



UNDER HIS WINGS

ANGEL/DEMON



MM ROMANCE

NATALIE WISH

Under His Wings

Angel and Demon MM Romance

by Natalie Wish

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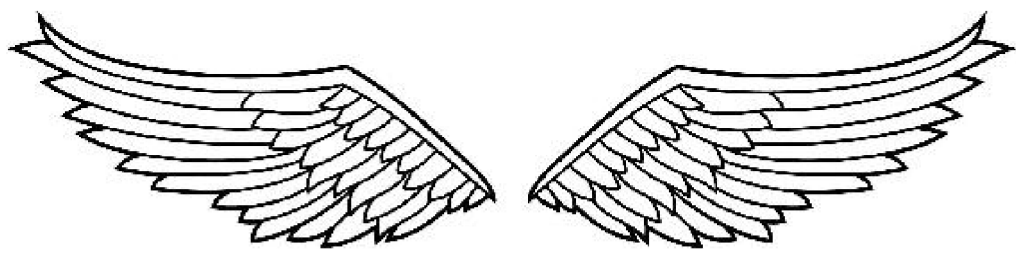
About the Author

He couldn't submit to an angel! But it felt so good...

A challenge and a dance result in Zachariel, an angel, taking Hellion, a feisty demon, in hand. Hellion learns he can get nice things... but only if he begs for them.

Content Warnings:

This book is intended for adult audiences and contains graphic sex scenes between two men, BDSM, dominance/submission, praise kink, anal sex, sadism/masochism, magical scarification/tattoos.



Chapter 1

When I entered the club, my attention was immediately captured by the faint aura of light. An angel was here, blending in with the humans as if beings like us were the same as that pathetic rabble. I scooted closer and caught a glimpse of curly blond hair, almost white in its brightness. The pale locks crowned a soft face adorned with a smile.

Ugh, this guy was like a poster child for a stereotypical Christian idea of an angel.

...not like I had a leg to stand on, seeing as I went with a classic black and red attire, the clothes fitting me like a second skin.

Alright, so we were both on brand. I itched to go over there and start a conversation, but I knew it was a bad idea. There were so few fights between angels and demons on Earth precisely because we tried to avoid each other. It was the responsible thing to do yadda, yadda, and, even if demons didn't do the whole 'moral obligation' thing, we did do contracts, so I couldn't just start shit without a good reason and flaunt the rules.

I was going to leave the angel alone, but he turned around and looked straight at me. Those baby blue eyes stared at me and when he tilted his head, I found my legs carrying me over to him without my conscious decision. Seeing as I unwittingly made the first move, I decided there was no stopping it; I had to continue if I didn't want to look like a fool. Retreat wasn't an option. I power-walked to the angel. Feeling the confident

steps of my body settled my mind well enough I could gather my wits to start the conversation properly.

“Are you a parking ticket? Cause you’ve got ‘fine’ written all over you,” I drawled shamelessly.

The heaveners often got so indignant when I flirted with them, so I truly couldn’t help myself.

“Did it hurt when you fell from Heaven?” the angel deadpanned back at me.

I jolted back as if struck.

Yes, it fucking did! That was a very mean question!

I frowned at the angel and saw a smirk on his lips. Ooh, the fucker had done it on purpose. It wasn’t just the case of reaching for one of the most often used pickup lines; he wanted to hit where it hurt.

Well, this night just got interesting.

“The name’s Hellion. What’s yours, sweetheart?” I asked with an eager twinkle in my eye.

“Definitely not ‘sweetheart’. But I will allow you to call me Zach.”

“Zachariel, when we are alone?” I raised my brow suggestively, guessing at his angelic name.

“Only if you earn it,” the angel shot back.

I noticed he didn’t bristle at the idea of us being alone, as many of his kind would. And earning something from an angel was quite a temptation...

“Alright, I will bite. What do I have to do to earn it?”

As long as it wasn't something disgusting like holding babies, or boring like helping old people cross the street, I was game.

“I came here to find entertainment.” He tossed his blond curls back and pierced me with his eyes. “*Entertain me.*”

Something hot squirmed in my stomach and my breath may have caught a little.

“Right,” I coughed into my fist, suddenly frustrated. All the funny puns and interesting pickup lines vanished from my mind when I needed them the most, so instead I clapped my hands and declared: “Let's dance!”

Zach smiled, and his hand closed around my wrist, leading me onto the dance floor.

I stared a bit dumbly at the slender digits circling my wrist as I followed. I couldn't remember another angel ever touching me so freely. Sure, I had a few romps in bed with the other side (it was almost a rite of passage for a demon to successfully seduce an angel), but there were clear expectations and purposeful erotic touches, not this... casual skin contact. It was unnecessary to touch me, yet he chose to do so. Somehow, that initial touch was more intimate than our hands meeting together when we started to dance.

After a few songs passed, I had to admit the angel had moves. I expected a more conservative dance, but he answered the grinding of my body against his with a dirty little shimmy

of his hips and he didn't hesitate to place his hands on my spine, on my ass, on my neck.

Shit. I was getting hard.

When the song ended, I took a step away and ran a hand through my hair.

“How about a choreographed dance?” was my cheerful suggestion. I was going to make a fool of myself if we didn't put some distance between ourselves.

“I know an interesting one. Let me teach you,” the angel offered.

That's how I found myself in a girl's position. Well, no, scratch that, that was a dumb sexist thought; I was a demon, not a total bastard, and I had to keep my standards. So, the real problem was: I found myself being led in the dance. I expected one of the side-by-side fun little skits, like Macarena, or Gangnam Style, but what Zach had in mind was a paired dance. A complicated, highly challenging dance that required flexibility and a quick mind, which made it fun... but it also demanded that I follow the angel's lead. And I don't know which part bothered me the most: the inherent submission of following someone's guiding hand, or the complete concentration essential to be aware of Zach's every motion, every suggestion in the turn of his body, or the tilt of his head. I followed when he pulled, like a fish on a hook. I twirled away from him, but I was tethered by his hand. I bowed not only my body, but my mind to his whim.

“Well done,” he murmured as we finished with me being dipped low into an undignified end pose.

I flushed and looked away as he pulled me back to my feet.

“Does that mean I have entertained you?” I asked.

“Yes, you did. It was a joy to dance with you.” The smooth fucker bestowed a kiss upon my hand.

“Zach—”

He placed a finger on my lips before I could finish uttering the name I earned fair and square. I glared at him angrily.

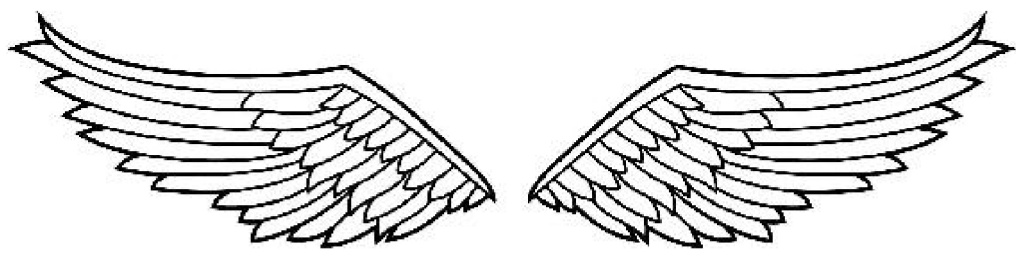
“You asked if you could call me by my full name when we are alone. We are not alone,” he pointed out.

“Then let’s get alone,” I bared my teeth, almost certain that the angel was trying to wriggle out of the deal with this technicality.

Instead, Zach took my wrist again.

I couldn’t help the sharp inhale this time.

“My place,” the angel said, and dragged me out of the club.



Chapter 2

The minute we passed the door of his, admittedly quite nice, flat, I turned to the angel, purred out his name, and let my true nature show; my black wings spreading behind my back, the red horns on my head growing.

“Zachariel,” I savored the name on my tongue and stepped closer to the man.

“Hellion,” he responded levelly with the name I had given, not backing down despite our faces being now only inches apart. He didn’t ask for my true name; it was customary for demons to get a new moniker when they fell and he knew that. Not everybody could be Lucifer and rule Hell with an obnoxiously angelic name. ‘Bringer of the Light’? No, thank you! Admittedly, my name was just a placeholder after I fell, but I came to like it. So, Hellion it stayed.

Zachariel reached out and was the one to pull me into a kiss, destroying the space between us. Finally, we were on the same page. I was going to screw him so hard, make him see stars, take him like a beast. My lips opened, tongue twinning in a battle with the angel. Soon, my kiss grew teeth and a hand in my hair pulled me back.

“Bed,” the angel quirked his lips. “Before you destroy my room.”

I flushed, realizing only now that my wings preened up, spreading to their whole length in a display. It was an instinct not unlike in certain species of birds during a mating season. The only difference was that my wings were truly massive and, as such, they indeed threatened to knock down and

destroy the things in the room with one careless move. I pulled the wings to myself and followed the angel to his bedroom.

Once we were there, my clothes flew and I was naked in record time. I was so quick the angel only shook off his outer layers and took off his shoes in the meantime. Even though he still had his shirt and pants on, I could see from his arms that his body was built with casual strength. I wanted to lick his abs. I knew they had to be there. For all their talk, angels were vain motherfuckers who liked to change their human forms to appease the standards of beauty that prevailed in the times and in the region where they appeared.

I imagined Zachariel in different eras with fluidly changing features and styles. The changes took time, happening slowly over centuries, but, if he lived as long as I did, it was likely he had looked different in the past. Long hair with braids when he played a Viking. A powdered wig on his head when he stayed in French Court. A slim mustache acquired in 19th century England. I thought he would nail each of those standards of beauty because the being in front of me definitely looked like someone who could be a model in the current times.

I licked my lips in anticipation, eying the angel like a piece of meat.

I reached out to undress him further, but he batted my hand away and instead pushed me backwards, until I fell onto the plush bed, sprawling on the covers. He climbed over me and kissed me.

I was ready for the battle of lips, the dirty slide of our tongues, and nipping teeth. Instead, my fierce offensive was met with a soft press of lips and kitten licks. When I tried to press the angel's mouth open, he tangled a hand in my hair and kept me in place, sliding his lips to mouth at my neck instead, pressing soft kisses there. I tried for a dirty kiss again when he returned to my lips, only for the situation to repeat itself again, and again. I groaned in frustration and let my head fall back, surrendering to the languid, sweet kisses.

Zachariel rumbled in approval and the sound went straight to my dick.

While my mouth was occupied by the softest kissing session I have ever experienced, I let my hands roam all over the angel's body, managing to at least undo the offending button-down shirt that kept me from the sculpted body. I explored the dips of abs and a satisfyingly full swell of pecs with both of my hands, greedily touching the skin, feeling the fever of desire rise in me as I wanted to rut against this perfect body.

Zachariel took my chin between his fingers, pressing down, making me open my mouth to deepen the kiss, as if it wasn't me who wanted to do this from the start. My eyes flashed as I readied myself for the return of the heated competition.

"Be good for me," Zachariel murmured before he claimed my lips in a kiss.

He pressed me down into the mattress with his body and slid his tongue in slowly, mapping my mouth thoroughly, as though he had all the time in the world. I let it go uncontended

because his words made me freeze in place. My cheeks flushed as I realized my position. I was completely naked, under a still dressed man, who was once again fucking leading, like he did in the dance. And he wanted me to be good? I couldn't be. I never had been good. Even if I tried.

“You are not fucking me,” I snapped, the warning bells ringing in my head. This was what the angel was trying to do, right? Make me his bitch? I enjoyed being the bottom sometimes, but it had to be on my terms. I had to be in control.

“Don't worry, honey, I want your cock inside me,” the angel said, and it made me lower my hackles a bit.

“Then go on with it,” I grumbled, still defensive.

As the angel parted from me to get rid of his clothes, I tried not to think about how I missed the feel of those maddeningly gentle lips on mine. Instead, I concentrated on devouring him with my eyes. His beautiful physique was finally completely uncovered, and he looked like a sculpture of a young Greek god or hero. The only difference being that he had, thankfully, a bigger dick than most of those ancient depictions. I never understood why the ancient Greeks insisted on sculpting either barely there penises or monstrous unwieldy weapons, with no in-between space for a proper long and thick cock that wasn't comically big. I was sure if the ancient Greeks sculpted Zachariel in all his naked glory that marble figure would have millions of visitors who wanted to gawk at it in a museum.

Fortunately, I had the real thing in front of me and I could not only stare but touch as well.

I decided to take the initiative and this time it was the angel who ended up on his back. Faced with such a gorgeous meal in front of me, I had to lick and bite. Zachariel moaned as I worried a red spot on his neck, sucking hickeys down the pale column of delicious flesh. The angel chuckled and I felt the vibrations under my lips.

“Like an animal, aren’t you?” his hand returned to his favorite spot, tangling in my hair, and guided me down, until I hovered over a pebbled nipple. “Bite here, ah, there’s a good boy.”

I flushed hearing that word again, that demeaning praise I got for following an order. Maybe I should have rebelled against the orders that followed, but how could I when he asked me to do such wicked things to his rosy nubs. I nibbled, pinched, sucked... used my hands and tongue to bring the angel pleasure. I was getting fine-tuned to bring the maximum amount of bliss. It felt as if I was a toy and Zachariel was playing with my settings, seeing what he liked the best.

What happened to my initiative? To running things here? I was still on top, shouldn’t that mean...

“You are doing so good,” the angel murmured in a satisfied tone, stroking my hair.

I blinked up at him, realizing that, with my face lowered to his chest and him being propped on the pillows, it didn’t matter that I was technically on top; I was still the one in a subservient position. Being petted, and used, and fuck, fuck, FUCK.

I straightened over the prone body, aiming for a menacing look, and growled,

“Suck my cock.”

The angel reached for my cock and leaned forward, changing position until we were kneeling in front of each other, our faces close once again.

“Not until you beg for it,” he said with a sunny, dimpled smile.

I didn't have time to bristle before both his hands were running over my cock, stroking, spreading the precum over my length, twisting over the sensitive head, and, fuck, was that a tip of a nail digging into my slit?

A whimper left my lips.

I didn't mean to make the sound, but my mind was deserting me as the angel kept stroking me, and finding new places that brought me pleasure which felt so incredible it seemed unreal.

Fuck, how was I supposed to know a circle of fingers squeezing hard just below the ridge of my cockhead would feel so indescribably good? Nobody dared to touch me like this — as though I was an uncharted land that needed to be thoroughly explored — in the past.

I panted hard and raked my fingernails down the angel's strong back, no doubt leaving marks.

“You know, it could feel even better,” the angel said pleasantly, while taking me apart with the onslaught of sensation. “You can have my lips on your cock. My tight, hot

throat squeezing around you.” He gave me a few particularly vicious pumps that made me see stars, punctuating each move with words: “You. Just. Have. To. Beg.”

I shivered and bit my lip to stop myself from doing just that. It was just bodily sensations. I could stand the hottest handjob I have ever received and not make a fool of myself by begging, right?

Right?

Sure, I could, and would, if the blasted angel didn’t pull out the big guns.

“You are so beautiful, Hellion. A sight to behold. A precious little demon just for me. You are trying not to come so hard, aren’t you? Just a little more. Good boy, yes, like that.” The angel wasn’t playing only with my body anymore. He was playing with my mind. And, with the desire burning through my veins, I was starting to forget why I shouldn’t like what he was saying. In fact, his words were fanning the flames and my heart was beating fast in my chest. I felt the thrill of it in my whole body thrumming with pleasure. “I believe in you. I know you can ask for more.”

With a desperate sound I opened my mouth and shocked myself with what came out.

“Please,” I gasped. And after I said it once it was like a dam burst open. “Please, please, plea— AH!”

Zachariel’s mouth found my cock and didn’t hesitate to gulp me down. He took me straight into his throat, swallowing

around me, letting the warm, tight confines massage my cock. I threw my head back with a cry, my hazy eyes open wide. Deliriously, I wondered if he got so much practice he could deepthroat me like this without a problem, or if he was cheating and using his heavenly powers. Both options were scathingly hot and I couldn't hold back anymore.

I came in Zachariel's throat with a groan. He held my hips in place with a vice-like grip when I tried to buck wildly into the welcoming tightness. The angel swallowed around me, drinking every drop of my thick cum. When I looked down, I was met with lips still stretched around my softening cock and a fierce stare.

There was absolutely nothing submissive in that gaze. It was the gaze of a predator who got their prey exactly where they wanted.

I could pretend I wasn't the prey. But with the orgasm settling like a warm blanket over my body... I didn't want to fight against this. My eyelids fell softly as I let myself lose the staring contest. Acquiescing another bit of power to the angel was a rush.

Warm hands cradled me carefully, and I didn't protest against being manhandled into laying on my back once more. My breath stuttered as Zachariel straightened the black feathers of my wings, ensuring I could lie comfortably. When was the last time someone groomed my wings...? I nearly melted under the delicate touches, becoming even more of a putty in the angel's hands. I wondered how it would feel to

return the favor. If touching the white feathers would be allowed. But Zachariel didn't even take his wings out yet; he stayed in his fully human form, so I didn't ask.

“Lie here, gorgeous, and catch your breath while I prepare myself,” the blond man intoned warmly, pecking me innocently on the lips before he straightened and reached to the side to fish out a bottle of lubricant.

Oh.

Right, he said he wanted my cock inside him.

I looked down at my limp cock with a frown, but as Zachariel put the first slick finger inside himself, and gave a truly pornographic groan, I decided it wouldn't be a problem for long. My erection was already slowly stirring to life as all my blood traveled south. I watched the show with half-lidded eyes, taking in the gorgeous man opening himself on his own fingers without an ounce of shame. His cock was bobbing softly, a string of precum landing on my stomach, a tantalizing evidence of debauchery. I wanted to make him even more dirty, so I reached out for his cock, but he batted my hand away.

“No, sweetheart, I will come when I'm split on your cock and no sooner. Now, place those wandering hands here, where I can see them. Good, such an obedient pet. Keep them there. And don't you dare look away from me,” he whispered to me and I shuddered, my hands clenching into fists where I was keeping them over my head.

As if I could look away from Zachariel. Lucifer himself could appear now, and I would just tell him to get lost. The show of obscene beauty in front of me was taking my breath away, my mouth shaping panting breaths just as the angel's lips curved around dirty moans. He opened his tight ass with one finger, then two, three... He eyed my raising cock contemplatively, but apparently decided to forgo the fourth finger. It was going to sting with how well-endowed I was, but Zachariel wasn't human. He could take it. He would take it. I was going to fuck him so hard—

Clever fingers lubed me with brisk efficiency, Zachariel's hand pumping my erection a few times to bring me to complete hardness before the angel sank down onto my cock.

My hands trembled where I was trying to keep them over my head. Zachariel was going so slow, his hole swallowing my cock in miniscule increments, his knees locked in a position where he controlled the deliberately sluggish pace. God, the warm, tight cavern was too much, but at the same time it was entirely too little. I gasped, my body a tightly coiled spring as the angel continued his punishing pace.

What I wanted was for him to fall onto my cock as fast and hard as I fell from Heaven.

Instead, he descended gently, still in control of himself while I was breaking apart.

“Mmm, Hellion, you are louder than me,” the angel panted out, a delighted smirk on his face.

“Nghh!” was all the incoherent response I managed as he finally sank all the way down my cock, his ass meeting my thighs, his weight settling there comfortably and. Not. Moving.

I whined in protest, but my attention was diverted as Zachariel took out his wings, spreading the beautiful white feathers wide, until they reached the walls of the small bedroom. Their color was nearly blinding in its snowy paleness. It was like the white fur of one of those long-haired cats that always looked pristine, even when they spent their days outdoors.

Clean, pure, unsullied wings decorated the angel sitting on my cock. Maybe it was good I couldn't touch them and spread the dirtiness of the fallen to such perfection. I clenched my fists until I could feel the small pinpricks of pain from the nails biting into my skin.

“Hey, honey, none of that,” gentle hands pried my fingers open. “How about you hold onto me, hmm?” the angel said and transferred my hands to his hips where I could feel the beginning of a gentle motion starting.

The skin under my fingers felt smooth, delicate, but I could sense the hidden strength beneath and my hips quivered at the thought of Zachariel putting his muscles to work to ride me hard.

But first I had to survive the gentle sway of his hips. He was barely moving on my cock, rocking back and forth, as if he didn't want to part with my dick, just screw it deeper inside of

his body. After a minute of this treatment, I couldn't keep my hips from snapping up, trying to drive harder into the welcoming tightness. The noise I made was nearly animal in nature.

“Is it too much for you, darling?” Zachariel cooed, cupping my deeply flushed cheek with his hand. “Didn't you learn yet that you can get things... if you ask nicely.”

“Fuck me... ah... let me fuck you...” I made a frustrated whine as my words scrambled all over the place. “Harder, faster, m-more!”

Zachariel was looking at me with fire in his eyes but he still wasn't moving any faster. There had to be something missing in my words. They were inadequate, I could not have nice things... I could not have any mercy, I did not deserve it.

“Please,” I sobbed.

Oh. That was the magic word.

“A-ah! Fuck! Zachariel... aaa...” I cried out and moaned as the angel started riding me hard and fast, the change of pace nearly giving me whiplash. It felt as if the gentle waves of his sways suddenly changed into a tsunami that rushed over me, took the breath from my lungs, made me powerless under the onslaught of sensation. The ends of my wings thrashed uselessly as the electric charge of desire spread through my whole body, making my spine curve into an arc. My head was thrown back, mouth open and eyes rolling into the back of my head.

“So pretty,” Zachariel panted out. “I’m going to ruin you.”

He was pushing up and sinking down with such ferocity I could barely keep my hands on his hips. My dick was hard as a diamond with each of the thrusts between the pale cheeks, the hole that stretched around me making obscene, sloppy, wet sounds that would make even a whore blush.

I already felt ruined. Ruined by the blissful heat and ruined for anyone else as well. I was pretty sure I was going to come hard enough to see Heaven.

“Fuck me,” the angel ordered and it was the last straw.

I tightened my hands on his hips, pushing bruises into his skin as I pulled him down onto my cock, hard, harder, as if I wanted to reach his throat, fill him forever, leave him stuffed until my cum was overflowing, tainting his pretty marble-white body.

Zachariel moaned, the tips of his wings quivering in bliss. I hammered up into him until he was shouting, spilling his seed all over my body, his hole squeezing like a vice around my cock.

Air rattled in my lungs as I tried to breathe around the whimpering moans in my own mouth, my throat squeezing when my body released like a guitar string snapping from too much pressure. I was writhing under the angel, keening, whimpering, utterly devastated by my orgasm. I snapped my hips mindlessly into Zachariel’s hole to fill it with the thick whiteness of my cum. The seed of a demon finding a place inside an angel... there was something wrong with it, but at

the moment I couldn't remember what. I only felt the bliss and the need to possess. My hips gradually slowed down, the spurts of my cum deposited where they belonged.

I felt a soft touch of fingers on my face and a tongue licking my cheek.

"You are so beautiful when you cry," my angel murmured softly between his still labored breaths.

Did I... was I crying? I blinked my hazy eyes and felt the wetness clinging to my lashes.

"Such a good boy," the angel soothed before I could even start to get worked up.

There was a burst of angelic power and I found myself cleaned, the angel's cum gone.

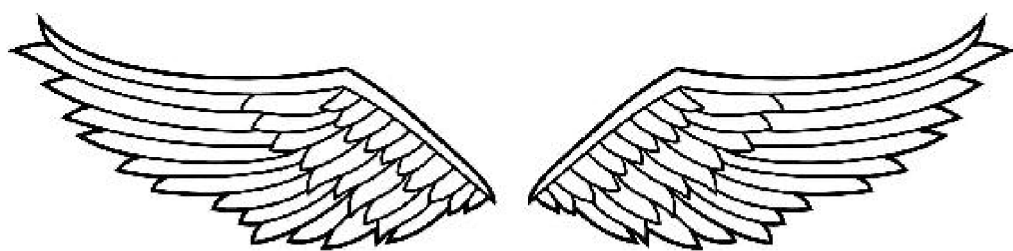
I made an unconscious mournful sound. I didn't get to taste it!

Zachariel laughed and shifted me to the side, so that we both could fit into the bed. Grudgingly, I followed his example and vanished my wings.

"Be a good boy for me and go to sleep. And maybe I will let you taste my cum as a reward," the angel whispered, cuddling me close, my languid body shaping itself around his.

I fell asleep fast; safe and full of contentment.

I dreamed of touching Zachariel's wings.



Chapter 3

Warmth. It's the first thing I felt as my mind woke up slowly, leisurely, the contentedness of the moment almost making me purr. I shifted, like a cat lazily stretching out its spine, feeling the rays of sunlight kiss my skin. My hand petted the silky sheets lazily, enjoying the smooth sensation under my fingertips. With a sigh, I burrowed myself into the covers, intending to drift into a peaceful sleep once more.

I nearly jumped out of my skin when I heard a whimper from next to me.

Fuck! Memories rushed into my mind like a freight train, bulldozing over any restfulness I found. I was at an angel's place. I let myself be vulnerable in front of one of Heaven's goons. Let myself sleep soundly next to someone I barely knew. Who I shouldn't trust. And now that angel was... in pain?

I took in the whimpering form of the blond angel. He looked miserable, his brows knitted in anguish, and he curled up on his side, as if to protect himself.

Oh, I realized with a surprise, He's still sleeping.

A nightmare wasn't something unique among humans, but we, both feathered kinds, never had the ability to dream. Sleep was a recharging state used to consolidate and replenish one's power, but angels and demons didn't need dreams. In all my hundreds of years of existence I've never heard of angels dreaming, much less having nightmares. Well, maybe I did hear something once or twice, but I had put those rumors

between the pages of a fairytale book. Such a thing was impossible. Ha, but Zachariel just loved to prove me wrong when I thought something was impossible. Just like I thought I couldn't submit to anyone...

I wrenched my mind away from that topic and reached out a hand towards Zachariel, but hesitated before my fingertips could reach the his back. Wasn't there something about not waking humans from nightmares, as it may have a negative effect? But when Zachariel made a stifled scream and started a frantic litany of "No, no, no, NO!" I couldn't just watch.

"Zachariel!" I shook him not too gently.

"No... no, please, no!"

How could I get to him? Using my power would probably frighten him further and the physical touch did not help... Time for another method.

"You are... safe," I started awkwardly. Such platitudes were not my specialty! "It's just a dream. Nothing bad is happening."

I shifted to cradle his form from behind, trying to not constrict him but provide a steady presence.

"Don't be afraid. I'm here, I'm with you," I said the words that should be spoken by an angel and not a filthy demon like me.

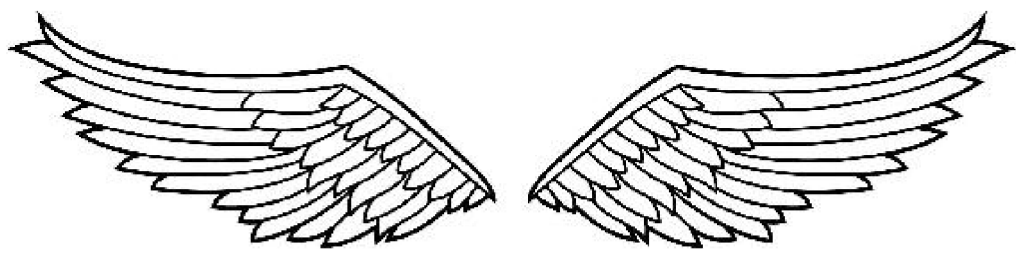
To my consternation it worked.

Zach's restlessness turned into a moment of painful stillness. He was awake.

The angel escaped from the circle of my arms as if he was burned, his long strides bringing him to the bathroom, the door closing behind him with a loud thud.

Ah. I should have expected this.

I was gone before the angel came out, knowing I wasn't wanted.



Chapter 4

Forgetting about Zachariel should be a simple matter. One night stands were more of a norm than an exception for me and I liked it that way. But the memories from that night, the moments of incredible pleasure I was offered as soon as I let myself submit, were haunting my mind. It was like a paper cut on my attention; nothing significant, but I was always aware it was there. An annoyance through and through. Ha, how typical of an angel to get where he wasn't wanted.

The moments of passion were something I could resist. Memories of my submission made me want to hide, so I didn't linger on them too closely. But another memory played havoc with my emotions.

The glimpse of tears on the angel's face before he could hide his face from me as he ran.

I may have given him a lot, maybe more than I ever expected to give, but I also took from him, had seen him equally vulnerable. Possibly more vulnerable than me. Did that mean we were even? Back to square one? Did it mean... I could approach him once more without the burning shame I felt whenever I thought of spending a second night with an angel who had seen me bare, not only in body but in soul? I felt like an addict after I tested submission with him. It exposed a side of me I had spent hundreds of years carefully hiding to not get taken advantage of by the brutal world of demonic relations.

That was one reason why I spent so much time on Earth; I preferred the atmosphere here over what happened in Hell. All that posturing was so tiring. But today I decided to make an

exception and go back to the demonic plane, even if I didn't have to, for the first time in years. I wanted to ask pointed questions, to quietly research the abomination of an angel having nightmares and get to the bottom of the strange occurrence. Researching in Hell also gave me a reason why I couldn't just drop by the angel's flat. The flat I know the address to. And could find any time. By the stars, it was so tempting to just go there. Fortunately, I was always good at procrastinating away from my troubles.

I took a deep breath in as I materialized in Hell, the slight tang of sulfur letting itself known even after millennia of the hellscape getting steadily transformed into a nicer place to live in. Lucifer's efforts to change the hellish plane he was thrown into after his rebellion were slowly bearing fruit, but there were still places, dark corners like the Abyss, where I didn't dare to go.

Besides sulfur I could taste the magic in the air, the power tantalizingly close after staying for so long among humans. On Earth you had to use the power from within and couldn't just reach out and take it from the outside as you could here. As I walked to a nearby pub, one of the best places to gather information, I caught the swirling strands of power, carefully taking them inside me. I wished it would be easier to stockpile it for later, but no matter how you gorged yourself on the power in Hell, it leaked out of you like from a sieve after you entered the human domain. It took dedicated work to bolster the reserve you could keep within you like a seed of possibility.

I delved into the matter I came here for, angels who dreamed, straight away. But after trying everything I could think of – paid information brokers, the biggest gossips in Hell, a few demons who were known for sleeping with angels – I was left empty handed. Frustrated, I decided to try again later and spent the time meditating, focusing on the power around me.

Two days later, as I passed the threshold of Fire in the Hole, my favorite pub, a smile curled on my lips as I realized my reserves were larger than when I was here last time. Of course, to most of the folks gathered here that meant nothing. Not when they were so much better at utilizing the magic around them. My eyes darkened, my mood already souring, as I saw one of the regulars sneer at me. She thought herself superior because she kicked my ass one time. I was convinced she wouldn't last a minute if we brawled on Earth, but alas, if there was one thing many angels and demons shared it was unwillingness to set foot on Earth. Some devils loved to play with humans but there were restrictions now, rules, contracts, regular jobs. It was all too civilized for their tastes.

“Look who graced us with his presence,” Beira taunted. “Got fed up with your humans? Are you ready for something better?”

I gave her a thorough once over then flicked my eyes dismissively to the side.

“Sorry, honey, but I had better offers on Earth.”

“Yeah? Like what? Did you seduce your mark? Humans are so easy; it’s embarrassing going for them.”

“Then it’s good I didn’t go for them. I had my sights set *higher*, if you know what I mean.”

My hand flicked up lazily, the white feather between my fingers gleaming in the dimness of the pub as I played with it gently, casually.

“You son of a bitch.” I tried not to let a smirk overtake my face at Beira’s dropped jaw and admiring tone. “How did you pull that?”

“A gentleman doesn’t kiss and tell. But I can tell you he was dreamy,” I laughed, but Beira didn’t. “Get it? Dreamy? It’s funny because angels do not dream?”

There was a rule about telling jokes: if you had to explain it, the joke wasn’t really funny. But just this once I gave himself a dispensation to be extremely corny as it steered the conversation exactly where I wanted it to go.

“Yeah, yeah, everybody knows the feathers don’t dream,” Beira rolled her eyes and waved to the waiter to order us two drinks.

“But wouldn’t it be funny if they did? Can you imagine an angel having an erotic dream? You know, night emissions and all.”

“Ha! I would pay to see that!”

“Maybe there are some exceptions out there. Had you ever heard about a dreaming angel?”

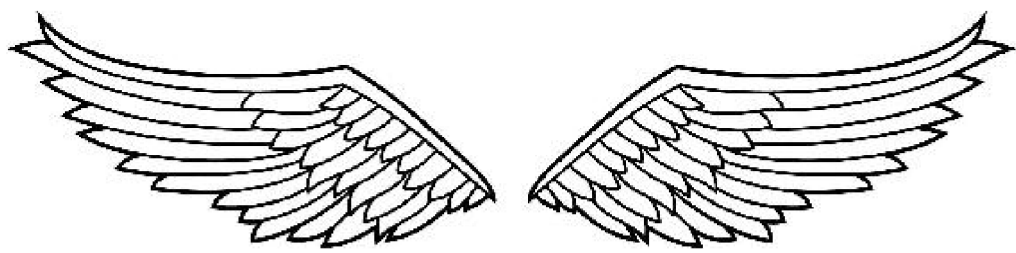
“Nah. Or I would already be blackmailing them into giving me some of those pretty feathers like you got. But I had heard...” Her eyes turned calculating as she followed the motion of the feather in my hand. “You know what? I will tell you what I heard if you give me a prize.”

Her burning stare made it obvious what she wanted. The white feathers from true angel wings were filled with a spark of angelic power and they didn't last long, especially not in Hell, quickly dulling and turning to dust in a matter of days. Waving around a still-glowing feather at a demon was like waving a flag in front of a bull. Who could resist it? Certainly not Beira. I was only glad the feather got tangled among my things when I hurried to leave Zach's flat. I wouldn't have enough balls to keep one for myself otherwise.

I made a show of not wanting to part with my prize, but ultimately I relented and got what I truly wanted. An answer. A lead. Beira leaned towards me and whispered conspiratorially.

“I had heard about a demon who dreams. He made quite a spectacle of himself the other day...”

My eyes sparkled as she told me all the rumors flying around about one Auriolus, soon to become my prey.



Chapter 5

Auriolus would be extremely easy to follow, seeing how distracted he seemed as he looked around curiously with those big eyes, if it wasn't for one detail: he was following a demon of a higher rank around like a puppy. And not any demon: Abaddon himself. It would make sense if he was one of the sycophants looking to ingratiate himself, or even a lower demon playing fetch-and-serve, but the little guy seemed more trouble than help, what with the way he almost managed to get lost twice among the demons at the marketplace while I observed the unique pair. It's not like it was that hard to follow after Abaddon's broad shoulders and beautiful golden horns! They were practically a beacon! But Auriolus was apparently as curious as a squirrel while having the attention span of a goldfish. I wasn't surprised when Abaddon finally seized the smaller demon by his always-gesticulating hand and forcefully pulled him after himself.

After seeing that interaction I was more confident that Beira's rumors may have been onto something. As the grapevine had it there was a public altercation which resulted in Abaddon taking Auriolus under his wing. Hell wanted to sweep this whole thing under the carpet so nobody was really talking about what the situation was about but nevertheless it put Auriolus into a position of a person of interest. And that resulted in some juicy rumors coming from Abaddon's mansion... now I just had to see if there was a seed of truth in them.

I decided to observe from afar.

After the second hour at the marketplace I was happy that my mark was so hyperactive and injury prone. Abaddon didn't have time to spot me lurking when he had to pay attention to his charge not tripping over his own feet. He scowled darkly at the smaller demon but still acted like a protective mother hen, his hand always ready to catch the other.

The way Auriolus stumbled, held his wings stiffly, and looked around with wide eyes as if taking the crazy world of demonic activity in for the first time made me ponder an idea... was he newly fallen? That would certainly explain the curiosity and the clumsiness if he still had some lingering pain from when he lost his white wings.

The pain... the smoke... I couldn't get the taste of ash from my mouth for months and even now I could feel the phantom sensation of burning feathers when I thought about how I fell.

Smoke...

Fire... fire.

I shook my head forcefully, gritting my teeth against the memories which wanted to pull me under.

Now that I looked closer at the healthy, well-groomed wings on Auriolus's back, I realized he must have been here for months already if his feathers managed to grow back black. And my own first coat was pretty mangy; I didn't get the beautiful shine on mine before I molted and exchanged the feathers for new ones properly cultivated with the Hell's power.

No way that big-eyed stray was here for enough time to go through the whole process already.

Once I had my suspicions, it was easy to hone in on the never-ending stream of words leaving Auriolus's mouth and quickly come closer when I managed to pick a keyword I was looking for.

"...I was a fashion designer in my previous life, you know. So, trust me when I tell you this purple fabric is made for you. It will go brilliantly with your golden horns." Auriolus beamed at the huge demon at his side.

Abaddon entered a staring contest and, wonder of wonders, lost against puppy dog eyes.

Gold clattered onto the vendor's table.

"Fine. Have it if you want it so much. But I don't need it. Wear it yourself."

Auriolus gasped as if he was dealt the biggest offence of his life.

"I beg your pardon! Wearing purple with my coloration would be a crime!"

"Get used to it." Abaddon bared his teeth. "We are demons. You are a demon now. Crimes are our thing. Let's finish here before I decide to teach you a lesson like your previous handler wanted to do."

Oh? There was a story here. But I was more interested in learning about the dreaming. Unfortunately, the pair headed out of the market after visiting an herbalist, making trailing

after them too risky. I decided to see what they were doing in the herbalist's shop instead. I took a gamble and barreled through the door as if in a hurry.

“Excuse me, excuse me, dear madam, sorry to bother you, but Lord Abaddon sent me to pick some more of the product you just sold him.”

The clerk frowned at me.

“He just got enough for several months!”

“Yes, yes, but he just remembered he may not be available for some time, so better stock up than be sorry later!”

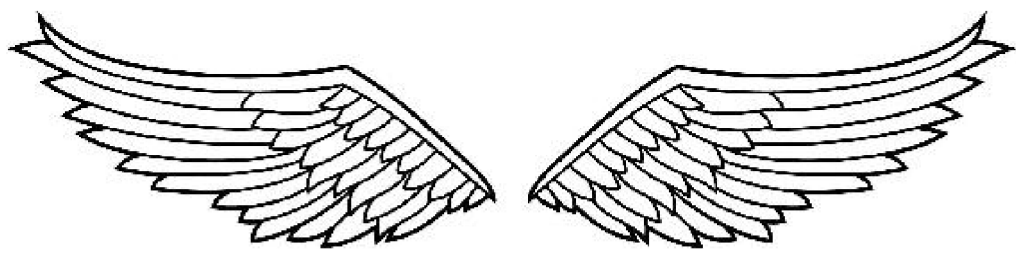
“Hmph, and he had to send a servant as he couldn't be bothered to turn around. Typical. How much do you want?”

I loved when the targets of my lies filled the blanks in themselves.

“Just enough for another week or two?” I asked, hoping it wasn't some kind of extremely rare magical ingredient I would need to spend my life savings on.

In the end, I didn't end up paying a lot for it because it turned out to be a common Earth herb, valerian. For demons it didn't really have any effect in its base form, but it was an ingredient in a few more complicated concoctions. But, if I remember correctly, humans had used valerian to help with sleep. Restful sleep with no nightmares.

Bingo. It seems that silly demon dreams just like my angel.



Chapter 6

To my frustration, I was unable to keep my eyes on Auriolus and Abaddon unless they were in a more populated place and, after a week of fruitless searching for rumors of their appearances in public and staking out places Abaddon frequented, I decided they were probably hiding in the high demon's mansion, waiting for the rumors to die down. The mansion was a very private, very secure parcel of Hell and I wasn't stupid enough to go anywhere near there. So, with a sigh, I went back to Earth.

I did my job for a while – influencing humans to go to the dark side of the force and all – but my current area included the club I met Zachariel in just a few weeks ago. I fought with myself, debating the pros and cons of going there, and allowed myself a peek in, only to discover a complete lack of the subject of my interest within. Right, he wasn't here. I couldn't even be sure if he came here for work or for pleasure before I distracted him with my pretty face. But I didn't need him. I could seduce any of the bodies writhing on the dance floor, find myself someone who would cave in to all my whims, let me do despicable things to them and thank me for it. What I didn't see among the gathered humans was someone I would let do that *to me*.

Each song I mindlessly danced to only made me more on edge so I slapped away a wandering hand of a big, burly man who took an interest in me, stalked away from the dancefloor and out of the club, peeved by the squirming want inside of me which insisted it could be quenched by one man only.

Whatever! I wasn't going to go to him like some dog and beg for attention!

I was so lost in my fuming I didn't even notice someone in front of me and barreled into a strong chest.

“Oof! Hey, watch where you're standing—”

My furious eyes rose to meet familiar baby blues.

“Hello, Hellion,” Zachariel purred.

“You!” I spluttered. “How did you know I was here?”

“After you left me so rudely with no way to contact you, I decided to be proactive and paid the bartender to keep tabs on a certain beautiful man. I'm glad I was fast enough to catch you.”

He was looking for me, my mind crooned as my mouth spewed out:

“You haven't caught me yet, angel.”

“That's alright, I enjoy the chase.” He stepped closer to me until our noses were nearly touching. “Are you going to run?”

Fight or flight warred in my veins. I pulled my power around myself, dipping into my newly replenished reserves to hide my presence from the mortals.

“I bet you can't catch me,” I taunted, spreading my wings to their entire width, the tips glinting in the light of the street lamp behind me. Fight or flight? Why not both? “If you cannot catch me in the next ten minutes you will follow my orders tonight.”

Zachariel's eyes flashed bright blue.

“Deal.”

I shot upwards and had to dodge immediately as the angel didn't give me even a second of advantage. My body twirled around, the wings catching the wind with a powerful beat, and I soared. The skies were my domain. Heaven, Earth, Hell... no matter where I was, I always loved to find freedom in the vastness of open space around me. I laughed as I fell into a dead drop, turned into a corkscrew, as the angel made another attempt. It quickly became apparent I was the better flier but instead of getting frustrated Zach joined in my laughter and our chase turned into more of a close dance, a playful flirtation, the space kept between us only an illusion as we got as close as possible without touching, our wings swirling together into a mesmerizing mix of black and white.

As the minutes passed, I allowed myself to fall back to earth, towards the towering buildings of the city. And if it just so happened that the mark of ten minutes passed as I landed in an alley next to a familiar building...

Arms circled around me from behind. Zach's warmth enveloped me with a brief touch of vanishing wings.

“You are too late, angel. It's no use catching me now,” I smirked. “The ten minutes have passed and tonight you are going to do what I say.”

“As you wish,” the angel whispered straight into my ear, making goosebumps raise on my skin. And he kept hugging me! I tried to wriggle free, but his arms were like bands of

steel around me. This wasn't how it was supposed to play out! I wanted to be in control of the situation.

“Let me go!” I barked, and he immediately loosened his arms and took a step back. I threw him a dirty look and started walking towards his flat.

In no time at all I found myself alone with Zachariel in his house and the place brought memories of the first night we met. Well, the sight of the door to the bedroom did. I honestly barely took in how the rest of his place looked. But now I kicked off my shoes and went to sprawl on the couch in the living room.

“What should I do with you...” I wondered out loud as Zach stopped in front of me. It was half an attempt to let him stew in the uncertainty of not knowing what I was going to make him do and half a real question. I had many ideas, but where to start first?

“I'm hungry. Prepare something delicious for me,” I commanded. Even if human sustenance was optional for demons and angels, I enjoyed eating. And I was curious if the angel was going to sabotage the task or try to wriggle out of playing a cook for me in a way a demon would.

When Zach returned from the kitchen after I lazily watched an episode of one of my favorite crime shows on his big screen tv and placed the dishes in front of me, I had to fight with myself to not let my jaw drop open. Whatever the opposite of sabotaging the meal was called, Zach had just done it. In front of me laid a veritable feast for the eyes and, if my

olfactory senses were anything to go by, for my tongue as well. The fresh French pancakes with jam filling drizzled with chocolate called to me so strongly I had to swipe a bit of the sweet treat from the edge of the plate and lick it off my finger. It was delicious. And it wasn't even the end! There was a fruit salad with fruits cut into the shapes of fucking flowers as well. And a fresh smoothie! Well, I did wonder about the sounds coming from the kitchen, but I didn't expect Zachary to really put in an effort when he could go by giving me a sandwich or even ordering us pizzas.

“How the hell do you know to cook so well?” I asked through the bites as I practically devoured the pancakes.

“I sold my soul for it,” the angel deadpanned, but I sensed a slight unease in the way his eyes flickered away from mine. “You should try the fruit. The strawberries go particularly well with the pancakes.”

“You are such a showoff. Was there a need to go this hard?” I waved a flower-shaped strawberry piece at him.

“I wanted you to enjoy what I prepared. You asked me to get you something delicious and failure was unacceptable. Many beings don't realize how important presentation is. How it makes everything sweeter. How important it is to engage every sense.”

I swallowed, my throat bobbing as Zach moved closer, seating himself next to me and practically whispering in my ear. Uh-oh, now all my senses were going haywire. He was so close I could nearly feel the heat of his body and, when his

hand landed on my thigh, I had to suppress a squeak. He was engaging all my senses alright! Deliberately, I'm sure, that crafty fox. Something about how proficient he was at cooking was already getting me hot. I knew I had a competency kink but cooking? That was a new one! But with the angel it somehow fit that I would daydream about watching him prepare complicated dishes and about sucking honey off his long, slender fingers after he was finished.

As if he read my mind, Zachariel reached to pick a fruit from the bowl and put it to my mouth. I licked my lips, warring with myself, but, in the words of the great Oscar Wilde, I could resist anything but temptation. I took the offered morsel and licked the fruit juice off Zach's fingers. The taste was divine, and I chased down a droplet which slid down Zach's hand, my tongue swiping over his offered palm.

"That's it, good boy."

That hit me like a punch and I had to wrestle back what meager control over the situation I had.

"On your knees," I snarled.

Zachariel blinked slowly at me like a satisfied cat and folded to his knees with an elegance I was envious of. He was completely unashamed of his position, but he rose a mocking brow at me.

"Is it really what you want? For me to be on my knees?"

I had half of a mind to tell him to crawl between my thighs and suck my cock, but then I remembered how he managed to

still be in charge the last time he had done that to me.

Think, Hellion, I admonished myself. You have ultimate power over an angel. Don't waste it. Other demons would kill to be in your place.

“Strip.”

Maybe taking away the layers Zachariel could hide under would do the trick and show me the vulnerability I craved. But he was unbothered by my order. Zach stripped slowly, with a casual sensuality that wasn't even a calculated move, just the angel's natural grace. Previously, I didn't take the time to properly appreciate his body, but I was going to make sure to leave no inch untouched this time. Every freckle, every scar, every special spot that was uniquely his was going to be mine.

Only...

As I stood up and circled around the kneeling, naked angel slowly I noticed Zach's skin was perfect. Unnaturally so. It was eerie how I couldn't spot even one blemish, one patch of rough skin, or any identifying marks. Did I ever look this bland? Perhaps, at the very beginning of my creation, but with time, with experience, with cultivating an actual personality and tastes, with experimenting, my body has settled into this form and now I had a spattering of freckles across my nose, a few small scars, spots of roughness on my skin... In contrast, the man before me was a completely blank page begging to be written on. I remembered how I joked to myself about how he looked like a poster boy for an idolized renaissance idea of an angel, but now it really seemed as if he was created just with

factory settings. He was undeniably beautiful but my demonic heart ached at such a lack of individuality. The urge to mar this unsettling perfection was overwhelming. I practically salivated with the need to bite.

“You look hungry, Hellion. Are you sure you don’t want to be the one on your knees instead? To fit between my thighs like the little, pretty twink you are and have your fill of my cock until you can feel it in the back of your throat?”

That motherfucker. Hah. Here it was. Zachariel’s body may be boring but his mind certainly wasn’t. How did he know how to push all my buttons? His personality was maddeningly unique, infuriating, and... fascinating. I leaned down to finally sink my teeth into his shoulder—

“Hey!” I yelped as Zachary pulled me over his shoulder and made me tumble into his lap.

His hands were like vices around my wrists as I yanked at his hold. He was still kneeling, making a mockery out of his careless obedience while he tried to keep me prisoner. Heat pulsed in my veins.

“You can tell me to stop,” Zachariel murmured against my throat, feeling my thrumming pulse with his lips. “But don’t worry, as you wanted to order me around today I won’t do anything to you until you tell me exactly what you want me to do.”

It was a promise and a threat in one. Giving myself over to the submission was the hardest thing I ever had to do but at the same time it was easier than just... just asking for it! I couldn’t

do it! Surely, if I didn't push him away, didn't protest, made myself open and receptive... I tilted my head back, baring my throat, issuing a wordless invitation. A soft kiss was all the acknowledgement I got. Zachariel seemed happy to sit with me in his lap for an eternity, doing exactly nothing! Oh, how I hated him.

“Mark me,” I said, even if it cost me all the breath in my lungs.

The hickey Zachariel sucked on my skin was worth asking for it. Knowing more of this was in my reach if I said the words was pure torture. Suddenly, what I wanted the most in the world was not to have the angel humiliated and crawling at my feet, but to be under his hands once more.

“Take... take off my shirt,” I gasped out and I was rewarded by those too-perfect hands sliding under the fabric of my top and peeling it away. A natural progression would be for the angel to continue undressing me but his hands returned primly to his sides after his task was done. Did I have to instruct him to do every little thing? To guide him through every move, every stroke, every idea? I wanted to get lost in my head, to feel, not to think, not to...!

Oh.

Not to lead.

The control I fought for at the beginning of this evening felt like a fool's gold when I knew true riches laid elsewhere.

My nails dug into white skin as I closed my eyes tightly.

“What do you want?” Zach entreated with a voice like molten lava.

“Touch me,” I said and when he did the words spilled from my mouth in a torrent that couldn’t be stopped anymore. “Keep touching me. Don’t stop. Don’t you dare stop.”

His hands mapped my skin, fingers splaying over my chest, raking down my back, gripping my hair hard.

My gasp reverberated through the room. Yes, yes, this was what I wanted. But no, I wanted more. So much more. A hard yank on my hair made me snap my eyes open and stare straight into Zach’s electric blue eyes.

“Command me. Tell me what you really want.”

I gathered all my courage, all the iron will I should have as a demon, and put it into two breathless words:

“Dominate me.”

My world swerved madly as I was suddenly lifted and manhandled onto the couch, my pants and underwear stripped off my body with a savagery that made breath catch in my throat. Zach’s lips found mine, sealing a deal of me willingly giving myself to him.

“Good boy,” he murmured between the kisses. “Such a brave boy. I think you deserve a reward. Come here. Yes, like this.”

He made me lay on the edge of the couch with my ass on display. I didn’t have to wait long in suspense for what he was planning as only a second later his hands were spreading my

asscheeks and I gave a small squeak which quickly turned into a moan as Zach started to eat me out.

That clever tongue was truly made for more than the witty banter and the way it spread the wetness of saliva over my tight hole, softening it for what was coming, was making me sink into the cushion under me as all the blood in my body went south. My cock had been half-hard for a while now, being close to Zachariel enough to affect me in this way, but in this moment I became hard as a diamond. How could I not when an angel was doing his damndest best to drive me mad as he spread me even more and dove in to put his tongue inside me, the strong muscle slithering inside, slowly, but inescapably until he was fucking me with it messily.

My hips jerked forward, the couch in front of me too much of a temptation to not try to rub against it and relieve the mounting ache in my dick, but Zach's hands pulled me away.

“Tsk, tsk, and here I just praised you for being a good boy. Are you a dog in heat to rub against the furniture? Do you want to come so much? Fine then, I will give you a choice.” His large hand slid from my flank down to my straining cock, his hold present but loose enough to not really give me any relief. “I can keep you from coming tonight, bind your pretty cock and let you writhe in ecstasy for hours before I grant you the mercy of spilling your cum.”

His fingers tightened cruelly around me and I whimpered.

“Or I can let you come right now. Would you like that? But if I grant you completion I won't stop.” Long fingers started

an unhurried rhythm that made my toes curl. “I won’t stop until I wring you dry, And then...” He leaned forward to whisper into my ear. “...I will still continue. Until you are begging me. Until you can take no more. Until you are a total mess.”

His hand stilled as I panted raggedly.

“Which one will it be?”

“You are a bastard. Are you an angel or a demon?” I spat out as my body thrummed with remembered pleasure. Both choices were a trap. A delicious torture. I could only pick in which way I wanted to be flayed open. I was... I was too weak to deny myself an orgasm even if I knew what was going to come later. “I want to come...” I mumbled into the cushion.

“Speak up,” Zach yanked on my hair, lifting my head up so that I couldn’t hide.

“Come! Make me come!” I spat out, as the rough gesture sent a bolt of lightning through my body.

“As you wish.”

I barely heard the words over the rush of blood in my head as my whole world shrank to the feeling of his hand on my cock pulling tightly up and down. Up and down, Up. And. Down.

The measured, lazy pace was enough to have me twisting, chasing more of the sensation and when Zach added a twist to the upstroke I was gone. Spine bowed, mouth open and panting, I let myself fall into the most delicious orgasm I’d

had in weeks. Using my own hand couldn't compare to this. I was starting to doubt anything could as Zachariel placed a tender kiss on my neck.

It was all the warning I got before he started stroking me again.

I bit my lip at the flare of oversensitivity, my skin still tight and my cock twitching with aftershocks even as it was cruelly stimulated once more. Zachariel didn't even wait for me to get soft. If I was a regular human I may have had more trouble rising to the occasion once more, but with a superior demonic body, which ran on willpower as much as any sustenance, I was ready to go in no time. When Zach heard my moans start to leave my lips freely he changed our position, putting me onto his lap facing him, my legs spread over his so that I couldn't hide anything. My cheeks brightened with a pink blush as the angel took his time to admire my body. Did he want to track every little freckle on my body like I wanted to do with his before I realized his blank state? Ah, probably not. I was just hot, I could admit that much to myself, and the angel was admiring how good a job he was doing of driving me mad with lust.

"You are beautiful," Zach said. "But you will be even more beautiful when you scream with pleasure. And I want to see your face when you do."

"I won't scream," I huffed, embarrassed.

Though I probably will cry, went through my head.

“We will see.” Zach smiled sunnily and made a gesture with his hand which resulted in a bottle of lube flying into his hand a few seconds later. Here he went, using his angelic powers for trivial things again. No, wait, that wasn’t what I should be focusing on.

Lube.

“You want to fuck me?” I asked brusquely, already feeling that prickly awareness snapping back into place, pushing the fiery contentment of the erotic play to the side.

“Yes. Very much so. But I was thinking of using my fingers today. I’m planning to make you come as many times as I can and I thought focusing my attention only on your cock may be too cruel even for me.”

“Too cruel, my ass,” I snorted but I felt my shoulders relax. “Somehow I doubt you are doing this to make things easier for me. But fine, go on. Fingers... are fine.”

I had already let him eat me out today, this wasn’t that much of a jump, right? As long as he didn’t take it even further... Somehow I thought Zach understood my unspoken limits and he wouldn’t try pushing past them. At least not today.

As for the limits of my body’s endurance though...

Slick fingers reached between my legs and pushed against my hole, circling it softly, testingly. Between the post-orgasmic bliss and the earlier rimming, I was loose enough that putting the first finger in wasn’t much of a problem. It sank in readily, swallowed by my hungry body, and when

Zach pulled back only to return with two fingers my groan reverberated through the room. There was something so intimate about being opened, slowly but surely, inexorably being made to take more, the other person shaping your insides for their desire, for their use. My hands twitched at my sides and, as I didn't quite know what to do with them, I let them roam over the body under me. By the time a third finger made its way into me I was clutching at my lover's back, hiding my muffled groans in his neck, lost to the pleasure wrung from me when the angel decided to switch gears and started playing instead of just preparing me. His questing fingers pushed against my prostate and I nearly bit my tongue to stifle a whimper. I didn't know if I should press back and encourage him to target my sweet spot or if I should lean away from it to not get overwhelmed by the concentrated dose of bliss. In the end my hips did a little dance, fucking me on those slender digits, making me lose all my dignity somewhere along the way.

Who cared about dignity when I was so close? I could almost taste the upcoming release. *God, so close.*

I may have mumbled something along those lines as the angel laughed and pulled at my hair, stopping me from hiding my face in his neck.

“I told you I wanted to see you. I'm going to catalogue every twitch of your expression as you come apart. Show me everything, precious.”

It's not like I had a choice whether to show him everything or not. When he started slamming his fingers up into my tight hole, hammering into me with bestial ferocity, I lost control of my expression, of everything really. My mind blanked out as the onslaught of pleasure made me cry out and mindlessly chase the molten heat inside of me that was ready to burst into a flame.

“Ah... aaa... ah!”

My body seized with a powerful orgasm, muscles spasming as I shuddered to completion, pulse after pulse of cum escaping from my cock onto Zach's stomach. He milked me thoroughly, his fingers pressing into my swollen prostate until I was an incoherent mess. I sagged against his warm body, not having enough strength to sit upright, and he let me lean against him, the hand in my hair switching to petting me gently. I drifted for a while, content with drowning in this warm haze, but after a few minutes I blinked my eyes open, some of the coherence returning to me.

And with it, realization that Zachariel wasn't done with me.

His fingers were still buried deep inside me, threateningly close to the oversensitive bundle of nerves, like a predator just waiting to pounce. And me making a groan of despair was apparently the signal as the digits started moving again.

“Too much!” I cried out, trying to wriggle away but the fingers were insistent and followed my movements, pressing in and out without mercy. “Nngh! Too... ah, ah... too much!”

“Is it?” Zach asked pleasantly. “I think you can take much, much more. I’m only just starting after all. But if you really want me to stop at any point, darling, just flare your power.” His fingers stopped for a moment to give me a chance to think. “Do you understand? Can you flare your power if you need to?”

I took a shuddering breath and nodded.

“I’m so sensitive. You are such a bastard,” I said.

And I didn’t use the power even as the fingers got back to their work once more.

It truly was too much for my body but my mind relished the sensations absolutely overflowing my system. A particularly hard press against my sweet spot made me produce a wretched sound that was nearly a sob. Seeking a way to ground myself I lashed out at the body in front of me, my clawed fingers digging into Zachariel’s arms until I could smell blood in the air.

“Hands behind you,” a hard voice commanded and my mind jolted in an automatic response to obey. I grabbed my left wrist with my right hand so tightly I knew there were going to be bruises, but when Zachariel kept his punishing pace I found out I couldn’t do it, couldn’t keep my trembling hands together when my body felt like a live wire. I couldn’t come like this, not yet. Not when it was the third time in such a short period, but it felt as though I was going to come. Every touch was magnified to horrifying proportions and I lost control of my hands and put them forward, clutching at Zach once more.

When the never-ending too-much, too-fast input stopped it was like a bucket of cold water.

Oh, I disobeyed an order, I thought hazily, looking at my hands on my dom's chest.

“It's hard, isn't it?” Zachariel cooed at me, not angry at all. “Don't worry, I will help you.”

I was shifted into a new position and I gave no resistance as Zach manhandled me as he wanted until I found myself on the floor, my hands behind me getting tied with something... was that a tie? Whatever it was, it was strong enough to hold as I tried to pull my wrists apart. I was caught and trussed up and I could do nothing to resist. A shiver of excitement ran through my body. Anticipation for the delicious torment to come made my breath come out faster. I was so focused, so strung-up, that I flinched when Zach touched my ass but he shushed me, his hand petting gentle circles on me until my head lolled on the floor as I surrendered myself.

“Good boy,” Zach's voice was heavy like molasses, rich like honey. It dripped over me, getting into every corner of my soul, even the parts I tried to keep hidden, filling those dark corners which unexpectedly flourished when exposed to the angelic light.

“More,” I whispered, jumping off the cliff of want.

The fall was glorious.

This time Zach's strong hand pressed me into the floor before his body leaned over mine, keeping my bound hands

sandwiched between us, letting his heavy form contain me as I thrashed when he reached for my cock and set a fast rhythm. I was pinned in place like a butterfly, hopeless to move away.

And I found freedom in it.

Freedom to cry and babble a litany of broken words, to not care about anything else than here and now and how I was made to feel.

The room echoed with the symphony of my whimpers, moans, pleas.

“Yes, yes, please, no, ah! Please, y-yes.”

And Zachariel gave me not what I wanted – even I didn’t know what it was at that point – but what I needed. His second hand sank once more into my hole, the dual sensation of being stroked inside and outside coalescing into a such a heady mix of pain-pleasure, too-much-not-enough, I thought it would never end and I would spend eternity suspended in this place where time didn’t exist. I could only feel. Only be.

Stroke. Push. In. Out. Stroke. Push.

“Breathe,” a voice rumbled behind me. I could feel the deep vibration where Zach was plastered to my back. His chest was rising up and down...

Oh, I forgot to breathe.

I sucked a desperate lungful of air, my head swimming, my legs trembling with the need to come while my body tried to acquiesce to this demand. I just needed a little more, a little push...

Zach's hand left my cock.

No, no! This is the opposite of what I needed. I want more! I need—

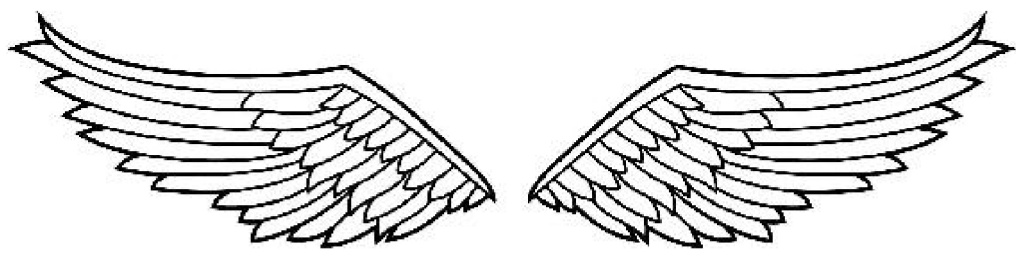
The angel's hand found my nipple and pinched.

My spine tried to bow away from the pain but there was nowhere to go. Except for where Zachariel wanted me to go: towards an earth-shattering orgasm as the agony of his cruel touch somehow heightened the pleasure I had already felt. It was like adding gasoline to the fire. I went up in flames like a house made out of wood.

My mouth opened in a soundless scream as I found my third release of the night. It felt as if I had barely any cum to give, drained completely empty, but the dry orgasm had a hold of my whole body, bathing me in wave upon wave of sensation until I could barely twitch, insatiate on the floor of an angel's room, my mind one big haze.

It felt like swimming underwater. I was submerged in the feeling of complete surrender. And... accomplishment. Even as my mind refused to parse words I knew the shapes Zachariel's mouth was making contained the words "good boy". Maybe even "precious" or "darling".

I let myself float, safe and content.



Chapter 7

I stretched lazily as I woke up, and nearly knocked a lamp off the bedside table, catching it before it wobbled off to the floor. Ah, right, I wasn't at my home. I looked towards the other half of the bed but Zachariel wasn't there. I vaguely remembered that he was cleaning me up and I dozed off in the warm bath he drew up for me. He had to bring me back here and tuck me into the bed.

A frown marred my face at how pristine the other side looked. I tossed the covers off, intending to get up. When my eyes met Zach's I fought the urge to cover myself once more. He was standing in the doorway of the bedroom, completely clothed and ready for the day.

"Did you sleep at all?" I asked.

"I felt no need to waste my time on sleep," Zach waved my question away.

"I see," I said and tried to squish the voice in the back of my head which insisted the angel didn't join me not because of his problems with nightmares but because no way an angel would want to sleep next to a demon like me. My presence was desirable for things other than sleeping and that had to be enough. "Such a shame," I pouted and looked up at the angel from under my eyelashes. "I thought I could wake you up nicely. Very nicely," I ran my tongue slowly over my lips, looking him straight in the eye.

"I had come to ask if you are hungry but I see the answer is yes," Zach said with an answering twinkle in his eye. In three steps he was standing over me. "You can show me how *very*

nice you can be. But Hellion? This time you are not getting to come.”

“What? Why?” I spluttered.

“Because I want you panting for it when you come to me next time.”

I was going to answer with a biting retort, maybe even deny I was going to come back for more, but then Zachariel opened the zipper of his pants and pulled out his cock and I was too distracted to participate in verbal sparring. My mouth salivated at the sight of his thickening length. I wanted to be the one to fully coax it to hardness so I pushed Zach’s hand aside and explored it with my fingers, both hands working in tandem to map every surface, my thumb circling the slit and scooping the precum which started to leak out, easing the way of my touches.

It was the throbbing vein at the side of his perfect cock that finally made me lean forward and taste him. I ran my tongue over this vein and traced it up the hardening length, ending with a lick to the slit at the top. I circled his frenulum and coated it with my saliva, letting the excess drip down the length. Messy blowjobs were always my favorite and I was told I was good at them. Extremely good. I really hoped it was a universal truth because I had a new mission in life; I wanted to wring sounds of wild pleasure from the angel before me. So far, my work gave me breathy huffs and slightly elevated heartbeat but that wasn’t even close to enough.

With my new conviction I decided to do this properly, so I pushed Zachariel to step backward and slid down from the bed to kneel in front of him. A rush of heat tried to overtake my cheeks at not only the position but at how I was naked and the angel was completely dressed, but I stubbornly ignored the mix of embarrassment and lust to concentrate on my mission.

“Can I?” I asked innocently, using my big, wide eyes to peer up at Zach while nuzzling his cock.

I didn't miss the sharp intake of breath from above me.

“Say ‘please’,” Zach said.

“But my mouth is too busy,” I pouted, kissing all over his cock. “Can I?”

Zach stubbornness wavered.

“Alright.”

I hid the truly devilish grin on my face by ducking my head and licking from my lover's balls up to the top where my prize awaited me. I placed a sloppy kiss on the head and then opened my mouth wide, swallowing Zach's cock down.

Some celestials and abyssals liked to cheat by making their bodies impervious to such a human thing such as a gag reflex, but for me fighting against it was half the fun. As I went lower and took more of Zach's length into me I had to swallow to keep the instinctual reaction at bay and open up my throat, inviting a now completely hard length into tight, wet warmth. It got me my first prize: a moan. My throat spasmed as I tried to take it all and I had to pull back to gasp for air.

I know how I had to look; hair mussed, cheeks flushed, my cock plump between my legs, my mouth shiny with spit and precum. I looked like a dream. But I was going to look even better with cum all over my face. I wanted Zach to lose a bit of that iron control, so the next time I dove in I decided to pull out all the stops. I curled my tongue just so, pushing at the tender underside of his dick. I ran my hands over his thighs, which were sensitive even through the layers of clothing – in fact I hoped the sensation of the material sliding over skin made a nice counterpoint that heightened the other sensations. That stoic veneer of my lover’s was finally starting to crack and, being the demon I was, I sank my claws and teeth in to widen that crack, to get under his skin. When I started to suck, my cheeks hollowing in a way I knew made me look like a practiced whore, Zach’s hips couldn’t stay still anymore and he was panting loudly, moans waiting on the tip of his tongue.

I pulled back only enough to gasp out,

“Fuck my mouth. Please.”

He did.

With a hand gripped in my hair he fucked into me as much as he pulled me onto his cock, the motion slamming him deep inside my throat. He was losing himself and I was there with him all the way, so ready to come—

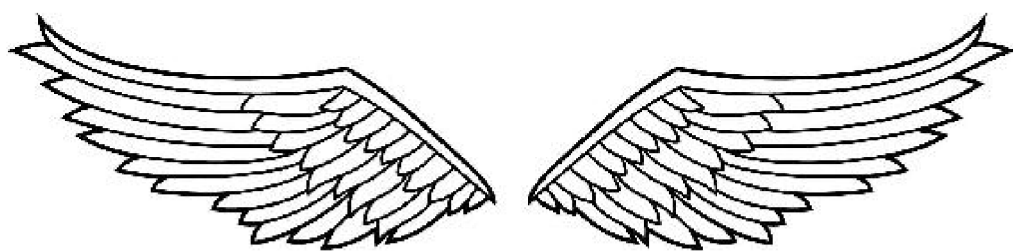
Wait, I wasn’t supposed to come.

When I thought about that night later (I thought about it a lot) I was convinced that it was the moan of misery from my throat that made Zach come. I drank the sound of his guttural

moans as much as I drank his cum, letting my throat flutter around him and milk every drop he could give me. When he pulled away, spent, panting, I grinned up at him, proud of making him like this.

“Thank you for the meal. It was delicious as always.”

And if Zach groaned at my bad joke... well, seeing him like this, casually rolling his eyes at me and then giving me a smile, his cheeks still flushed, was a privilege in its own right.



Chapter 8

Weeks later, I flushed as I remembered Zach's parting words that morning.

"I'm not so cruel as to tell you to not come at all until we meet next time... But when you take yourself in hand you will feel how it's nothing compared to what I can give you. Won't you, Hellion?"

It pissed me off that he was right.

No matter how I tried to distract myself, the lust I felt was a shimmering sensation in the background, a static buzz that wouldn't leave me alone, like a catchy song that plays on repeat in your head.

What was even worse, I didn't have much of an excuse for not going to fulfill my wants now as I had an explicit invitation to drop by Zach's place whenever I wanted. In the end, I had succumbed to my frustration and found myself in front of the building Zachariel lived in. Before I went in, I idly scanned the building with my power to see if he was inside. A flash of an angelic signature gave me pause. It didn't feel like Zachariel... or rather, it felt like he was in there with another angel.

I could just leave. But I was a curious beast and I wanted to see what was going on. It could be a friendly visit but if it was a superior... or even worse, a lover...

Most demons wouldn't be able to accomplish what I tried in that moment but thanks to my prolonged stay on Earth I was very good at hiding my signature; good enough to hide even

from other higher beings for a little while. Cloaked in such a way, my power layered over itself to not leak out, I spread my wings and with a few beats I hovered just outside the window of Zachariel's apartment. And lo and behold, there was indeed another angel there. One I recognized.

What the fuck was Archangel Gabriel doing here?

I wasn't so sure about being safe from being found out anymore. The Archangels were in another league and I didn't want to end up on ones radar so I backed off as quickly as I could.

But not before I caught a glimpse of the two angels arguing.

I should probably just cancel my plans, or even cancel our association altogether if that was the crowd Zach was hanging out with, but I had to admit I was a little... worried. As far as I knew Zachariel was just a lowly angel, as low in the hierarchy as I was, and an Archangel had enough power to write Zach out of existence or make his life hell, maybe even literally, if Zach pissed him off enough. And I knew how strong-willed the angel was.

So, I abandoned the immediate area but returned a few minutes later, after I felt the second signature leave. I knocked on the door and the angel opened it a bit harshly then blinked at me in surprise.

"No," he said when he saw the flirtatious smile I tried to hide my worry behind. "Not today."

He looked exhausted, on edge. Whatever was going on was taking a toll on him.

“I can leave,” I said. “But... I thought maybe you would like to have dinner with me? There’s this new restaurant on the 5th street I’m dying to try...”

“You would...” Zach looked thrown but that spark returned to his eyes. “You want to go with me... on a date?”

“W-who said it’s a date!” I spluttered. “It’s just eating out together! Like friends do. Shit, not that we are friends...”

“I would love to,” Zach put me out of my misery as I rubbed the back of my neck not looking at him.

That’s how we found ourselves in Whoop’a’Burger with plates of greasy food in front of us.

Zach scrunched his nose at his burger even though he picked some gourmet-style abomination with goat cheese, or avocado, or whatever weird shit it was.

“This is what you were ‘dying to try’?” he asked skeptically. “And you said ‘restaurant’. I don’t know if this qualifies.”

“Ha! Stop complaining or I will take you for a food snob,” I joked. But as I observed Zach place a napkin in his lap and go at his burger with a fork and knife instead of just biting into it as you should I realized. “Oh my god. You really *are* a food snob. The flower shaped fruit should have clued me in.”

“I’m not a snob,” Zach said, snobbishly. “I just have an appreciation for fine cuisine. I didn’t train my tastebuds for years just to—”

He stopped and clutched at his head with a pained expression that had me instantly worried.

“Zach?” I asked, reaching out a hand but leaving it hovering between us, unsure if I should touch him.

“I’m... fine. Eat your greasy food.”

“We could move somewhere else if you want,” I offered, my appetite gone.

“No... it’s just... I know I have very particular tastes but I don’t know *why*. I don’t remember. Sometimes the words just leave my mouth but if I try to think about them... I can’t. I don’t recall ‘training my tastebuds’. I don’t remember anything from my past life.”

“Oh, damn, I should have realized sooner. You are an Ascended,” I said as my brows rose up nearly to my hairline.

He acquiesced to my theory with a tilt of his head, his face grim.

“I know we are rare. Both among the angels and the demons. Have you ever meet one like me?”

“Probably,” I shrugged. “But, usually, it’s not... advertised. If a demon can keep it a secret they will try to do so. Some see Ascended as...”

“Weaker? Beneath them?” Zach asked dryly.

“I was going to say ‘abominations’ but sure, that as well.”

“And what do you think?”

I hesitated over what kind of an answer to give.

“I was always told that the Ascenders are created only from humans who are strong, unique, iron-willed. Aren’t you all that as an angel as well?”

“The unique part is certainly true,” Zach chuckled mirthlessly. He picked at the edge of the cloth covering our table and spoke only after the silence grew heavy. “I learned only today that I may, in fact, be an abomination. The nightmares... I thought they were a normal part of the process of going from a human to an angel.”

“They are not?” I asked quietly.

“They are. For the first few weeks. Or months. Not years. It’s normal for the newly made Ascended to retain the ability to dream for a while, and that may include nightmares, but...”

“How long ago had you Ascended?”

“Three years.”

Oh my Lucifer, he was a baby. A baby angel who apparently thought the worst of himself. Wait, was that blasted Archangel reinforcing that belief when I saw them argue? Did he just drop the bombshell about his nightmares not being normal on Zach and left him alone in such a state?

“Did Gabriel do something to you?” I blurted out like a moron.

Blue eyes widened then narrowed.

“You saw us. I’m going to spank your ass for not respecting my privacy, Hellion.”

“Is that a promise or a threat?” I shot back. “But really... he didn’t do anything did he? Not like I could do a lot against an Archangel, but I will gladly bitch about him with you.”

“No... He is... well, I still think he is my friend but he is on fucking thin ice,” the rare expletive falling from the angel’s lips only highlighted how frustrated he was. “Gabriel was the one who guided me into the life of an angel after I Ascended. His support and friendship helped me a lot. But apparently he decided keeping some facts from me, like how the dreams should stop soon after Ascending, was for ‘my own good’.”

“That’s some bullshit. Bitching about him it is,” I nodded with determination. “I will start: his hair looks hideous. Just cut it and be done with it or let it grow out! The half-state he keeps it in is an affront to creation. Now you.”

Zach blinked at me but then he gave a slight smile.

“I suppose... his singing voice is atrocious. It’s a good thing the fabled angelic choir isn’t really a thing.”

“Ha! Imagine if the Archangels burst into a song during one of their showy proclamations when they gather everybody in Heaven who won’t hide fast enough.”

“I don’t know, maybe it would be good. I have heard Michael has quite a nice voice. He should do a rap battle against Lucifer.”

I would have snorted with laughter at the vision had it been anyone but Michael. As it was, my smile twisted into some kind of unidentifiable grimace. Zach noticed. Of course he did.

Fuck, I didn't want to make it about myself. I would be damned before I would let the specter of the man who burned my wings ruin this, the trust my angel was putting in me by sharing even a glimpse of his troubles.

“You know what we should do next time? Some ice-cream and a movie bad enough we can throw popcorn at the screen.”

“Are we going to paint each other's nails as well?” Zach raised an amused brow.

“You bet. I'm totally bringing some nail polish next time. Now, what is the worst movie you have watched? I bet we can find something even worse to verbally eviscerate.”

Thankfully, I had managed to steer the conversation into safer waters and, as the evening progressed and our meals vanished, Zach started looking more comfortable, looser, not as gloomy as before. I had questions burning a hole in my tongue; about the dreaming and the loss of memory, which was an iceberg I had barely seen the top of, but I decided to prioritize Zach's wellbeing over my curiosity. If I made myself available and gave him a safe space to express himself I was hoping he would tell me more one day, as much as he himself knew at least, but it didn't need to be today. I enjoyed our light-hearted banter and unassuming companionship.

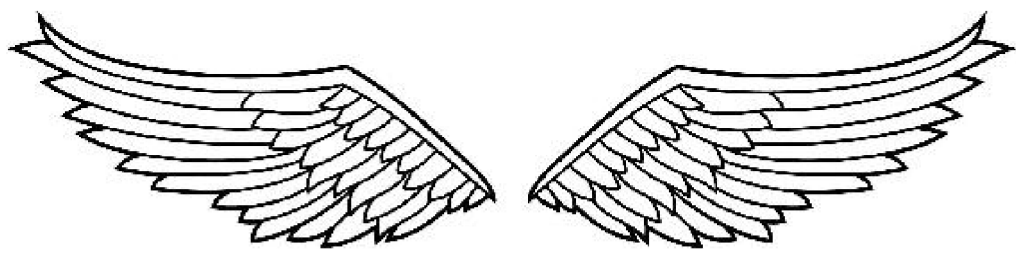
When we left the restaurant, after hours together, I walked Zach home. I fidgeted in front of the door to the building, unsure. Was his mood improved enough I should make another attempt at getting what I came here for? Should I even accept if Zach offered?

I didn't have to worry; the angel saw straight through me and cupped my cheek with a gentle hand.

“This was our first date. It would be improper to invite you in,” Zach teased. “But there’s one thing I can give you on a first date. Do you want it?” He whispered against my lips, nearly brushing against them.

What a question! Of course I wanted to kiss him!

So, I did. I pulled the smug bastard in and took his mouth in a ferocious kiss. I ignored how I had to stand on my tiptoes to do that and concentrated on the dirty slide of tongues. The way Zach seemed to pour all his frustrations of the day into the slick battle between us sent a shiver of want down my spine. I gave as good as I got but somehow when the angel pulled back and said, “Goodnight, Hellion.” before vanishing into the building, it still felt as if he won that battle.



Chapter 9

I thought learning why Zachariel had nightmares would be enough. But the revelation that he was a rare human made angel, an Ascended, turned out to only be the beginning of the mystery and I couldn't stop poking at it. It's not as though I dedicated all my time and resources to the problem, but I may have made a few promises of favors if my contacts provided me with information about the movements of a certain hyperactive, newly Ascended demon and his gold-horned ever-present minder. It took a few weeks but I finally got the awaited signal. The pair were at the market once more.

And this time I was prepared.

From my previous observations and what I overheard I knew one important thing: Auriolus was obsessed with fashion.

So, it was expected he would inevitably drift towards the portion of the market where textiles and clothes were on offer. I prepared by getting myself a crash course in textiles – not enough to truly have deep knowledge but enough to ask the right questions – and waited.

“Hmm, I'm not sure if this fabric is the right fit. Which one do you think would fit a white-and-blue ensemble with silver accents?” I lifted the two fabrics up to show them to the vendor, very aware of Auriolus' proximity.

“Why not buy two!” The seller said cheerfully. “Both of those are of highest quality!”

“Just buying double the fabric when you have a specific project in mind is the stupidest idea I have ever heard,” a voice

to my left piped up with indignation. Gotcha! “Sure, I may have done it myself, but thanks to that I can save you, poor soul, from repeating my mistakes. Tell me more about your project and I will help you choose something suitable.”

It was like dealing with an excitable puppy. The guy positively beamed at me.

“Hello, hi, I’m Hellion,” I smiled at him and gave him my hand to shake. Some demons didn’t like this human method of introduction and were set in the old ways, such as bowing in greeting, but as I knew I was dealing with an Ascended I was not surprised when he gladly shook my hand.

“The name’s Auriolus. Now, tell me about your project. Sorry to rush you but I may not have much time,” he sent a glance over his shoulder where Abaddon was talking with someone over at the next stall.

“That’s alright, I will be glad for any assistance you can give. So, you know how some angels go all white purity and peerless elegance in their wardrobe? I want to create something like that. For myself.”

“How scandalous!” Auriolus gasped, his eyes shining. “I already have so many ideas.”

He shared many of those with me but, as predicted, Abaddon pulled him away before we were really done. Which gave me an excuse to wave at Auriolus the next time we met, this time just passing each other on the street when he was accompanied by a demon with wonderful horns made of malachite. Slowly

but surely I inserted myself into Auriolus's life over the next weeks and got him more invested in my project.

The hurdle on my path came in the form of Abaddon pinning me to the wall of the back alley during the Reverly Day, a Hell-wide yearly celebration of all the sin. He intercepted me before I reached Auriolus and pulled me away before the younger demon could notice me.

“What do you want with my charge?” The powerful demon snarled and I won't lie, my knees trembled with instinctual fear. “If you do anything to hurt him...”

“Nothing! I swear I don't have any bad intentions!” I squeaked.

“Then why are you stalking him?”

“It's very simple, my lord: because I have no other way of contacting him. And after our first meeting I wanted to see him again. I enjoyed our conversation greatly.”

“If he wanted to keep in touch with you he would have let you know.”

“Would he? Or maybe he is worried you would react badly to him making friends. By, I don't know, pinning someone to the wall and threatening them.”

Abaddon pinned me against the wall a bit harder, my ribs protesting at the treatment, air whooshing from my lungs, before he dropped me with a scoff and let me slide down the wall.

“I don’t have anything against him making friends. What I cannot stand is people trying to get to me by using those around me. What is your true goal? What do you want from me?”

I looked him straight in the eye and said,

“Not everything is about you. I do not care about you or your connections.”

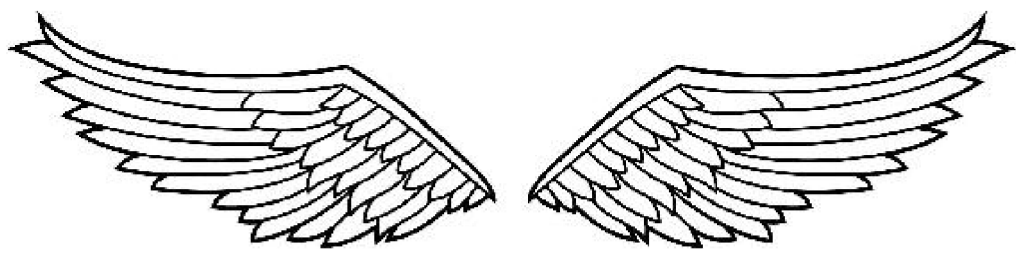
Golden eyes searched my face, brows drawn in disbelief but, for once, I was entirely honest. Abaddon had to see the sincerity on my face because he snorted and didn’t look so murderous anymore.

“So what, you just want to prattle for hours about the differences between turquoise and periwinkle?”

“Those two colors aren’t even remotely similar!”

“Yeah, I can see how you get along so well. Stop by the mansion next time. I’m getting tired of getting dragged to the marketplace so often.”

And with that permission I found myself not only finding more information but making a new friend.



Chapter 10

In the meantime, I had not forgotten about Zachariel. Far from it. I made good on my threat and showed up at his flat with a pick of bad movies, ice cream, and my favorite set of nail polish. Zach agreed to let me paint his nails crimson red if I let him pick a color for me. He picked gold and I have to say I was a little flattered at how well his choice suited me. The angel may have been crap at actually putting the polish on but it was the thought that counted.

We had a good time that day but Zach decided to be a sadist and play at the date rules some more so he only permitted a sloppy makeout that got me all hot and bothered.

“We have to wait until the third date before I can fuck you, darling,” I remembered Zack say.

And the surprising thing was... I was actually considering letting him put his dick in me. In my defense it was a very lovely dick, that made my mouth water each time I saw it, and I may have done a test run by imagining him fucking me when I was touching myself in the shower. It resulted in an explosive orgasm that left me weak at the knees. I was sure it would feel good – I knew the sensation could feel amazing but the thing was... it could simultaneously feel bad. For me it was like letting myself freefall high from the skies – a rush, an experience like no other, but it would be terrifying if I wasn't in total control.

Each time I bottomed in the past I felt as if a bit of that control I needed slipped away from me. Could it be better with someone I trusted? Did I trust Zachariel?

I was going to put that to the test tonight.

For once we had actually scheduled the date and decided to meet in a nearby park. If someone had told me a few months ago I would be spending my Saturday evening feeding ducks with an angel at my side I would have laughed at them. But that was exactly the new reality I found myself in. It was a pleasant evening but I could do without blushing like a maiden when Zachariel wound his arm with mine or pulled me against his side when we sat on a bench. I wasn't used to being so... sappy in the open. Flirting with everything that moved in a club was different from longingly staring into each other's eyes while in a bloody park.

“Would you like to go back to mine?”

“Yes!” I responded embarrassingly quickly but I was waiting for this for hours. It was time to move this date to a next stage.

“Race you?” Zachariel asked with a mischievous grin and soon we were racing through the sky, the mortals under us oblivious to the winged shapes above them.

I'm not even sure who won the race because I was too focused on how we tumbled into the building together and started devouring each other's lips in the elevator. The ride was entirely too quick but I made the momentous sacrifice and separated from the angel before I dragged him to his door. It opened so quickly I was convinced Zach cheated with his magic. Maybe he was as excited for this as I was. The chase through the skies seemed to bring the predator in him closer to the surface as he crowded me against the wall and took

possession of my neck; kissing, licking, biting, sucking his marks into my skin. I would bare my neck eagerly, voluntarily, seeing how good it was, but when his hand wound in my hair and pulled my head back with force, I fought against it just a little, just enough to make the push and pull of our interactions even sweeter, to make Zach feel as though he fought for and won the privilege to leave a purpling spot on my pulse point.

“My, my, look how hard you are,” Zach pushed his thigh between my legs making me moan. “You just couldn’t wait for this, hmm? Our third date? I saw the way you were looking at me in the park.” He leaned closer and whispered in my ear, punctuating each word. “Dirty. Little. Boy.”

For once I used a bit of my demonic power to push him away and turn us so that he was the one with his back to the wall. A painting rattled and fell to the floor but we both ignored it. Me settling between the angel’s legs on my knees was much more interesting.

“You are as hard as I am,” I said, mouthing over the front of his white pants, letting saliva soak into the fabric until it clung to the shape of his rising cock, my mouth sliding over the prominent bulge. “And after how much you teased me you better prove to be a fantastic lay when you fuck me.”

There. I said it. I committed to the idea that wouldn’t leave my mind. And looking at Zach’s wide smile at the declaration I had a feeling it was a good choice. I couldn’t wait to see, to feel, the fruits of my boldness.

“I’m going to blow your mind, baby,” Zach said with such assuredness it surely had to be the definition of the sin of pride. But, well, he hadn’t lied to me yet, had he? As the saying goes: ‘it’s not boasting if it’s true’. “Let’s go to the bedroom. I have plans. So many plans. I could keep you in my bed for a week and not run out of ideas.”

Zach led me to the other room, his steady hand on my back as my mind whirled trying to guess what he had planned.

“Why don’t you strip for me?”

The voice wasn’t a suggestion. It was a steel order coated in velvet of lust. My hand jerked automatically to the buttons of my shirt and I had to turn the motion into a more planned, deliberately seductive gesture.

“Aren’t you going to watch?” I said as Zach opened a cabinet instead of keeping his eyes on me. Rude!

“I assure you, you will have enough of my eyes on you before we are done. Now, strip. And turn around. Let’s give you a little surprise.”

I had an urge to be a brat and defy his order but... A surprise. He had me hooked with that one. So I turned around, a small pout on my face, and shed my layers of clothing. I had strewn the items all over the bedroom, throwing them carelessly wherever, as a small act of rebellion as I knew how tidy the angel liked to be. Like a fussy white cat who had to spend a good portion of the day grooming to keep looking pristine.

With my underwear kicked off into a corner of the room I stood there bare, waiting.

Footsteps sounded behind me.

“Are you mine to do as I wish with for tonight, Hellion?”

My mind blanked at the first words. Mine. His. But no, the angel wasn't really claiming me, it was only a game, a temporary fix.

“Do as you will,” I said, my hands twitching at my sides.

“Then I have something for you, Hellion. You can always stop me with just a flare of your power but I ask you to at least give it a try.”

Before I could ask what he meant there was a strip of black fabric in front of my eyes. I stepped back on reflex only to meet a hard chest behind me. The blindfold hovered in front of me as I was caged on both sides by Zach's arms.

“Easy,” the angel shushed me as if I was a spooked horse. “I think you will like it if you just give it a try. Look how soft it is.”

I lifted a cautious hand to touch the strip of fabric. It really was soft. Looked comfortable. Made for this kind of a play.

“I bought it just for you,” Zachariel confessed. “Your eyes are beautiful and I could stare into them all day but I think visual input gives you too many distractions. Too many things to watch out for. You don't need to be afraid, here with me. You can trust me and let go. Will you? Will you try?”

It... wouldn't hurt to try, right?

I dropped my hand and nodded, closing my eyes. Watching the fabric get closer would be too much. The first touch of it on my face was a foreign sensation I was hyper-aware of but Zach did a quick job of tying it behind my head and distracted me with touches to my body.

Like this, with my eyes tightly closed under the blindfold, every touch seemed magnified. As Zach's fingers traced the grooves of my spine I had to fight not to arch into them, to not betray how even such a small exploration was affecting me.

In no time at all I forgot about the blindfold.

My awareness stretched out as always, but now I was expecting to find pleasure. It was as though Zach's touches trained me to expect only good things and I could leave all the paranoid worry behind.

The angel's right hand affixed itself to my nipple, caressing it and making the little peak harden, while his other hand traced my lips.

"Open up for me," Zach said. Before I could decide to consciously follow the order the fingers on my sensitive nipple pinched and my mouth fell open in a gasp. My lover's fingers took the opportunity to quickly slip inside, press against my tongue, reach towards my throat until I was drooling around them. He fucked me with his digits like he would with his cock.

“Just a little taste of what you can have if you are a good boy,” the silky voice behind me whispered.

I felt a line of drool escape from the corner of my mouth as I obediently sucked, my tongue wrapping around the invading fingers, fellating them, showing the angel just what I could do. Zach gave a pleased hum from behind me and pressed his fingers down and forward, making me choke a little before he relented. The casual sign of dominance and the rumble I could feel in the chest plastered to my back made me hot all over. Either Zach was eager himself or he had to sense my eagerness because he took away his tormenting hands and led me to the bedroom.

When he put me on my hands and knees I nearly shook with anticipation of being stretched open by him but he surprised me once more by pulling my own hand towards my ass.

“Show me,” the heated voice demanded. “Show me how much you want this. Prepare yourself for me. Let me see it.”

Oh, God. Could I do this? My cheeks were burning like the flames of hellfire as the angel coated my fingers with lubricant. This was happening. Should I close my legs, or maybe spread them open? The two instincts warred inside me. I couldn't do it with Zachariel staring at me like that! It was embarrassing enough that my ass was up in the air as if I was a bitch in heat, ready to be mounted.

“You said... you said I could suck your cock if I was good,” I implored.

“Show me how you take in the first finger and I will let you distract yourself with my dick,” Zach laughed, seeing through me with worrying ease.

I buried my face in the bedcovers but reached to circle my puckered entrance. Usually, I didn't play much with softening it for the incoming stretching because I liked a bit of a burn but I couldn't bring myself to just shove the first finger in when I knew how closely Zach was watching. So, it took a few minutes of beating around the bush before I even started sliding inside. But when I finally did everything went smoothly and my hole opened to the slick intrusion easily, swallowing me in. The muscles tried to keep me inside as I started a slow push and pull rhythm and stifled any noises with the fabric under me.

“Gorgeous. You are gorgeous all over but this particular spot... I like your little flower.”

“What flower!” I spat angrily, humiliated. “Stop spewing nonsense and give me your dick!”

“My, my, what crude language. It's a good thing that I can easily put a stop to it.”

He shifted to the front and pressed his erection against my cheek, spreading precum over my furious blush there. This pose, with one hand still behind me, wasn't the greatest for fellatio but between the two of us we figured a position where I had enough support to put my mouth over the waiting erection. I didn't bother with bobbing my head – my sense of rhythm was focused on stretching myself open – so I just

treated Zach like a tasty lollipop. My tongue swirled, prodded, licked, my mouth giving a gentle suck from time to time. It was an entirely acceptable tactic as making the angel come wasn't the goal right now. In fact, I would be cross if he spent in my mouth. There was another place where I wanted him more.

I admit I got a bit lost in the dual sensation of being filled from both ends. Zach seemed to be enjoying himself as well but after some time he chuckled and asked breathlessly,

“Are you ready for me?”

I realized I was. For some time now. And I was just playing with the three fingers in my ass at that point. I scrambled to take them out. Zachariel's gentle hand landed on my face and pulled me into a thorough kiss that simultaneously calmed me and added to the fire inside me.

I didn't protest when Zach folded me into a new position. It was telling that I was getting used to him manhandling me. I found myself on my side, the angel's hot, athletic body behind me. Somehow I didn't expect this position but it had its uses; we weren't face-to-face, which saved me the chagrin of having my emotions out in the open but I couldn't smother myself into a pillow when hiding my face as well.

“You were so good for me the whole night,” Zachariel cooed in my ear. “Let me reward you, darling. Let me fuck you as hard as you deserve.”

“Yes,” I said through my dry throat.

“Yes, what?”

“Yes... please...”

Zachariel took a hold of my knee, spreading me as wide as he could, and pressed the head of his cock into me. I was still a bit tight, just how I liked it. Four fingers would be what I would have to use if I wanted to be completely comfortable, but I stuck to three and relished the slight burn of a fat cockhead forcing its way into my body.

Zach took his time, filling me slowly, leisurely, until I was panting for more. His body behind me was grounding; a solid, dependable shape in the midst of growing sensations which replaced my stolen sight.

“Ah...,” a soft moan escaped my lips.

“Be patient, darling. Just a little bit more and then...”

Zach’s cock sunk into me agonizingly slowly until it couldn’t go further. He pulled back, his breath fanning against the nape of my neck, and when he thrust back in...

“Fuck! Ah, a-ah, nnn!” I cried out as he went to town on my hole, slamming into it. I was holding on for dear life, my hands clutching the sheets, my toes curling where my leg was pulled up to give Zachariel access.

“Take it,” the angel hissed. “I knew you would take it so beautifully. It’s like you were made for it. Made for me. Are you? Tell me, Hellion.”

Speaking was currently beyond my capabilities. I could only moan and whimper and drool. Everything stopped and I gave a

groan of despair, my body arching back into my lover to continue the rhythm but he held me in place.

“Tell me that you were made for me.”

“I’m... I’m m-made for you,” I said. I would have said anything at this point to make him continue fucking me. It was so much better than any other time I let myself have this. As good as I expected it to be and more.

His cock was the closest to a taste of heaven I had in centuries.

I could feel Zachariel’s lips pressed against my neck stretch into a pleased smile. It was all the warning I had before he hammered into me like a beast, continuing where he left off and doing his damndest to turn me into nothing but a bundle of nerves that could only register the bliss he gave me. Each push filled me to the brim, until I had no more space inside, and then Zachariel pushed harder, somehow finding a way to possess me even further. I felt as if I was going to break.

In a good way.

Was there a good way to break? Could I shake apart in his arms? And maybe later... he could piece me back together?

After all, I was made for him.

I felt some last barrier inside of me fall as Zachariel continued his mission of wringing desperate sounds from me. I mewled as he gave a particularly hard push, settling in to the hilt and grinding his hips in a filthy circle. My legs shook and I no longer had the wherewithal to hold my leg up, keeping me

spread was entirely in Zach's hands now. Everything was in his hands. I could just enjoy it, give myself over to the lust and basic, animal instincts.

I chased after completion, my cock leaking a steady string of precum onto the bed, so hard it hurt.

“Can you come like this? Just from me fucking you? Try for me Hellion, there's a good boy.”

It was the easiest thing in the world to do.

The fire inside me blazed into a true inferno until the room was filled with my dirty moans, interspersed with pleas.

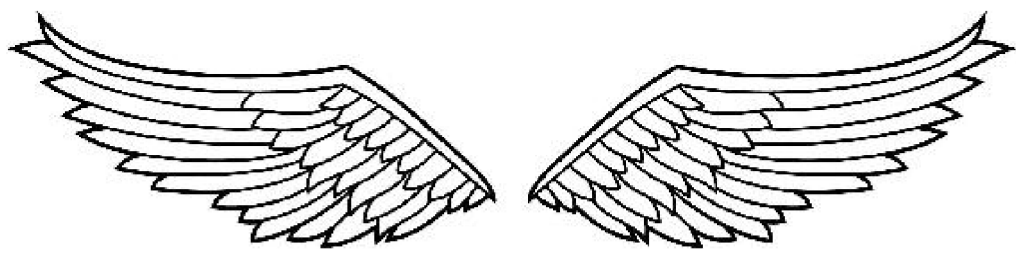
“More... yes... aaa... ah!”

“Hellion,” Zachariel said my name like a benediction, like a blessing and permission for my spine to bow, for my body to seize with the best orgasm I had ever experienced.

It was too much; it was just enough.

When hot cum seared my insides I felt as though I was being given a tidbit of angelic grace. The way Zachariel moaned, his deep voice shaking, meant everything to me. For a few minutes, soaring high, together, I felt as if we were one.

And even when we crashed back to Earth, in the end I was caught in an embrace of white wings.



Chapter 11

It took months of spending more time in Hell than I wanted (and maybe having less time for Zachariel made me a bit grumpy) but my regular meetings with Auriolus started bearing fruit. Slowly, haltingly, his stream-of-consciousness babbling turned into deeper words with more meaning. Hushed whispers exchanged in those rare moments when Abaddon wasn't around. The Ascended demon confided in me he had experienced sleeping difficulties but the trouble resolved itself as he took in more power and his connection to the human dreamscape was fully cut.

“I miss it sometimes, you know?” Auriolus said to me while he sketched another idea for outrageous costumes. “Dreams aren't all bad. Sometimes they are nice, or crazy, or baffling. When I was human I took quite a lot of inspiration from them. They were fun.”

“I can't say I relate. I have never dreamed in my life,” I said a bit wistfully. “But doesn't the bad outweigh the good? Even if you have one nightmare among otherwise pleasant dreams, doesn't it spoil everything?”

“Pshh! It's not like I had those that often. The first few weeks as Ascended were intense but after that it wasn't anything special.”

“Then... what does it mean if someone has bad dreams constantly? To the point they don't want to fall asleep because they will wake up screaming?”

“That, my dude, means someone is fucked up. Mentally, physically, or whatever other way there is. If you have

nightmares every night something is wrong.”

It’s not like I didn’t know that Zachariel’s situation wasn’t all roses, but Auriolus putting it so blatantly made me... worried.

“Have you ever met other demons who had problems with dreaming?” I asked.

“Oh, yeah, Abaddon introduced me to some other Ascended. I guess they are all older than me so they don’t have this problem anymore but they obviously knew what I was talking about.”

“You know other Ascended?” I blinked in surprise. It made sense, but the Ascended were the unicorns of both Hell and Heaven. I couldn’t quite wrap my mind around multiple Ascended in the same place at once. “Did all of you... remember your past life? Was there someone who didn’t?”

“Nah, we all remember it in a crystal-clear technicolor detail. I mean, the memory fades with time so the oldest Ascenders remember the bare facts about the first few decades of their life as they lived centuries past that, but after Ascending you can recall what happened. Including your death,” Auriolus shuddered. “I wish I could have skipped remembering that.”

“How do you get from... that... to becoming a demon?”

“I, uh, don’t know if I should be telling you this?” I gave him a flat stare. “Fair enough, I suppose I already told you a lot of things I shouldn’t. What’s one more. You die. An angel and a demon appear in front of you. You get wings. Voila!”

“Just like that?”

“Yup! I’m sure it’s complicated and all but for me it was a whirlwind of dying, suddenly being alive again, and seeing supernatural creatures in front of me, growing black wings, and being whisked away to Hell.”

“Was it Abaddon? The first demon you had met?”

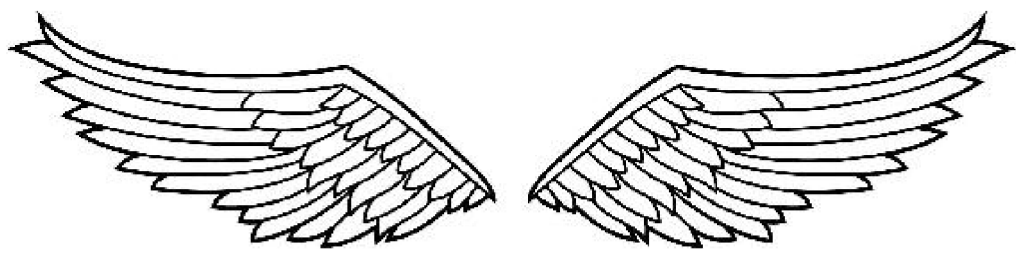
“No.”

The flat, curt response was uncharacteristic enough I decided to leave the matter alone and steer the conversation to different waters where my friend’s face didn’t have to darken with incoming storm clouds.

I had a lot to think about. One thing in particular was a game changer; both an angel and a demon witnessed the Ascendence. So, even if I had no way of reaching the angel who took Zachariel into Heaven and possibly witnessed his past or at least his death, maybe I could find the demon. Unfortunately, the information about Ascenders was guarded jealously and with my current low status I didn’t have a chance in hell of finding out any specifics.

I left this problem on the back burner, hoping an opportunity to find more would present itself. In the meantime, I had something I could only hope would bring Zachariel pleasant dreams. Or at least was good enough to make him feel as if he was dreaming while in the waking world.

My special outfit was ready.



Chapter 12

I heard a human refer to my walk when I was very focused on my prey as a ‘murder strut’. Apparently it was as intimidating as it was hot. I couldn’t help doing it now, the heels of my polished boots clicking against the floor as I prowled forward, towards the angel who just opened the door to his flat to find me inside.

Zach’s eyes widened as he took me in. He traced the crisp lines of the white suit with his gaze, committing the glints of silver and pale blue accents into his memory. It was as far a cry from my usual black-and-red attire as possible. In fact, my clothes matched what the angel usually wore. Zachariel’s tailor was good but mine was even better; not everyone could have an Ascended demon fashionado in their pocket as I did. As such, I preened shamelessly as my lover stepped towards me, hunger in his gaze. I felt how much he wanted to ruin the pure whiteness of my ensemble. I blinked innocently at him, assuming the demeanor of a poor, naïve, little lamb.

“Do you like it?” I asked demurely, my hands fumbling nervously with a silver cuff in the shape of wings.

“Hellion, you are a vision. Have you been sent from Hell to tempt me? If so, it’s working. I’m very much tempted to take you over my knee and spank you until you cry.”

“You can’t be so rough with me.” I let my lower lip tremble. “I couldn’t take it... I have never....”

I let Zach’s imagination fill in the line for this scenario and when I saw his eyes flare with unbridled lust and the desire to

mar me, spoil me, take the pretend innocence away, I knew I had him.

Hook. Line. Sinker.

“Don’t worry, precious, I will be gentle with you.”

He forgot to mention that gentleness could be crueler than the harshest punishment when wielded with such deep intent.

After opening the layers of my clothes just enough to give access but still give an opportunity to admire the enchantingly innocent ensemble, Zachariel touched me languidly, as if I was going to break, for hours. When I whimpered, unable to take it anymore, and reached for my cock, Zach grasped my hands. He kissed my palms like a knight professing his devotion to a princess, and tied them together so that I could do nothing but take it. I could squirm all I wanted but the gentle touches continued, driving me mad.

“Uh... nnn...” I bit my lip as he circled my nipples again. A bare caress of the tips of his fingers, a kiss of his tongue against the pebbled surface... one, then another, again, and again.

At first I thought he wanted to see what I had shown him before; that my body could come without my cock being touched. And, even if this was a magnitude harder without my body being deeply fucked by his cock, I thought I could do it. I could fall into bliss just from this. But when I was on the brink of doing just that Zachariel curled his fingers at the base of my cock and stopped my orgasm in its tracks.

I panted, poised on the edge, before the wave of heat receded and I collapsed onto the bed, shaking.

“Please...” The word flew from my mouth more easily than normal. I was a pure, innocent lamb after all. Of course, this virgin fantasy would beg without even knowing what they were begging for. “I want...” I gasped out, pulling my tied hands down to cover my face shyly, hiding the blush streaking my cheeks red.

“What do you want, baby? I will give you anything you want. You just have to ask for it.”

“I want to feel good. Please, make me feel good,” I begged.

“But doesn’t this feel good?” my bastard of a lover asked, trailing his hands over my heaving sides. “It does. I can see it in how you writhe under me. How you push into my touch.”

“No... ah... yes... Give me more. I want more.”

“Like this?” Zachariel asked and cupped my balls.

I jerked off the bed so hard I nearly levitated. The firm caress was enough to get my head spinning and a few minutes later I was rearing to go once more. Just a little... just a little more...

I sobbed as Zachariel’s fingers closed around the base of my cock once more. My knees drew up so that I could kick him with my feet in a silent protest.

“Hush, baby. I’m doing it for you. Just wait a while longer and you will see how good it feels when you don’t take the easy way out. How it all adds up in the end. I will make sure

you will feel each one of your ruined orgasms. You will never forget this, I promise you.”

The promise sounded more like a threat and I let my head fall back in defeat. I just had to survive until the angel fulfilled his dastardly plan.

“There we go,” Zachariel cooed, pleased with my submission.

This time he granted me a hand on my cock. It was the sweetest torture. After hours of him playing with me I was so sensitive I had to toss my head back and forth on the pillow as he slid his fingers over my glans and dipped a nail into my slit. When he brought me to the highest point of the pleasure I knew I was entirely at his mercy. Was he going to grant me freedom this time?

“Zachariel.... Please... Zach... ah. Ah! Please!” I begged with a wrecked voice.

“Come,” he said and I was gone.

I threw my head back with a soundless gasp, my voice stuttering after the initial cry of release. I was half aware of the tears leaking down my face as a tsunami of bliss completely ruined me, changing the landscape of my pleasure forever.

Zachariel licked the tears off my face.

When I came a bit back to myself – my head was still in the clouds but some basic reasoning returned to me – I realized the blindfold was gone, my lover’s deft fingers taking it away while I was still rebooting. I blinked up at Zachariel and

looked at his pants. He did not come, even though he looked painfully hard. The angel focused all of the attention on me and he looked satisfied with the outcome, like his pleasure was only a secondary, trivial matter. But I wanted him to find his fulfillment as well.

Knowing I was a tempting sight I capitalized on that. My hands ran through the spread on my stomach, spreading the white streaks all over my chest.

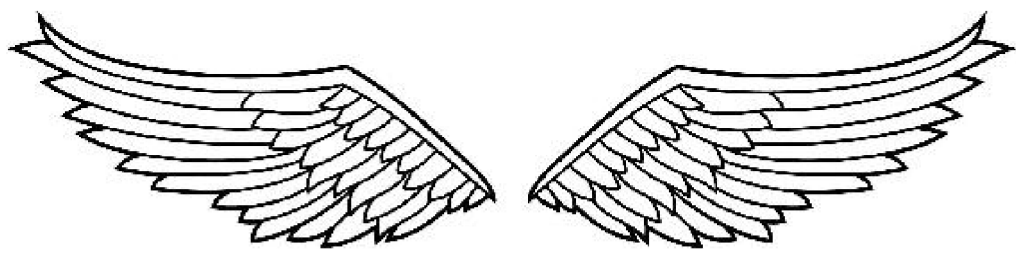
“So good. I want to give it to you too. Will you come on me Zachariel? Mark me with your cum?”

The angel groaned. I knew he wouldn't be able to refuse such a heartfelt invitation. I arched my spine as Zachariel took a position over me, his legs spread over my body, his hand flying over his big, red cock.

“B-beautiful,” the angel panted out as streaks of white painted my stomach, my nipples, even my face. “Mine. Mine.”

“Yours,” I said.

I wondered if I would be allowed to say ‘mine’ back one day.



Chapter 13

That night, after we cleaned ourselves and went to bed, I had enough presence of mind to grab Zach's hand, offering support and making sure he wouldn't run away as I said:

“You don't have to stay up all night, you know. I'm already aware of the nightmares so even if you wake me up... It's not a big deal, I don't mind. I would rather be woken up than to know you are neglecting yourself.”

“I... don't need to sleep,” the stubborn angel replied.

“Maybe when you are in Heaven. But you know as well as I do that on Earth it's a good way to keep your power from evaporating. Sure, you could just visit the higher plane more... but I always find you here. Are you going there at all?”

Zachariel couldn't hide a wince. That was as good as no.

“I stayed there for more than two years after Ascending...” he told me reluctantly. “It was hard to get used to a completely new place and new people around me without any memories. For the longest time all I could think about was why I had become an angel. It's just... such a fundamental question. Was I helping people in need? Maybe I invented a new medicine? Could I be a leader who had an impact on his community and inspired them to do better? Or was I just an everyday good man? Nothing special but consistent enough in my good deeds to gain recognition? I feel I need answers to those questions...”

“You... don’t think you deserve to be an angel,” I realized after searching his expression.

“I know only the judgment of other people. As long as I can’t make my own judgment even God’s opinion is not something I can blindly trust.”

I bit my lip, knowing this conversation was going to be a difficult territory.

“Maybe... being an angel or a demon is not about deserving,” I said.

“How is the choice made then?” Zach asked, frustration evident in his voice.

“I think it’s more about who fits a certain mold... And once you stop fitting the perfect image of how an angel is supposed to be and break the mold...”

“Is that what happened to you?” Zachariel asked softly, the words exchanged between us in the dark an intimate connection.

“I didn’t want to fall. But I was too curious for my own good. I started asking questions. Questions nobody wanted to hear and least of all answer.”

“What questions?”

“No,” my voice was strong in its vehemence. “No. Zachariel, don’t even joke about this. You have an Archangel on your tail. Do you even realize how easy it would be for him to damn you for all eternity if you ask even one question he

doesn't like? Promise me you will be careful. Don't chase after the answers like I did. Please, be careful."

"I will try to be, darling. But I feel adrift in limbo and I don't know for how long I can take it without doing something."

"Then... let *me* do something. I have already gathered a bit of information in Hell. Did you know that each Ascendence is witnessed by an angel and a demon?" Zach shook his head. "I don't have much of a chance of reaching that specific angel but I hope I can track the demon somehow. It could be a key to knowing your past. Even if you don't recover your memories, a second-hand account of the person you had been is going to be better than what you have now, right?"

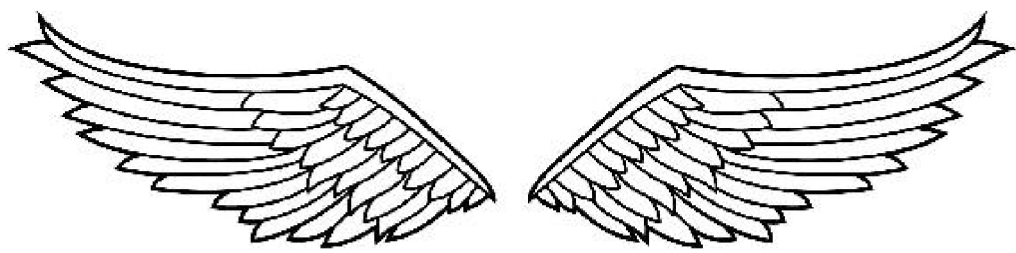
"Hellion... you would really do this for me?"

"I am a demon, don't think I'm doing it for you," I huffed, embarrassed. "I'm doing it for myself. I want to know everything about you. I will rip you apart with my claws until you can't hide anything from me. Your past, your future... I want it all."

Why was the angel staring at me as if I had just confessed my love?

"Let's go to sleep," Zach said after giving me a sweet, short kiss on the lips. He closed his eyes, tangling his limbs with mine, pulling me closer.

Oh, he was really going to stay with me tonight. So close I could hear his heartbeat as I laid my head on his chest and let myself fall into a dreamless sleep.



Chapter 14

I was getting ready to order some pizza and chill on my couch with a tv show after tirelessly tempting humans all day (that hen party turned into sin extravaganza!) when I heard knocking on my door. Was it my neighbor looking for her cat again? I opened the door, ready to offer to buy the granny new locks because I swear that cat learned how to open the front door...

“Hi, Hellion.”

I stared at Zachariel. Here. In my home. He came to me.

I ignored the part where he had to stalk me at least a little bit to know where to go, as I lived on the other side of the town, and let my stomach fill with butterflies.

“Can I come in?”

“Ah, yes!” I jerked the door open inviting him in, flushing at how stupid I had to look just standing there and gaping. “Why did you come? Shit, no, that’s not what I mean. It’s good that you are here! You just never visited before... Wait, is this a booty call?”

Zach’s eyes crinkled with silent laughter as he saw how I perked up at the thought, a perfect picture of a dog waving its tail.

“Maybe,” the angel offered. “I wouldn’t mind if it turned into that. But I just... wanted to see you.”

I would be lying if I said that didn’t make me stand straighter, puff out my chest a little bit. He wanted to see me! Hah, of course, who wouldn’t enjoy the presence of such a

magnificent specimen, the creme of the crop, the star among demons—

Suddenly I was filled with a bout of confidence that made me ask:

“You know, that first time you promised me I could play with your wings. Will you let me do it now? Maybe I could... groom them?”

It was a daring request, a very intimate thing, and from the widening of his eyes Zach knew that. And yet, he tilted his head at me as if I was an enigma containing multitudes, a secret he wanted to crack, and murmured softly:

“Alright.”

“Great!” I pretended my voice didn’t get a little higher than it should. “Come to the bedroom. My bed is Alaskan King size – the biggest I could find. Perfect to spread your wings out. You will love it.”

By the time we reached the bedroom Zachariel had already lost his shoes, jacket, vest and was in the process of removing his shirt. I dipped into the ensuite bathroom to grab the wing oils and brushes and returned to the angel laid on his stomach, only the white trousers still clinging to his body, his wings half tucked in around him.

“Do you even know how to care for your wings, baby angel? Has anyone done this to you before?” I asked curiously, teasing just a little.

“Yes. Gabriel... he showed me how to do it.”

Jealousy burned in me like a meteor falling from the skies. I vowed to make this experience magnitudes better than what that blasted Archangel had to offer. Zach didn't need his grabby paws if he had me.

I put my hands in the middle of Zachariel's back, where the base of his wings was located, and pulled them slowly outward, familiarizing myself with the shape under me. Like this I couldn't reach the ends because of the impressive wingspan, but it was the best practice to work from the base outwards. I straightened and smoothed the overall contour and the angel sighed softly when I ran my hands through the mess of white. I admit I stayed at this phase a bit longer than necessary, enjoying the feeling of how pliant Zachariel was under my fingers. before I reluctantly pulled back to use the oil. I switched between using a special grooming tool – a beak-like, two pronged comb – and my fingers to spread the oil. It took a lot of work to make sure every surface I could reach was covered and soon I found myself in a semi-meditative state, the repetitive motions and the intimate calm of the ritual lulling me into contentedness similar to what I experienced when I went under during the play sessions with Zach and fell into subspace. Soon, I had to move and kneel by the bed to reach every part of the mile-long wings. I was aware of Zach's half-lidded eyes watching me, tracing my movements lazily.

I found a hidden part of myself, inner peace, in an angel giving me silent appreciation as I attended to him on my knees.

Let me serve you, I thought as I placed a kiss on the tip of his magnificent primary feather.

“Turn around,” I said in a hushed tone when I was done with top feathers. Zach complied slowly, giving my cheek a brief caress before he fell back onto the bed, practically melting into it.

The underside required ever more care and patience, as this was where the smaller feathers, including the soft down feathers, were located. I used my hands and tools to oil and straighten each feather, taking care to ensure barbs were properly interlocked. From this close, the whiteness of the wings was practically blinding and I could feel a subtle, almost imperceptible, presence of angelic grace in them. The wings were perfect... except for one spot. I frowned at a place where it looked as though Zachariel had lost a couple of feathers. The spot didn't look as it would if the loss was fresh, but I didn't see any new feathers growing in either. Was Zach preventing them from growing for some reason? A quick look up showed me the angel with closed eyes, practically purring under my attention. I wasn't going to bother him with inane questions now, so I just shrugged to myself and continued my task.

I was so focused it caught me by surprise when I discovered Zachariel was hard. I looked at the angel's face as I ran my hand firmly over a part of the wings I knew was particularly sensitive and saw how he bit his lip to prevent a moan from escaping.

Encouraged, I moved to place myself between my lover's legs.

"Mmm, you don't have to—" the angel protested feebly as I nuzzled the prominent bulge in his pants.

"Let me take care of you," I said, and Zachariel capitulated quickly, his lips opening in a shuddering gasp as I freed his cock from its confines.

The sight of the wings shuddering as I took his erection in my mouth was incredibly rewarding. I set a slow, thoroughly mind-blowing rhythm, and used the fact I had two hands free to my advantage by running my fingers through the feathers I could reach, doubling the stimulation until Zachariel was tossing his head on the bed, moans dripping from his mouth. The sounds were like a symphony created by a true maestro and I eagerly awaited the upcoming crescendo. Fingers tangled in my hair, just holding rather than directing my head, as I sucked his hard cock, my cheeks hollowing, and looked up to meet Zach's eyes.

It was enough. Zachariel's spine bowed and his wings spread in a glorious display of losing control. The impressive wingspan took over the whole room as Zach sank into the bed, his cry of pleasure reverberating as I drank everything he had to offer. His salty cum settled in my stomach like a prize.

I sat back on my hunches, licking my lips, and taking in the effect of my efforts with pride. Zach's chest was rising up and down as his breathing slowly settled. His pale countenance was made even more striking by the flush of color which

spread from his cheeks to his chest. I could not help but admire it. He looked well fucked and like he could fall asleep in a second. When he tried to open his eyes I covered them with my hand.

“Shush. Just go to sleep. There’s nothing to worry about. Sleep.”

I felt a brush of his eyelashes under my hand as he blinked slowly, but then he closed his eyes for good, trusting me. He was asleep a few moments after.

I cleaned myself up, tucked the angel under a duvet, and curled up under one of his wings in my thankfully big bed.



The next day Zachariel looked sheepish.

“I’m sorry,” he said, and I blinked blearily at him from where I was making breakfast on autopilot.

“For what?”

“I didn’t act like much of a dom yesterday. I should be the one taking care of—”

“Hey, you know you don’t have to always play a role for me, right? I enjoyed myself yesterday and if you did too...” I left the space open and Zachariel picked it up.

“Yes, I did. And I didn’t even have any nightmares last night. Thank you.”

This amount of palpable sincerity made me frustrated in the light of the day, so I waved him off.

“Don’t mention it. Besides, don’t thank me yet. Your posh tastes are in for an ordeal.”

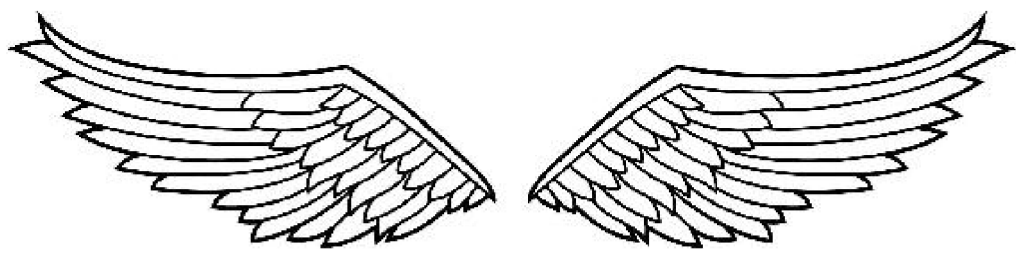
I presented the assortment of sandwiches I prepared for us and Zachariel’s eyebrows rose sky high.

“Did you make those combinations specifically to baffle me?”

“Maybe. Or maybe there’s almost nothing in the fridge.”

“Both. I bet it’s both.”

I laughed and kissed him on the lips.



Chapter 15

The moment I stepped into the playroom of the Steel Velvet club I was on edge. I came here in search of a particular demon and I was getting frustrated with my failures. It wasn't easy to find someone when you only had a few characteristics to go with.

A man, red hair, a broken left horn.

I wouldn't even have that much to go on if not for Zachariel's nightmare when I visited the previous week. We discovered my presence helped only sometimes so when he woke up gasping, his eyes wide and scared, and jolted me awake, I was ready to comfort him, but he held out a hand and muttered between his too-fast breaths about a figure he saw, a demon with a broken horn. He could remember only a few impressions before the dream vanished away like smoke.

"It seemed so vivid, Hellion," Zachariel confessed to me. "And I wonder... I feel it wasn't just a dream, but a fragment of my lost memory. What if this demon I glimpsed was the one present for my Ascendence?"

I followed the uncertain trail, but I was losing hope. After investigating several demons who matched the description and not finding any connection, it felt a bit like shooting fish in a barrel. Granted, there weren't that many fish – molding one's body to have physical scars like a broken horn wasn't exactly common among demons and the red hair narrowed the pool of male-presenting candidates a bit more – but that didn't mean I could identify or have access to the exact person I needed.

My eyes found my current mark. He wore his broken horn with pride, a string of glittering jewels bringing attention to it. As I watched the demon flirt his way through the crowd, I thought he seemed confident, even cocky. Quietly asking around proved my suspicion that he was a regular here, in the Steel Velvet, an exclusive angel and demon BDSM club.

“If you are just starting, better set your sights on someone else,” the bartender warned me. “That one likes to play hard.”

It occurred to me that seducing the guy would be the simplest way to get close, especially when it seemed he wasn't in a committed relationship and was down to fuck at a drop of a hat, but something in me recoiled at this thought. Not like me and Zachariel were exclusive... I never made any promises! But sometimes I thought I would like it if we were. So, instead of seducing, I tried to make myself a part of the community there, coming to Steel Velvet several days in a row. I wore a blue bracelet which signaled I was a switch, even if marking myself as a sub would be more truthful, and watched various presentations, hung out with the patrons, and even played a rope bunny when two doms had a heated conversation about a proper way to tie a particular knot.

And I watched the redhead.

His name was Leonius. We orbited each other in the club's space and I was gearing myself towards actually approaching him when he came to me first.

“Hello, beautiful,” the demon cornered me against one of the walls of the club.

“Hi,” I said gamely, tilting my head up to look into his green eyes.

“I got bored with waiting for you to come to me. Tsk, tsk, what a bad puppy, making me chase him.”

Shit, he had noticed I was watching him. No matter, I could spin it to my advantage.

“Ah, I was a bit intimidated. After all, everyone seems to think you are more of an... advanced level.” I gave him a small grin.

“Hmm, is that so?” He leaned forward, his lips nearly brushing my ear. “Or are you spying on me because you think I have something to do with your angel friend?”

I stiffened, trapped between his arms on each side of me, my heart beating wildly.

“Do you?”

This bastard saw me watching and decided to spy on me in return. If he got as far as Zachariel, he probably knew at least about my search for demons similar to him, so I didn’t pretend to not know what he was talking about.

“Yes,” the demon answered simply, to my surprise. “I know your Zachariel. Do you want to know how? Follow me then.”

As soon as the doors to a private room closed behind us I blurted out:

“How do you know him?”

The blasted demon smiled so wide it showed his fangs and I got frustrated. I was exposing too much with my behavior, but I couldn't help it. This was important.

“If you are looking for some kind of payment for the info—”

“Oh no, I will tell you for free.” I squinted suspiciously at Leonius. This seemed like a trap. But he really started talking. “Your angel was a human once. But you already knew that, hmm? Such a sophisticated taste, going for an Ascended. Hmm, I always wanted to break one in. Ah, no matter, I'm sure I will have a chance one day. So, there I was with my angel counterpart, observing this unassuming human, with both of us trying to push him to our respective side, and I was so bored I made a little bet over making a demon out of him. Unfortunately, I lost. Or did I? Nothing I threw at him when he was alive seemed to work to snap him out of his goody-two-shoes personality, but when he died... Oh, *when he died.*” The way Leonius smiled like a shark sent shivers down my spine. “He grew his pretty white wings. And then they *burned.*”

“I— no! I saw his white wings. Whatever you are trying to imply—”

“I was there, puppy. I saw. Your precious Zachariel overheard me talking about the bet and came to the correct conclusion that to us it was all a game. He didn't take it well. Oh, the look on Tiraël's face when he realized his ticket to a better position was falling in front of his eyes. When he saw the burning feathers—”

“No...” I didn’t want to believe it, but my mind conjured a memory of a path of missing feathers I discovered when I preened Zachariel’s wings.

“Yes, your angel made up his mind to spit in the face of God. To revoke his choice to make him a celestial being. But Tiraël decided to do something even more unforgivable. He impressed me really, I have to say. I wouldn’t have expected something like that even from a demon...”

“What did he DO?” I shouted, unable to take this cruel meandering anymore.

“To fall, you need to be pushed, to be dragged down by one of the Archangels, or you need to decide to fall yourself, to *choose* it. So, he made sure Zachariel wouldn’t remember why he wanted to fall.”

“He scrambled his brain,” I said numbly. “He erased his memories. I’m going to— I’m going to kill him. He will beg for mercy—”

With my hands shaking I turned towards the exit, but a strong arm held me back.

“What do you think will happen if you make a scene and everyone learns about this?” Leonius asked.

I stopped dead in my tracks, mind whirling. I wouldn’t keep it from Zachariel but if anyone else learned about this... about an angel who was a demon, about a demon who was an angel, about a horrifying taboo being committed during an Ascendence... Zach may be forced to fall even if he no longer

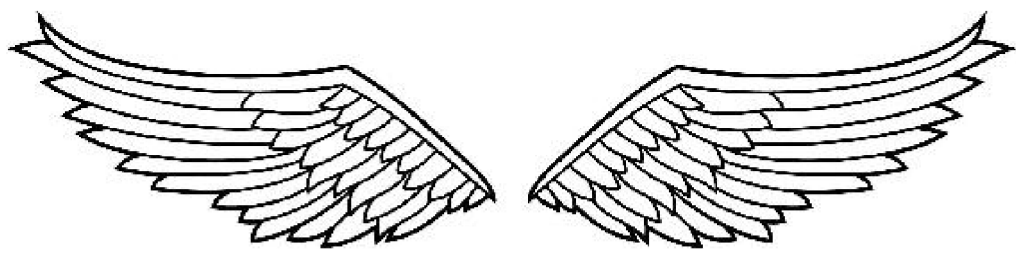
wanted to. And this whole situation went beyond my lover – such a crime committed against someone who was supposed to become a demon may have great consequences. The relationship between Heaven and Hell was fragile enough and there were factions on both sides looking for any excuse to start a war.

I closed my eyes and drove a fist into the wood of the door.

“Do you understand now? You can’t let anyone know.” Leonius’ hand landed on my shoulder and I thought it was a gesture of commiseration.

Then his claws dug in.

“Now, let’s discuss how you are going to buy my silence.”



Chapter 16

I was about half an hour early to our date at Zach's but I couldn't wait anymore. I felt like waiting even this long after my awful evening last night had broken all my barriers.

"Hellion, come, come, I made us an almond pie with a cherry glaze— Darling? What's wrong?" Zach opened his arms and I took the step into them, burying my face in his neck.

I stepped back a moment later, embarrassed by my neediness. When it came to it, I couldn't just ask for what I wanted. I needed to at least push the mood in the right direction if I wanted to make the odds more in my favor, so I cupped Zachariel's face and pulled him in for a kiss.

"I just missed you," I said and put all my heart into seducing the angel until we were making out like teenagers on the couch. Once eager lips were kissing down my neck, I found it in myself to ask. "Could you... could you mark me?"

A pleased rumble vibrated in Zach's throat before he sucked a prominent hickey into my skin.

"Like this, darling? I can mark you all over," he declared.

"I was thinking..." Well, I was *trying* to think as the angel made it very difficult with his busy lips and teeth. "...about something more... permanent?"

It sounded more like a question than a statement, and I had to swallow hard as Zach pulled back and pierced me with a heated stare.

"What do you have in mind, Hellion?"

“Ah, something that w-would remind me of you,” I said, squirming under his attention.

“You want to wear my claim.”

I had to close my eyes at being seen through so easily. Zachariel’s hand trailed up my neck, fingers closing around the pale column just a little.

“A pretty collar would do, hmm? But I find myself partial to a different idea... You can take the collar off and pretend either for yourself or others that you don’t have an owner. And I want you to be mine always, all the time, without limits.” My eyes snapped open at the declaration, and the fire I saw in Zachariel’s gaze was more fitting for a possessive demon than an angel. This was a big leap... but was it really? I had already met the edges of this jealous, covetous, darkly intense creature and I had cut myself open against them willingly.

“Yes,” I said.

“You don’t even know what I want yet.”

“Tell me, show me.”

A bit of angelic power flickered over his fingertips, the blue emanation glowing softly, soothingly. But I knew better than to touch it. Angelic power burned when you were a fallen angel like me.

“I want to trace my power onto you. Burn a tattoo of grace into your skin. It will hurt. It will hurt a lot, and you won’t be able to ever get rid of it. I understand if you don’t—”

I caught his hand leaving my neck and pressed it back into place.

“Yes,” I said quieter than before, but no less sure. “I want it. I want you to mark me with your grace. Make me truly yours.”

And just like Zachariel said, it hurt. It was a visceral pain, akin to what I imagine a human being tattooed felt, but the most difficult part for me was keeping still and ensuring my demonic power wouldn't fight against the invasion.

“Would it help if I bound you?” the angel offered.

That's how I found myself tied with red rope, the constraints helping me keep my hands from intervening and my body tethered. Zach traced a shining layer of power over my skin first, laying out a pattern of beautiful swirls over my shoulders, and I barely felt the sting. But after that, when the angel started sinking his power into me... I gritted my teeth and felt sweat bead on my brow after the minutes, and later hours, passed. A demon's body naturally rejected angelic power and always tried to heal back to the currently preferred shape, so I had to let the angel's grace in and hold back my healing. It was a slow process, making sure the magical tattoo took. I didn't even know how the angel was doing this, but somehow it worked.

“You are doing so well. Just a little more. Such a good boy,” Zachariel whispered soothing nonsense to me, his forehead against mine in a gesture that felt even more intimate than a kiss on the lips.

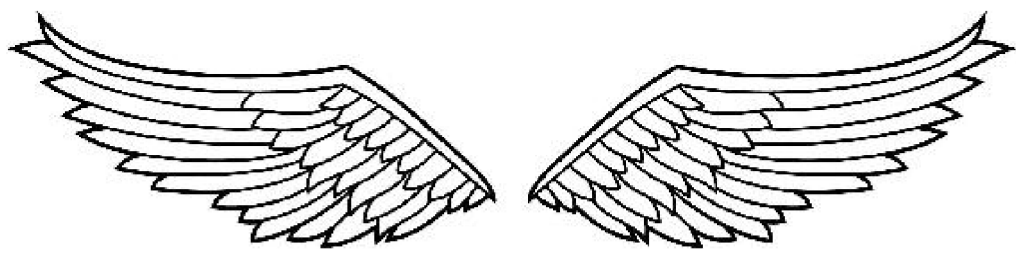
I drifted, suspended between the pain and the sheer gratification of being claimed. With every pass of angelic power Zachariel and I were coming closer, becoming one, ensuring nothing could tear us apart.

It felt like it took days, certainly more time than a human would spend in a tattooing session. When it was all done, I was left with red lines on my skin that were starting to heal over. But the grace under my skin... it stayed there, waiting. I could feel it buzzing faintly if I concentrated. It was like when you smelled ozone and knew a storm was coming. No matter where I was, I could always find this connection to my lover inside me.

It felt like a gift I didn't deserve.

I will tell him, I promised myself, after my payment.

I couldn't let him stop me from ensuring his safety.



Chapter 17

The disparity between angels and demons wasn't actually that big. Demons tended to be more raw, more intense, more honest with the needs of their bodies and souls, not given to unnecessary self-limitations as angels preached. But there were extremes on both sides, and, while Hell tried to curb its denizens without morals with rules, it didn't always work. The act of inflicting eternal torment upon human souls proved to be a source of satisfaction for some, but for others it was simply an occupation that lacked any enjoyment. It was too easy. Too boring.

It's more fun for people like Leonius to corner new prey, I thought as I kneeled next to him in the public space of the Steel Velvet club.

My back was ramrod straight and my hands were clenched in fists where Leonius bound them behind my back. This humiliation, a show of how much power he had over me, was just a prelude to the real payment for him keeping his mouth shut. He had made that clear when he had me in his private room at the beginning of the night.

“Strip,” he ordered then, and I had to grit my teeth and follow his order. After all, I agreed to be his slave for tonight. Anything to keep Zachariel safe. “I’m going to enjoy whipping that beautiful body. I find demons take it much better than mortals... Humans break too easily. But you... oh, I just know we will have fun for *hours*.”

His fingers glided over my naked body, and I had to suppress a shiver of revulsion. I wanted his paws off me.

As if the Heavens answered my prayer his hand left me as he gave a yelp of surprised pain.

“What is this? A brand?” He reached for the faint red lines on my shoulders and neck. The angelic power tried to bite at him once more. Even when he wasn’t here, Zachariel was trying to protect me. “Hahaha, you let that angel put his dick *and* his power into you? How precious. This is turning out to be better than I imagined. I’m going to enjoy making you beg. Do you think you will scream for him to save you? Don’t worry, I will drop what’s left of you on his doorstep after I’m done.”

“No! He can’t know about this!” I protested, though I was aware how little say I had here.

“Hah, then be a good little slave for me for the next hour, and I will consider letting you stay here until you can move on your own. You can fight me all you want once we are back – please do in fact, I will delight in putting you in your place – but out on the floor of the club I have a reputation to maintain. Now, stay still.”

He buckled a heavy black leather collar around my neck, made me put on a pair of leather pants – not for my comfort but because the rules of the club prohibited full nudity outside of private rooms and specific playrooms – and led me out to where I was now. Sitting like a prized pet at his feet while he made idle conversation with the club goers, enjoying my humiliation and drawing my torment out.

I wished I could bite his hand off when he started petting my hair, but I remembered his ultimatum.

Zachariel can't know, I repeated to myself like a mantra. *Zachariel can't know. Zachariel can't—*

I heard gasps around me and jerked my head up.

Zachariel was here.

Demons and angels parted for him as he made his way towards me, his white suit gleaming, his wings on display, his expression...

No... oh, no... the pure anger in his expression...

He can't know, I thought in despair.

The angel stopped in front of me.

“Hmpf, why are you making such a show, angel? It’s rude to be taking up so much space. If you want attention so much, I’m sure we can find someone here who will take you over a knee,” Leonius said and even without turning my head I could tell he had a grin on his face. He knew who stood before him.

“Hellion,” Zachariel said, ignoring the demon. I ducked my head as shame and fear warred in my mind. I knew how it looked, with me kneeling at another man’s feet.

“What do you want with my pet?” Leonius asked with a sneer, making sure everyone in the gathered crowd heard the possessive declaration.

“Yours?” the angel’s voice was deadly quiet, like a garrote before it tightened over a neck. “Hellion, who do you belong

to?”

I opened my mouth to answer, but a harsh grip on my collar stifled the words on my tongue.

“Everyone can see whose collar he wears,” Leonius scowled, jerking me toward himself.

“No, they can’t. But I will *make them see.*”

I was pulled out of Leonius’s now bleeding clawed hand and pressed with my back against a familiar, warm chest as Zachariel’s hand settled against my throat in a possessive grip after tearing the black collar off.

Angelic power flooded into my brands and I opened my mouth in a silent scream. Grace poured into me all at once, the dimly lit room growing bright with the light emanating from my marks. As the shining collar appeared on my neck the pain was immense.

But so was my relief.

“Yours,” I gasped. Forget trying to get breath into my lungs, speaking those words was more important. “I’m yours. Yours.”

“Mine,” Zachariel reassured me. “And you, demon, you knew he was mine. That he was collared. That he had a master. You will pay for what you did.”

As the power settled under my skin, a constant fiery presence not letting up, I was dimly aware Leonius tried to turn the crowd against Zachariel, but everyone here knew

touching someone collared without their master's permission was a crime.

The owners of the club, an angel and a demon, descended upon Leonius like the wrath of God. There was a lot of chaos, but I found peace in the eye of the storm, in my angel's arms, and I dared to believe everything was going to be fine. I closed my eyes, lost in the current of pain.

When I opened my eyes again, I found myself in a room alone with Zach, my head lying in his lap. Oh, I had to have checked out a little.

“Are you alright? I didn't hurt you, did I?” the angel asked with clear worry.

We both knew he caused me pain, but I understood what this question was really about.

“You came for me,” I said, turning on his lap so that I could stare up at him.

“Of course, I did. Do you think I wouldn't, when my power in you screamed someone had touched you?”

“You... you put a tracker on me,” I laughed. “Did you know it would work like that?”

“I may have had some idea,” Zach admitted sheepishly. “Well, I was hoping it would work like this. But it's good I did track you, isn't it? What did you get yourself into, Hellion?”

I stiffened, reminded of the fucked up situation I was in.

“That demon, Leonius, you didn’t let him go, right? He can’t speak to anyone; he will tell them...” I sat up, panicked.

“He is being kept by the owners in another room. They won’t let him go until this matter is settled, and I asked them to prioritize your wellbeing and to give us a while before the confrontation. Is that demon blackmailing you? Is that why you knelt for him?”

“I did it to protect... you,” I said heavily, knowing I had to lay all the cards on the table now.

“Me?” the angel blinked at me. “Oh, precious, I’m sorry if investigating my circumstances brought you to harm. If I knew, I would just let the matter lie. You... I want you safe and content and at my side more than I want to know my past.”

I blinked away the tears gathering at the corners of my eyes and shook my head.

“It’s not your fault. You have nothing to be sorry about. And I return the sentiment. That’s why I can’t just leave this alone. I want you to be happy, to be yourself, to not have an unknown factor hanging over your head like a sword. Zachariel... I learned about your past. I was going to tell you, but I needed to do some damage control first. I should have told you, but I feared the knowledge would put you at risk. And if others knew... Leonius, the demon, demanded I spend a night as his slave for his silence.”

“He didn’t...” Zachariel’s words stuck in his throat but his eyes scanned my body wildly as if searching for a wound.

“You appeared just in the nick of time. My knight in shining, white armor. The things he said, what he had planned to do... I’m glad you came for me. But as shitty a time as I had, I’m afraid it’s you who will have a no good, very bad, terrible day now. Your past... it’s hard stuff. It will change everything.”

“I still want to know. Tell me, please.”

I reached for his still visible wings and touched the spot I noticed when preening his feathers.

“You pulled those feathers out because they grew black.” Zachariel flinched but didn’t protest the statement. “They appeared because, while your Ascendence designated you as an angel and you got your white wings, you started falling when you realized an angel and a demon had toyed with your human life, even making a bet between themselves.”

“I... fell?” Zach asked numbly.

“You started to – a few feathers burned, and that they grew back black is the proof. But the angel intervened, and somehow, by using his power to erase your memory, he stopped the process of you falling.”

“An angel did this to me.”

“And a demon watched and laughed.”

“I want my memories back,” Zachariel said, his voice wretched.

“Even if you fall completely once you have them back? I... I want you to be true to yourself, but this, *falling*... It was the worst experience of my life. Imagine not only the pain – you

know I can take *that* – but the grace being sucked out of you... It leaves you empty. Cold. As if you will never be warm and happy again.”

Zach was silent for a moment.

“...but you will be at my side through all of it?”

“Yes.”

“Then I will do it. I will get my memories back. And if I fall... so be it. Finally hitting the earth is better than being suspended in the air for eternity, always waiting for the crash.”

“If you are sure,” I squeezed Zach’s hands. “There is also a matter of this being an equivalent to a nuke for angel-demon relations. I think we need to reach pretty high to get this resolved.”

“I think I need to summon Gabriel for this. Who can you get for your side?”

“Abaddon,” I grinned. “Well, I can probably get to him. I have a standing invitation to his mansion.” Zachariel’s eyes darkened, and I gave him a quick kiss to distract him, even if I did like him being jealous. “I know his ward, Auriolus, you know, the tailor I mentioned.”

There was a knock on the door. Just in time. I opened the door to see the demon owner of the club, Kreshadon. He scanned me up and down.

“You fine now? I wouldn’t press you, but the shit Leonius is talking about is disturbing,” he said.

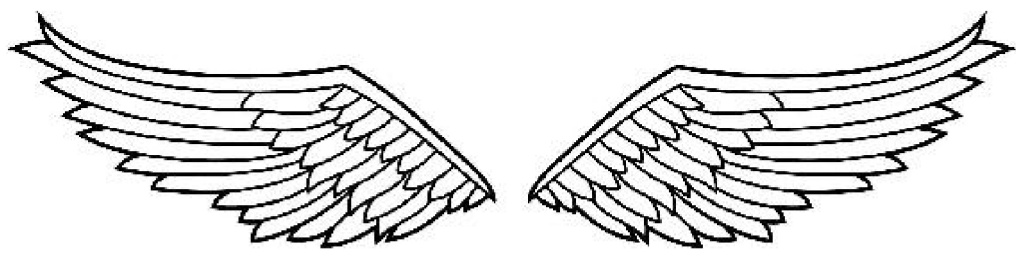
“We left a guard with him before you ask!” a cheerful voice pipped from behind, and the demon shifted to reveal the taller form of his angelic partner, Nathaniel. “But yeah, we would like to know what the fuck is going on, haha.”

“We are ready to talk,” I said. “But we need two more people for this.”

“Who?”

“Oh, just Gabriel and Abaddon.”

The look on Kreshadon’s face clearly said he considered murdering us here and there just to not have to deal with this.



Chapter 18

Abaddon and Gabriel stared at each other. If they could have thunderbolts flying from their eyes they would.

“Zachariel, what is the meaning of this? Why did you summon me to this place?” Gabriel asked.

“We need to talk about matters that concern both sides,” Zach replied, from where he was seated on the couch next to me.

“And this couldn’t be dealt via official channels?” Gabriel’s voice was incredulous.

“I wish,” Kreshadon muttered under his breath.

“This matter also concerns me personally. And you, as my Guide,” Zach said.

A flash of concern appeared on Gabriel’s face. I learned a Guide was the word angels used for those who guided the newly Ascended into their new life, and from what Zach told me the Archangel was even more than that to him; he was a friend.

“What is it? Did something happen?”

“First, I need you to tell me something,” Zachariel said. “Why did you become my Guide?”

“Because I wanted to,” Gabriel splayed his arms, his expression confused. Seeing the explanation wasn’t enough he continued. “Tirael should have been your guide but he thought you would be more suited to my guidance.”

“Why?”

“He said...” the Archangel looked around, scrunching his brows. “Look, we can talk about this privately.”

“No. You need to tell me. Now. Here. There can be no more secrets, Gabriel. If you really are my friend you will answer all my questions.”

“Zach, what is going on... Alright, I will talk. even if I think it's inadvisable. I have... a private project of sorts. I have taken it upon myself to prevent as many angels from falling as I can. I believe a timely intervention when angels are at their lowest or are plagued by doubts can help, and so I strive to offer support where I can. I want to use my higher position for something good, not just to lord it over other denizens of Heaven. When Tiraël submitted a request to be reassigned because he feared he wouldn't be able to help you enough I volunteered to be your Guide.”

“I need details,” Zach pressed.

“He said in his report... that you had a hard life on Earth, and you were so traumatized by it you lost your memories upon ascending. He didn't know which side you would choose to the last moment and he feared you barely made it into Heaven and were at risk of falling.”

Zach barked an unamused laugh.

“Is that what he told you? I suppose he was truthful. He omitted an important factor though. He didn't mention how he was the one who took my memories from me with his angelic power.”

“What?!” Gabriel exclaimed, his eyes wide. “Why... why would he?”

“As interesting as seeing angels being two-faced liars is, this seems like a squabble among your kind. Why am I here?” Abaddon asked gruffly, his foot tapping a staccato rhythm against the floor.

I looked at Zach and he gave a go ahead with a tilt of his head.

“Because Tirael erased Zachariel’s memories when he started falling,” I said.

“Bullshit, Hellion.” Abaddon scoffed. “I know he has white wings and your boy-toy radiates angelic power.”

“I know it’s hard to believe but erasing my memories somehow stopped the process,” Zachariel explained, his expression set in stone. “I have a patch of feathers that burned and grew back black.”

“Well, show them to us,” the Archdemon requested. Zach winced, so I hurried to explain.

“He plucked them out, but there really is...” I started to say.

“Hm, I may have a resolution for this. My healing powers are not as good as Raphael’s but they should be enough to grow the feathers back,” Gabriel offered, staring at Zach as if a million theories were going through his head and he didn’t like even one of them.

Zach nodded and the Archangel laid a hand on a presented wing, the rough path visible among the feathers if you knew

what you were looking for. The light of angelic grace shone bright and it took a few minutes of tense silence as we all waited for the feathers to go through all the stages of forming. But once a hint of black peaked from behind the hand Gabriel took a step back with a gasp.

“How is this possible?” the Archangel asked. “Zach... why didn’t you tell me about this?”

“Why didn’t you tell me about my supposedly horrifying life as a human when you knew I was desperate to know anything? No, it was a rhetorical question, I know you think you were protecting me. I didn’t tell you about this because I thought it was just another detail that made me a freak, like my amnesia and my nightmares, and I didn’t want to deal with it on top of everything else. After all, you were always going on about how I had to be a perfect angel, and fretting about me if I even as much as gave someone a side eye.”

“It seems my approach may have done more harm than good,” Gabriel said despondently. “I’m sorry if you felt as if you couldn’t trust me because I would judge you.”

“Do you really think becoming a demon is the worst thing that could happen?” Zach’s quiet voice inquired. “Will you stop being my friend if I become one? Because, Gabriel, there is a chance that I might. I want my memories back. I want this atrocity committed against me to be dealt with.”

“I...” the Archangel was at loss for words once more.

“My, my, it always surprises me how many things we demons can learn from you angels. Usurping an angel’s free

will, interfering in the natural order, using angelic powers for evil... and then pretending nothing happened,” Abaddon turned to Zachariel. “By my reckoning you will be safer among demons. Don’t worry, we take care of our Ascended. Hellion can tell you Auriolus has everything he wants under my care.”

Oh, hell no, I could see where this was going. I wasn’t going to let Abaddon collect another Ascended like picking up a dirty puppy he found in an alley. Zachariel was mine.

“We should deal with the angel and demon present for Zachariel’s Ascendance and return his memories before we do anything else and make any plans,” I deflected.

“You are right,” Gabriel said, anger palpable in his words. “I will be back.”

He vanished suddenly, no doubt teleporting to Heaven to hunt down Tirael. After learning the demon we needed was already in custody Abaddon took the time to talk to Kreshadon about how it would be a good idea to have a place where angels and demons could discuss business. If this whole ordeal resulted in diplomatic quarters next to a kink club I was going to laugh myself sick. With a flutter of beautiful, rose-gold tipped wings Gabriel was back, his hand firmly fisted in the collar of a man he dragged behind him.

Tirael protested the treatment loudly until he saw Kreshadon pushing Leonius into the room and his eyes jumped around, settling on Zachariel. He went deadly still and stopped speaking.

Leonius on the other hand started running his mouth when he spotted Abaddon.

“My Lord! Those savage angels committed a taboo offence against our kind! Brainwashed that one into going to Heaven!” He gestured at Zach with his whole body as his hands were tied behind his back.

“Why didn’t you inform me about this earlier then?”

“They blackmailed me! Said an Archangel would kill me if I don’t cooperate. It’s in my nature as a demon to save myself.”

I seethed quietly thinking to myself: *Yeah, and it is in our demonic nature to lie as well.*

But I didn’t need to intervene. Abaddon had everything in hand.

He placed a heavy palm on the demon’s shoulder and said,

“I can understand that.” But before the smirk on Leonius’ face could spread the Archdemon continued. “I could forgive you for harming one of our kind, it’s not unheard of after all. But, Leonius... you gave Heaven an advantage over Hell by letting them snatch a promising Ascended from us and that I cannot forgive.”

Abaddon’s palm flared with power. Just like Archangels could burn the wings of the angels they judged so could Archdemons cast their judgement over demons. But while the angels fell... there was nowhere to go for the demons. Leonius screamed as his demonic power was taken away and his body slowly fell apart, disintegrating into dust.

“Not inside!” Nathaniel yelled, his arms flailing. “I’m never going to get the stench out from the furniture!”

Nobody paid the traumatized owners of the club any attention as they muttered under their breath about the biggest bill in the history of Hell and Heaven while Abaddon continued the process until there was nothing left of the traitor.

“Now, let’s deal with the other one,” Abaddon announced darkly.

“My Lord, please save me!” the angel fell to his knees, shaking with fear in front of Gabriel after such a display. “I know what I did was wrong. I just panicked! And after it worked... I felt guilty, so I sent Zachariel to you. I didn’t want him to suffer. Please, believe me.”

“But he did,” I said, my teeth bared. “He suffered a lot and he is still suffering because of your spell.”

“I will undo it! I will do anything. Just, please, have mercy, don’t let him touch me.”

“Oh, Abaddon? You will call him merciful after I get my hands on you, you deplorable—”

“Hellion,” Zach stopped me in my tracks with just one word. He faced the angel responsible for his torment. “Free me from the spell.”

Tirael nodded hastily and crawled to Zach on his knees. He took Zach’s hand with shaking fingers and let his power flow until sigils made of light became visible on the skin. Then they broke.

When Zachariel curled in on himself, hands clutching at his face, I scooped him into my arms, I tried to offer assurance as the memories rushed back in, but I had to let go.

My lover's wing burned.

He is falling after all, I thought. I didn't know if this was really a conscious choice on the angel's part, or maybe an instinctual one. There was a chance it was just fate being cruel and disregarding his wishes... Either way, I hated seeing him go through this, to suffer and scream as fire left the bare structure of his wing, now devoid of any feathers. We all knew they would grow back black.

But wait...

Zachariel's left wing didn't go up in flames. It remained a pristine, angelic white.

"Holy cow! Is he both an angel *and* a demon?" Nathaniel exclaimed in the ensuing silence.

"Did you... damn, this h-hurts... did you think Heaven could get rid of me so easily?" Zachariel panted out. "I'm here to stay, b-bitch."

As I propped Zach up as best I could, taking care not to touch his injured wing, I had a feeling the sentiment was directed at all the angels and probably all the demons too. I truly knew how to pick them, huh? Never a boring day with my angel being the center of chaos. I was proud of him and his ability to befuddle the upper ranks.

As it was, Gabriel and Abaddon were talking furiously, the angel gesticulated wildly while the demon had his arms crossed over his chest, his stance firm as a rock. The conversation would probably run for ages but Abaddon delivered a one-hit punch.

“He should come to Hell. You have mistreated him enough.”

Gabriel deflated.

“We should ask him what he wants. Zachariel?” he said and looked towards us with eyes I swear to god were filling with tears. Ha, so he was aware Zach had good reasons not to choose Heaven and managed to pull his head out of his ass far enough to actually consider Zach’s opinion. Maybe there was some hope for him after all.

“Heaven or Hell? Or maybe... both?” Abaddon asked bluntly.

I could see sweat bead on my lover’s forehead but he managed to lift his head up from my shoulder and stared straight at the Archangel and Archdemon.

“Neither.”

I was as shocked as everyone else at the declaration. Did that mean he wanted to stay on Earth? But he would have to return to a higher plane sooner or later to replenish his power.

“I know that I’m young compared to all of you. I’m a newcomer and I don’t pretend to know everything about angelic and less demonic society but I can see how many faults both have. You are set in your old ways and while

humans progress you are happy to stay stagnant or even regress. While you do that your people suffer. And one of the biggest offenses is the lack of communication between sides.”

“We meet on diplomatic talks with the other side...” Gabriel said, his brows furrowed.

“Please, Michael and Lucifer have refused to meet for millennia now. They handle everything through other Archangels and Archdemons and I for one am sick of it,” Abaddon scoffed.

“And that doesn’t account for regular people who want to talk peacefully or have a dispute with the other side.. Did you consider how you are getting the items for your markets? The merchants have to sneak around to deal with their counterparts and if they get screwed over there is nothing they can do because there is no real trade treaty between Heaven and Hell. The higher ups are busy pretending the relationships between demons and angels – be it for business, politics, or personal – don’t exist. But they do, and our people have to hide or are taken advantage of,” Zachariel said, his hands trembling slightly. If this didn’t finish soon I was going to drag him from this room kicking and screaming to properly bandage him and make him rest.

“That’s true,” the stoic voice of Kreshadon piped up. “I have seen angels and demons come to my kink club to do business or just talk as friends because they felt that this was the safest place they could do it. There’s really nowhere else that has even a tentative, unofficial neutrality like our place does.”

In theory there were rules about how to conduct yourself as an angel or demon while on a job but there wasn't much besides 'don't kill each other' while one wasn't acting in the capacity of their job. It was a giant grey area. And encroaching on someone's territory outside of being delegated there could be taken as an act of hostility. I was still smarting from when I went to see the pyramids of Giza and was chased out by an angel who didn't like 'corrupted demons' to even look at the place she was lording over. And that was a pretty mild reaction, I had heard about much worse. It was a problem, especially for those like me who actually liked spending time on Earth.

"You need an intermediary," Zachariel summed up his thoughts.

"And you think you are good enough to be one?" Abaddon asked.

"No. But I can learn to be one. And who better than someone with black-and-white wings? As long as I get people, resources, and permission to do it; I know I can create something that will benefit both sides while not being beholden to either."

Gabriel and Abaddon looked at each other for a long moment.

"Michael is going to throw a fit..."

"Well, he and Luci will have to deal. It's their own damn fault for shirking their duties," Abaddon snorted, a playful light in his eye.

“Very well. You have our approval. There’s a lot to discuss... but, ah, we can do it later. Or else I fear your partner will set me on fire,” Gabriel said.

Good to know my glare was potent enough for him to notice.

“We can meet here tomorrow? If you two are fine with lending us the place once more?” I asked the club owners.

“Sure, sure! The price is 300 gold per hour,” Nathaniel said cheerfully.

“That’s preposterous!” spluttered Gabriel.

“Feel free to find a different neutral place, my Lord. Oh, right, there isn’t one,” Nathaniel looked at his fingernails disinterestedly. What a troll. I liked him already.

“Fine. Fine!” the Archangel threw up his hands. “But what are we going to do with Tiraël?”

The angel in question tried to become one with the ugly floral wallpaper of the room.

“Give him to me,” I said with what I knew had to be a bloodthirsty smile.

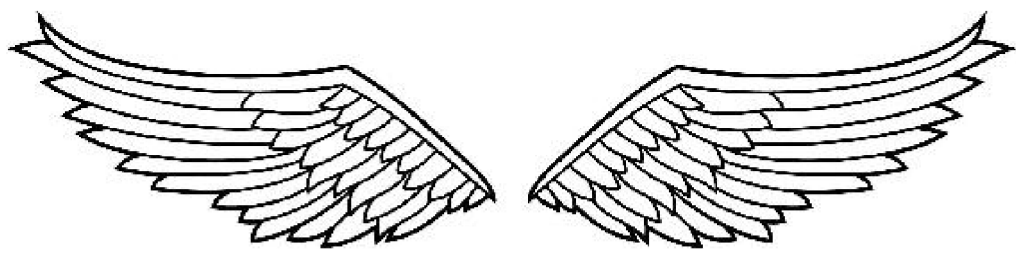
“Actually, that’s not a bad idea,” Zachariël said and I did a double take at him. “Give him to us. I will make sure he learns his lesson.” Seeing Gabriel wring his hands he added. “Don’t worry, I won’t kill him. Or torture him... much. Tiraël, I’m giving you a chance to work to atone for your sins. Will you take it?”

The angel hung his head low but when he raised it again his expression was full of determination.

“Yes. I will do what I can, please, just give me a chance.”

The angel’s smile looked more innocent than mine but I knew it was no less bloodthirsty.

“Wonderful! Gentlemen, meet my first employee.”



Chapter 19

Once Gabriel teleported us to Zachariel's flat (for once, I was happy with him flaunting his enormous reserves of power) I fell upon him like, well, like a very worried mother hen upon a hurt chick. I cleaned the remainder of the right wing, then dried and bandaged it while the angel gritted his teeth. Then I tucked him into bed and despite his protests the fatigue won as soon as he laid his head on the pillows.

When he woke up the next day I had breakfast prepared for him. It wasn't much, just some scrambled eggs, toast, and freshly squeezed juice I made using his fancy juicer, but it put a smile on the angel's face.

"No weird combinations of ingredients this time?" Zach teased.

"You have a dispensation for today," I nodded sagely. "Though I recognize my lack of culinary talent so I ordered in for dinner. How do you feel?"

"Still a bit... muddled," Zachariel grimaced. "It all came back to me at once but it's taking time to properly connect and understand everything."

"Was... was your life as a human as bad as Tirael said?" I asked gently.

"Ha! No. He made that up. We will have our hands full with setting him straight but I do enjoy a challenge. Oh... Hellion... I know now that I like challenges!" Zach's giddy smile made my heart flutter. It was such a small thing to know a basic fact about yourself. I was glad my angel got this back.

“Honestly, as far as I can tell my life was pretty good. I was... I was a chef. No real surprise there, huh? Now I will be even more annoying with my snobby tastes, you can bet! Though I appreciate simpler food as well. I was in a pretty good situation but I spent a lot of time in impoverished communities and it always hurt me to see how many people couldn't get something as basic as food.”

I nodded in understanding. Honestly, occurrences such as this, seeing things that weren't a problem in Hell or Heaven like starvation, were why some angels or demons refused to step on Earth. Somehow, denying a child a meal felt far crueler than the most depraved tortures in the deepest pits of Hell.

“Did you help? Yeah, of course you did. Tell me how.”

“I ran cooking lessons for low-income families for free. Not those ‘make the fanciest cake’ ones – I tried to make it as practical as I could. So they could learn about properly canning products, or how to store things so they lasted longer, or how to use all the parts of the vegetables they had. I know it could never be enough but at least they went home with new knowledge and with the spoils of the lessons to eat. Then I decided to do more and started campaigning for some changes...”

“What happened?” I could tell by the angel's expression it wasn't anything good.

“I was murdered. Over feeding children. I think dying like that had a lot to do with how I almost fell just after Ascending. My end... disillusioned me and seeing that angel and demon

making a game, a bet, out of my existence... it was the last straw.” The angel’s lips quirked into a grim expression. “You know, it was pretty hard to convince Gabriel to let me gallivant on Earth, because Heaven has a system where Ascenders can’t visit Earth for a hundred years after the Ascendence. They say it’s so the Ascended won’t be tempted to intervene in mortal matters, but I argued that didn’t apply to me due to my amnesia.”

“Are you tempted to intervene now?”

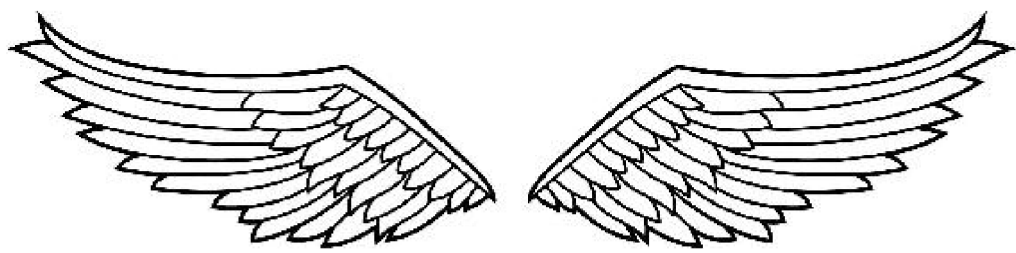
“No. I think I left that life behind. I have to look forward now. We have a lot to do, darling.”

“I still can’t believe you want to willingly put yourself between angels and demons.”

“I’m not trying to be a wall but a bridge. Will it be hard? Yes. But we have eternity to do it, Hellion.”

I kissed his nose, something like true happiness bubbling in my chest.

“And I know how you like challenges.”



Chapter 20

You would think brokering the treaty between angels and demons would be a grandiose thing but the reality was much more lackluster.

“Why do I have to do this?” I complained. “Isn’t this why we have Tirael?”

I was practically buried in stacks of paper. Who would have thought that so much bureaucracy was required for such a little thing as ushering in the dawn of a new future.

“Leave Tirael alone, Hellion. He has his own share of work and you know his assistance is essential.”

At just that moment Tirael appeared as if summoned, carrying a cup of steaming hot coffee with him. Zachariel sent me a pointed stare. I couldn’t even say anything because the coffee cup was for me.

All right, so maybe Tirael wasn’t so bad with a bit of training. He was just so eager and respectful. Ugh. Every time I tried to exact my revenge it felt like kicking a puppy when he turned those big, wide eyes on me.

Once Tirael was gone from the room, I could stop pretending to look like someone who deserved to be called Sir. I slumped onto my desk once more and pouted at Zach.

“You know, I feel like some incentive is in order. I am not made for this. I need to be free to run around and cause chaos,” I said.

“Oh? ” Zachariel lifted an amused eyebrow at me. “What do you have in mind?”

“Zach, Zachariel, light of my life, dearest, baby, we are stationed next to a kink club and we have been there only for business. This is sacrilege, just pure torture!”

“Ah, I see. Do you want to make a social visit so we can have tea with the owners?”

“Zach!” I exclaimed.

The asshole laughed at my frustration. He really enjoyed teasing me too much.

“And after that I will show you off to everyone there, how does that sound?”

My body instantly thrummed with arousal as Zachariel stood behind me and leaned down to whisper in my ear. His hand went to my neck and even without him putting his power in me, like a Pavlovian reflex, my mouth started salivating at his mere touch against my marks.

I leaned into his touch eagerly, set on getting this party started right here, right now.

A loud chime was like a bucket of water over my horniness. The sound signaled that someone teleported into the antechamber and so far only a few people had access to go there.

Gabriel stormed into the room as if his wings were on fire.

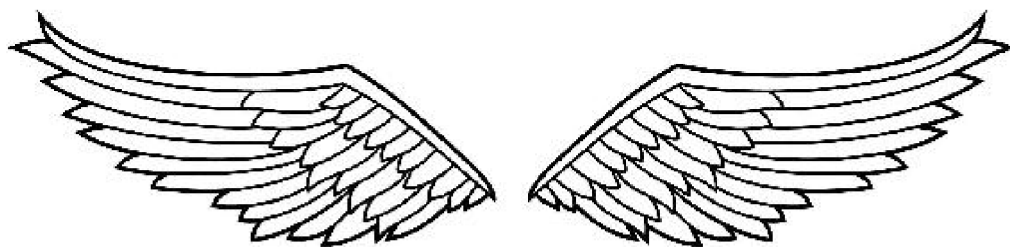
“You’re not going to believe this. Michael and Lucifer have agreed to meet.”

A quick look at Zachariel showed me my conflicted emotions mirrored on his face. Those two talking? This was huge.

I couldn't tell if our endeavor was going really, really well or if we were on the brink of a disaster.

“Bring it on,” I grinned.

To be continued

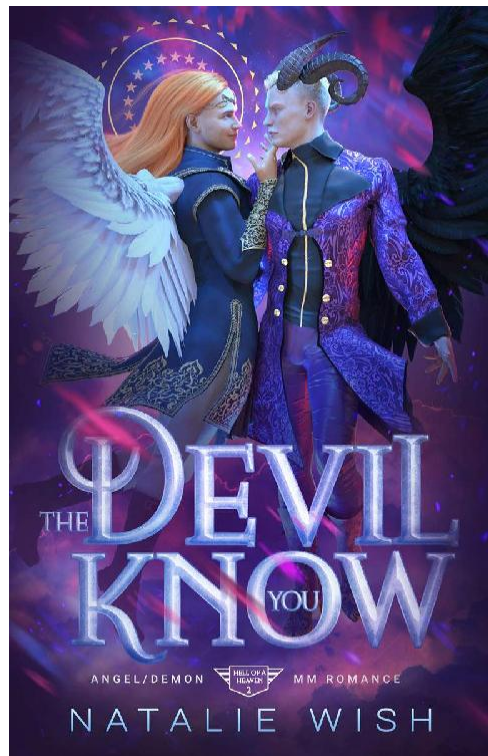


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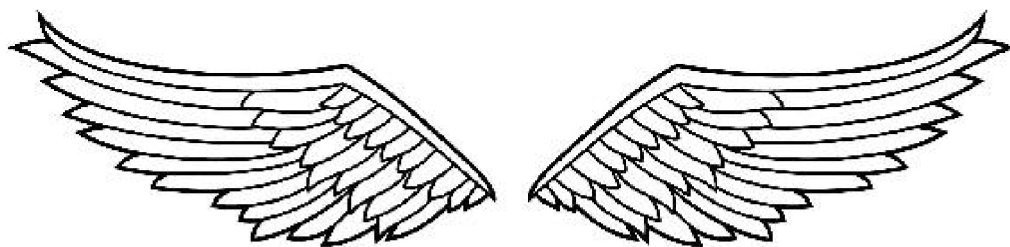
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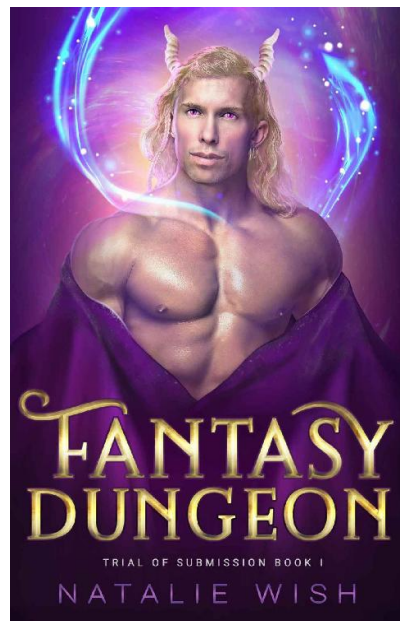


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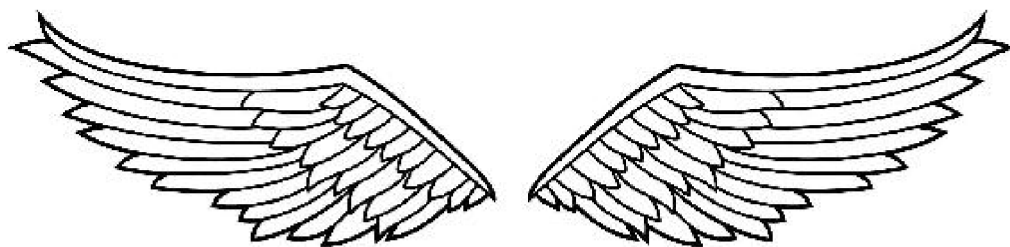
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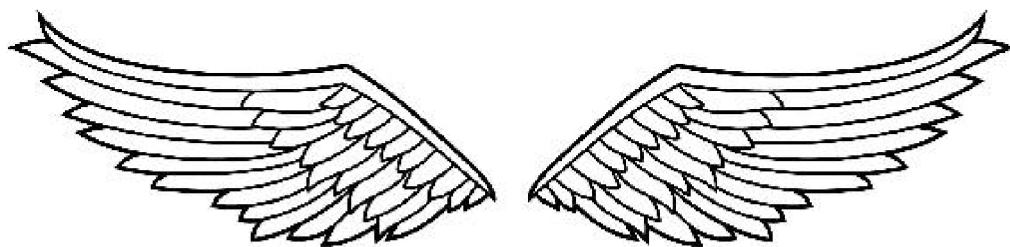
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