crew into a trap; Desmond only came with us to keep me out of trouble. Nonna was gone because I insisted she and Angie were safer here than in Brooklyn. I held my head in my hands as my entire body started to vibrate. Peeping through my splayed fingers I watched my skin tint red. The balloon

threatening to explode finally popped. I pushed Ares away from me right before my entire body caught fire.

An empty wail tore from my throat. "It wasn't supposed to go this way!"

The fucking crystal, the only thing I had to show for putting Desmond in danger, weighed heavily in my pocket. I took it out, holding it in both hands while engulfing it in flames.

"Diana, no! What are you doing!" Michael barked, trying to take the stone from me. I waved my hand, slamming him into the wall.

I channeled all of my anger, pain, and guilt into crushing the stone between my hands. The flames surrounding my body burned blue as my rage multiplied. Pieces of white crystal turned to ash, falling at my feet. A red cloud of dust rose into the air above me. It disappeared, materializing as a tall man with dark brown hair, chocolate-colored eyes, and a wickedly serious face that seemed too familiar. My father, Lucifer Morningstar, was in the building, and he did not look happy.

My flames extinguished, leaving me bereft and confused; I struggled to hold my own in front of my father as my nose tingled. Tears threatened to fall again, but I blinked them back. I refused to cry like some kind of damsel in distress. The room was silent, everyone staring at him as time seemed to slow down. Lucifer took in his surroundings with a precise awareness. His gaze fell to each person while he scanned the room. I couldn't read his thoughts, but he seemed less than impressed with the situation he found himself in.

"Diana, my dear daughter, you have some explaining to do."

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## Chapter 26

### *Lucifer*

Diana has no clue what she got herself, or the world, into when she opened my crystal prison. I had lived in that cramped, stuffy rock for years on a fucking shelf in my basement office because Damon—my own fucking flesh and blood—trapped me there. That little shit had been a nuisance since the day he was born, the apple not falling too far from the tree in that regard. His mother had been a ruthless, conniving cunt, and so was he. I had spent years existing as a shell of myself inside a hollow rock, plotting my revenge and thinking of ways to make him truly suffer for his crimes. By the time I was done with him, he'd *beg* me for death.

I'd had so many enemies gunning after me over the centuries, I'd lost count. Each poor, delusional soul who challenged me met a fate so appalling, so undeniably fucked up, that death seemed like a cake walk in comparison. Greed for power and fame drove people to commit insane atrocities. I had had multiple assassination attempts on my life, lost some of the people closest to me, including Diana's mother, and had been forced to do things that immortalized me as a monster in history, even to the most deplorable creatures below and on Earth. There was a room full of trophies in my home from past adversaries who thought they could pull one over on the Prince of Darkness. The Original Evil. I regretted none of it, but I had never wanted Diana wrapped up in all of that. Her safety was imperative for the survival of the world as we knew it. She needed to succeed, and my lifestyle would only get her killed, at best. I never wanted a repeat of what happened to Marilyn... There were way worse things that could happen to Diana in the supernatural world than death,

and I would not be the cause of someone else I loved being harmed again. So I did the only logical thing I could think of to keep her safe... I abandoned her.

Over the years, I fought my desire to be a father to her tooth and nail, trying my hardest to stay away from her like Michael begged me to, but I couldn't stay away. Watching Diana grow up was addicting. The man I loved and I had somehow managed to make a beautiful child together, and I couldn't even raise her. He tried to stop me so many times, and every time he'd almost talk me into keeping my distance, but knowing I couldn't be around my only surviving little girl was torture. There were occasions where I would watch her from afar. I'd morph into an animal, preferably a squirrel, and watch her in plain sight. I'd sit in a tree and watch her swing or play on the see-saw with her aunt and cousins.

Other times, I would manipulate my appearance and go on dates with Marilyn. Michael had ruined any chances I could ever have with her as myself again when he made me leave her. At least when disguised as someone else, I could catch a glimpse of her and Diana to make sure they were okay. I dated Marilyn for six months once as a Henry Cavill look-alike, until Michael caught me and made me break her heart a second time. I had been at my wits end. To abandon Marilyn and Diana was cruel, but to stay in their lives was dangerous.

The day Michael left me was the breaking point...

*I convinced him to go with me to a supernatural festival. Altering our appearances so no one recognized us, we blended in with the crowds of magical beings who wanted to have a good time. He even muted our power signatures, so anyone who passed us felt the magic of two mid-power demons. Everything had been going fine. We weren't in a great place at that time, but we were on our way to getting back to where we had been. Michael and I were complicated together to say the least, but I*

*always fought to keep him because he was worth it to me. Having fun together at the festival and being momentarily ignorant to all of our emotional bullshit and baggage was freeing. I almost forgot about everything that had happened between us—all of the things we both had to give up and take on to be together and the mistakes we made. But all of that came crashing down when I saw a beautiful, curvy woman with curly, dark brown hair and green eyes. She reminded me of Marilyn...before she practically became a ghost. When she was full of vitality and that New Yorker attitude that drew me in deep. My mind instantly strayed to Diana. How was my girl? What was she doing right now? Was she truly safe or did I make a huge mistake in leaving her?*

*Michael saw her, too. He must have been able to read my mind, and he told me the latest report from Azazel, the fallen angel he entrusted to watch our little girl. That prick got to watch her grow up, but I had to stay away, skulking in the shadows while I worried about her. He stalked my girl, and I wasn't even able to hear the reports from him or directly see any of his visions because I was disgraced. I couldn't even communicate with God directly about their plan for my own daughter—nevermind that she was mine. My anger over the whole situation bubbled up inside me like a pot mere seconds from boiling over. It came to a head again, and without even thinking, I faded to the fire escape right outside Diana's bedroom. I sat there, watching her take an afternoon nap right through her window. Michael followed me, fading next to me with an admonishing scowl on his face.*

***Do you know how risky and dangerous this is?! Anyone could see you right now! He linked me.***

*I didn't care. There was nothing he could say to convince me that I did the right thing in leaving her. She no longer had her mother, and although she lived with*



*family who loved her, nothing could compare to having her father around. He put his arm on my shoulder, fading us back home. We had an argument that permanently ended things between us, and he left. I knew he meant it this time.*

After drinking myself into a depressed stupor of self-pity, Damon had ambushed me in my own home with his guards. He somehow trapped me inside a stone and put me on a shelf in my office. I was too drunk to even defend myself, let alone know how he did it.

But those days were over...and now I was free. Things were going to change.

Snapping back to the here and now, my gaze landed on Diana. She stared at me, with a cool, confident expression that almost hid the waves of sadness and confusion emanating from her. A fire blazed in her eyes. I had seen the same inferno in my own eyes and the eyes of many of my children. Her face was all the best parts of Marilyn, Michael, and myself—she was absolutely beautiful.

Whatever hot water my daughter had landed herself in, I would fix it. I had never wanted her to meet me, because that meant things didn't go according to plan. But now that I was here, nothing would stand in the way of us taking back control and fixing whatever shitshow the Underworld had become in my absence. Michael derailed me from my calling. I gave everything up so I could be with him, and look where that landed us? This time around, nothing and no one would derail me from what I truly wanted.

I scanned the room, eyeing each of the men that moved closer to my daughter with every passing second. A colossal, hairy man stood behind her with his hand on her shoulder, his entire body glowing with a brilliant golden hue. *Ares*. Of all my daughter's...*friends*...he seemed the most capable. Greek gods usually had their

shit together, except their mental health. Another stood next to him, with curly long hair. He wasn't nearly as large, but he was built with long, lean muscles. His concerned frown was interesting, as was his power signature. I pushed some of my magic in his direction, confirming my suspicions when a pair of marbled wings sprang from his back. This was Azazel, the fallen angel that watched over my daughter. He'd obviously done a poor job.

I could sense the incubus the moment I was freed from the stone. He was the only one whose eyes weren't on me, as they were fixed on Diana. I wasn't happy when Michael told me she could have possibly been claimed by such a possessive creature, but his dedication to her outweighed the negatives for now. I could always deal with him later if he needed to be neutralized. The blond one with the man-bun stood still, his gaze bouncing between Diana and me. Even if I couldn't sense the depths of his feelings for my daughter, his sentence as a hellbound would make him easy to manipulate. I searched for the redheaded one Michael told me about, but he was gone. Azazel apparently told Michael he was an integral piece of Diana's crew. I locked eyes with Michael, and instantly knew something bad had happened. Oisín's frustrated expression confirmed my suspicions.

"Diana, my dear daughter, you have some explaining to do."

To Be Continued...

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## AFTERWORD

# A World Revealed

In *The Devil's Shadow*, *Dangerous Lovers* Book Two, is the second installment in *A World Revealed*. Maggie Bonnet invites you to further explore the hidden paranormal side of life in further series and standalones.

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Thanks Lil' Bonnet for always making me smile and laugh. And thank you Nonna and Pop Pop for always being there for us. This book was written during a joyful, but difficult time in my life. To a very special someone, thank you for coming into our lives. We waited so long, but never lost hope. I cannot wait to meet you.

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And last, but certainly not least, thank you reader. You made this all possible! You came back after the first book and I cannot wait to crank the third one out in 2023.

I made this [playlist](#) for you!

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