

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
CRYSTAL ASH
KATHRYN MOON

SAY YOUR
PRAYERS

SAY YOUR PRAYERS

OceanofPDF.com

CRYSTAL ASH
KATHRYN MOON

OceanofPDF.com

Copyright © 2020 by Crystal Ash and Kathryn Moon

Say Your Prayers

First publication: Oct 23rd, 2020

Editing by Telisha Mortensen

Formatting by Kathryn Moon and Crystal Ash

Cover by Moorbooks Designs

All rights reserved. Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work, in whole or in part, in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means now known or hereafter invented, is forbidden without the written permission of the publisher.

Published by Crystal Ash and Kathryn Moon

authorcrystalash@gmail.com

ohkathrynmoon@gmail.com

✿ Created with Vellum

[*OceanofPDF.com*](http://OceanofPDF.com)

The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of a copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by fines and federal imprisonment.

Please purchase only authorized electronic editions and do not participate in, or encourage, the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, brands, and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

This is a Reverse Harem Paranormal Romance and is not suited for those under the age of 18.

✿ Created with Vellum

OceanofPDF.com

To the two tired bishes who made this book happen.

It's us. We're bishes.

OceanofPDF.com

Contents

Foreword

1. Comfort Food
2. Bless Me, Father
3. I'm Not Afraid of God
4. Who Is My Neighbor?
5. God Doesn't Make Mistakes
6. Anger and Lust
7. Sins of the Flesh
8. Judgment
9. Sacrifice and Worship
10. No one is Without Sin
11. The Pure Light of God
12. Swords of God
13. Fuck Angels, Fuck Hellions
14. Succubus Soup for the Soul
15. Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory
16. Idle Hands do the Devil's Work
17. Love is Kind
18. Divine Sin
19. Feasts of Flesh and Touch
20. Well-Fucked & Well-Fed
21. Thoroughly Debauched
22. Hail Mary
23. Not Even God
24. Demons Don't Wrestle
25. Blessed Relief
26. More Blessed to Give
27. Call of the Hound
28. Faith, Hope, and Love
29. Living Sacrifice
30. A Cross to Bear

31. [Forgiveness](#)
32. [Holy Staff](#)
33. [A Time For War](#)
34. [Not A Chance In Hell](#)
35. [Holy Fuck](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About Crystal Ash](#)

[Also by Crystal Ash](#)

[About Kathryn Moon](#)

[Also by Kathryn Moon](#)

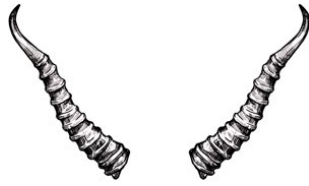
[*OceanofPDF.com*](#)

Foreword

This story includes inspiration from Christian mythology, which the authors have *liberally* and *enthusiastically* adapted to suit their own imaginations. Those adaptations, or re-imaginings are no reflection of the authors' personal beliefs, nor should they influence your own.

If you feel yourself troubled by any of the changes, please remember one thing: this is only a work of fiction.

OceanofPDF.com



Comfort Food

OceanofPDF.com

Sex could be a comfort. It could also be a weapon.

When you've been feeding for as long as I have, it becomes easy to identify all the flavors that color the taste of sexual energy. I've tasted love, joy, and despair. Bitterness, anger, and longing.

Ever since Hell rose up from the bowels to become Earth's overbearing next door neighbor, I've tasted the entire spectrum of human emotions in just a few short years. By far, the dominant flavor has been fear, with hearty undertones of loss, grief, and heartbreak.

Virgins were especially volatile, depending on the reasons why they hadn't spent their sexual energy with another person before the apocalypse. The one underneath me now, with his soft blond hair and pillowy lips, had the bite of shame in his taste. That pretty brow furrowed, digging deep lines into his forehead, as deep as his fingers pressed into my hips as he bucked into me. I dragged my blunt nails down his chest, over his nipples and watched the lines vanish with his surprise as his lips parted on a gasp and a whimper.

Pretty Zachariah, always shocked by what he was capable of, what he *craved*, a little self-disgust lacing the satisfaction I

gave him.

I was perched on a ledge, overlooking the pits of agonized damned souls in the melee of pain below. Zachariah was there, superimposed over the violence, his own face twisted, but only with pleasure. I closed my eyes and Hell's landscape fell away, leaving me in the quiet of the young man's dream, our bodies colliding gently, reverently. He caught his breath, a puzzled smile on his full lips, and then rolled us in the white sheets of the dream, pinning me down with his hips rocking into me. In spite of his desperation, his endless craving for more, he still tasted mainly of confusion and discomfort.

He was delicious regardless, and not just in the energetic sense. His mouth was made for kissing, mismatched eyes curious and watching as I devoured him. He had a strong body, robust and young—early twenties by my estimate. And such sensitive skin, warm and responsive to my indulgent licks of his untouched flesh.

The first time I'd claimed his dream, I tasted his embarrassment when he came quickly, then the shame and disgust that flooded him right afterward. That confused me at first, until I tasted the sweet brightness of devotion, of complete trust and faith. Not in any single person such as a partner, but something much bigger.

Just my luck that my sweet virgin meal was also a priest.

“Ssuccubus.”

I grimaced and left the dream, turning to face the interruption. A pain hellion, creeping closer, trying to smudge away the tenderness I'd just been enjoying.

“What do you want?” I snapped.

“New arrivalssss. At the gate.”

My jaw gritted, hands digging into the sharp stone of the ledge. This was my work. My duty to Hell. To welcome the damned souls that now flooded the bowels, to suck them dry and leave them compliant. And every last one of them was like drinking acid, leaving me weak and queasy, full of human pain.

“Fine,” I said. When the pain hellion hovered, its belly fat with all the good eating our realm gave it lately, I sat up straighter and glared, my eyes going yellow with warning. “Fuck off before I make you an appetizer.”

It skittered away, melting down a dark cavern. I let out a long, weary sigh and returned to Zach, finishing him roughly. I covered his mouth with mine, swallowing the silent cries of his release, and taking the sips of energy and pleasure that I’d been using all these weeks to sustain myself. I released him with a grazing kiss to his cheek.

He would wake, full of sweet relief. To him, it was only a dream. To me, it was the last thread of my sanity. Once, before Hell’s Rising to Earth, sex had only been satisfying a craving. A late-night raiding of the fridge while everyone else was asleep. Now, these moments were the scraps I was holding myself together with. Sex was not my weapon against him. At least, I didn’t intend to use it in such a way when I found him. I thought he would be one sweet, selfish moment.

But I went back to him for seconds.

And then, thirds.

And then I found two more delicious priests—without the capriciousness of virgin energy, but full-bodied and complex all the same. These men weren’t merely junk food either. I found their flavors deep and rich, layered with complexities as one would find spices in a hearty broth.

After my virgin, I relished in one who had a flavor of sorrow, an eagerness to please tinged with self-loathing. He found comfort in me, soaking up tenderness and affection while holding nothing back. It was too bad he was a priest—his desire for women nearly overpowered that of his faith.

And with the third one, I almost didn't come back for seconds. But I couldn't tear myself away from his unique flavor of sadness. He had a sweet quality to him too, hidden under many layers of despair and loss. While he found some physical comfort with me, my presence barely scratched the surface at easing his pain.

Maybe that was one reason why I kept coming back for more. I related to their struggles, their tangled emotions. We were all living out our versions of the loop-track of hell since the rising, but when I stole those moments in their dreams, I let myself pretend that I was free. If nothing else, it was a break from the toxic flavours I'd been barely surviving on in the bowels.

I kept returning to feed from these men, neglecting my duties at Hell's Mouth to indulge in them like a junkie. The lines between comfort food and necessary fuel blurred until I couldn't even bring myself to taste another damned soul. My Fathers became my favorite and only food source, their untainted flavors just as refreshing as they were fulfilling.

I didn't intend to dream-feed from three faith-filled men who'd taken vows of celibacy, it just happened that way.

Forgive me, Fathers, for I have sinned since long before your species walked the earth.

The same earth that was now scorched and blackened, an eerie likeness to the dark realm that had been my home for thousands of years. Hell's royalty had watched and cheered as

the human population was slashed to under one billion in a few short years. It was a grand victory for them.

“We have risen! Just like their precious fucking Christ,” Belial had cackled to his fellow kings.

Hell’s kings had been planning this overtaking for centuries, but to humanity, the apocalypse came out of nowhere. Millions of people died unexpectedly and painfully. My feeding on freshly acquired souls was just the first step in Hell’s welcome pamphlet. I calmed them from the hysteria of recently dying, making them nice and compliant for further corruption.

In moderation, I didn’t mind the taste of fear, the anger, grief, and helplessness—but not even a succubus could withstand eating only such bitter flavors day in and day out. So could you blame a girl for skipping them in exchange for more...satisfying meals?

It was only a matter of time before I was caught, and then reprimanded for neglecting my duties. So I spent an extra few hours with my virgin, knowing it could be the last time I savored such a flavorful meal. I enjoyed his sated, human breaths and his tentative affection—soft caresses of my face and hair while ignoring my horns, naturally.

He seemed to feel better with the knowledge that I was just a dream, a fantasy he could partake in without turning his back on his vows. All humans saw me as just that—a fantasy. Something safe, a conjuration from their baser instincts to indulge in dark fantasies.

Completely unmotivated to feed on fear and terror again, I paused on my way to the new arrivals to sit on a ledge overlooking the barren, conquered earth.

“What would you do if you knew I was real?” My leg dangled over the opening of the cavern, toes wriggling a few thousand feet over my priests’ cathedral.

Behind me, Hell’s Mouth bustled with legions of demons preparing an onslaught of hellfire. The legion commanders, marquis and presidents in the demon hierarchy, grumbled to each other about the resilience of humans. They were easy enough to kill in large numbers, but small pockets of them adapted, persisted. Even now, with the victory overwhelmingly in Hell’s hands, the demons had to spend precious resources to keep the pesky humans under their fists. If they slacked off even a little, the humans would repopulate and adapt, much like cockroaches. Privately, I was rooting for their success.

“Deyva.”

The sound of my own name crawled over my skin like claws, echoing off the vast caverns of Hell’s Mouth. I forced myself to not look at Kimaris standing behind me, knowing I had to conserve my energy for what would come later.

“You look well-fed,” he sneered, rank breath blowing over my shoulder. “And yet the fresh souls are less compliant than they should be. Why is that?”

I shrugged, keeping my eyes fixated on earth’s scorched surface down below. “Perhaps they’ve grown resistant to my feedings.”

Even a big, dumb demon like him wouldn’t buy it, but I had to say something to buy myself time. If he took me to Belial, I might not come back.

“In all your millennia as a succubus, they’ve just now learned to resist you? When they have nothing left to enjoy?”

Kimaris barked out a cruel laugh. “Somehow I doubt that.”

“You know how they are with addictions,” I continued to stall. “Their tolerance just keeps getting higher the more they take.”

“So where are you getting your supply from? You look...” His voice took on a husky tone. “Exquisite. Like you haven’t skipped a single day. Are you projecting down there? Dream-feeding again?”

I bristled without giving him an answer. King Belial tossed me to Kimaris and his legion as their reward for wiping out every influence of Christ in the South Pacific. It was because of these lunkhead demons that I started dream-feeding with regularity, to recover from what these infernal brutes put me through.

The first time Kimaris caught me, I threw myself down at his gigantic hooved feet and begged him not to tell the king. He delighted in using my secret feedings to blackmail me, to use me in replenishing his own power until I barely had the strength to lift my head up.

Living forever was tiring, so maybe I’d finally had enough. Despite Kimaris’ threats, I kept sneaking visits to my priests in their dreams. Apparently I didn’t cover my tracks well enough. That, or I just didn’t care about getting caught anymore.

A massive hand, nearly as big as my head, wrapped around my upper arm. The contact immediately burned, pain shooting through the right side of my body. I hissed and fought against every instinct telling me to spend my energy to heal. I needed to conserve it.

“You spend so much time down there. You want so badly to join them?” Kimaris taunted in my ear. “To be a mortal

human woman who loves, ages, and dies? Even for a succubus, you're pathetic."

"Pathetic enough for you to fuck," I bit back. "No demoness in the hierarchy wants your stupid ass, so you settle for abusing me."

His hand clamped down on me tighter, the burning pain shooting through my vision. A human woman's bone would have crumbled to dust under that grip.

"You're the only succubus with the privilege of being a king's toy. You should be grateful to get fucked by anyone in the hierarchy at all. But you spend your feedings on dream-walking with humans, like a basic bitch with her lattes. You shame your brethren, Deyva."

Biting down against the pain, I tilted my head up to stare into the churning ash-and-coal gaze of the demon towering over me, pupils like lightning strikes slashing across his irises. His horns were long and corkscrewed, angling backward like an ibex. Long, black claws decorated his hands, with pitch black skin traveling up his arms. His body was made of carved and twisted muscle, body extending forward in a constant leer, shoulders pushed back to the center of his spine. He reminded me of some ancient beast, a dinosaur, bones protruding at odd angles and the hard shell of old callouses like shields over his chest and legs. He was considered attractive by demon standards, and for the longest time I couldn't understand why I felt sick every time I fed from him.

He always tasted awful. Rancid and rotten.

"I'm not your brethren." How many centuries had passed wishing I could say that out loud? "I've never been anything like you."

Kimaris' eyes flared the color of liquid fire, a burning red-orange. The pain extended down my side and to my legs now as his fury grew.

"I hate how you taste," I went on, throwing gasoline on a pyre that was already sure to kill me. "Your flavor is bile and your offerings are pitiful and sluggish. I've never enjoyed feeding from you. King Belial, your legions, and the souls we're accumulating? I hate how you all taste."

Everything I'd been bottling up for centuries came pouring out. I might not survive Kimaris' wrath, but at least he couldn't use sex as a weapon on me anymore, abuse me with the very gift I was created for.

"Hah! You're willing to give up your seat at the Mouth because you're suddenly a picky eater?" He sounded incredulous, but I didn't miss the undertone of worry. The big idiot thought I was bluffing and was getting ready to call me out.

Good. Try me.

"I'm willing to take my chances among them," I hissed, the pain now turning to numbness, "before spending another minute on your nasty demon dick."

He laughed, but I'd spent enough years among his kind to know he was furious. All these demons were fucking ego-driven. Their sense of self-importance was all they truly had.

"Go then, little succubus. Let the humans get one look at those pretty horns and see how kindly they take to you." He yanked me up by my arm, bringing his hot, slimy mouth next to my ear. "And when you come crawling back, I won't feed you nicely."

With that, he threw me violently. And not for the first time, I wished I'd been a fallen angel instead, with the ability to fly to my freedom.

I was no angel. I had no wings and I couldn't tell which way was down or up.

But I was falling.

OceanofPDF.com



Bless Me, Father

OceanofPDF.com

“*B*less me father, for I have sinned—”

“Stav—”

I made a soft growl at the back of my throat, cutting Zach off. “It’s been...two and a half months since my last confession.”

“We don’t have to do this in here,” Zach murmured, his shadow shifting through the screen of the dark confessional. “If you want to talk—”

“No, like this.” I pinched the frayed knee of my jeans between my fingers, grimacing at nothing. I didn’t want to sit across a table from Zach and his pretty-boy face, eerily beautiful mismatched eyes watching me as I talked about... about *her*.

“Where’s Kais?” I asked, realizing I didn’t want to be talking to Zach about this at all. Zach was... well, he was also a topic I felt similarly guilty about sometimes, and talking to him about this was all a little too closely related.

“Scouting the border,” Zach said. “Is this about him?”

“No,” I said immediately. “I’ve been...having lustful thoughts.”

In spite of everything, in spite of the world we lived in, the roles we played, Zach still had it in him to laugh. Well, snort at least.

He cleared his throat and his hands ran over his thighs in the booth next to me. “Stav, you’ve gotta be kidding me with this.”

“It’s different,” I muttered. “They’re dreams but...not normal ones.”

I expected him to laugh again, and harder, but this time he was serious. “What kind of dreams?” he asked, voice pitching up with curiosity.

I scowled. “What kind of dreams do you think?”

“Hey, you wanted confession, man.”

I groaned and bent forward, my elbows on my knees, hands scrubbing my face.

“Man or woman?” he asked.

I blinked, suddenly wanting to peer through the screen. Had I ever mentioned being bisexual before? I didn’t think so. Zach knew me, knew my...habits with a couple of the women in town. But I was glad he didn’t sound judgmental as he asked the question.

“Woman,” I said. “Beautiful, but...you know how in dreams someone you know might not look the same, but you know it’s them anyway? Or a stranger in your dream might look like someone you know?”

“Mm.” Noncommittal agreement.

“Well, she’s unfamiliar on both counts.”

“What happens in the dream?”

“It’s not about that,” I said quickly. *She has me pinned to the bed somehow, even though there are no ropes or cuffs, and her mouth runs over every inch of me like she’s inhaling me...*

“What does she look like?”

I scowled at Zach’s open curiosity. Fuck. I should’ve waited for Kais. “It’s not about that either.”

“I’m confused about what this is about then, Stavros,” Zach said, voice taking on weight.

Zach wasn’t a little dude, but he was undeniably *young*, at least in mine and Kais’ eyes. Still, he had a command to him, and you could see the faces of the community brighten when he gave sermons full of hope, as if he could infuse it into them. He’d come of age at the end of the world and it hadn’t beaten him in the same way as the rest of us. Maybe you could adapt to the apocalypse if it happened when you were a kid.

“Maybe I’m not confessing the lustful thoughts,” I said. “I...these dreams are like waking up somewhere else. I don’t remember what’s going on in the world in them. I don’t remember anything but her, and it’s like she’s...*real*. And she’s all there is. It’s a fucking relief, honestly.” Zach hummed again. “Two nights ago I drank half a fifth by myself just to fall asleep faster.”

“Did you dream?”

“Oh yeah.” A good dream. A *long* dream. Full of her and empty of anything else. “I hate waking up.”

Zach sighed and fabric rustled as he slouched in his seat. “What happens in the dreams?”

“Zach,” I growled. “I’m not gonna fuel your wanks, okay?”

He laughed, but it was a slightly nervous sound. “Come on, you wanted to confess. Is it guilt?”

“Of course it’s guilt!”

“For having sex in a dream? Or for preferring that your whole world is a beautiful woman touching you rather than the shit we actually have on our plate?”

“For...wanting to dream and never wake up again,” I said.

Zach was quiet for a while after that. “Are you confessing suicidal thoughts?”

I let out a slow breath. “Not suicide. I think I’d take a coma though, if it were a safe bet.”

“It’s okay to be weary, Stavros. To be angry. God is...”

I tuned him out after that. God was testing us. God wasn’t giving us more than we could handle. God knew that we—Kais, Zach and I—had the situation in hand. That was Zach’s favorite line. He liked to feel chosen by God, as if Hell had risen up from the depths to wash the slate clean for us to start over. Except that Hell hadn’t gone back down again, and I was pretty sure they wouldn’t until they’d dragged every last living soul back with them.

“What does she look like?”

I stirred and shook my head. “It doesn’t matter. You’re right. It’s just dreams. At this point I’m lucky to be dreaming about a beautiful woman that can’t stop fucking me rather than the horrors that ought to be working their shit out in my head at night.”

“Just tell me,” Zach pressed.

“Jesus Christ, Z, just borrowing a fucking magazine,” I laughed.

“Dark hair, pale skin, kind of slight, but with those almost fake looking curves, except they’re real, right? Cause you’ve weighed ‘em in your hand.”

I sat up straight frowning. Was that just...? That was coincidence. That was just a standard fantasy girl that guys thought about then?

“Weird eyes,” Zach said softly. “You can see them almost glowing sometimes. Little bit gold, little bit red, sometimes even green.”

“The *fuck*, Zach?” My skin crawled, ice and spiders raising goosebumps and making my hair stand on end.

The eyes had given me chills the first time I’d seen them, but lately I’d enjoyed reading them. Red was when she was impatient, desperate to get me inside her. Gold was kind of usual, but glowed brightest when staring up at me from between my legs as she ran her tongue up and down my eternally stiff cock. Green...in the pausing moments, ones where it was almost like we were both satisfied, resting together. And then she’d start up again.

“Mine always start mid-kiss, like I’m just kinda waking up with her already there. Do you try to talk to her? I used to, when they started. ‘Bout two weeks ago, yeah?”

I sat up like a shot and banged the door of the confessional open, swiveling on my heel and throwing his open. Zach was just sitting there, frowning to himself. He was dressed in his robes—Kais and I figured he hadn’t really gotten to wear them *before* the Rising, and anyway Zach still really had faith. His hair caught the light of the candles on the other side of the room, little shimmers of gold in the honey. One blue eye and one almost amber flicked up to meet mine.

“You...” I couldn’t find the words.

“She doesn’t ever answer, does she?” Zach asked. “She doesn’t make a sound. I can feel *everything*, but it’s like the world’s on mute.”

The only time there was a sound was when I woke myself up with my moaning. I gaped at my friend, some combination of shock and horror and...there was jealousy too, wasn’t there? She was *mine*, this crystal-clear perfect woman of my dreams that didn’t make a sound and never seemed satisfied.

I’d become almost obsessed with her, that was what I was confessing. I was possessive of a fiction.

And it wasn’t even entirely my own.

“Kais?” I asked.

Zach’s eyes widened and slid away as he thought. He shrugged. “He hasn’t said anything, but I wasn’t planning on saying anything either. Do you think the others...?”

We—well, mainly Zach and Kais—didn’t take too many confessions from the small community of people we protected. I wouldn’t have let anyone call me a priest at all if it weren’t for the fact that it reassured them. I helped kill the demons that circled our borders, but I didn’t give sermons on Sunday like Zach, or go door to door like Kais to check on families and the injured and the women who cared for abandoned children. From what I could tell, Zach and Kais were pretty lenient on some of the old traditional sins. How could any of us judge each other for being angry with God? We were an abandoned flock. And the three of us held the group together with protection and listening ears and understanding more than the structure of a faith that had failed us.

“If anyone was going to hear anything, it’d be you or Kai,” I said, shrugging.

I turned and looked around the church. It was an old beast of a building that we’d found when we moved our community out of the city and into rural Massachusetts three years ago. Half the stained glass was broken, repaired with old windows, and one of the men had done his best to restore the large crucifix hanging high behind the dias. It was a half-hearted replica of the parish I’d led in Boston before I’d stepped down.

“Even the two of us...it’s not a coincidence, Stav,” Zach said, drawing my gaze back to him.

I shoved my hands in my pockets and rocked back on my heels. I regretted the confession. I’d marred the one good thing in my life from the past two weeks, the past year.

It came pre-tainted, you just didn’t want to see it.

“What are you thinking?” I asked, but my thoughts were already turning in an ugly direction.

“It was strange enough before. Too...specific, explicit. I’ve never had sex,” Zach whispered, and I tried to fight my smile.

This poor kid. Like he thought it was a secret. If he weren’t so good with the flock, so good at killing the fucking demons, I would’ve tried to talk him out of his collar to go out and *live* a little. As much as he could at least, in this half-world. There were a couple girls his age in the community, and a couple of women a little older, who absolutely panted up at him when he gave sermons. There was me too, although I wasn’t sure if he’d want to hear that.

“But for the both of us? It’s gotta be a demon, right?”

I sighed and let my head fall back on my shoulders, staring up at the stone arches of the ceiling. “Well in that case it’s my favorite fucking demon, yet,” I said. I groaned and rolled my head, wincing at the crack, the bite of tangled muscles pulling. “We gotta tell Kais, don’t we?”

Zach was quiet and when I looked at him again, the blush was evident on his cheeks. “Can you...can you do it without me? Or just...introduce the idea without me? Like when it’s my turn to patrol?”

I scoffed at him. “You were eager enough to wring the details out of me! Fine, sure. Your shift is next anyway.” I shook my head and started to walk away.

“Stav! Do you think...does that mean...she’s coming?”

I swallowed and glared at the open doors of the church, vicious sunlight pouring through, stretching across wood pews and stone tile to just barely reach my toes.

“I don’t think we’re gonna be lucky enough to face a demon that looks like that, Zach,” I said. “But just be ready, in case.”

It would be a shame though, to have to kill a creature as beautiful as that. I hoped Kais would be faster.

I SKIPPED the confessional for the next conversation, pulling Kais to the far side of the diner we used as a cafeteria for the community. He sat across from me, easy going at first, laughing at the plain questions I posed at the start. Was he having vivid sexual dreams? Regularly? Same girl every time?

By the time I got to the eyes he was upright and stiff, that cool brown skin turned almost ghostly white and faintly green.

I nodded, that was enough confirmation. We'd skip the specifics this time.

"Zach too," I said and Kais' eyes widened a fraction. "You hear anything from the flock?"

That was more my nickname for the community. I knew it pissed Kais off a little, but it was fun to piss Kais off a little. He got this twitch under his left eye as he tried to laugh through his irritation.

"Nothing," he said. "Got a couple adulterous thoughts last week, but it was community specific. I nearly suggested the couples just swap for fun and not worry about it."

I choked on my roasted beet, coughing through the laugh. We ate mainly out of the garden and from the chickens we raised. Looting had grown thin after the first year and we'd been quick to try and establish our own independent food source. We weren't the only ones left alive. We were just one of the few groups trying to hold a little humanity together, rather than matching the enemy for violence and cruelty.

"You think demonic?" Kais asked, frowning.

"I dunno about you, but my dreams weren't holy," I muttered, staring at my plate as Kais shifted uncomfortably across from me.

"Fair enough," he said, nodding. "It's a new tactic."

"But to what purpose?" I asked. "I mean...what is this doing to us really, aside from the, um, obvious?"

Making me come in my sheets like a teenager every night.

"Have you felt groggy in the morning?" Kais asked.

I blinked and shrugged. “I’m not a morning person.”

“I am. Zach is and he’s been sleeping late too.”

“I’m not really in a hurry to wake up lately,” I said, and Kais fought his smile, shaking his head and rolling his eyes.

Over his shoulder a few women entered the diner. Women were outnumbered in our community, and most of the ones we’d picked up came with husbands. I tried not to think about what happened to all the other women of the world, the ones we didn’t find. But the few single women of the community had a habit of letting their eyes slide in our direction. Especially Kais’.

He had dark, tight curls that he let run a little wild on his head. He didn’t admit to it, and I didn’t ever catch him at it, but I suspected he had some hair product stashed away because that wasn’t a natural carelessness. And while Zach and I, and the men brave enough to join us as we left the gates, all did a decent amount of manual labor around the community and a fair share of working out, it was difficult to get Kais to *sit down* for more than a few minutes at a time. He either had endless energy, or he needed a constant distraction from whatever was running through his head.

But in spite of the attention he received, as far as I could tell, Kais kept to his vows.

I wonder what it’s like to have restraint.

“You almost done?” he asked, sure enough starting to shift anxiously in his seat.

I nodded, focusing on my food for the moment, ignoring the invitation in Emma Keene’s tipped head. Kais got first glances, I got second—an unrefined and less beautiful option, but I knew how some women saw priests. We were a

challenge. Could they make us break? Were they more tempting than our devotion to God? What they didn't know, and I opted not to tell them, was that some of us just weren't very good priests.

Kais waited for me to take the last bite before jumping out of his seat. "Come on. It looks like a storm's brewing."

I glanced out the window and up to the gray clouds starting to gather. "What do you think they'll give us this time?" I asked, rising and taking my dishes to the bucket at the counter. "It's been a while since we had some kind of plague of carrion."

Kais pushed the diner door open and the whiff of sulfur, bitter and damp, hit quick.

"Hellfire," we both said.

I PULLED the helmet of the fire suit off my head as I stepped into the old local station, sucking in a deep gasp of air. It was hot inside the building, hellfire turning the world into an oven. Most of the community was down in cellars and basements of the select few buildings we could man and keep cool enough for safety.

Old wooden structures had burned down years ago, before we even arrived.

Part of moving out of the city and up the coast was keeping up our access to a reliable water source. Move too far inland and the water supply started breaking down. Too close along the coast and you had to deal with the new residents of the bays and harbors.

“My turn,” Zach said cheerfully, meeting me at the open floor of the fire station’s garage. “Kais still out there?”

I nodded and rolled my shoulders, pulling the heavy, hot jacket off my shoulders. “It’s moving north now. Should be done in another hour or so.”

“Any more coming?”

“Not as far as we can see to the south, but you never know,” I said, shrugging.

“No dreaming tonight,” Zach said, pulling on his jacket and then helmet, patting me on the shoulder as he ran for the door.

I suppose I was supposed to feel relieved about that. I set the helmet and jacket down on a bench, debating briefly if I could risk it before taking off the cowl and gloves too. It was better to stay prepared, but I wouldn’t do anyone any favors if I overheated in the middle of a second round of hellfire.

Will Norton, an old Boston city planner and current head of our community security, met me at the door of the office, a bottle of water in his outstretched hand. I guzzled it down gratefully, stepping inside and heading for the screens.

Bethel had a limited amount of power to work with, mainly from a windmill farm nearby. A lot of the remaining human communities we knew of were nomads, traveling north into Canada, trying to out-run hellions. The good news for us was that our choice to remain stable left a decent amount of resources to work with that the nomads had overlooked, solar panels and security cameras and computers we could rewire for our limited uses.

“Kinda typical,” Will said, shrugging a shoulder. “You know, for hellfire.”

I nodded, but kept watching. We'd learned a lot since the Rising, but Hell wasn't one for being predictable. "How're the safe houses?"

"Kais is just finishing up with the last one," Will said, sliding back into his chair and slipping his glasses back down to his nose.

He tapped a series of keys, pulling up the images of the schoolhouse, the police station, the library, the church—all the buildings where people could wait out the latest disaster. The school library and church were all on the southern end of town. I'd just finished clearing the way back from the school, which also served as the greenhouse for our food, and protected us from events like the one taking place now. Kais and a few of our volunteers were gathered around the police station, managing the fires there and at the diner.

"And the gate?" I asked.

"Untouched," Will said, but he pulled the visual up for me.

We'd built our gate out of crucifixes when we'd realized it really was effective against the Hellion races. The wooden posts surrounded all of Bethel now, six square blocks of our small town. It wasn't quite the picturesque little village it must've been before the Rising, but it was the safest place we'd found to offer our flock. Hellfire didn't touch the gate, although it didn't prevent the hellfire from raining down within our boundaries, and no hellion could cross. Most wouldn't even come within a few feet.

On the screen, the ground outside the gate was smoking, a few little fires still burning on what was left of the grass.

"Nothing coming for us yet," Will said, changing the screens to the cameras pointed out to the world.

Except there was something coming.

“Fuck, what is that?” Will breathed, sitting up in his chair. I leaned forward, squinting at the image. It was only a shadow, and a significantly smaller one than we usually saw coming for us. I held my breath at its approach, a softly sinuous quality to its movements.

Twin pin pricks of light appeared at the top of the shadow and my gut dropped.

“Shit. Is that...is that a woman?” Will asked. “Is there a woman out there?!”

She was burning, flames licking up the legs of a dress, dangling at the ends of her hair, still clinging to the tips of softly twisting horns on top of her head.

“No woman survives hellfire, Will. I’m going back out. Send Kais or Zach,” I said, running for the door. “*Only* Kais or Zach, you got me?”

“Gotcha, Father,” Will answered as I stuffed myself back into the fire suit, wincing at the title.

So she was a trap after all, I thought, even though I hadn’t really seen her face. But those little pinpricks of light. It was her.

My dream girl.

The hellfire was north past the fire station now and I ran with my helmet off. I wanted to see her face. Look her in the eye for real. She had to be an illusion. If hell was smart, they’d have made all their creatures look like her.

The opening of the gate was two blocks south and I was panting by the time I reached it, the air still heavy with the smell of sulfur, with the heat of the fires.

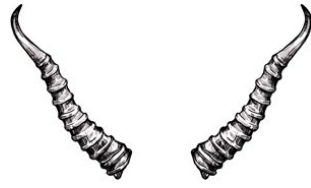
She was there, on the other side, still limping slowly closer. Aside from the horns— which weren't just on fire but were a gleaming gold, curling back and ridged like a ram's— this was absolutely the woman I'd been fucking in my sleep. Except battered. She was soot marked, and I couldn't tell if the blue stains on her temple, shoulder, and her knee as it peeked through a long tear up her skirt, were blood or something else.

Her eyes held mine and the world seemed as quiet as it had in my dreams, her face bobbing over the corner of a large crucifix. I kept waiting for her to stop, to wince away from the gate like the rest of her kind, but she just hobbled closer until she was inches away. Then less.

I could hear Kais calling my name behind me from a distance, but it was muffled. Her breath was sweet, brushing over my face as she leaned into the gate, embracing it in a way I'd never seen from a hellion before. There was pain in her gaze but she sighed, knees giving out. The flames dressing her vanished as she embraced the gate.

“Sanctuary, Stavros,” she whispered, eyes fluttering shut.

OceanofPDF.com



I'm Not Afraid of God

OceanofPDF.com

I smiled at the three familiar faces glowering down at me. A neon light bulb flickered overhead and they blocked the door of the small shed they'd thrown me into. We were still outside their gates and I tried to contain my shudder, my wrists tied at my back and shoulders pulling uncomfortably.

I needed to get in. I needed to get behind those gates where Hell couldn't reach me. Sooner rather than later, because there had to be something, *someone* coming to find me. Kimaris had tossed me out to teach me a lesson. I had absolutely no intention of allowing him to drag me back.

"What are you?" Zach asked, and I smiled at the open curiosity. I knew that curiosity intimately. Zach liked asking questions and finally, outside of the dream, I could answer.

"Succubus," I said, watching the big one, Stavros—who moaned and pleaded and clutched me tightest—cross his arms over his chest. As if he could protect himself from me.

"Why have you come here?" Kais asked, stepping forward.

My gaze flicked nervously to the black gun in his hand. I didn't have enough energy stored up to heal from a gunshot.

Not quickly at least. And I was pretty sure none of the men in front of me would be volunteering to feed me anytime soon.

“For sanctuary,” I said, eyeing each of them and leaning against the still-hot metal of the shed. The warmth felt good actually, more like the home I’d run from. And I was getting shivery and hungry after the journey.

“From what?” Zach asked, head tipping.

“Hell.”

Kais raised the gun and I flinched at last. “Wait—”

A cool, wet splash struck my shoulder, my mouth open and ready to beg, body tense. My head turned and I watched the water run down my bare arm, rinsing away some of the blood with it. Relief rushed through me and a giggle escaped.

“The fuck?” Stavros whispered, stepping forward and crouching down, eyes narrowed on my shoulder.

I looked up at Kais, pale and stiff, eyes wide as if he hadn’t really believed he’d just done that, and even worse, that it hadn’t harmed me.

“I’m not like them. I’m not afraid of God,” I said, watching Kais’ stare rise slowly.

“You don’t come from Hell?” Zach asked, brightening.

“Welllll.” I tipped my head side to side. “Not *originally*.”

Zach pushed in front of Stavros, the young priest’s face hardening as he grabbed for the wooden cross dangling around his neck. He thrust it out toward me, a string of Latin bursting out of his mouth.

“I’m impressed, Zach, but do you mind if we stick to English? Dead languages aren’t all that useful anymore and I’d

already jumped ship from Earth by the time the Romans rolled up.”

His mouth dropped open, plush lips practically begging for a kiss if he didn't look so shocked.

“It's a trick. It has to be.” That beautiful mouth tightened into an angry scowl. “She came to us in our dreams to lower our defenses, to soften us to her so a Hellion could slip past the gate.”

Stavros stroked his beard, those same rough bristles I enjoyed on my inner thighs, while Kais copied his cross-armed stance. A bolt of panic struck my chest and for the first time, I was beginning to regret getting tossed out. Maybe Kimaris was right. The people of earth would take one look at my horns and only see a creature that laid waste to their world.

“But she could *touch* the gate.” Stavros continued to watch me curiously, dark eyes flickering from my face to my arm as if waiting for a delayed effect from the holy water. “Not a single demon from any legion has ever been able to come near it.”

“She could be working with the demons even if she's not one of them,” Zach argued.

“But she says she's a succubus?”

“Why aren't you afraid of God?” Kais was the one to address me, while the other two argued like I wasn't even there.

“Because He created me.” I lifted my chin, my weary smile returning. “You could say succubi and incubi were His first prototypes for humans.”

“Impossible,” Zach scoffed.

“Yeah?” His mismatched eyes dilated, smooth cheeks reddening when I turned my gaze to him. I’d bet both my horns he was growing thick under those robes, too. “Were you there, Zach? Because I was.”

“It’s not anywhere in the scripture,” he retorted. “Except for Lilith, who—”

“Oh yeah, she’s not a succubus, but was another failed attempt.” I shrugged dismissively. “Perfection takes several tries to get right, you see. The writers of the good book would never have you believing such things.”

“And the devil tells lies, you see.” His face twisted into a sneer. “He hides behind beautiful faces too.”

I batted my eyelashes. “Aww. That’s sweet, Zach.”

“Okay, calm down.” Stavros pulled the young priest back by the shoulder, who was getting hot under the collar in more ways than one. “Zach, take a walk. Make sure the rest of the Hellfire’s been put out.”

“But—”

“I said, *take a walk*.”

Standing toe-to-toe, the two of them were nearly equal in size. Zach’s fists clenched at his sides, his emotions nowhere near as clamped down as Stavros’. The older priest stood impassable, like a fortress. I licked my lips, daring to taste the tension simmering in the air between them.

Could they be...? Ah, very interesting.

After a few moments, Zach yielded, storming out of the shed with a heavy slam of the door. Kais and Stavros exchanged a quick glance before returning their gazes to me. Heavy, hungry gazes.

I bit back my whimper at the heat of their eyes on me, the closeness of them amplified by the walls of this tiny shed. I really needed to feed soon, and to get within their crucifix gate.

“Did you come from Hell or not?” Kais, ever the straight shooter.

“Yes.”

“And you’re seeking sanctuary, why?” Stavros squinted at me as though expecting me to change shape before his eyes.

“Because I’m not safe there.”

Kais looked at his fellow priest, scratching the dark curls at the base of his skull. “And does this have to do with you not fearing God?”

Sure, you could say that.

“Yes.” I swallowed, trying to find an answer that wasn’t really an answer. “It’s true, I’ve spent a long time there, as you can see.” I rolled my eyes up to my horns. “But recent...events have made it clear how different I am from Hellspawn. It’s no longer a welcome place for me, and I...” I sank to the dirty floor, trying to make myself look as pathetic as possible. “I’m asking for your protection, Fathers. Within your church.”

“For how long?” Kais finally put the gun away, although it made the question no less abrupt.

“I’m not sure.” I looked down, frowning at the burnt edge of my dress. “I hadn’t thought that far ahead yet.”

Kais released a closed-mouth sigh, angling his head at Stavros with a skeptical look. Oh no. That meant two of them were leaning toward denying me and only the big, beautiful Greek man could be my saving grace.

They all had enjoyed their time with me, I made sure of that—but it was Stavros that clung to me like a lifeline. Sometimes I wondered who was feeding off of who, the way he begged me not to leave, how he asked to just hold me after I took my fill. Many of those I'd fed upon wanted cuddling and aftercare once the deal was done, but I'd never been tempted to say yes until him. He—all three of them, really—was just as much an escape for me as I was for him.

I'd been around a long time and was no stranger to priests who took vows of celibacy. When I fed from Kais and Zach, their energy was potent and heady, a more concentrated form due to not indulging in sex for many years—or in Zach's case, ever. Stavros on the other hand, didn't have that same potency. Which meant he spent it elsewhere.

I could practically taste the longing from him as he stared at me right then. He wanted to agree with his fellow priests, but he also wanted *me*. The man was simply wired to touch and crave, to spend his nights wrapped up in a woman. I could read him from the pheromones he produced, but why such a passionate, indulgent man chose a life of priesthood was lost on me.

“Is there any truth to what Zach said?” Stavros asked quietly. “Why you've been coming to us in our dreams?”

“It wasn't to...to manipulate you, Father.” Adding on the title seemed like a good idea in theory, but the sharp pang of hunger was a stark reminder of what I needed. “I couldn't stand the taste of newborn Hellion anymore, or any Hellion for that matter. Dream-feeding is harmless in small doses, but I...I may have overindulged. Forgive me.” I lowered my eyes demurely. “Father.”

Stavros was quiet. His longing tasted just as strong as ever, but I couldn't get a sense of where his mind was.

"*If* we let you in," Kais spoke up next, "there will be none of that. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Father Kais. I do, but..." My eyes lifted to his—warmth in their brown depths but his pain just as potent as his desire. I didn't need to be a succubus to see that.

"But what?"

"I *do* have to feed, in order to live."

I SUCKED in a deep breath as they pulled me through the gate, pinned between Kais and Stavros, pretty Zachariah at my back just simmering with anger and fear. And it was fear saturating the air around the crowd too.

Word had gotten out and a mass of humans waited on the other side of the shoddy crucifix gate. That gate was a fucking miracle. A wild animal probably could've torn it down, but the legions of Hell couldn't even come close. I was safe.

From Hell, at least, I thought, tasting spite and suspicion and rage with every breath. Several dozen eyes watched me, like I was part of some little human parade, shepherded by the priests through the town.

"Fathers! How could you?" one woman cried out, bundling younglings to her legs, hiding their faces against her hips.

I glanced down at myself. My dress was shredded but I was decent. It was definitely the horns then.

“Kais, this can’t be right,” another man began, stepping down from the sidewalk. But his little tantalizing bubble of courage popped as I looked up at him.

“We’ll explain everything,” Kais answered back, a delicious honeyed echo in his tone as he called to them all. The priest on the pulpit. “You’re perfectly safe. I promise!”

“Are they, though?” Zach muttered at my back.

“You know the terms of Sanctuary, Zach,” Stavros answered, but his fingers pinched my arm with their grip. Was he afraid I’d slip away for the other humans’ sake, or his own?

“I won’t touch them,” I whispered.

“Do you need to be touching them to hurt them?” Kais snapped under his breath.

I turned my head to study him, the shadow on his jaw and the dark circles under his eyes. He thought he was betraying these people. If he knew how to hurt me in that shed, he would’ve done it. He *wanted* me to be demonic, rather than the puzzle I presented. If I were, he would know how to kill me.

“I do, actually,” I said.

“We’ll get the details later. For now, we need to get her out of the street and calm everyone down,” Stavros whispered.

“Do you eat regular food or just people?”

“Zach!” Kais hissed. “Keep your voice down.”

Food...I blinked and brightened. “Oh! I think I did once. It grew on a tree...a pretty shade of red.”

“An apple?” Zach squawked.

“Pft. No...no it had seeds that burst between your teeth,” I said, closing my eyes, ignoring the whispers of the sidewalk

and trying to catch the thread of ancient memory.

“Pomegranate,” Stavros said softly.

“Mmm, it tasted like...good fortune.”

Stavros’ grip softened around my arm and I got the first lick of something sweet. Fondness and regret and... I shivered and restrained my moan.

“Tell me what you’re thinking about,” I whispered. The pounding in my head softened and the burns on my skin stopped throbbing and stinging, just from this little lick of emotion coming from the man next to me. Feeding in person would’ve been so much better than the scraps from their dreams, if only they would let me.

“What?” Stavros asked, frowning.

“I’m remembering pomegranates and you’re remembering...” I caught Stavros’ eyes, that deep shade of brown with little whispers of gold.

“My ya-ya—grandmother, in Greece,” he said, eyes crinkling at the corners.

Love. That was the taste. I sighed and swayed. I hadn’t tasted love in millenia.

“What is it?” Kais asked, his own grip tightening as Stavros’ softened.

“That’s how I can feed here,” I said, holding Stavros’ gaze for another second before looking ahead of me. “Emotions. Preferably the pleasant ones. It’s not substantial, but it doesn’t make me feel sick either. I won’t touch your people.”

We broke out of the small crowd and turned a corner to a side street.

“It’s bigger than I expected,” I said, craning my neck and trying to see how much of this abandoned town my priests had managed to claim for their flock. “Does the gate go all around?”

Stavros opened his mouth to answer, but his eyes snagged over my shoulder on Kais and his mouth snapped shut. I could pull at Stavros’ threads and he would unravel for me. Of the three of them, he cared the least where I came from and craved me the most. And if I took advantage of that, Kais and Zach would probably toss me out on my ass. Better to be docile and cling to safety as long as I could.

Kais pulled on my arm and I turned, discovering our destination. It was large and gothic, one of the oldest buildings in the old town. It’d been bruised, this old beast of a church, but there was only so much a Hellion could do from the street and I knew the second they forced me onto the steps that this was consecrated ground.

Was God watching me now? Wondering how a reject had made it back to Earth and up to the door of a church?

“It’s beautiful,” I said, eyeing the scorched doors, the wrought iron swirls of ornamentation. “I see why they cling to you.”

“Just get inside,” Kais muttered, thinking I was speaking about him and his people.

I wasn’t.



Who Is My Neighbor?

OceanofPDF.com

*B*e patient in tribulation. Patient in tribulation.

It was becoming my mantra in life.

“But why is she *here*?” Leanne Bateman asked. At her side, her husband Scott remained seated in the pew, his eyes on the succubus confined to the chair to my right. I wasn’t sure if the fix of his stare on the creature was the same suspicion as his wife’s or something else.

“She wants safety from the Hellions, same as us,” I said, not sure I really believed the words.

“Couldn’t she get that somewhere else? Why does it have to be us?” asked Oscar McCann, our engineer. He was a widower and he had a daughter about Zach’s age named Heather, who’d recently moved in with another widower the same age as Oscar. The father wasn’t taking it well. Actually, Oscar hadn’t been taking anything well for about a year and a half.

I looked at the woman—the *succubus*—to my right but she remained silent, eyes cast down to the tear in her dress that revealed one pale, elegant—fuck. A leg. It revealed a leg. She hadn’t spoken through the entire inquisition the town led. I’d been grateful at first, but I wasn’t sure it was doing us, or her,

any favors at this point. She just sat there, looking *other*, looking like the Hellion she claimed she wasn't.

“We don't know that there is somewhere else,” Stavros said. I was surprised he was standing with Zach and I. He didn't wear the collar, he didn't give sermons, he didn't offer council, and Stav rejected every staple of our position but fighting back Hell. It was good though, we needed a united front.

Or you could just do as they ask and throw her back out the gate. What's really the loss?

“She might be here under false pretenses,” Zach said, and I stiffened, resisting the urge to crane my neck and gape at him. “She may be sent from Hell to test our wills, our faith. She may be the snake in Eden—”

For the first time, the succubus made a noise, a little snort under her breath no one but the four of us on stage could hear. Her head twitched a little, a soft shake of the head, but she didn't interrupt Zach.

“Or she is as she says she is, a child of God seeking refuge. If that's the case, who do you think is testing our faith? Testing our hearts? If this creature is in need, seeking mercy, sanctuary, what mark is it on our souls to refuse her?”

Stavros and I both sighed as Leanne and a few others sat down, that soft spell of calm taking over the town as Zach began to speak.

“Take her off the stage,” Stavros whispered. “If they can't see her, they won't be constantly reminded of...”

Of the horns, the preternatural beauty, the eerie eyes, and the strange, vivid blue of her blood. Demons didn't come in beautiful bottles from what I'd seen, and I'd seen more than

most while I was still a chaplain in the army, fighting the first rising. Still, she was clearly not human, and that was enough to scare our town.

I set my hand on her shoulder, resisting the urge to flinch. The dreams I'd had, the ones full of her, and been so vivid it was like I was living them. I knew the exact porcelain smooth texture of her skin. What was worse was that in real life, touching this creature was amplified, beyond reality, as if a magnifying lense had been placed over my nerve endings, sending rapid and overly detailed messages to my brain.

The basest part of me wondered what that would make the sex feel like.

“You know the parable of the Good Samaritan. You heard it a hundred times growing up,” Zach continued as I guided the succubus to the back of the dais, slipping through the open door. “So he asked Jesus “And who is my neighbor?”” Travelers from different towns, that’s all of us. We’ve all met one another midway on this journey, all felt the spite of robbery against our lives since the Rising...”

“Take me to the balcony,” she whispered, resisting the pull of my arm.

“Why?”

“Because I want to listen,” she said, lips curling in that infernal smile she kept sporting.

Why? I wanted to ask again. This...succubus made me feel like a parrot. Why was she here? Why had she chosen us, our dreams? Why leave hell now in its victory?

“You have to be silent,” I said, glaring at her.

She nodded. “I know. I won’t let them see me. Just let me hide up there.”

The hall was quiet, and our footsteps echoed on the linoleum. This area was a later addition to the classic structure of the church, more modern and full of little community rooms and offices. I'd been planning on stashing her down in the cellar where I could lock the door from the outside and then...

Leave her there? Is that really a better example than throwing her back to Hell?

"Fine," I said, turning heel and heading for the narrow stairs that would take us up to the balcony.

Her feet slapped against the cracked linoleum and I glanced down, my jaw gritting. She was barefoot, leaving little blue footprints on the floor, her feet torn and covered in black ash.

"Are you bleeding?"

"I'll clean it up," she said quickly.

We'd nearly passed the supply closet and the succubus went slipping and stumbling as I stopped suddenly, yanking the door open. The first aid kit hung in a basket inside and I grabbed it with my free hand, ignoring her stare on my face.

"Is this going to work on you?"

"It's going to help. Thank you, Kais."

She flinched as I whipped my stare back at her, just a tiny fraction of a movement. It might've been faked, but she recovered quickly, expression smoothing. She reacted to sudden movements, had fear impulses, like when she thought I'd pulled a real gun on her, and there were...marks around her throat and on the high arch of her cheek.

Trap.

I tugged her along to the stairs, shutting down the argument in my head and trying not to take my frustration out on her arm in my grip.

Her steps were silent up to the balcony, and she slid soundlessly down to the floor, pulling free of my grip and scooting over to the wall of the balcony as I watched. Her hands were still tied behind her back, and her feet looked worse now that I could see the soles, like she'd walked over hot coals. Caused by the Hellfire that had rained down, probably. I knelt at her feet, opening the first aid kit as quietly as I could.

I'd have to tell the others how quiet she could be, make sure one of us knew where she was at all times. I didn't like the idea of locking her up like an animal, but for the sake of the people we promised safety to, we couldn't just let her loose. Maybe for her own sake too, based on the looks some of the community was giving her.

I tore open a sterile wipe, glancing up and pausing.

She had her cheek pressed to the stone wall, head tipped back and lips parted, eyes shut as she took in great breaths. Her foot twitched, yanked in my hand as I grabbed her ankle, and then settled quickly. She didn't seem to mind the wipe, just pressed her hand to the stone and shivered.

"Do you have a name?" I whispered.

"Deyva."

Day-vah. Deyva...it sounded like a sigh, sweet and romantic. A name better suited to an angel than the creature in front of me.

She twisted, ankle turning in my loose grip, ignoring the shift of her skirt that left one leg entirely bared. But she wasn't

paying any attention to me, her eyes were on the roof, cheeks coloring pink and chest heaving.

“What—” I knew that look on her. I’d *created* that look on her in my dreams. “What are you doing? Are you...*feeding* off of our people?”

Every instinct told me to spur into action, to get Stavros, anyone. We didn’t know *what* she was capable of, or how dangerous she really was. Did she drain people like a vampire? The Lord knew how sluggish—no, how utterly *slothful* I’d been in the mornings after visits from her.

What I hadn’t admitted to anyone yet, was how rested and peaceful I felt during those mornings. It didn’t last the whole day, but my sleep had been an endless minefield of flashbacks and cold sweats before her. This strange, beautiful woman gave me a glimpse of what I’d been fruitlessly chasing for years—peace.

Despite all that, I had to focus. To stop her. It could’ve all been to lull us into a false sense of security, no matter how much I craved feeling that peacefulness again.

“Stop what you’re doing,” I insisted, tightening my grip around her ankle. Who the fuck knew if I could actually prevent her from doing anything, but she’d complied with us so far. “Stop it now!”

She blinked and there was a drowsy, dreamy expression on her face as it turned to me. “They won’t feel it,” she breathed. “I know I...I was too greedy in the dreams. I didn’t mean to be. But I promise, I won’t harm them. This is just the sweetest thing I’ve tasted in centuries.”

I frowned, staring down at the mangled foot in my hands, the blue carving scratches on the soles of her feet and the scars

around her ankles.

“What is?”

“Their faith,” she sighed. “I think it feels like sunlight. It’s so strong.”

“In God?”

She shook with silent laughter, head lolling limply on her shoulders. “In *him*. Zach. All of you. They have absolute faith in the three of you. It’s breathtaking, Kais.”

“Your reverence is touching.” My other hand continued to wipe at the ash and cuts on her foot. “But how do I know you’re not harming them?”

The succubus—*Deyva, her name is Deyva*—tilted her head, her strange eyes brighter now and that little smile all too playful. “Have I ever hurt you, Kais? Or any of you for that matter?”

“That depends on your definition of hurt.” I discarded the used antiseptic wipe and ripped open another, my grip shifting to her other foot. “Too much of a good thing can be bad for anyone.”

Her eyes rolled back, a groan emitting from her throat. *Fucking hell, she needs to stop making noises like that.*

“I figured Zach would be the morality police, but you?” She blinked at me, the light from the stained glass created a kaleidoscope effect on her horns as her head tilted to the other side. “You are certainly not without sin.”

I returned my gaze to her feet, noticing how her bleeding slowed and the most shallow cuts already had begun to close. And still I heard Zach’s commanding voice from down below,

meaning nothing was amiss in the chapel. At least, no one was dropping dead anyway.

“Look, the thing is, we don’t know you.” Her feet were looking better already. Now if only I could keep my fucking eyes from wandering up her leg. “So it’s going to take some time before we can trust you.”

“And yet here you are, washing my feet.” Deyva pressed her back to the balcony wall, her chest lifting with a deep breath like she was getting high on the choruses of, “*Praise Him! God is good!*” down below. If it was Zach up here, he definitely wouldn’t be thinking about the outline of perfect, teardrop-shaped breasts through the burnt fabric of that dress. No, absolutely not.

And Stavros? I didn’t even want to think of where Stav’s mind—or hands, for that matter—would be.

“What’s me cleaning your feet got to do with anything?” I muttered.

“Aw, come on, Kais,” she sighed. “Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Mary of Magda washed His feet with her tears and spilled perfume. All this feet-washing symbolism in your faith, don’t act like you don’t know.”

“Yeah, and what do you know about it?” I barked with more aggression than I intended. Shit, I needed to get out of here and run laps around the town or something.

She deflated slightly and I wished I could take the words back. Succubus or not, she still reacted in the same way a frightened woman would. Like someone who’d been hurt.

“That it’s an act of humility,” Deyva said softly. “Of selflessness. You *do* trust me, to the extent that I’m a stranger,

and you're treating me like a guest. So thank you, Kais. That's all I'm trying to say."

A long silence fell between us, with only the shuffling footsteps and murmuring voices downstairs to fill the empty air. People sounded like they were leaving, going about their business for the evening. That was good, the less people hanging around to gawk, the better.

"So you know your scripture." I cleaned up the trash from the first aid kit and dared to steal a glance at her.

"I've been around a long time," she shrugged, looking stronger and slightly more alive than when we first dragged her in, but still not one-hundred percent.

She looked healthier but tired, not quite the acrobatic seductress dragging her tongue and supple body all over—

Yeah, gonna need to run some laps tonight for sure.

I also didn't want to get into the conversation of exactly how long she'd been around—just more shit that I probably couldn't wrap my head around, so I opted for simpler questions.

"Do you um, bathe? Like, do you need to take a shower?"

Her grin spread, eyes flashing a tinge of red before returning to her normal golden yellow, but thankfully she didn't proceed with any innuendo.

"Yes, a shower would be great. I'm pretty much bound by your laws of physics down here, like any other person. I have a body, so dirt and things will cling to me."

"Right. Let's go." I peered over the balcony, making sure the pews were empty down below before rising to my feet. My grip returned to her bound arms, albeit gentler and more

guiding than my forceful grip earlier. “Sorry if I was rough with you before,” I muttered.

“That’s okay,” she answered lightly. “Do you mind if I get some new clothes with that shower?”

“Yeah, sure. I’ll track some down for you.”

Leading her back down the hallway became more like walking side-by-side at some point. Her head reached my shoulder’s height, but the added horns made her look a bit taller.

At the other end of the building was the church’s gymnasium, which had a small locker room with showers attached. Hardly anyone used it anymore, but it seemed like a better deal than having her shower and caged up at our place—the caretaker’s cottage just behind the cathedral.

Having her stand right beside me after only having her in my head was one thing. I didn’t dare to think about her in our personal space.

“There’s no soap or shampoo or anything,” I said at the locker room entrance. “But you can rinse off. I’ll have a towel and change of clothes just outside for you.”

Her shoulders rolled back as she peered up at me under the dim fluorescent lights. “I don’t suppose having full use of my hands would be asking too much?” She tugged at the bindings on her wrists, eyes brightening. “Or are you going to give me a hand in the shower?”

“Don’t get cute.” I drew a circle in the air, indicating she should turn around. “And if I take these off and get you some clothes, you’re definitely not going to run off and cause trouble, right?”

“You seem to keep forgetting that I *wanted* to come here.” She spun around in a huff, sounding truly irritated for the first time. “I’m safest here, even with your manhandling and suspicion about my intentions.”

With her back to me, holding out her bound wrists, she certainly seemed to trust me enough. I pulled my pocket knife from my belt, switching the blade open. She didn’t react to the sound, not even a tense lifting of her shoulders. I had a weapon in my hand, standing behind her and she didn’t even flinch. Would she even get injured or die if I tried to attack her?

The thought left me feeling immensely uncomfortable. *What the fuck is wrong with me?* Horns or not, what kind of Christian contemplated attacking a woman who came to us seeking sanctuary? My own mind was giving me whiplash trying to determine if she was a threat or not.

“Any day now, Kais.” Deyva tossed me a look over her shoulder, her side profile as artfully crafted as a Renaissance painting.

I stepped closer, sliding a finger of my free hand under the zip-tie holding her wrists together. The skin of her wrist was warm, and I realized just as my blade slipped under the plastic cord, how close my face was to hers.

She stayed, looking back at me like that even after her wrists came free. If she leaned back another inch or two, that horn would be nuzzling against my forehead.

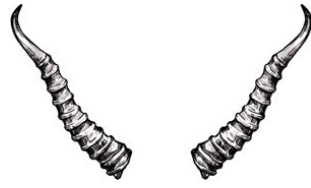
“I won’t be long.” She turned away, lifting one free hand to the locker room door.

“I’ll, uh,” I cleared my throat, “I’ll knock when I have stuff for you.”

Her head tilted back, the curve of her lips naughty and coy.
“If you’d like to, but you’re welcome to barge in at any time.”

“Not happening.” I stormed off, unsure if I was trying to convince her or myself more.

OceanofPDF.com



God Doesn't Make
Mistakes

OceanofPDF.com

A shower. How long had it been since I felt real water on my skin? I was tempted to stay under the scalding hot spray until Kais really was forced to burst in. The thought made me giggle—his heavy footsteps stomping through the locker room, thinking I'd run off to go on some demonic rampage. Only to find me here, wet and naked, just as he liked me.

How they all liked me, as long as I was a fantasy. Reality proved to be entirely different. I couldn't say I was surprised, but maybe a tad disappointed. Getting Kais all riled up from my teasing was fun, though.

I heard two heavy thumps on the locker room door, then the creak of it opening.

“Got you clothes. I'll be right outside,” Kais called just before the door closed.

“Why stay out there when you could come inside?” I said to the empty locker room.

It didn't dignify my question with an answer.

I remained under the hot spray for another several minutes before reluctantly shutting the water off. As fun as it was to make these priests squirm, it was probably smartest not to

press my luck with them. Who knew how much sexual frustration would set them off to the point of tossing me back over the gate? The dream-feeding was real to me, but not to them. I felt like I knew who they were, but in their eyes, I was only meant to be a fantasy.

Dripping wet, and my dress discarded on a bench, I padded across the locker room to see what Kais had left me. A large, fluffy bath towel, a pair of leggings, and a long-sleeved t-shirt were folded neatly on the bench closest to the door.

I couldn't help the sigh that escaped as I rubbed the towel over my body. There was nothing like this in Hell, this sensory feeling of softness, coziness. Wrapping the towel around my torso, I carefully unfolded the clothes set out for me. Between the shirt and pants, there was a pair of flip-flops, and even a bra and panties, still sealed in plastic packaging.

“Aw, what's the matter, Kais?” I laughed to myself. “Don't want to see my nipples through my shirt?”

I got dressed and left the locker room to find him waiting just outside the door, as he said he would be. His arms were crossed, trying to look the part of a stern bodyguard, but his brow and stance visibly relaxed at the sight of me.

“Feel better?”

“Much. Thank you.”

“Good. You do look almost human with Hell washed off of you.” His gaze was softer as he appraised me in my new human clothes. “Fresh as a daisy.”

I snorted. “Please do not ever compare me to something as bland and earthly as a *daisy*.”

“Why not?” Kais seemed delighted in my annoyance. “It almost sounds like your name. Deyva. Daisy.”

“Stop.” I wrinkled my nose. “I’d threaten to feed from you, but you’d enjoy it too much.”

“Uh huh.” He turned on the toe of his boot, which I took as an indication to follow him through the empty gymnasium.

“Do you sleep?” he asked, thankfully changing the subject.

“I can, but it doesn’t replenish my energy like it does for you.” My toes curled over the soles of the flip-flops, the sensation of shoes odd, but not completely unpleasant. “Only feeding does.”

“Right, which is not happening. I’m still not thrilled about you doing it with no warning on the balcony.”

My chest heaved with a sigh. I was tired, and not just because feeding from the congregation’s faith was barely enough to sustain my normal energy levels. I hadn’t even been here an hour and already had to constantly defend myself.

“You’ll see how they feel tomorrow,” I told him snippily. “And when you don’t notice a difference, I expect you to come to me with an apology. Doesn’t mean I’ll accept it, though.”

“An apology!” He barked out a laugh. It was sudden and bright, the pleasing sound echoing off the gym walls and ceiling before he led me out another door. “Good one, Daisy.”

“You know in all the years I’ve been alive, I’ve never actually head-butted someone with my horns. Seems like it might be fun to try.”

“I’m sure it would. But you’d certainly say goodbye to hot showers and clean clothes if you did.”

I bit my tongue, following him through the hallway. His demeanor was considerably more relaxed than before, apparently convinced that I wouldn’t run away or disappear in

a plume of smoke. That, or he was confident I wouldn't get far if I tried. His reflexes were like lightning, footsteps fast and efficient despite the broad spanse of his shoulders filling the hallway.

Even though I knew exactly how well he was built, intimately acquainted with the musculature from his thick arms to his even thicker thighs, watching him simply march down a hallway was a sight to behold. I was nowhere near full-strength, so I had to jog a couple paces behind him to keep up, my eyes fixated on his ass as he walked.

“You can stay in here for the time being.” He stopped abruptly in front of a door, making me crash forehead first into the brick wall that was his back.

So hungry...

Even just brief contact through clothing, a quick inhale of his smell, had me salivating for a taste. A real one that not even dream-feeding could satisfy.

“Deyva?” He looked at me with that pinched brow again. “You alright?”

“Yes! Yes, a room. Thank you.”

“Sure. It's just an office with a futon, but it'll have to do until we,” he sighed and rubbed the back of his neck, “until we figure something out.”

“I understand.”

“You do know that I'm going to have to lock you in,” he said with an almost apologetic look. “Right?”

“Actually, I know that's the last thing you need to do,” I said, pursing my lips. His stare hardened and I shrugged, slipping past him into the office. It was quaint, human, with

little framed scripture verses and a painting of a white Jesus on the crucifix hanging prominently behind the desk. “But I understand it’s what will make you feel safest.”

“It’s my people I’m concerned for, not myself,” Kais said.

I wondered if it gave him a headache to grimace so much. To be so full of tension. “I am less interested in them than I am in you, Kais,” I said, lips quirking.

This would go much more smoothly if I could learn to stop flirting, I realized as he snarled.

“Kais, wait—” I started, but the door slammed shut before I could ask to see the others, Stavros and Zach. A moment later, the lock clicked.

All the ease and comfort I’d gained from feeding from Zach’s audience, from the shower, and from Kais’ care, snapped like a weak thread. My muscles coiled in my body and my chest ached as I held my breath. I didn’t like cages.

This isn’t really one, I reminded myself, swallowing hard and staring at the door. There were dozens of ways I might leave the room. The window Kais had failed to secure for starters. I would stay—locked, like an animal, like a *toy*—because that was what they needed me to do if they were going to trust me.

I was safe from Kimaris here, relatively speaking. And it would be a long time before Kimaris would admit to Belial that he’d thrown me from Hell. The greatest risk I faced at the moment was the humans turning on me, or not being able to feed before I turned on them.

I slunk over to the small couch at the end of the room, testing its give cautiously. *Afraid of a couch now, are we?* I laughed at myself and bounced onto its cushions, purring as I

slid down on my back. Company would've been nice, but being clean, free, and having my first taste of flavors not colored by the agony of Hell since the Rising? It was enough.

For now.

And they couldn't leave me in here indefinitely... right?

SOMETIME IN THE NIGHT, it occurred to me that I should've lied and said I needed human food too. I watched the color of the sky change through the high window, and no one came. So I took to reading to pass the time, trying to ignore the infernal ticking of the clock on the wall as it told me that minute by minute, hour by hour, I was abandoned.

In a priest's dowdy little office.

By morning, I'd pulled the batteries out of the clock and taken a pen to the good book.

Click.

I stiffened in the chair behind the desk, my legs stretched across the wood. My eyes darted to the door, wondering if I'd imagined the sound. And then the knob turned, the door parted, and I found mismatched eyes studying me, before taking in the minor chaos I'd caused in the room.

I'd discarded the bra Kais had gifted me—they were obviously Hell's design—and thrown it to catch on the corner of the frame of White Jesus, my sole companion of the hours. The clock was dismantled into pieces on the floor—I was fairly certain I could put it back together—and I'd knocked a cup of pencils and pens to the floor when I'd taken my position at the desk.

One of the pens was clamped between my teeth as I gazed widely back at Zach, whose cheeks were red with anger or embarrassment. I couldn't *quite* taste from here.

“Are you...are you writing in the *Bible*?” Zach asked.

Ah. Anger.

“Just annotating a little. There's an awful lot of errors. By the way, have you realized that you have your Lord and Savior's *birthday* wrong?” I asked, *tsk*'ing at Zach. “Think of how He must feel.”

Zach didn't quite rise to the bait, but he stepped into the room, leaning back against the door. “Liberties might've been taken with specifics, but the teachings of Christ remain essential,” he said, which sounded a little rehearsed. I opened my mouth to parry and Zach snapped, “*Don't* bring up Leviticus. Everyone always thinks they're gonna crack Christianity wide open with that one.”

I laughed and bit my lip, grinning at Zach. He had something wrapped in white paper tucked under his arm and it smelled...savory from here.

“Is that for me?” I asked, nodding at the package and drawing his eyes up from their accidental fixation with my legs.

“Are those scars?” he asked, frowning at my ankles.

I twisted and tucked my legs under the desk, sitting up and remaining silent.

“Kais said not all of your injuries looked recent enough to be from...how *do* you get here from Hell?” he asked, looking a little horrified by the question.

“It’s not up or down,” I said, shrugging. “Just...” I reached out to my left, tentatively brushing at the fabric of here and there and then shook my fingers out. I didn’t want to put so much as a hair back in that place. “Gimme.”

Zach glanced down at his offering and frowned. “I know you said you don’t need to eat like us, but I couldn’t really wrap my brain around that so...”

He trailed off, and finally abandoned his post at the door, moving to the desk. I jumped up, climbing onto the top and letting my legs dangle off in front of me. Zach only came as close as he had to, stretching his arm out in front of him until I could steal the paper wrapped food from him. I tore it open eagerly, sucking down a deep breath of something fatty and salty, as well as Zach’s delicious threads of curiosity.

“You are hungry?” he asked, frowning at the way I unwrapped the gift impatiently.

“Not for this,” I said, grinning at Zach, catching a drop of grease from the paper and sucking it off my thumb as I held his eyes, wondering if we were both thinking of the time I’d edged him in his dream, sucking on his precum in the same way. When the flush ran up from his black collar to his cheeks, I relented. “But it’s been a long time and I am interested to remember your version of flavors.”

“It’s just a breakfast sandwich,” he said, retreating to the couch, sitting down in its deep cushions and watching me.

“Where do you get the food?” I asked. The world was ravaged.

“We grow it. Bread is...kind of a commodity since there’s only so much wheat we can grow, but we thought today was a good day.”

“As an apology for letting me in?” I asked, and Zach hummed. The sandwich was dripping with some kind of fat and I brought up to my lips, moaning with the first bite, eyes growing wide briefly before falling shut. “Oh, *Zach*.”

His throat cleared uncomfortably and I resisted the urge to laugh, simply enjoying the added headiness of his lust with my gifted meal. Something broke and dripped onto my lips with my next bite and I looked down to see a bright orange yolk, quick to lap it up. Slowly as I ate, the conversation replayed in my head.

“You brought me something precious,” I said, tipping my head. If bread was rare, and it had been made to console the people of this town, Zach had probably brought me his portion of it.

“It’s just a sandwich,” he muttered, frowning at his own lap.

“Do you want to know what it tastes like?” I asked.

He looked up, puzzled, and shrugged. “I know what food tastes like Dey—” He stopped himself from saying my name for some reason, but I liked the abbreviation.

“Bread tastes like...good rest? Laziness, maybe? The indulgent kind. Fat is like the comfort of wealth. This yolk is similar, but more about safety I think. I’m not sure, it’s been a long time since I’ve had a lick of that,” I said.

Zach’s mouth hung slightly open as I explained myself, but it wasn’t flavors he asked about. “Why aren’t you in the Bible?”

I licked my thumb again, lingering, holding his gaze. I wasn’t going to get much to eat while I was here perhaps, and Zach didn’t seem to realize I was drawing out his lust

intentionally. Kais would've noticed. Stavros probably wouldn't have needed any inducement at all.

"Hmm, maybe because I'm too old. Maybe because God doesn't like admitting to mistakes," I said, biting out the last word.

"God doesn't make mistakes," Zach said.

I laughed and finished my gifted sandwich, wondering what Zach would think if I licked the paper. It wasn't filling, but it was fucking good and I would enjoy what I could.

"What do you call what happened with, you know, the Big Bad Honcho?" I asked, wagging my eyebrows.

"Lucifer, the Devil?" My eyes slid away at the name and Zach sat forward. "Are you scared of him?"

"I am... respectfully wary," I murmured.

"Lucifer's sins are his own."

"Are they?" I asked, frowning and wishing Zach would quit using the name. "Are humans the only creature of God allowed to doubt and be forgiven for it? My kind aren't in the Bible because God created us to love, but not each other, not the angels. Just our maker. Why make a being with free will if you only want it to be used for one thing? We failed as an experiment, so we got the boot."

"The teachings of Christ are about loving one another, caring for one another," Zach argued.

I sniffed and tossed my hair back. "The teachings of Christ *are*, as long as it's not with your body parts." My eyebrows wagged suggestively. "And look where he ended up," I said, pointing to the painting behind me.

Zach huffed and stood marching for the door. Shit, too far, Deyva.

“Wait! You can’t... *Please* don’t just leave me locked in this room,” I said, jumping up from the desk, moving to meet him at the door and pressing myself against the jamb. He stumbled back, unable to close the door, unable to leave the room without passing close to me. “Please. I’ll stay in the church, within the grounds’ gate at least, but not this...”

Cage. Prison. This single fucking room.

Zach’s jaw ground and I went ahead and let him read the desperation on my face. He was close enough that I had good sips of him, not *taking*, just appreciating what came off of him naturally. Frustration, mostly with himself. The angry disbelief with me. The decadent sexual attraction. And just enough sympathy that I could make use of it.

“Please,” I whispered, flinching.

His hand snapped up and I twitched in response, until he dug his fingers into his hair, making it stand at adorable angles as he stared out into the hall.

“The others are patrolling. You can...come with me to the chapel. There’s someone who usually comes in about this time. But you have to stay out of sight and you can’t just *wander*.”

I nodded eagerly. “I promise.”

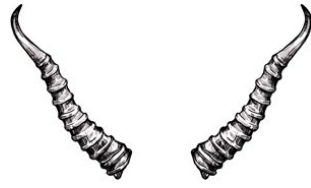
“When the guys get back, we’ll discuss your boundaries before we change shifts,” Zach said, chest puffing up and shoulders squaring, taking on some of Kais’ natural authority. “If you disappear, Deyva, I swear—”

“You tell me where to sit and that’s where I’ll be. I just need more space,” I said. It was a little more than I wanted to

admit, but it did the trick. Another flare of sympathy.

I didn't want to share those things, the ugliness of the recent years with Kimaris in Hell, especially not with these three men who had only ever been precious, perfect moments. But this wasn't dreaming anymore. If they could suffer through the reality of me, I might as well give them whatever honesty I could spare.

OceanofPDF.com



Anger and Lust

OceanofPDF.com

“*D*o you think I can sit up on the balcony? Kais let me go up there last night.”

Zach whipped around to face me in the center of the hallway. His frustration with me was peppered with other flavors—attraction, annoyance, and a small dash of fear.

“I thought *I* said where you could sit,” he ground out, nostrils flaring.

“I’m just throwing out suggestions.” I shrugged. “People won’t be able to see me up there, but I won’t be confined like a child.” Or a pet.

“I need to be able to see where you are at all times.” Zach’s grumpiness rivaled Kais’ in that moment, and I not-so-secretly delighted in getting under his skin too. “The answer is no.”

He turned to continue down the hall and I followed, letting out a dramatic, wistful little sigh. His broad shoulders bristled at the sound but otherwise didn’t react.

So prickly, these pious virgins.

When we reached the door to the chapel, he stuck his head through and looked around before opening it fully.

“Just stay behind the pulpit,” he muttered. “I have to talk to some people, but one of the others should be here soon.”

“Yes, Father.” I tossed him a smirk, leaning against the short staircase leading up to the platform.

Zach turned a delicious shade of red and jumped the staircase in two long strides. I heard the murmurings of people as he went to address them, and quickly tuned them out. Souls and salvation, *yawn*.

Now utterly bored, I paced back and forth along the back of the pulpit. Soreness and fatigue shot up my feet as I walked—I wouldn’t last much longer without an actual feeding and the priests needed to know. Their safety—and that of their people—would be at risk if I came close to starvation.

If only I had gotten any actual sustenance from that breakfast sandwich. It certainly tasted good enough. I licked my lips, my tongue finding tiny remnants of breadcrumbs in the corners of my mouth. Humans had no idea how easy they had it, just being able to put things in their mouths to live another day.

Not that I wouldn’t mind putting something else in my mouth, I thought, glancing at Zach and smirking to myself.

Zach wasn’t leading a sermon this morning, so there was no collective swell of faith for me to siphon from. The handful of people in the church were calm without huge spikes in their emotional state, so that didn’t do much for me either.

I paused in my pacing, already feeling drained as I leaned against a wall. The temptation was strong to just pop onto the pulpit and feed on the shock and fear of people seeing me, not to mention seeing the pricelessness of Zach’s reaction. It would be better than nothing.

But I had to listen, to do as I was told, if I wanted a snowball's chance of surviving. Kimaris would be forming a plan to get me back by now, most likely under King Belial's nose.

My eyes closed halfway, my body starting to sway on my feet. I just needed a little taste of something to feel alert. Maybe Zach would...

“Devya?”

A hand, warm and firm, squeezed around my shoulder. My eyes focused to find the man in question blinking at me.

“Hi, Zach.” A tight smile pulled at my lips as I forced myself not to feed from that physical touch, nor the taste of unease clouding around him like a perfume.

“You look like you're about to fall asleep on your feet.”

“Yeah, you know. Getting tossed out of another realm, walking a couple miles through hellfire, and barely eating anything tends to be pretty draining.”

His mouth tightened, and again that sympathy washed over me like a cool waterfall. As much as he tried to be a righteous hard-ass, that sweet sympathetic taste was palpable in him.

“I need to take a few confessions.” He tilted his head toward the wooden box, only slightly bigger than a phone booth, to the side of the pulpit. “Can I trust you to stay back here while I do that?”

“Mmm.” I tapped a finger on my chin. “I'd really prefer to go up to the balcony.”

“No! Fucking—” He stopped himself, jaw clenching with a huff of breath.

“Careful now,” I chided. “Wouldn’t want you to say your Lord’s name in vain.”

The look he gave me was ripe with anger, but I picked up a heady taste of desire from him too. Ah, anger and lust—the perfect emotional mix for a hate fuck. He’d never take me up on it, but it would soothe the barbs of his prickliness nicely.

“Come on, please?” My plea wasn’t desperate now like it was to get out of the office, but I couldn’t help from poking Zach’s hornet nest just to see what would happen under all that restraint. “I’ll stay hidden, I promise. And I’ll be able to see when Stav or Kais come back so I won’t be your problem anymore.”

He hesitated another moment before grunting out, “Fine. Let’s go.”

“No need!” I headed for the door we’d just come out of. “I know my way.”

I pulled it open and headed down the hallway Kais took me last night. Part of me wanted to see if Zach would insist on following me like a reluctant, sexually repressed bodyguard. The fact that he didn’t caught me off-guard. If the most pious of my three priests actually took me at my word, maybe there was hope for me yet.

Taking care to stay out of sight of anyone below, I made it to the second level just in time to see a woman step into the confessional and close the small wooden door behind her. Zach was presumably already inside, no doubt taking the responsibility of unburdening this woman’s soul very seriously.

Curiosity locked my gaze onto that little wooden booth, wondering what they talked about. These days, humans did

little more to survive from one day to the next. Earth was no fun anymore, what sins did people have to confess?

A creeping thought wandered in just as the ancient, heavy front doors of the church opened and Stavros walked down the aisle. Several heads in the pews turned to look, all female.

“Good morning, Father,” some murmured as he passed them.

“Good morning,” he returned politely, the twitch in his eye at being called Father barely visible. “Where’s Father Zach?”

“Taking confession. If you don’t mind, Father,” one woman rose from her pew, stepping out into the aisle to get closer to Stavros, “might I have a word with you in private?”

I froze, watching the exchange from my voyeuristic hiding place. The woman stepped closer to him, hands clasped in front of her demurely, while her forearms conveniently pressed her breasts together. Stavros’ gaze flicked over her, his expression unreadable, but I tasted the apprehension spiking off of him. And from her, the want was thick and palpable in the air.

“What is this regarding?” Stavros asked with measured caution.

“A personal matter, Father. I would really prefer to speak with you alone.”

His tongue stuck out to wet his lips, a large hand coming up to idly scratch the dark scruff coating his cheeks.

“Don’t do it,” I whispered, not that he could hear me. “You think I’m a trap? You’re looking right at one!”

“Sure, why don’t we, uh,” he scrubbed a hand down his face, suddenly looking weary, “talk in the office?”

The woman looked all too pleased as they walked together around the pulpit to the back door of the chapel. I hesitated for all of five seconds before leaving the balcony, making my way silently down the stairs and hallway. Zach wasn't likely to come looking for me if he had more confessions to hear, and Stav would know where I was soon enough.

The main hallway was empty when I made it back to the first floor, the door of the office where I'd been kept was closed. I crept closer, pressing myself against the wall alongside the door and hardly daring to breathe. Low, murmured voices came from the other side. While my hearing was slightly better than a human's, I still struggled to pick up more than a few words of the conversation.

“...vows. Can't do that...”

“...at home... he won't...”

“...sorry. I can talk to...”

“...please? Just once?...”

I bit my knuckle to keep from making a sound. Stavros' voice was low and firm, tempered and even throughout the whole exchange, while the woman steadily pitched higher as she seemed to grow more desperate. The door flew open suddenly and I let out a squeak of surprise, giving away my cover.

The woman's head whipped around to face me, shock and then venom in her eyes. She continued turning until facing Stavros, sitting behind the desk looking defeated.

“Did you know this...*creature* was eavesdropping outside the door?” Her pinning stare returned to me. “Why is it still here?”

“Emma, you heard Zach’s talk last night,” Stavros answered wearily. “We’re giving her sanctuary here. She’s not a prisoner.”

“Well if she’s skulking around the church, listening to private conversations, maybe she should be!”

“Eavesdropping is not a crime.” Stavros leaned back in his chair. “If she truly were a demon, she’d probably be up to far worse.”

“So what are you going to do?”

“I’ll handle it, Emma. Thank you for coming to me with your...concerns. Have a good day now.”

Emma did not look pleased at being dismissed by him, despite being on her way out of the office anyway. She turned without another glance, speed walking down the hall while I took a moment to taste the emotions she threw in the air. They were familiar, but not something I tasted often.

When they hit me, a fiery mix of possessiveness, intense desire, and embarrassment, I turned into Stavros’ doorway with a gleeful smile.

“She wants to bang the shit outta you.”

He coughed with surprise. “You heard that much, huh?”

“No, hardly anything, actually. But I tasted everything she felt on her way out of here.” I leaned against the doorjamb, studying him as he studied me. “But you turned her down. Why?”

“Why?” He had the nerve to scoff. “I’m a priest.”

“Nah, come on, Stav.” I stepped into the room, shrinking the distance between us. “Maybe you were at one point, but you don’t even put on a collar anymore. And you certainly

don't abstain from sins of the flesh." Reaching the edge of the desk, I placed my elbows down and propped my face in my hands. "So why? She's pretty. Not your type?"

"What does it matter to you?" The question was defensive, but his tone was light, his curiosity matching mine. "You haven't been here a whole day, now you're all interested in our personal lives?"

"Hers? Nah. Yours? Yes." I drummed my fingers on the sides of my face as I peered across the desk at him. "Once upon a time, you would have taken her up on it, wouldn't you?"

"I'm not that kind of person anymore," he finally admitted. "Emma's married and I...learned my lesson the last time something like that happened."

"What changed?" I felt like a talk show host, salivating for juicy details.

"I dunno, maybe getting my ass shipped up here and then the fucking apocalypse had something to do with it."

Ahh, there it was. The source of the bitterness and guilt lacing his taste—the part of him that he perceived to be a weakness.

I tilted my head into one hand, gazing at the lines of his face. Classic swarthy Greek features, with a dusting of gray in his hair and beard. Handsome with a jagged edge, in some ways even more jagged than Kais, and with none of Zach's pretty-boyishness. There was nothing pretty about Stavros, he was all rough masculinity. No wonder married women wanted "private meetings" with him.

"You know, there's nothing wrong with lusting after pretty women and enjoying sex," I said matter-of-factly.

“Oh, thanks,” he huffed, cheeks reddening as his voice dripped with sarcasm. “I’ll remember that.”

“If things are so bad at home for poor Emma, you might even be doing her a favor.”

He shook his head. “No, she and her family come to church every weekend. Her husband’s dealing with a bout of depression. It would be all messed up.” His eyes sharpened, focusing on me as if seeing me there for the first time. “That was supposed to be private. I’m not sure why I’m telling you this.”

“It’s nice to have someone to confide in, isn’t it?” I smiled. “To have someone listen to you for once.”

“Are you,” his dark eyes narrowed, “doing something to me?”

“No, I’m not feeding from you, I swear.” I returned to standing upright, his gaze following my movement. “But your inclination is to trust me, to unload all these burdens you carry for others.”

Stavros shook his head again, this time rubbing his forehead with a groan.

“Didn’t sleep well last night, did you?”

“Is it that obvious?”

Yes, because I wasn’t in your dreams. The knowledge hung between us, unspoken.

His hands dropped to his lap and Stavros leaned back in his seat, eyes studying my face with an interest that was more than his usual sexually potent stare.

“I’m not the only tired one, am I?” he asked, frowning. Concern, worry. I wasn’t sure if it was for me, or for his

people because of me.

“I am also not sleeping,” I said, lips quirking as I shrugged a shoulder.

Stavros just shook his head. “It’s not that. You...don’t look much better than you did when you arrived.”

“Gee, Stav. No wonder all the ladies come panting after you,” I teased, my smile growing brittle. He was right though.

Stavros didn’t have many markers of the priesthood. He was weak when it came to restraint, intensely eager when it came to violence against Hell, and reluctant when it came to offering counsel. What he *was*, was empathetic.

You have to tell them anyway, I thought.

“I can’t sustain on just...scraps. Especially not if I’m going to be staying away from the rest of your people,” I said, looking down at my own lap, fingering the seam of the leggings I’d been given.

“You said you wouldn’t—”

“And I meant it.” I looked up and met Stavros’ hard gaze. “But at some point...in a week or so, I may become dangerous. Weak, but dangerous. You’ll have to think of somewhere to...put me. To keep me away from everyone.”

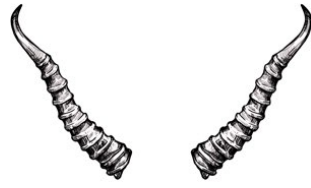
Stavros stiffened as I sighed, accepting that I may have just handed over a kind of confession, one that might end up leading to me withering away to nothing in a dark, small room in a basement.

He leaned forward, frowning, hands splayed against the surface of the desk. The emotions came quick and I breathed them in, but it was just licks in comparison to what I needed.

“Why did you come here? If you can’t survive in this place then—”

“Because I would rather starve to death here, with mercy, than end up back in Hell,” I said, holding his stare, watching the whip lashes of horror, anger, and sorrow rushing through his eyes. “It’s not a joke, Stavros. It’s not a ploy. I will tell you when it’s time.”

OceanofPDF.com



Sins of the Flesh

OceanofPDF.com

Searing iron, my flesh burning like incense in offering. I knew better than to thrash, to fight against the binds, knew the way the coal-hot metal would sizzle and peel away at my skin, but this was *wrong*. I wasn't meant to be here. I was safe.

“Deyva, Deyva,” he taunted. “Playing children’s games with me? Hiding in holy nooks and crannies as if I can’t find you. My little lost treasure.”

I panted, pulling on the chains, whining as the cuffs ate down to bone, arching away from the acid-washed stones nipping at the flesh of my back.

“I am impatient, my Deyva.”

His hooves scratched over the floor, closer, closer, whispering warnings.

“It would be better if you returned before my impatience becomes *anger*.”

He hasn't found me. I am hiding. I am safe.

“Deeyyyyva.”

“Deyva.”

I woke with a gasp, a massive figure framed in the door, shoulders wide enough to fill the space, fire at his back. I scrambled back on the couch, down to the floor, ashamed of my own terror, but not foolish enough to let him get his hands on me a second before I had to.

“Whoa! Deyva, hey. Hey, it’s me.”

He stepped into my room and I growled. Hands went up into the air, a mild gasp sounding.

“Deyva? It’s Stavros.”

Stavros. Sanctuary. My hand wrapped around my ankle and I moaned, falling forward and hiding my face against my knees. I wasn’t burning. Kimaris had found me, but only in dreaming.

“Shiiiiit,” Stavros breathed softly, and he scuffled forward, dropping to his knees.

The idiot didn’t have enough of Zach and Kais’ caution. I was still feral, still the animal from the dream, but he scooped me out of the corner and into his arms, pressing my bundled form to his chest. He smelled clean, soapy, like he’d just come from a shower, and some of my tension unwound. Nothing in Hell smelled like a freshly-washed Stavros.

“I didn’t think you’d be sleeping,” he said.

“I didn’t mean to be.” But I was fucking tired. It’d been a few days now since I arrived. A few days of pacing in boredom, taunting Zach with theology arguments until he got too prickly and took off. A few days of Kais watching me like a hawk, aware there was a larger predator in his territory, and not certain of what he wanted to do about it.

A few days of Stavros, circling me, scenting the air with curiosity, shame, and thick desire. As if that shit didn’t just

make me *hungrier* when I was already approaching starving.

“I’m good, you can let me go,” I said in a rasp, but I couldn’t pull away. I didn’t like the flavors on Stavros right now, pity was a saccharine taste, and it was especially so when I knew it was directed at me.

He ignored me, lifting me from the floor with a soft grunt, rising to the couch and continuing to hold me. It was an odd kind of embrace, his arms banded around me but hands not quite touching.

“You want to talk about what was going on just then?”

“No.” I turned my head, resting my head over Stavros’ heartbeat, listening to the steady drum, the way it picked up as my legs loosened and I leaned into him, pressing my aching feet against the warm leg of his pants. “Why are you here, Stavros?”

He sighed and one hand slipped up my back, cupping the back of my neck, thumb brushing absently in the hair at my nape. “I’ve been thinking about what you said.”

“I have days still before you need to worry.” More if he’d come to my room like this and let me soak up this strange buffet of feelings. Desire was rising gently, but so was guilt.

“Deyva, I think you should feed off of me.”

I stiffened, but when I tried to pull away the hand on the back of my neck held me still, grip careful, but firm. Desire flashed, but this time it was mine. I was hungry and tired, and Stavros was a *meal*.

“No. Let me go.” My own reluctance surprised me. This was what I’d been hoping for, but I didn’t want it out of pity. And I didn’t really want Stavros to give in to his self-loathing, as if he were meant to be a sacrifice to me.

“No? Then why did you come here?” He eased up and I slid off his lap and onto the cushions, the fluorescent light of the hallway still falling through the open door enough to illuminate the frown he was wearing.

“Because you were...better than where I was. I meant what I said—”

“And I meant it when I offered you sanctuary, Deyva,” Stavros said, hunching and meeting my eyes. “If you want to survive, I am the best option. I know firsthand what you are, what I’m...offering. And I’m...well, let’s just say sins of the flesh are something we have in common.”

Don’t be an idiot, just ride him like the meal ticket train he is, the hellion in me said.

A softer, older, neglected part of me wanted to say yes for an entirely different reason. One completely unrelated to my survival.

I sat up, and Stavros did too, holding my stare. His tongue flicked out over his lips as I shifted, straddling his lap, settling myself just over his crotch, but resisting the urge to grind and watch his thick eyelashes flutter with that first fall from grace he was asking for. Stavros thought he was irredeemable, like his irrepressible craving for affection—for offering it—made him the same as me.

His throat flexed as I settled my hands on his shoulders, my hair falling forward as he arched back, head against the back of the couch, chest rising and falling with quick breaths. I held his gaze as I kissed him, as the soft groan of satisfaction echoed between us as I licked around his lips. I grasped his head and Stavros’ hands gripped low on my waist, fingers digging into the top of my ass.

It was a kiss, but also a feast. He had washed himself for me, anointed himself in oils, perfumes on his freshly-trimmed beard, like an offering. A sacrifice. I sucked on his tongue and his hips rocked beneath me. Finally, I fed, pulling on the storm of desire, the twisted satisfaction he got by giving in to what he considered his sins, and that secret craving of his to be cared for. Underneath it all, was pure Stavros, a heady, dense pool of him, his life and pains and pleasures. This is what I couldn't get from dreaming, what was missing from the souls who descended to Hell, and was entirely absent from the hellions I'd been surrounded by.

I wanted to devour it all, suck him down like an alcoholic with their first bottle in years. It was far more than I needed to survive, but it would be orgiastic to consume. And Stavros would be left a husk.

My chest ached at the thought. I took a morsel instead, a tiny spark. It warmed away the cold in my bones, the burn of my injured feet, and the pounding in my head. There was still hunger, still exhaustion, but that was less too.

Stavros' arms had circled me in the kiss, he held onto me like a clamp, moaning against my lips, chasing them as I lifted my head.

He wasn't tired, his eyes were bright. He was panting a little, but that probably had more to do with the fact that I'd been sucking him down, not giving him an inch of space as I kissed him.

"Fuck. *Deyva*," he sighed out. And then he arched for more.

I paused him, my hand on his throat. "It's done, Stavros. Thank you."

He blinked, forehead folding between his eyebrows.
“Done?”

“I only took a little. It’s enough for now.”

“But...” He looked to the door and I thought he might listen, slip out and go back to the priest house like I was suggesting. He straightened and lifted his chin. “You can take more. Like you do in the dreams.”

“I did take more than I do in the dreams. The sex is fun for me, but it isn’t necessary, Stavros. We can keep it simple, like this,” I said. *We could even skip the kiss*, but I would’ve missed that too much.

Stavros swallowed, eyes falling to my mouth, and then to my breasts where they were pressed against his chest, just peeking out the collar of the t-shirt.

“What did you really come for, Stavros?” I asked, combing my fingers into his hair, smiling at the rumble in his chest that answered.

“To...to help you.”

“You have.”

“I thought you’d want more, or just—”

Fuck. Just let him go. Let him think the sex was just a dream thing.

“What I want is to strip out of these clothes and have you pin me to this couch like you would in your dreams, Stav. But I don’t need that to survive—” Not literally, at least. It felt pretty fucking necessary at the moment as I felt his cock jumping against me through our clothes. “—and you’ve already done enough. Anything more would be...”

“Selfish,” Stavros rasped. “I came here to be selfish. Because I wanted to fuck you so bad and—”

And have it be my fault, what I needed him to do, rather than what we both felt like, just for fun. Just to be selfish.

His arms loosened, but only to slide his hands down to my ass, squeezing tight and making me gasp as he ground me over his stiffening cock. I pressed my lips together, swallowing my whine of need, and Stavros leaned in, biting at my throat, swirling his tongue over my pulse, one hand sliding down the back of the shorts to grope at my flesh, passing over my ass and just barely grazing at my sex.

“This is what I want, Deyva. I want my fucking dreams to come true,” he growled. “You can feed on me whenever you want, just give me this. *Please.*”

Begging, as if I had it in me to refuse him.

I growled, the animal in me snapping, but Stavros was quick, hand sliding up my waist. The t-shirt rucked up and over my breasts and he yanked me forward, sucking roughly on my flesh as if *he'd* been the starving one the whole time. The pull of his mouth on my nipple, and the scratch of his beard on my skin, shot right down to my pussy, making me clench and twist in his hold, poised too high to do anything but rub myself against his chest like a cat in heat.

I whipped the shirt off over my head, sliding my hands back into his thick dark hair, roots still wet from his shower, as I held him to me. He pulled free of one breast, moving quickly to the next. His arm strapped across my back like iron and his free hand slid down my stomach and into my shorts.

I'd memorized them, my divine men, but it appeared Stavros had done his fair share of studying me in the dreams

too because his fingers didn't err, pressing directly up inside of me, pumping and twisting roughly. It was better friction than what I had, but I knew what I really wanted.

“Lemme go. I want your cock,” I gasped, which only made Stavros bite on my breast and suck and lap harder, fingers moving fast inside of me, knuckles and thumb rubbing against the lips of my sex. “Stavros, *please*.”

He grunted and pulled off with a wet ‘pop’, hips rising as I landed suddenly on his lap, both of us shouting as I immediately started to rock and bounce against him, the scratching of the zipper on his pants curious, and a delicious kind of bite. At least for me. Stavros winced, guiding me back on his lap and fumbling his fingers at his waistband.

“The door,” I gasped, reaching for the shoulders of his t-shirt, pulling it up over his back.

“Church is locked up, no one’s coming,” Stavros answered in a rush, pushing his pants just far enough down for his cock to bob out, smacking against his bared stomach as I yanked his shirt off and tossed it behind me.

I’d never gotten to really talk to him in the dreams, it was enough effort to create the fantasy in the first place, and it made a giddy feeling bubble up in me. This was clumsier, sloppier, the pair of us racing and stumbling to undress, but it was *real*.

I jumped off his lap, and Stavros yanked my shorts down, hands fisting around the backs of my thighs and pulling my hips to his face, chin and beard nuzzling against me in the little borrowed underwear.

“Later,” I whispered, pushing the underwear down. “I just want to feel you.”

Stavros looked up at me, eyes hooded, hair mussed, lips swollen from my kiss and parted on his panting breaths. For a moment, he looked as though I'd put him in a trance, the way I would've if I were feeding on someone who *wasn't* as excited about the prospect as we both obviously were. Then he grinned, scooping me off the floor and twisting, tossing me back to the couch cushions. One hand ripped the panties away and the other pushed my legs apart, bending one knee up to spread and expose me.

"I wanted you to be real," Stavros said, brushing his hand over my sex, testing me with two fingers and making me arch at the soft stretch.

I was made for this, regardless of what Zach thought of God's early creation. Made to give and receive, to be pliable and embracing. At least God had done me the favor of making sure it all felt fucking *delicious* too.

Stavros' weight was heavy as he lowered himself and I purred at the heat of him, until suddenly I was choking as he thrust fully inside of me.

"Jesus fucking Christ!" My hands snapped to his back, hips arching into his as he filled me.

"Deyva," he laughed, chastising, my name strangled on a groan.

"Stavros, I think I did you a disservice in the dreams," I moaned, spreading my legs further apart, hooking one heel over the back of the couch. Stav was *thick*, and even if I was built to receive, his girth still created an incredible stretch inside of me, one I wanted more of.

He laughed, breathless, hands bracing on the arm of the couch behind my head so he could hold himself up. I resisted

the urge to tell him that the light from the hall gave him the effect of a halo, and instead arched my neck to nip at his jaw.

“You good?” he rasped.

I squeezed around him and started to ride him from below, humming at the buzz of the friction, the heat of his body on top of mine. The *softness* of it all. Stavros was hard, muscular, and heavy, but even as he withdrew and then thrust roughly in again, testing the crash of us as we both moaned, there was an undeniable gentleness. He wanted this to feel good for me, and it *did*. Better than good.

“Stop and I’ll suck you dry,” I growled, grinning at him, relieved when he grinned back, brow furrowing with effort.

For all his talk of being selfish, he was more focused on me than his own pleasure, eyes watching my face as he started to fuck me, bucking roughly and gasping on every thrust as my fingers dug into his back and my cunt clasped and squeezed around him.

“Shit, this is... *Deyva*.”

I was good at dream illusions, but not talented enough to have given Stavros and the others the full effect of sex with a succubus. Stavros’ pulse pounded in his throat and I pulled him down to suck on the rhythm as he fucked me at the same pace. The sounds between us were wet and obscene, moans liberal and ragged. I was careful as I scratched him, wanting to mark him as mine, but not do real damage.

Human girls talked about getting pounded and they must’ve meant by men like Stavros. He was rough and desperate, his thick thighs forcing mine open. One hand left the couch to slide underneath me, pinching my neck in his

grip, not choking but claiming and holding me in place for his fucking.

I was, honest to God, starting to babble praises, hanging at the edge, waiting for Stavros to find his release so I could finally have mine. I'd lied to him. The kiss hadn't been enough. This would be better and cost him less energy, and it would *ruin* me for any other form of feeding. I hadn't had this in so long and everything since then had been meager or mean.

"Stavros, God, yes. Stav, please, so good, please," I whined, rocking into him, heels bracing and slipping against the wall and floor, spread for his use.

The hand at the back of my neck squeezed and I leaned into the touch obediently, Stavros diving down, his tongue fucking my mouth roughly. His groan echoed through me as his back started to bunch and flex beneath my hands. I slid them down to grip his ass, as if I could force him into me harder, faster.

His rhythm stuttered and my legs twisted around his hips, heels digging into that perfect ass as the couch squeaked and bumped across the carpeted floor.

"Fuck, Deyva, I'm—"

I swallowed the words, drawing Stavros into me, my hunger sucking on his cock as it released into me and the man in my arms shuddered and collapsed, pinning me to the cushions, burying himself inside of me.

A succubus didn't really orgasm like a woman, but our feeding was close, better even. I trembled as the rush shook through me, made my veins feel electric one moment, and then honeyed and slow the next. Stavros started to move, and I dug my nails into his back, holding him in place.

“...Holy shit,” he sighed, shaking and hissing as I fluttered around him with a happy little aftershock of the feed.

I grinned, nuzzling into his cheek and beard, nosing at his ear, sighing at the wave of warmth and contentment buzzing through him. There wasn't much cuddling in the dreams I'd used, but I'd noted Stavros' craving for that contact. Guilt was lacing through him, but it was faint by comparison to the relief and bone deep satisfaction, just a complement to his sweeter flavors. He ignored my irritable squeak and rolled us on the small couch, sinking down into the old cushions and holding me draped over his chest.

Our eyes met shyly and his brow ticked up. “Usually in the dream, you make me go again.”

I blushed, a rare warmth on my cheeks that I hoped he couldn't see with the glare of the hall light behind me. I was suddenly aware that what he would notice was the silhouette of my horns, something I'd conveniently left out of the dreaming. But he didn't look up to them.

“It's different in the dreams. I could make you hard again like this, but it would strain your heart, your body,” I murmured. “And I might've taken a little more than I realized. Better to see how you feel.”

“I feel fucking fantastic,” he said, head thunking on the arm of the couch, lips curled in satisfaction. His eyelids did look heavy as he blinked though. “I thought you looked like you were enjoying yourself in the dreams. Pretty proud of myself that I beat the fantasy.”

I rolled my eyes, but let him be smug. It was true. It was probably too soon, even by human standards, to tell Stavros that he was the best thing to happen to me in centuries.

Especially since most of that had to do with his quality as a meal.

Instead, I ducked my head, licking at his nipple and making him grunt. “What’ll you tell Kais and Zach?” I murmured on the heat of his skin.

“Don’t worry about them.” His fingers swirled in a repeating pattern through the strands of my hair.

“*I’m* not worried.” I copied the same motion he was doing on his chest. “But they’re going to worry about you.”

He let out an indignant sound, sliding his arms tighter around me as if the other two priests would physically rip me away from him. I hid my smile in the crook of his arm, the protectiveness wafting from him as cozy as the towel Kais gave me for my shower. It was endearing, if ultimately meaningless. A byproduct of the chemicals his body released after orgasm, nothing more.

“They know how I am,” he sighed. “They know my... habits. I don’t think either one of them will be completely surprised. And if they’re not the ones doing this,” his affection stilled, fingers pausing on my shoulder, “then it’s one less burden for them to bear.”

“Oh, such a burden, am I?” I skimmed a hand across his chest to his other nipple, circling a light touch around it.

“The worst,” he chuckled, lips brushing the top of my forehead. A finger tucked under my chin, returning my gaze to him. “How long until you need to feed again?”

“To feel as good as *this*?” I grinned. “Once a day. I can make it a week without, but will weaken significantly. Roughly two weeks is when it gets dangerous.”

“I see.”

A new sharp taste emerged in Stavros' emotions, one that seemed to drown out his guilt completely. I didn't know whether to laugh or growl at him for feeling such a way. It came with a deep, contented huff of air and his hands locking into place on my back.

Determination. Conviction. There were a few words for it.

The perfect sacrifice who would offer himself up again and again.

OceanofPDF.com



Judgment

[OceanofPDF.com](https://oceanofpdf.com)

Opening my eyes was a chore. He had put me upside down again so the blood would drip from my wings to my head. It dried over my eyes and stayed crusted there, even after my wings had healed.

My blurry vision slowly came into focus as my consciousness returned. I did my regular limb check—fingers, toes, and wings. *Ugh, that one still hurts.*

I tried to bend the primary joint in my left wing, and the shooting pain ran all the way to my neck. It wasn't broken anymore if I could move it, though. I just had to go easy so it could fully heal before that ugly demon came back.

The chain-torture contraption Kimaris held me in worked on some kind of complex, hellish pulley system. He liked to have me constrained and hovering, like in the middle of a spider's web, while he pulled and pushed on the chains. Sometimes my wings broke, other times my arms or legs were pulled out of their sockets. He sure liked variety, that demon. Today was apparently a flip-the-angel-on-his-head day. My body was tightly bound, with my wings only chained loosely. Kimaris enjoyed fucking with them the most.

“Lovely,” I groaned, taking in the feathers littering the ground around me. Their golden sheen remained on the quilled end, but the top end had become an inky black, like a raven’s feather. The color shifted from black to gold abruptly, like someone had dipped my wing in an oil spill.

I always knew the corruption of Hell would set in and alter my appearance. I just didn’t expect it to happen so quickly. Or maybe I’d simply lost track of time since I’d been down here. Time flies when you’re being tortured by demons.

My chain links clinked together in an echoey, metallic sound as I twisted around, trying to get my bearings. Sure enough, small golden horns had also sprouted from the top of my wing joint. Great.

I stilled at the sound of Kimaris’ large, hoofed footsteps clamoring through the corridor. Shit, he was coming back sooner than normal. Normally he waited for me to fully heal before starting up my torture again.

The big demon was pissed—I could tell by the aggressive swing of his shoulders and his snorted breaths, reminiscent of a bull. He paced around the cavern at first, seemingly taking no notice of me hanging upside down in the center.

“Oh don’t leave me in suspense,” I taunted, pushing back the fear welling up in my chest. Fear was a human emotion, one bred as a result of mortality. My time on earth must have acclimated me to it. “Tell your favorite punching bag what’s got you all upset. I’d love to know one reason why you enjoy torturing me so much.”

Kimaris spun to face me with a growl. “I enjoy torturing you because you’re a holy, winged prick that sucks God’s cock. I don’t need another reason.”

“That’s half-correct,” I said. “But I wouldn’t be here if I really sucked His cock now, would I?” I forced a grin. “He’d never let me go if He gave me such an honor.”

“Shut up,” the demon hissed, returning to his pacing. “Whoever made you think you were any good at it is delusional.”

“I use my teeth on you because demons love pain.” I pulled my lips back and clenched my teeth with a loud click, enjoying Kimaris’ ensuing wince. “But oh, I’ll worship a cock that’s deserving of it.”

Pissing Kimaris off was my only joy since being cast down to Hell for my judgment, and I reveled in the glare he threw at me. He’d tried to break me since day one, intent on making me submissive and compliant, but he underestimated what an angel of my caliber was capable of. I did not obey, and that was both my downfall and my greatest strength.

“No wonder you fell,” Kimaris sneered. “A holy creature who enjoys such impure activities. It’s too bad you weren’t born a demon.”

“I was not cast down from Heaven for what I like to do with my mouth.”

“No? *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment—ring a bell?*”

“Very good, you can read,” I praised. “What you forget is sin is relative. Complex creatures such as myself are even capable of committing more than one at the same time. So you’re not wrong, Kimaris, but giving otherworldly blowjobs is not the reason why I’m here.”

“I told you to shut up!” The aggravated demon lunged and I willed myself not to flinch. “If you weren’t so fucking annoying, I was about to offer you a bargain. But it seems your favorite thing to do with that mouth is make meaningless noise.”

My lips clamped shut as I forced my facial expression to stay neutral. A bargain, he said? I shouldn’t have felt a glimmer of hope at that word—I was in Hell after all, to be used as a demon’s toy while waiting for judgment. He was just trying to break me again. King Belial would never allow his subordinates to grant leniency, especially not to an angel like me who could feed their arms with my holy strength. I had to stay strong and wait for my day of judgment.

“That’s better.” Kimaris dragged a perverse, clawed hand across my face. “Nice and quiet.”

I forced myself to lean into his touch. My wing still needed more time to heal. If I pleased him, he might grant me a bit of relief before the next torture session. But nothing was ever a guarantee with these fickle demons.

“I might have some use for you.” Kimaris stroked a thumb over my lip and I stuck my tongue out to lick it. “No, not like that, angel.”

“I’m willing to show you my skills without the use of my teeth,” I offered. “You’ll be the only horned brute down here who got sucked off properly by an angel, I can guarantee that.”

“What did I say about shutting up?” Kimaris whispered almost sweetly, his hands moving to cradle the back of my neck.

Oh yeah, I absolutely did not want him to break my neck again. That took forever to heal and I was paralyzed from the

chest down for most of it. So I did my best to look compliant, slamming my lips shut while trying not to clench my jaw against whatever he had coming for me.

“How would you like to walk the earth again?” He caressed my cheek bones, red-orange eyes brightening as he watched for my reaction.

I hid my surprise and blossoming hope behind a puzzled expression. That was the last thing I expected him to offer me. Demons never offered freedom. Ever. He had to think I was desperate, and fuck, maybe I was. My judgment could be centuries away, and as strong as I was, I was no mindless machine. One day, my resolve would crack.

“The current earth that now resembles the vast majority of Hell?” I said in my best aloof voice. “I suppose it wouldn’t be much different from my current situation.”

“You wouldn’t be chained.” Kimaris continued stroking me in his mock display of tenderness. “You could spread these beautiful wings of yours and feel the sun again. Wouldn’t you like that?”

Yes. Oh Lord yes, so fucking much.

I knew I had to answer carefully, to not make him think I was eager. He’d use my love of earth and humanity against me if he knew how badly I really wanted to go back. Sunlight and having use of my wings wasn’t even the half of it.

“Are you *that* taken with my cock-sucking skills? I’m flattered Kim, but I haven’t even shown you the best part.”

“It’s not your mouth that’s the most useful to me.” He tapped a long black claw on my forehead. “But what’s in here.”

“You’re going to have to be a bit more specific. There’s more up there than your kind is used to.” I stretched my wing with as little movement as I could muster, so as to not catch his attention. Damn, still sore.

“Your knowledge,” he said. “Of humans and earth’s landscape from your travels. I may need you to find something for me.”

“Well the landscape has changed quite a bit since I last walked. I hope you’re not looking for, say, a set of keys, ‘cause those are long gone.”

“Must I warn you again, you feathered piece of shit?” Kimaris yanked on a chain and my vision dotted with black spots. The pain was so intense, I thought I might pass out again.

“Sorry. Sorry...” Deep, gasping breaths wracked my bound body. Lord, it hurt so much worse when I was close to fully healed. I could only pray Kimaris wouldn’t know or be able to tell. I’d crack long before my judgment if he exploited that.

“If you find what I’m missing,” he returned to his low, husky voice, “I’ll take the chains away. For good.”

Anything. I’ll find a sewing needle in the Marianna’s Trench if that’s what you need.

“And just when I was adopting this as one of my kinks,” I sighed. I could never show eagerness for what he offered, not even when I wanted it more than anything. Demons lied and manipulated. It was how so many souls broke so easily.

“Cut the act, angel,” he snarled. “You’re suffering here. It’s as obvious as those horns sprouting from your wings.”

“I thought suffering was the whole point.”

“It is, but you get no enjoyment from this.” He ran one dark claw from my wing down my chest, back to my face. “You wouldn’t have been cast down, facing judgment, if you were like the other fallen.” He almost looked like he pitied me. “You don’t have it in you to rise as a fallen angel. You’re still loyal to your God above.”

I bit back every snarky reply that rose up in argument. Because he was right. I didn’t have it in me to fully embrace Hell like Lucifer and the brethren who followed him. I still believed in the Lord’s teachings and will, even if we disagreed on how best to carry them out. I could hold out on torture for years, maybe even centuries. But eventually Hell would take its hold on me, as was already evident by my wings. And by the time it did, would my judgment day even matter?

“What will you have me find for you?” I relented in a shameful whisper.

Kimaris smiled with cruel pleasure. “A succubus by the name of Deyva.”

He pressed a palm to my forehead, shoving imagery into my mind of a beautiful woman. *Sinfully* beautiful, with Hell’s touch gleaming in the golden horns, and divinely beautiful too, with those luscious curves that only Heaven could design. It’d been a *long* time since I’d enjoyed the company of a succubus. I saw her from Kimaris’ perception, his memories, and nearly retched at some of the things he did to her.

Fuck. And I thought I got a raw deal.

“She’s...on earth?” I blinked, wishing I could shake the imagery from my mind. “Why? There are so few living humans left to feed from.”

“Your only task is to find her for me, not ask questions as to why she’s there,” he barked. “You are not fully corrupted, so you may be able to find her in places demonkind cannot reach.”

So she’s hiding from him in some kind of holy place. Interesting.

“And if I return her to you,” I ventured cautiously, “I won’t be chained anymore?”

“I’ll do you one better,” Kimaris grinned. “I’ll make your judgment with King Belial a top priority.”

This time, I couldn’t school my features and my eyes widened. “You will?”

“You have my word.” He placed a hand over where his heart would be, if he were human.

It was still a gamble. Judgment could mean either a peaceful, final death or an eternity of more suffering. But it was better than not knowing, better than these mind games with Kimaris slowly wearing me down over centuries.

But that succubus. What were her crimes?

Not many hellions deserved the treatment that Kimaris doled out, let alone one of the First Daughters. Whatever she did, she had good reason to hide from him, assuming those images he showed me were real and not sick fantasies.

Angels lived to protect, to guard those in need. To swap my place with hers went against my very nature. But what was one immortal succubus to all of humanity, who were on the brink of extinction?

She may very well be innocent—a victim of Kimaris’ exploits, but she could withstand it. This had already been her

home for millenia. For all I knew, she loved and embraced the hellish flames, the suffering, and the desecration. Did she even remember her origins? Or did she come to accept the human narratives of succubi, as so many others down here had?

But if she loves Hell, why would she hide?

“What do you say, angel?” Kimaris’ claw pressed into my sternum, a warning of what would happen if I chose the wrong option. “Do we have a deal?”

“We do.” *I’m sorry, Devya. I’m sure you deserve better, but I must be more corrupt than I thought.* “I’ll find the succubus and return her to you.”

“Excellent.”

Without the big demon lifting a finger, the chains moved and loosened their hold on me, as if they were alive.

“Ow!” My head hit the floor with a thunk, the rest of my body crumpling over my head and neck.

The world spun when I rolled to my hands and knees—I must have been upside down longer than I thought. Kimaris gave me no time to orient myself before he grabbed my ankle and proceeded to drag me across the ground.

“Wait, wait!” I hissed in pain as the rocky cavern floor scraped over my back and my wing that was still awkwardly folded underneath me. “I’m not fully healed.”

“I know.” He dragged me to the edge of a cliff, the ground dropping off to nothing but putrid red smoke down below. “And you’ll heal much slower down there. Laws of physics and all that.”

“I—I can’t find her if I’m crippled!”

“Oh no?” He wrapped an inhuman hand around my throat, turning me around so my head hung over the edge. “You’re an angel about to go to a world that’s lost hope. I think you’ll manage.”

“If I can’t fly, I’ll fucking splatter on impact.” Fear flooded me like a dam that had been broken. I needed just a little more time. “And then I’ll be completely useless to you.”

“But you’re immortal, so you’ll live.” The demon’s cruel smile disappeared with a cock of his head. “Yes, my king, in here! How can I be of service?”

He had barely gotten the last word out before he shoved me over the edge.

OceanofPDF.com



Sacrifice and Worship

OceanofPDF.com

*M*y heel jiggled as I waited against the wall outside the shower, listening to Deyva's soft humming and the rush of water on the tiles. There were other voices too, some families using the reading room for lessons with the community children and the sound of Kais going over plans to repair one of the nearby windmills we used to help power the town. It wasn't safe, I wasn't alone... and yet all I could think about was pushing my way into that shower and lifting Deyva up against the wall with me between her wet, slippery thighs.

She probably wasn't even hungry. What had it been, five hours since I snuck back out of the church before dawn?

I was a little heavy and tired today, but that might've had more to do with the three rounds of fantastic fucking in the middle of the night than the little drags Deyva was taking off me for the past few days.

The water stopped in the shower and I straightened, nodding at Derrick as he left Kais' office. I had clothes draped over my arm—a pair of women's leggings and one of my own flannel shirts—and he frowned at me briefly before leaving the hall. It was probably a good thing I'd tucked the bra Kais found for Deyva inside the bundle.

The door cracked and I turned, lips already twitching with a smile as Deyva's eyes widened. Her hair was wet, soaking into the t-shirt she'd been wearing all week, and one of her bare feet was pressed over the other ankle.

"Put these on," I said, pushing the clothes through the open door to her.

Her nose wrinkled as she caught the bundle. "Why?"

"It's cool today and I'm taking you out."

Her lips parted and it was a miracle I didn't lean in just to nibble on the lower one. She'd healed already, but I'd left that one swollen and a little bruised before slipping out this morning.

The door snapped shut and I turned back to watch the hall as she shuffled inside. When it opened again, I had to look twice.

Deyva looked...almost human. Or she did until you got to the horns, and the preternatural beauty of her features. Her smile was sly and she batted feathery black lashes tipped with gold at me. "Stavros, is this a date?"

I grinned but double checked the hall over my shoulder, making sure Kais didn't catch me. "It's...more like a visitation with the outside world," I said.

I expected to find Deyva grinning with the same mischievous feeling I had, but she only looked thoughtful and a little wary. "But inside the gate?"

My chest tightened at the reminder that Deyva wasn't *quite* the woman I'd been dreaming of for weeks. She had shadows at her back and I regretted stumbling into them.

“Yup, just a little reward for good behavior. Come on.” I jerked my head toward the hall and grinned as her smile finally appeared, sly and toothy. “Stay on my left as we pass Kai’s office?”

“Ohh he doesn’t know?”

“I mean, we’re all responsible for you. He doesn’t need to,” I said, winking at her.

“Naughty boy,” Deyva purred.

Fuck. I weighed the idea of tackling her into the nearest room, but I didn’t think either of us could manage to be quiet enough to keep from attracting attention. If I’d been addicted to the dreams Deyva had sent, it was nothing in comparison to the actual release and relief of real life. A week ago I couldn’t wait to fall asleep. Now I was afraid to, afraid that I might not wake up and go to her.

You’re doing this so others don’t have to, remember? I thought. It was meant to be a sacrifice.

I was starting to realize that I was doing it because I didn’t want anyone else but me to be this fucking lucky.

“Where are you going?”

I startled and spun and Deyva shifted smoothly behind me. Kais was sitting under his window in a beat up old armchair that had been scorched in a house fire ages ago. He had a map open on his lap, probably marked with the route we’d take to the windmill tomorrow.

“I’m...going to the diner,” I said shrugging and pointing to the clock up on the wall in his office. “Lunch.”

“And where is *she* going?” Kais said, eyes narrowing and a small smirk on his lips as he glanced down at my feet.

I tried not to look so guilty, stepping aside and revealing Deyva, as if I'd never meant to hide her. "She's coming with me."

"No."

"Kai—"

"We promised them."

"We promised them they'd be safe, Kais. They are safe." I looked around the hall and then caught Deyva's elbow, ushering her inside with me. "Are you really thinking that long term she'll just...exist in here? Hiding? That's not feasible, man. Think of it like...exposure therapy," I said, shrugging.

"She doesn't need to eat," Kais said, hands tight on the arm of the chair.

"I like to eat," Deyva said, stepping forward. "Food. I like to eat food."

"I can think of a hundred objections they'll have, and I can guarantee you there'd still be more," Kais said.

"It has to start somewhere, Kais."

Kais narrowed his eyes at Deyva, flicking them briefly in my direction and then right back on her. "For starters, everyone who eats in this community, contributes to the community. Farming, cleaning, cooking."

"I don't know how to... do much of that, but I can learn," Deyva said quickly, nodding.

She always brightened when I showed up in the night, and I hadn't caught her in another nightmare, but I could see the way the captivity in the church made her shift restlessly. It wasn't just for her sake either. The best way to protect the community from Deyva, and vice versa, would be to make her

a part of it. Everyone was always suspicious of newcomers. This was just a heightened version of that.

“Fine, but I’ll be there to talk with anyone. Sit her away from others and keep her bound,” Kais said, rising and going to his desk, retrieving a rope.

Deyva’s lips hardened into a thin line at the sight. “I don’t mean to be a brat,” she started, in a tone that I was very aware meant she was about to be a brat. “But that rope isn’t really going to protect anyone. Touching is always welcome, but I can feed without it. I just *won’t*.”

“Be that as it may, it will reassure our people,” Kais said, coming forward with the rope.

“And remind them that I’m not like them, that you don’t trust me.”

Kais arched an eyebrow as if to say ‘and I don’t’ and I stiffened, wanting to soothe Deyva or argue with Kais on her behalf, but afraid of what it would reveal. Before I could work up the nerve, Deyva raised her hands in front of her, glaring back at Kais.

“Not my favorite use of ropes, Kai, not gonna lie,” Deyva muttered as he started to bind her wrists.

Kais huffed a laugh and shook his head. “Not mine either, Daisy, but you gotta serve your penance before you get to the fun stuff.”

Well, hey now. Kais avoided my eyes as he stepped away, covering the smile that had appeared on his mouth. He hadn’t even realized he’d been flirting with our succubus and I was a mix of sympathy and amusement. I accepted my urges, and the fact that I never won the battle against them, but Kais was in for a rough road in fighting his attraction to Deyva.

Kais cleared his throat and looked blankly around his office for a moment. I could guess where his thoughts had gone, mine were in about the same place. Deyva gave me a sly warning glance as I stared at her wrists.

“I’ll head over there first, maybe give a gentle heads up. Gimme five minutes,” Kais said, voice rough.

I nodded and watched Kais hurry out of the office, leaving Deyva and I together.

“That wasn’t my fault,” she said, when his footsteps faded.

“Uh huh.” I grinned and hooked my finger into the ropes, glad to feel that Kais hadn’t made them quite so tight this time.

Her rough scratches from the first rope we’d used had healed after that first night together, and days later she only had a few old, ugly marks on her legs and back remaining. I tugged and Deyva shuffled closer, one leg tucking between mine, her hips leaning into me.

“You know, you’re going to have to feed me,” Deyva said, smiling up at me.

I shuffled back to the edge of the desk, drawing Deyva in until she was almost straddling my thigh. “Thought you said you only needed it once a day?” I teased. I thought *I* was the one who just couldn’t get enough.

“Not like that,” she laughed, raising her bound hands between us. “I mean at the diner. You’ll have to feed me.”

I took one look at Deyva’s sinful mouth and imagined her licking salt off my fingers after I fed her a fry. And then I cursed and she laughed.

“Fucking Kais,” I muttered. How was I supposed to go through lunch, sitting next to Deyva, feeding her, and then

wait until nighttime to be back inside of her?

“Hey, this was your idea, Father,” Deyva said, wiggling against me.

I sucked in a breath, heat burning up my throat and into my cheeks. What kind of sick asshole was I that I was ready to get off on her calling me that? I had a vision of Deyva in one of those horrible, Halloween naughty nun costumes and decided that I’d officially lost my mind.

And in spite of that, I tugged her closer by the lapel of my old shirt and caught one deep, licking kiss from her mouth before swatting at her ass and turning her to the door.

“Come on before I try and feed you a different kind of meal,” I growled.

Deyva shot me a hot look over her shoulder, the tip of one golden horn catching the light through the window, and then hustled for the door ahead of me, a soft giggle falling free.

Her bright mood dissipated slowly as we headed for the diner, passing a couple on the street, watching them hurry out of our way. Seeing others rush in the opposite direction.

“Maybe this was a bad idea,” she murmured, shoulders drawing up, watching a teenage boy gawk at her through an apartment window.

The diner was mostly deserted as we reached it, Kais scowling over the counter, and those remaining stared defiantly back at Deyva as I led her to a booth out of the way.

“It’s just the first step,” I reminded her.

But I could tell by the pinch of her eyes that all I was really offering her with this meal, were the flavors of anger and suspicion.

WAITING until the dead of night to sneak out to Deyva had been difficult enough since our little trysts began, but tonight was especially torturous.

I couldn't stop thinking of her at the diner earlier, not only how she teased and nibbled my fingers when I fed her, but how protective I felt with every dirty look cast her way. I wanted to block her from their eyes, to shield her with my body. At this point, I fully believed their suspicion was unfounded. She'd been here over a week already and had done nothing to harm anyone.

Kais went around to address concerns and assure people of their safety, but I couldn't be sure if it truly did any good. And Deyva, sending me sultry looks and licking her lips from the morsels I placed in her mouth, probably didn't help.

She only messed with me when Kais had his back turned, and I couldn't help the "Good girl" that slipped out when I returned her to the church.

It was still just the first day, sure, but of how many? How long could we expect the succubus to stay here, and as an oddity for the people to gawk at and whisper about?

One day at a time, I thought, flopping over in bed to my stomach for the hundredth time. At the end of the world, our days were precious and few. I'd take her back to the diner again tomorrow. And the next day. It would be uncomfortable for all involved, but necessarily so. Exposure therapy took time—time we may not have had, but at least I tried.

I sat up in bed when I couldn't stand it anymore, and carefully listened for any movement in the house. Kais was out

on night patrol, and Zach's room was completely silent. I slipped on a pair of pants, slippers, and a flannel shirt, before creeping out of my room, and then the front door of the cottage.

The air was cool and damp as I made my way across the lawn and small vegetable garden. I kept my head on a swivel, making sure to look out for anyone on a midnight stroll, but it was mainly my paranoia about being caught with Devya that kept me vigilant. Aside from those assigned to patrolling the border, no one went outside at night, and especially not alone.

My keys jingled from my pocket as I reached one of the back doors of the church. I could go in the front and straight to the chapel, but again, this dirty little secret made me extra vigilant.

The hallway was dark as I silently closed and re-locked the door behind me.

“Deyva?” I called in a whisper, then raised my voice slightly. “Deyva?”

My fingers trailed along the wall as I followed the corridor to the spare office she slept in. The door was open and the room empty as I swallowed down the mix of emotions—concern, fear, and a mild warning at the back of my mind.

I'd started leaving the office door unlocked, knowing how much she hated being confined to small spaces, but that didn't stop the alarm from pulsing through my body as I hurried down the hall, peering into other rooms and around corners in search of the beautiful horned woman.

Fuck. Had I made a terrible mistake in letting her roam the church unwatched?

“Deyva!” I had stuck my head into the empty gymnasium, my voice amplified and bouncing off the walls of the empty room.

“In here, Stavros.”

I cocked my head, trying to get a sense of where her voice was coming from. It sounded like the chapel?

I pushed open one of the doors to find that the chapel wasn't completely dark. A warm glow emanated from the front of the pulpit, casting long, eerie shadows of the pews and and figurines of the saints.

“Deyva?” I jumped the small staircase at the rear of the platform, crossing to the source of the light. “What are you doing?”

She was sitting on the altar, lighting candles.

The matchstick was nearly a foot long and she held it aloft like a wand, carefully moving it across the tops of white, pillar-shaped candles decorating the top shelf of the altar. I watched, hypnotized as I slowly came around to the front of the altar. There, framed by the candlesticks, ornate goblets, and the miniatures of saints set in their alcoves, she looked worthy of worship herself.

Deyva didn't address me until she lit the final one, then blew it out with a purse of those lips.

“Just setting the mood.” She smiled, spinning on the altar top to face me with crossed, bare legs. “Honoring your sacrifice.”

The flickering candlelight illuminated her horns like some kind of twisted halo, an angelic creature who'd been rejected through no fault of her own.

I started to kneel in front of the altar, at first as a joke, but when my face came to the same level as her knees, and I had to look up at this otherworldly, beautiful creature that found us, I knew.

I was hers. And I was done for.

Her hands came down to the sides of my face, sweeping across my beard and neck with the tenderness and affection I'd craved for so long. And she gave it to me freely.

"Am I a worthy sacrifice?" I scooted closer, nudging my face between her knees to plant kisses on her thighs.

"Stavros." I loved how she said my name. A moan, a plea, and a curse all rolled into one. Her knees parted for me—warm, smooth flesh gliding across my ears to grant me entry. "Am I worthy of your worship?"

"Yes." The answer came without hesitation, emphasized with a sucking kiss just on the inside of her knee. I felt her shiver from the coarseness of my facial hair and turned my head to give the same treatment to her other leg. "Will you keep me?"

"Stavros..." Her fingers dragged over my scalp, forging pathways through my hair that sent tingling sensations all throughout my body. "I don't think I could give you up."

I ended the kiss I just planted inside her thigh, pausing to look up at her in my leisurely journey to her cunt. Her cheeks were flushed, eyes hooded and hungry, but a tiny wrinkle of apprehension between her brows stood out among her flawless features.

"Is that a confession?" I lifted my head to rest my cheek on top of her thighs, gazing up at the woman who had me since she first entered my dreams.

“What if it is, Father?” she whispered, a slight tremble in her voice.

I almost wanted to laugh at the notion that she was concerned about getting attached to me. I was already bound to her by something that felt unshakable. More than lust, more than her natural allure, or how taboo it appeared for a man of my station. I was only a priest in name, and even that was debatable.

No, she was candlelight shining through darkness and desolation. She was warmth and comfort, a beacon of hope where there was none left. It might’ve been fucked up and weak to seek this, but I was miles beyond the point of caring. We all needed something good to cling to in times like these. For some, it was their family. For others, it was God. For me, it just happened to be this woman sitting on an altar.

I rose to a standing position, wedging my hips between her legs to guide them open. Deyva’s thighs squeezed around my waist as she placed her hands behind her for support. Our chests mirrored each other’s movements and audible breaths.

“Then I hope to continue being a worthy sacrifice.”

My hands circled her waist, holding her firmly as I leaned down to take a kiss. She sank her teeth into my lip, holding me attached to her while the rest of our bodies molded together. Her hands went to my shoulders, immediately sliding down and curling into my shirt in search of buttons to do away with.

Her kisses were rougher tonight—biting, pulling, and taking with a desperation that I was all too happy to match. I helped peel my shirt off my arms and let it fall to the pulpit floor before attacking the buttons on the one she wore. She beat me to the punch, pulling the loose fabric over her head and tossing it to the side.

“Watch out for the candles,” I murmured, sucking at her earlobe while my palms memorized her lithe ribcage.

She let out a soft giggle, squirming slightly under my mouth. “If I didn’t, which would you save first—me or the church?”

“You.” My touch slid up to her breasts, palms running over her flesh while my thumbs worked her nipples into stiff peaks. “Always you.”

“Very good, my sacrificial lamb,” she sighed, rolling her head back on her shoulders. Her hand slid into my sweatpants, palm gliding over me from balls to head with heat and pressure that seriously made me question my stamina.

I caught her by the wrist and pulled it out of my pants with sheer force of will. “Let me make you come first this time.”

“I want to come together,” she protested with a slight pout, her lower lip so red and plump. “It’s better for me that way.”

“In terms of feeding or just in general?” I brought her wrist to my mouth and sucked at her pulse there, watching her writhe at the sensation.

“Both.” She sucked that fat lower lip between her teeth, biting back a whimper as she answered my question. “Your orgasm is like a megadose for me, and I just love the taste of ultimate pleasure regardless.”

“I want to please you, though.” My tongue dragged over the spot on her wrist I’d been sucking, while my other hand slid to the apex of her thighs, finding her hot, luscious center already slick for me. “I want to worship you like you deserve to be.”

Her grin became devilish, tongue running along her teeth. “You’re doing a bang-up job, I’d say.” She reached for my

cock again, palming me through the fabric of my pants before reaching inside my waistband. “It’d be even better if you filled me up, my sweet sacrifice.”

I released her wrist, anchoring that hand down on her hip while my fingers found her opening and stroked inside. Our mouths clashed together with biting, hungry kisses—her little moans like the sweetest siren’s call as I curled my fingers against her walls, the hard nub of her clit rolling under my thumb.

“Your cock,” she growled drunkenly, her forehead pressing against mine. “Fuck me, Stavros.”

“Think I can get you close?” She looked on her way there—hips bucking against my hand, sexy, ragged breaths dragging out of her chest, eyes hooded and shining red as she stroked me from root to tip.

“Not close enough,” she whined. “Please, Stavros.”

God, how could I tell her no? My hand withdrew from her with a wet sound, fingers dragging up her belly, between her breasts, caressing over her throat until they found sanctuary in the wet heat of her mouth.

I nudged my stiff length against her entrance, wanting to tease her some more, but also needing her as badly as she begged for me to fill her. “Devya...” Her name ripped from me as I surged forward, sinking into the best feeling that had ever wrapped around my cock.

“Mmph!” She sucked ravenously at my fingers, tasting herself with abandon as that tongue—God, that tongue—flicked over my fingertips and lit up nerve endings that I didn’t know existed. I guess everything could be an erogenous zone when fucking a succubus.

I pulled my fingers out of her mouth with a loud pop, slamming both hands on either side of the altar to hold myself up as I slammed into her.

“Yes,” she cried out, arms embracing me to pull me closer. “Yes, Stavros, yes...”

My face fell to her neck, sucking and kissing along the line of her shoulder to her jaw. Her thighs squeezed around my hips, nails drawing lines into my back that hurt so good. Her pussy felt like it was made for me. I wondered if that was a succubus thing, that she molded herself to squeeze around my cock with perfect sensation and pressure as I dragged in and out.

Dragging my hands across the altar, I held her waist for leverage, lost in her touch and sweet sounds as I crashed into her. With a soft moan, Deyva leaned back slowly, dragging her fingers down my chest as she rolled her spine down to the flat surface. The candlelight flickered over her bare skin, bathing her stretched out torso in a golden glow. Deep shadows accentuated her curves and features, making her look even more otherworldly.

But she was real. My succubus, my dream girl, my downfall, and my salvation.

My thrusts grew desperate and hurried, crashing violently into her soft flesh. I ran a greedy hand up her body, needing to feel more than the velvety softness squeezing around my cock. My hand made a detour at each breast, pulling and rolling her nipples until her scream reached the rafters. She squeezed around me when I cupped the back of her neck. I remembered how much she liked that the first time, and forced her head still as I leaned over to pull another kiss from her mouth.

We were both desperate for release now—I could feel it the frenzied way she kissed me. How she pulled me down on top of her with inhuman strength, maximizing our skin-to-skin contact as her heels dug into my ass.

“Stavros, yes, more, like that...” Her whines, whimpers, and pleas were my fucking undoing.

“Deyva...”

Her name on a choked moan was my last word before my pleasure crested without warning. I felt light, bodiless, and yet anchored to her as my release surged through me. Just as she said, her pussy convulsed around me to match the jerks and throbs of my cock, wringing every last drop from me.

My weightlessness turned to heaviness, a deep, satisfying fatigue settling into me. Still holding her neck, I pressed another breathless kiss to Deyva’s flushed, plump lips before withdrawing from her.

“I’d carry you to the couch but...” My speech nearly slurred, each word taking a monumental effort. “...Don’t think I can make it.”

She released a deep sigh, hugging around me as she brushed a kiss across my forehead. “Sorry. I think I got carried away and took too much.”

“S’okay.” I lifted my head, my skull feeling like the weight of a bowling ball as I found her eyes, now green with her deep satiation and satisfaction. “Fuck, you’re so beautiful.”

She giggled, nuzzling her face into my neck, as if shy. “Think you can manage rolling over and spooning me?”

“Think so.”

I slid off to the side, rolling over and bending my knees so she could have a spot to fit against me. Deyva followed my movement, bringing her back to my chest and her legs against mine. My feet still dangled over the edge of the small altar table, but it was comfortable enough.

“I’m sorry,” she repeated, pulling my arm around her and bringing my knuckles to her lips. “I didn’t realize I took so much. You’ll feel better within an hour.”

“Already feel better,” I murmured into her hair. My lips brushed against one of her horns and I pressed a kiss to the ridged surface. I thought I felt her whole body shiver, but it was hard to tell with my senses so numb. “Feel fuckin’ amazing.”

Whatever she was about to answer became a small gasp as we heard the clank of a metal key in the chapel’s front lock, and the creak of the heavy door as it opened.



No one is Without Sin

OceanofPDF.com

*P*eaceful sleep had escaped me for as long as I could remember, until she started coming to me in my dreams. Now that the succubus was physically here, and no longer in my head, a deep, dreamless sleep was just as tempting as what she offered me in my dreams.

I had to keep reminding myself that it was all an illusion, something she conjured up to lull me into a sense of complacency. The fatigue, the long days, and the endless fighting against the hellions, that was where God needed my focus. He needed us, needed me, to serve and protect our settlement. Whether this succubus was put in my path as a test from Him or the devil, I would not succumb to her.

She was a distraction, a Jezebel. Us three ran ourselves ragged so our flock wouldn't have to. But what a test of human spirit this little succubus was.

I had been tested in such a way once before, and nearly did succumb. Such a mistake wouldn't happen twice.

The memory blanketed me in shame, the humiliation of being escorted out of Sunday school by my Bishop was just as palpable now as it was then. I was so absorbed in my own

weakness that I almost missed the sound of the cottage door opening and closing gently, like someone was sneaking out.

I held my breath, not daring to make a sound as I listened, but heard nothing. Pushing myself up in bed, I pulled aside the curtain just in time to see Stavros turn out of sight behind the church.

Letting the curtain fall back into place, I frowned to myself. What would he be doing in the church in the middle of the night?

No, he wouldn't.

Actually, yes, he would.

“Fucking Stav,” I cursed, flopping back down onto the mattress.

The older priest—if I could still call him that—both infuriated and fascinated me. He took me under his wing when I first came to Bethel, and kindly integrated me into the routine he and Kais had set into place. Stav had a lot of worldly wisdom that I admired, but he also conducted himself so immaturely around the opposite sex. It was like his brain turned off the moment an attractive woman was nearby. And having the succubus around just seemed to amplify his empty-headedness.

He humored me whenever I tried to gently steer him toward a more righteous path where his body was concerned. Purity was a mindset first, a behavior second. He could always return to it, no matter how many women he'd lain with in his past, as long as he got his head on straight. I knew from his confessions that he felt guilty enough, but he couldn't seem to follow through with the behavior.

None of us were without sin. Women just happened to be his.

You're not so different.

The voice whispering at the back of my mind had me sitting straight up in bed again. I threw back the covers with a curse, finding my pants and a hoodie in the dark, like an act of defiance. My sins were not the same. I didn't disrespect my body or others by sleeping around.

Maybe my weakness was similar, but I strived to do better. I was remorseful. I would forever be in a state of repentance for my past actions and thoughts. And then this damned succubus had to appear and make me feel so fucking good.

I hated how she made me want to give in so easily, to throw away everything I stood for in the blink of an eye. But God wouldn't stress the importance of faith, the necessity of resisting temptation, if it didn't test a man to his very limits.

I would prove myself worthy, like I strived to do every day. I would not give in, nor would I condone it by my fellow priests. Stavros might be pissed at me for a while, but he had to understand that it was for his own good. If I could prevent his soul from going to the same place she came from, that alone would be worth it.

Slipping quietly from my room, I grabbed my most reliable demon blade—a hefty machete I affectionately named Joan, and doused it with holy water. Joan was anointed with holy water and the smoke from a devotional candle to Joan of Arc before every battle, and she'd never failed me when it came to slaying hordes of demons. The blade might not affect the succubus, but if she let any demonkind slip past our crucifix gate, I'd be ready.

Deyva. Her name is Deyva.

Right, we were on a first-name basis with the succubus now. And just as our luck would have it, she had a damn pretty name too.

Grabbing my keys on the way out, I slipped out the front door as quietly as I could manage. The night air was cool and refreshing in the midst of all the hellfire we'd been fighting lately. I crossed the lawn in the same direction Stavros went, my sneakers collecting glittery dew from the blades of grass.

I tried the first back door—locked, of course. Looking through the keys on my keyring, I realized I didn't have a copy to the back door, fuck! Kais was going to have the locksmith make me one, but I had yet to receive it.

With that option gone, I walked around the side of the building toward the front. Flickering light from the inside made the stained-glass windows glow, the colored panes almost looked like they were moving with the sway and flicker.

My stomach dropped with dread. Was she burning things in the chapel, any of the statuettes or books? Stavros wouldn't let her vandalize anything, would he? Not unless he was fully under her spell.

I hurried my footsteps into a run, now no longer caring to be quiet. My shoes clamored up the slippery front steps of the chapel until I inserted the rusted key into the ancient lock and turned it. "God, give me strength for what I must do."

With the brief prayer whispered on my lips, I pushed the heavy door and at first, found nothing amiss.

All the candles on the top shelf of the main altar had been lit. As the only light source, they bathed the entire chapel in a

warm, humble glow that reminded me of the monastery I visited in Belgium years ago as an acolyte.

Sudden movement at the altar pulled my gaze there, away from the majesty of the chapel itself, to the sight of Stavros scrambling off the altar and to the pulpit floor as he struggled to get his pants on.

“What the FUCK?” I bellowed, my voice reaching the rafters.

Oh and *she* was there too, darting off to hide behind one of the podiums as she quickly covered herself with a shirt—another borrowed one from Stavros, I couldn’t help but notice.

My mind reeled. I expected to catch them in intimate conversation, maybe some flirtatious touching, but not in the middle of *the act*.

“Zach, it’s okay.” Stav’s speech came out a strange cadence, his words almost slurred, as if drunk. He had just barely managed to get his pants on over his dick, but seemed to struggle to stand.

“No, it’s fucking not!” It wasn’t like me to swear so much, but every ounce of faith and respect I once held for Stavros was snuffed out like the flames from those candles. “How could you? How—” My fingers speared through my hair, tugging at my scalp at the sheer stupidity. “I mean, look at you! What has she done?”

“I’m okay. It’ll wear off.”

His bare chest, slick with sweat, heaved with ragged breaths like he’d just been mid-thrust. Or had just come, Christ almighty...

In my rage, I fixated on how the candlelight danced over his olive skin, shadows and highlights carving out broad,

sinewy muscles like a statue.

“She’s been feeding from you,” I realized, fresh anger boiling up inside. “She’s been using you, like a parasite.”

“It’s not like that,” Stavros insisted, finally clamoring to his feet. “I offered myself to her.”

“Why?” I cried, incredulous that he would do such a thing.

“So she wouldn’t prey on you, or anyone else in Bethel.”

My jaw hung open and my gaze slid to her, *Deyva*. She claimed she wasn’t a demon, but this was obvious proof otherwise.

“You deceitful bitch,” I hissed.

“Zach!” Stavros shouted, stepping forward, swaying a little before straightening firmly.

Deyva slid out from behind the podium slowly, the shirt buttoned just barely enough to cover her, leaving a tantalizing v leading between her breasts that peeked open as she moved.

“Zach, I just got a little carried away this time, but I promise—”

“Like a promise from the likes of you means anything,” I snapped. “We only have your word on anything you’ve fed us and at the first opportunity you manipulated Stavros into—”

“Zach, she did *not* manipulate me. I’m a grown man, I can decide who I want to sleep with,” Stavros growled. His hand shot back behind him, reaching for Deyva, and I watched with a combination of disgust and jealousy as her hand raised and linked with his, her lips pressing flat as she stared back at me.

“What the fuck is going on here?”

Stavros groaned as I spun and found Kais dressed in his tactical gear and collar, a crossbow in one hand.

“None of anyone else’s business,” Stavros barked.

“She’s *feeding* on him! She lied to us!” I shouted, gesturing at the pair.

Kais looked between the three of his, eyes narrowed and face flat for a moment before huffing and rolling his eyes. “I fucking knew you were in too good of a mood lately,” he said to Stavros.

“I made a choice, on my own,” Stavros said firmly.

“You’re honestly surprised?” Kais asked me, head tilting.

“Yeah!” No. “I mean, aren’t you concerned?”

Kais frowned and looked at Deyva next. “Is this something you’re going to cultivate with others? Is he enough to sustain you?”

“No, and yes,” Deyva said, glancing briefly at Stavros before adding. “I can cut back too.”

“Dey,” Stavros murmured, leaning toward her with a heavy lidded gaze.

“What if it’s like, *addictive*?” I asked, arms flapping uselessly at my side. Was Kais really just going to...go along with this? We’d just let this creature devour our friend?

Deyva giggled and then swallowed the sound, but Stavros laughed full out, body shimmering with sweat and candlelight as his head fell back. His hair was ruffled with touch and his cheeks had gone from pale to flushed again. Already he looked less drugged and uneven and more...

Shit. Stavros looked really fucking happy.

“Zach, I hate to break it to you, but it’s definitely addictive,” Stavros said and then his smile settled and he pointed a finger at me. “Not like that, okay? I’m *fine*. This is the safest decision for everyone. This way Deyva won’t starve or pose a threat to anyone.”

Closer, standing in the light, I saw the shadow that passed over the succubus’ face, almost as if Stavros had injured her with the statement, but it passed quickly and she looked to Kais and I.

“Collared and tamed,” she said with a lopsided smile. She held up a hand with her pinky sticking out, Stavros’ too-long sleeve sliding up her wrist. “Pinky promise.”

“Stav,” I said slowly. “This is...bigger than an inappropriate liaison. We’re talking immortal soul stuff, man.”

“Zach, stay out of it,” Stavros said, levelling me with a hard look.

“Look as fascinating as it is to talk about Stav’s new sex life, we’ve got a situation at the gate. New visitor asking to be let in,” Kais said.

“No!” Deyva cried, the sharp word bouncing up into the rafters.

The three of us stared at her, watched her struggle to take control of the genuine horror splitting her expression.

“I mean, I’m not wild about it either,” Kais said, frowning at her. “But there’s a twist. This one’s got wings. We need to get out there, guys.”

“Deyva should come,” Stavros said, and his hand squeezed around hers, drawing her gaze. “You’ll have the best idea of what we’re looking at. Or maybe you’ll know them?”

Deyva's face twisted. "That's like assuming everyone in New York City knew each other. *Wings?* Are you sure?"

"Saw them on the monitor," Kais said. "Come on, we need to hurry before someone else makes the decision for us."

Wings. *Wings?* Did that mean...

I swallowed and eyed Stavros with his sex smile and Deyva who was twisting on her toes nervously. "You two should put some actual clothes on."

"Don't be jealous, Zach," Deyva snapped.

"Children!" Kais shouted, heading for the door. "Get it together. Let's go."

THE TOWN WAS CROWDED around the gate as we approached, but I could see the tips of the wings over their heads, my heart stopping at the sight. Golden and dense, with sharp glinting talons at the height of the joint. The feathers were dense and downy, but lay in crooked angles, broken and twisted. I wasn't sure if the wings were glowing, or just catching and holding on to the moonlight from the clear night.

I followed close at Kais' back as he encouraged the stirring crowd to part and let us in. Behind me I heard the gasps of breath and the quick stirring as people realized we'd brought Deyva with us.

"God sent us aid in ridding the town of her," a woman called from within the crowd.

"Is it true, Fathers?" another whispered.

"Look at him. My God, look at him."

“Everyone, please, give us some room,” Kais said as he was just a few people away from the gate.

But I saw him then, the man at the gate.

The angel.

Our eyes met and I was judged in one glance, an eternity in a single drowsy gaze. He was as beautiful as Deyva, but this time it was less the pure perfection of his features, and more the peace that struck me as I stared at him. Soft hair framing around his face and jaw, a cherubic mouth, and that stare that saw through me.

Kais stopped in place even as our flock moved aside, his own eyes wide and body frozen in shock.

There was an angel at our gate.

“Children of God,” he said, words velvety and melodic, lips curving gently upwards. “I seek sanctuary.”

“Let him in.”

“Thank God.”

“Fathers, let him in.”

My hand reached out for the gate and even Kais was stepping forward, ready to open the gate for the angel.

“You are Fallen.” Deyva’s voice cut through the sweet murmurs like a knife, warning and tense, and I whipped around to glare at her. She looked like a feral cat, her eyes glowing in warning, body bunched and angled in front of Stavros, looking as though she were...protecting him. Which didn’t make any sense.

“A succubus,” the angel said, and that elegant ringing of his voice drew my eyes back to him, my heart beating wildly

in my chest. “I haven’t seen one of your kind in millenia.”

“And I’ve seen dozens of you,” Deyva growled. “Those talons. Your wings. You’re Hell-touched.”

“And you aren’t, First Daughter?” the angel murmured, an eyebrow cocking.

“Deyva, if we let *you* in...” Stavros murmured.

“Enough,” Kais said. “Zach, help me open the gate.”

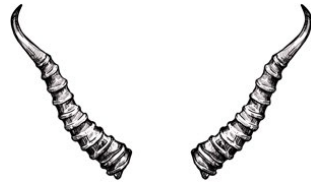
Deyva rumbled with a soft growl but I ignored her, hurrying forward to assist Kais in lifting the heavy barrier of the gate.

An angel. I didn’t care what Deyva said. God had sent us an angel, regardless of what direction he’d reached us from. We weren’t abandoned.

It was my one kernel of doubt and it melted away now.

We were blessed by an angel now. God was watching.

OceanofPDF.com



The Pure Light of God

OceanofPDF.com

“*Y*ou’re sulking.”

I glared down at the three human men standing at the front of the church and resisted the urge to stick my tongue out at them. Sulking, that was what Stavros had said. Like my being concerned by the way these humans just let a *Fallen* angel through their gates without a second thought was in some way a childish reaction.

“Idiots,” I muttered, not really caring if the word floated down to human ears from where I was tucked away in the balcony.

Except the only face that looked up was that of the angel’s. Azariah. Which was a pompous fucking name.

He stared at me without blinking as the men and women knelt and prayed at Zach’s urging. Even Stavros, my beautiful hedonistic lover, was on his knees. And the angel looked up and met my gaze, impassive and all too fucking observant.

I raised my hand, pointing two fingers at my eyes and glaring back down at him, before turning my hand and pointing them down at his face.

He shook with a little laugh and then winced as it jostled his wings.

Broken wings, twisted feathers, a few places where they were missing entirely, no doubt plucked away by some sadistic hand.

Fine. So Azariah had been tortured in hell. Wah, wah, hadn't we all? What did he want, a medal? *I'd get the gold on that one, buddy*, I thought.

I took a deep breath and closed my eyes, swallowing my groan. Shit, the humans tasted good though. They were *incandescent* with happiness. They thought God had sent them a savior. What they didn't realize was that it was more likely Hell had sent a wolf in sheep's clothing. I'd been tossed from Hell under Kimaris' petty temper, but there was no way Hell was casting off one of their Fallen. Fallen were like the infinite food source, if they didn't sign up to be Hell's greatest warriors.

I suspected this one was the former. I'd called him Hell-touched, but it seemed to be mild so far, just a couple decorative claws at the top of his wings and some black embellishment to his feathers. He hadn't sprouted horns yet or anything.

Ha, ha.

A chorus of amens rose from the audience and then, before their heads were raised, that fucking angel winked at me.

Oh game on, you imperious little asshole, I thought.

The townspeople dawdled in their pews, gazing at the angel. They were waiting on another miracle, and I was simultaneously gleeful and wary of the moment that they realized he certainly wasn't it.

"I know we're all very excited, but let's remember, folks, that there's always work to do, every day. Go on home and get

some rest. Our new guest isn't going to fly away, right?" Kais said, an awkward and nervous attempt at humor made. Shit, even *he* was giddy.

"Not until my wings are healed at least," Azariah said, attempting a sheepish shrug and then doing a drama queen's best performance of a pained wince.

I rolled my eyes as the room cooed with worry and happiness. Give me a fucking break.

Slowly and reluctantly, they cleared the chapel, heading out the front doors. Stavros glanced up at one point, checking on me and grinning, his arms crossed over his chest and a dopey kind of happiness in his gaze. I wanted to believe that look was there because of me, which was a shocking revelation on its own. It was worse to know that it probably had more to do with the angel than the heady depth of emotion he'd been sharing during our sex tonight.

Because he's just fucking me so no one else has to, I reminded myself spitefully. I was getting...too human about this arrangement.

I sighed and pushed off the balcony, ready to slink back to the office for the day.

"Deyva," Kais called up to the balcony, stopping me in place. He and Zach were crowding around Azariah's wings, frowning at the torn and mangled feathers. "What do you know about wings?"

A lot, actually. Before Belial passed me off to Kimaris, it'd been in my job description to patch up the Fallen and then remind them of the perks of being aligned with a succubus after they'd landed. I was good advertisement for the perks of Hell.

Azariah watched me, and the three men, *my* men in some ways, stared up at me.

“Just don’t...touch anything until I get down there,” I said.

Oh Deyva, we don’t trust you, but can you take care of our new best friend the angel from fucking Hell? Isn’t he pretty and shiny? We love his horns and his sin-stained feathers.

My mouth pursed and twisted with my petty inner monologue as I stomped my way down the stairs and heaved open the side door to the chapel with a bang that made Azariah flinch and then shudder with a groan.

“Feel free to stop being dramatic at any time,” I muttered, stomping my way over. Okay, maybe I *was* sulking just a little.

The three human men eyed me warily as I approached the Hell-touched angel, like the two of us in close proximity would create a black hole or something. But the star of the show just angled his head in my direction with a wry smile.

“Not all of us are as well-seasoned to the fiery pits as you, little succubus. Although I can sense your little vacation here on earth has treated you very well.”

“Aren’t you full of insight,” I scoffed. Anyone who knew what to look for could tell I had recently fed. I opted to ignore him in favor of examining his bad wing. “You have a clean break here,” I pointed to the long bone that was misshapen and out of place, just below the main joint. “I can set it, but I’ll need stuff to make a splint to hold it while it heals.”

“I’m on it.” Stavros immediately jumped up from the front pew and headed for the nearest door.

Even with Azariah watching me closely, I couldn’t help but train my gaze on Stavros’ wide back as he hurried to find what I needed. The sting was palpable, that he would be so

quick to help this creature rather than stay here with me. Zach or Kais would have made more sense, but why him? Did seeing this angel suddenly restore his faith? And if it did, what did that mean for our...*time* together?

I hated to admit that being with him was about more than just feeding now. It had been so long since I enjoyed the physical act of sex for the simple, mechanical motions that it was. The sweet ache of a cock filling me, the heat of bare skin, and pressure of another body on top of me. At some point, maybe just today, I stopped viewing Stavros as a mere sacrifice. His visits became a treat, something I looked forward to after long, boring days futzing around the church.

I had succumbed to the age-old human malady of catching feelings.

The door closing after him felt like the metaphorical slap in the face of him reinforcing that he was just fucking me to keep everyone else safe. Keeping my face blank, I turned back to Azariah, moving around to examine him for other injuries until Stavros came back. The angel missed nothing though, bright blue eyes tracking me like a bird of prey.

Kais stood atop the pulpit, ever the watchful soldier with his crossbow still in his hands as he stood over us. Zach on the other hand, couldn't tear his eyes away from Azariah. He sat on the edge of the stage, a full body length between himself and the injured angel, as if he dared not encroach on this holy creature's space.

The youngest priest just gazed openly, staring in awe, with wonderment in his eyes, mouth parted slightly. Azariah didn't seem to mind—rather he seemed to bask in the attention.

“You may come closer, Father Zachariah,” the angel smiled at him, holding out a hand. “Do not be afraid of me.”

I held back a snort as Zach scooted closer, accepted Azariah's outstretched hand. He was falling hook, line, and sinker—which would be one hell of a problem if this angel really was under Hell's orders.

“Can I get you anything?” Zach managed to ask in an awed whisper. “Some water or food, maybe? A change of clothes?”

“Sweet child of God,” Azariah cooed, wrapping his fingers tighter around Zach's. “Sheltered in the house of our Lord with kind souls such as yourself, I need nothing else.”

Behind Azariah's back, I rolled my eyes hard. Kais huffed out a breath that could have been a laugh.

“However,” Azariah continued. “I would be most grateful for some wine and a clean pair of pants, yes.”

Zach jumped up to obey so fast, he nearly tripped over his own feet on his way out of the chapel. I brought my forehead down to my palm, but had to give Stavros *some* credit. At least he wasn't a complete overeager puppy as far as the angel was concerned.

“You don't have any other major injuries,” I said flatly, hopping off the pulpit to face Azariah from the front. “Once I set that wing, and we deal with some of these feather issues, you should be in flying shape after enough time to heal. A good soak in the shower and maybe cleaning with oil should repair most of the surface damage. Kais would probably share some of his holy oil for this.”

“Of course,” Kais said with a shrug.

“You have my deepest gratitude, First Daughter.” Azariah inclined his head toward me, but his smile was mocking. His

eyes were cunning. I didn't trust this guy as far as I could throw him.

I crossed my arms with a narrow-eyed glare. "So who sent you here?"

"Devya," Kais warned, his voice sharp with authority. "Take it easy. We'll be questioning him after he's treated and we've all been able to rest."

"Really?" My gaze shot up to him, standing guard with his weapon like the warrior priests of centuries past. "You think you guys are the most unbiased, impartial judges here?"

"Are you?" he fired back. "Azariah just got here, and you're stomping around like a petulant child."

"Please, please." Azariah raised his arms, his too-pretty face pinching with a wince as he did so. "There's no need to fight on my account. Deyva has good reason to be suspicious of me." His look at me turned pitying. "Succubi have a long history of being jealous of angels, due to their kind falling out of God's favor."

It took everything I had to stop from lunging at him. "You fucking—"

"Hey, will this work for a splint?"

My growl was cut off by Stavros returning with two slender wooden boards and a length of nylon rope. He apparently missed that I was about to tear into Azariah, and Kais sent me another scathing warning look from where he stood.

I turned to Stavros stiffly. "Yes, that'll do fine," I said through gritted teeth, ignoring the *massive* and intentional slight against my kind, and all but snatched the supplies away from him.

As much as I wanted to revel in the hint of nervousness in Azariah's face, I kept quiet as I set everything down next to his injured wing. Stepping closer to him made me pause, if only for a second. He was attractive, as all angels were. Just androgynous enough to be both beautiful and handsome, with a long, lithe body created for little air resistance during flight.

Now standing next to him inside his wing, the feathered limb acted like a privacy curtain, shielding everything outside so my attention was only on him. Once healed, the wing could draw someone in close, like an affectionate arm around the shoulders. Not that it would ever happen between this fucker and I. This angel was not my friend. The smug glee on his face told me as much. He might have the priests wrapped around his little feathers, but not me.

I wrapped my hands just above and below the break, casting him a single warning glance. "This is going to hurt like Hell." Then I snapped the bones into place.

"Ahhhh, fuck!"

His scream blasted out my ears, his pain and fear overwhelmingly pricking my tastebuds with their sharp, spicy flavor. I knew from the angels I'd sampled before, their energy was the most potent, concentrated form I'd ever tasted. It was like getting injected rather than eating or drinking. Not that fucking him was remotely in the plans for me. If it wasn't for Kais asking me to heal him, I wouldn't be within ten feet of this angel.

"What the fuck are you doing?" Zach burst in, running at top speed with panic paling his face. "What's wrong? Why is he screaming?"

"Relax, Deyva's just setting a broken bone," Stavros placated him while holding one side of the splint for me.

“Well, don’t be cruel,” Zach murmured in a smaller voice.

“Isn’t that rich?” I snorted, winding the nylon rope around the two strips of wood holding the break in place.

“Dearest lamb, is that for me?” Pain laced through Azariah’s voice, but I could still hear that taunting smile.

“Um, yes,” Zach answered shyly. “We’re about the same height, so I hope the pants fit. I’m not sure how good this wine is—”

“Sweet man, come here.”

I finished tying the splint securely while Azariah beckoned Zach closer. Ever the eager puppy, Zach nearly stumbled over his feet again as he approached with wide, starry eyes. Azariah cupped his cheek tenderly, stroking his thumb over the young priest’s cheekbone, then placed a fast kiss on Zach’s lips.

It was over so quickly, any of us could have blinked and missed it. But nobody did. Kais and Stavros wore matching bug-eyed expressions, while Zach looked ready to cry with joy. His chest heaved with ragged breaths, a grin splitting his face as his hand reached up to touch the back of Azariah’s palm.

“Of all the angels and humans I’ve known, none hold a candle to your brightness, Zachariah.” Their foreheads touched, lips hovering mere inches away from each other. “You shine with the pure light of God within you. I can see it as clearly as your beautiful, curious eyes.”

Kais coughed, but nothing seemed to break the spell the angel had over his fellow priest.

“I used to get teased about my eyes being different colors,” Zach confessed, his head leaning heavily into Azariah’s palm.

“Oh sweet, dear little lamb...” I almost thought he was going kiss Zach again, but the angel’s lips landed on his forehead this time. “You are brave, you have suffered, you have remained true to your faith, and that is why you are one of God’s most favored warriors in these trying times.”

“I am?” A single tear tracked down Zach’s cheek, wiped swiftly by Azariah’s thumb, naturally.

“Are you guys hearing this?” I snapped my head between Kais and Stavros watching the train wreck unfold right in front of us. “He’s totally working him over!”

“Poor, jealous little succubus,” Azariah taunted, turning to me. “Have I foiled your plans of getting your seductive hooks deep in this pure, untainted soul?”

“I never would have—ugh!”

Defending myself was pointless, so why even bother trying? I turned and skulked off mid-sentence. The fucking wing was splinted, so I was clearly no longer needed.

“Deyva!” Stavros called after me, but I slammed the door on him, just as he did to me.

Okay it wasn’t the same thing, and maybe it wasn’t fair to get all bent out of shape. They were human. Why did I expect them to listen to me? It was in their DNA to *ooh* and *ahh* over an angel. I just had the tiny sliver of hope that maybe they actually trusted me a little more at this point.

It was foolish of me to even hope for that much, so naively human of me. After centuries of being a simple tool in a much bigger system, I wasn’t used to feeling anything at all. No, the feelings didn’t start happening until I started sipping from these men’s dreams.

“Deyva!”

I ignored the call of my name floating after me down the hallway, choosing to wallow in my thoughts instead. At this point, I didn't even want a pity fuck from Stavros. I'd rather starve than choke on the vile flavor of pity, no matter how good his body felt.

"Deyva, wait." A hand closed around my upper arm and I whipped around, stunned for a moment to see that it was Kais that ran after me.

"I'm just going to the office to lay down for the night," I told him stiffly. "Still not running away or sneaking into people's houses for midnight meal orgies, or whatever you're worried about me doing."

He at least had enough tact to look surprised. "I'm not worried about anything. I just wanted to say, don't worry about Zach. That out there was...yeah." He scratched a hand through his thick curls, and I mentally cursed my twitching fingers for wanting to sink into that hair too.

"It looked like he was trying to seduce Zach," I said flatly. "Because he's the most naive of you three. And Zach's falling right into it. That angel is fucking up to something, Kais."

"Yeah, Daisy, I hear you." Kais nodded, his words solemn. "I told Stav to separate 'em before running after you. We'll figure it out, okay?"

I was rendered speechless. He believed me. The sexy, grumpy, warrior priest had a bit of sense after all. Maybe the most out of all of them, with the exception of giving me that fucking nickname.

"And for the record," I found my words once again. "Despite what I am, and what I need to live, I have not once attempted to manipulate or seduce a single person since I got

here. Azariah doesn't need to feed like I do, and right off the bat he's preying on someone. Stavros came to me, I didn't—"

"Again, I hear you." Kais pulled in a deep breath, looking far too calm and contemplative for the situation at hand. "Your good behavior has been noted," he added with the smallest glimpse of a smile.

"Oh." Speechless again, I clasped my hands behind my back. "Well, thank you."

With nothing in his body language to read, I reached out with my senses. His emotions were clamped down, only the flavors of mild curiosity and amusement coming through. It seemed his giddiness over the angel had sobered into caution.

"Really, I should be thanking you." He blurted it out with a faint blush rising in his cheeks. "So, thanks, Daisy."

That fucking nickname again. "For what?" I sputtered.

"Let's see, repairing a wing despite your reservations about our new guest." He counted off on his fingers. "Gracefully dealing with the townspeople's suspicions, our own included. And," he paused, looking at me pointedly, "giving Stavros something good in his life. Lord knows he needed it."

"Um, what?" I stared at him, certain that I hadn't heard him correctly. "You're not upset with him? Or me?"

"How I feel doesn't matter," he shrugged. "It happened. I gather it's going to continue happening. Yeah, you have horns and you don't need to eat or sleep but," he drew in another long breath, "you're one of our people now. It's on us to look after you. Stav's the happiest I've seen him in years, and you?" He sucked his lower lip between his teeth and I felt hunger spark through me, despite feeding less than an hour earlier. "You're a completely different woman from the bleeding,

skittish little thing we found. It's...good to see you thriving too."

Kais grinned sheepishly, the shy flirtatiousness and heady desire bleeding through the emotions he tried so hard to clamp down.

"Kais?" I angled my body toward him, reaching a hand out tentatively. Did he want to...?

The moment I did, he stepped away. Out of reach. The sting of how Stavros saw me was one thing, but this outright rejection hurt.

"I'm just glad you two have something that's working out," he said in a single breath. "For the time being, anyway."

I laughed, dropping my hand. My turn to feel sheepish. He thought Stavros and I were a *thing* and he was just staying out of his friend's way.

"We don't have something," I said. "He's purely doing it to feed me, to prevent me from becoming a danger to the community."

Kais got an odd look on his face, like he was trying to hide a smile. "I don't think that's entirely true." With that he turned, heading back toward the chapel as he called out, "Goodnight, Daisy."



Swords of God

OceanofPDF.com

I woke with a start, my ears ringing and sweat stinging my eyes, the sounds of mortar explosions, bestial snarls, and the screams of dying men buried under the high pitched warning tone in my head. My chest heaved and my heart stuttered as I catalogued my surroundings.

The cross over my mirror. The black robe hanging from the hook on the back of my door. The rosary over the lamp by my bedside. The puckered scar running down the inside of my leg.

Bethel. I was in Bethel, in the priest house, after the Rising.

My men were long since dead.

Three years into this routine of night terrors and waking with the sense that I was in the *wrong* place, and I still had to sort through the panic and collect my bearings every time.

The house was quiet, which meant Stavros was on guard duty and Zach had probably carted Azariah off to see the town. I frowned, and oddly enough it was Deyva in my head, her wary eyes on Azariah, the defensive hunch of her shoulders as she moved around the angel. It had to be crazy to be so

suspicious of an angel, to *trust*...whatever Deyva was, but I couldn't shake the feeling.

I groaned as I stretched out of bed. I'd pushed a little too hard yesterday, working on reinforcing the old veterinary office so we could start building a proper (for the apocalypse) hospital, and my body wasn't thanking me today. But wearing myself out in the day was the easiest way of making sure I slept through the nightmares, too tired to fight my way out of the horrors.

I showered quickly, dressed in jeans and a black button down with my white collar, and went in search of the succubus.

She'd been petty and petulant and jealous the night before with our reaction to the angel and it had been fucking adorable. Not that I would tell her so. I was determined to keep Deyva at arm's length, but there was a kind of honesty in her reaction to the angel. She was angry and a little frightened and I...believed her, or at least I believed that she genuinely doubted Azariah's intentions as much as we doubted hers.

The church was empty and I found Deyva doing lazy cartwheels in the gymnasium, wearing black leggings and one of Stavros' shirts that slid up her stomach as she was upside down, offering a tantalizing flash of skin before righting again. Take away the horns and give her a pumpkin spice latte and she'd have looked just like an Instagram influencer from before the Rising.

"Are you waiting for me to flash you or did you need something?" she asked, rising up from a tumble and spinning to face me. She reached for the hem of her shirt, yanking it up, and I looked away in reflex.

I had to force my face to scowl at the sound of her bright laughter.

“It’s time for you to be useful,” I said.

“Oh, Kais. I thought you’d never ask,” she purred. I levelled her with a flat look until she huffed and rolled her eyes. “Okay, sure, fine. What do you need?”

“You’ve been feeding, so I take it you’re feeling healthy?”

I was a little surprised by the bitter look on her face. Stavros was in some deep shit and he didn’t even know it. To be fair, I probably hadn’t realized it would be so easy to hurt a hellion’s feelings either. A woman was a woman, horns or not, and Deyva didn’t like hearing Stavros’ excuses for why he was having the time of his life fucking her.

And I was absolutely not going to get in the middle of that. Because if I comforted Deyva, or reassured her that sex with her was probably the reason Stavros’ woke up in the morning with that dumb ass smile he’d been wearing... Well, I was pretty sure I knew where I’d end up, and it was as tempting a destination as it was idiotic.

“I’m not at my peak, but I’m in the best shape I’ve been in for a long time,” Deyva said.

Where have you been? What have you been through? What can I do to make it better?

I shut my thoughts down.

“Good, then you can help me around town.”

Deyva’s lips pursed, head tipping, and the look was unintentionally sexual, if that were possible for a succubus. Still, I was pretty sure she hadn’t *meant* for me to be thinking about her mouth in this way.

“I know everyone’s feeling nice and shiny about your new feathered friend, but don’t you think I’ll put a damper on things?”

“Look, Daisy,” I said, endlessly delighted by the annoyed furrow of her brow as I called her that. “Are you going to be Bethel’s new favorite neighbor this year? Probably not. But if people see you working, helping out, I think eventually there will be acceptance. I know Stav tried things his way, but watching him hand feed you at the diner when you haven’t even helped out around here, probably didn’t add to the warm feelings.”

Deyva snorted and then sighed. Absently her hands brushed up the back of her neck, gathering her hair and exposing the elegant length of almost bone-white skin. And then she took two handfuls and twisted them up around her horns, tucking in the ends and making the most absurd looking hair buns I’d ever seen.

“Fine. It’s better than hanging around here all day. But now that I’m on a healthy diet, animosity gives me a stomach ache—”

I nodded and turned on my heel, letting her follow me. “I can think of some things where you’ll be out of the way, but people will be aware you’re contributing. It’s a goodwill building exercise, yeah?”

“Yeah. Sure.”

She didn’t sound sure.

I DIDN'T THINK I was one of those guys who felt challenged by a woman's strength or authority. I focused on bettering myself, living up to my own expectations and then raising them again.

But there was something a little bit galling about watching Devya lift an entire fucking tree branch off the top of a house. She didn't make it look easy, but she definitely looked like a moderately-strong superhero.

It was hot. And intimidating. And I wasn't sure if it was exactly what the town should be seeing, if they'd feel comfortable knowing she was *that* strong.

"Fucking *cool*," Kyle Phillips muttered behind me. Kyle was fifteen, and had exclusively grabbed comic books when his parents had cried out for him to pack at the first sign of disaster.

Kyle was right though, it was fucking cool.

"Where do you want this?" Deyva asked through gritted teeth.

"Just swing it down to the ground. Far enough so it doesn't break the windows as it comes down," I called up to her. She was balanced precariously on the broken wall of the house, the branch cradled in her arms and lifted out of the debris it had created when it crashed.

"But the marigolds," she said.

I laughed and the audience of townspeople tittered behind me. "Seriously? Don't worry about the marigolds, Daisy, no one's taking care of the house until it's repaired."

She grumbled something, and it was probably for the best that we couldn't hear it.

“If only I could fly up and assist her, but alas, my wing is not yet healed,” a soft voice murmured from behind me. The angel, Azariah.

“I mean, she owes us,” Zach answered. “It’s just a tree branch.”

I frowned and glared over my shoulder at Zach. Just a tree branch? It was a tree branch the size of a fucking tree. Deyva was right. Azariah the angel was an asshole and Zach needed to rein it in a little.

“Okay, just everybody back up a little more,” Deyva cried, the strain starting to show around her eyes.

The crowd hustled back and I swallowed hard, watching her.

Deyva grunted, tossing the branch up and *away* from the marigold beds. It landed on the ground with a bone-trembling crash that made everyone gasp, but I was too busy watching Deyva. She wobbled, arms spreading out to try and balance herself.

“Whoops,” she said, and then fell forward out of the house.

“Daisy!”

I was way too far away to catch her, and there was a massive branch on the ground between us, but I still ran forward, trying to clear the branch in a leap.

It didn’t matter.

Succubus’ landed like cats, as it turned out.

Deyva made a soft ‘oof’ against the ground, tipping forward to catch herself on one hand before righting quickly. She giggled sheepishly at me, one hair bun falling loose against her cheek, a little flush on her skin.

“I like marigolds,” she said.

I released the breath that’d been trapped in my chest ever since she wobbled, and didn’t bother fighting the grin bursting through.

“Father! Can we have a bonfire with some of the wood?” someone called from the crowd.

“Good work,” I said to Deyva, since no one else would, and I turned to the others, glancing down at the branch. “If the weather holds, I think a small one would be alright. But let’s not forget this is going to come in handy this winter.”

“I’ll go inside and start clearing up the room that was damaged,” Deyva murmured, heading for the back door of the old house.

I was going to stop her, make her join me with the others, but then someone called my name with another question and she had already stepped inside.

In the crowd, the angel Azariah’s eyes tracked our succubus.

“SO TODAY IS REALLY...YOU *not* at your peak?” I asked Deyva, watching her eat on her own for the first time. She sat next to Stavros, who watched her hungrily, and even though she wasn’t giving him a full cold shoulder, it was pretty clear he was still in the dog house.

I passed her one of my fries, just to watch her dip it in maple syrup and chew on it thoughtfully. She was testing flavors, and she did so with a kind of adventurous freedom that was borderline childlike, but mostly pretty gross.

“Nah. This is like...me with a head cold or after a human bender,” Deyva said.

“Do you need to feed?” Stavros asked hopefully.

She gave him a sidelong glance, her face remaining impassive, aside from a brief flash of heat in her eyes. “No, thank you. *If* I were really wanting to fuel up, it would probably look more like what you guys expected me to do in the beginning. Multi-source feeding frenzy, not giving the human meal-ticket a break, seriously draining them.”

Stavros frowned and drew back, watching her. Personally, I thought it was kind of obvious. He’d made her feel like a job he had to do. She was making him feel like food.

People falling in love were sort of stupid, which made it that much more ridiculous that I was *jealous* of Stavros right now.

“If I wanted to be *really* naughty I’d go grab that angel and suck him dry,” Deyva muttered, picking up one of the over easy eggs on her plate and dumping it into her vegetable soup, stabbing irritably at yolk with a fork.

“Why him?” I asked. *Why not me?*

“God created my kind before your kind, remember?” she said, arching an eyebrow. “Succubi were intended to feed on angels. They don’t feel it and we thrive on it. But...well, that situation got complicated and God scrapped us.”

I didn’t like Deyva’s interpretation of God, of a divine ruler simply experimenting by trial and error. It felt too much like my worst doubts, my ugliest thoughts. Had he given up on us too? Was that why he let Hell rise up and overtake us?

“That’s not what Az said last night,” Stavros said.

Deyva looked as though Stavros had just electrocuted her, her body pin straight and eyes the same shade of yellow as caution tape, a suitable warning.

Luckily for Stavros' balls, one of our men from the security depot stepped up to the table at that moment.

"Fathers. We've got a situation coming toward the gate. Just some Hell wraiths but there's a big group of them. Zach's already heading for the gate. I think the angel's with him," Nick said, bouncing all the balls of his feet.

"Grab your shit," I said to Stavros, sliding the remainder of my plate in Deyva's direction before blinking at her, an idea striking me. "Hey. You down to send some wraiths back to Hell?"

Deyva was still stiff, eyes still yellow, and one of her hands wrapped tightly around the butter knife on the table. "I'm not going outside the gate," she said, voice tight and thread thin, eyes flicking between Stavros and I.

I looked at him and saw that same ache on his features that I felt in my chest.

"That's fine, Deyva," he said softly.

I don't know if he was even fully aware of what he did next, at least in terms of the fact that the town was around us, watching. His hand cupped her shoulder and he leaned in, and pressed a brief kiss to her temple. Deyva's spiky tension bled away. She leaned into him for a moment and then they both pulled away, Deyva nodding and sagging in her seat.

"Go to the chapel when you're done eating," I said. "You'll be safe there."

At least, I hoped she would be.

Which was a whole other shit storm I could worry about later.

Stavros and I headed for the armory, which was little more than a storage shed we set up at a convenient crossroad—not too close to the gate, but on the way there. It was loaded with gallons of holy water and water guns filled and ready to grab at a moment's notice. A few canisters of holy oil crowded the shelves too, and I grabbed one just in case while Stavros loaded himself up.

We were past the point of feeling like water guns were ridiculous. Humanity learned too late that our weapons meant to kill each other were useless on hellions. Guns, bombs, tanks—the demons just laughed at all of it. All the major militaries of the world emptied their armories, spent billions of their currency, and sent millions of citizens to slaughter, all because they didn't know how else to fight.

It was somewhat of a learning curve for us too. Zach came up with the idea of blessing weapons with holy water first. First we blessed the water, then sprinkled it over bullets and grenades. That worked better than anything had before, but we soon ran out of ammo. And Hell never stopped coming. Turned out, using the water as a weapon itself was much more effective.

If only I had known back then, my unit would still be alive. They were good guys, they might have even been part of the Bethel community, still fighting alongside me. I probably wouldn't need a succubus feasting on my carnal fantasies to get a decent night's sleep. I definitely wouldn't be haunted by their screams, their charred up bodies, and the abject terror in their eyes at the knowledge of where they were going after death. All to the eerie sound of demon laughter.

If only, if only.

“You think Deyva’s going to be okay?” Stav’s worried muttering as he strapped on weapons pulled me out of my dark thoughts.

Fuck, I hope so. “As long as nothing gets in the gate and she doesn’t get out.”

I took down my spare crossbow from the mount above the shed door. It wasn’t my favorite that I usually carried, but Teresa was back in the cottage and I didn’t have time to grab her.

“Think you’ll need that? It’s just wraiths.” Stavros watched me load a bolt, crafted with a holy water-anointed arrowhead and palo santo shaft, into my trusty weapon of choice.

“Can’t be too careful. Besides, they may have a general with them,” I reminded him. “If I have a chance to take down a big bad demon, I will.”

We closed up the shed and jogged out toward the gate to join the others. A crowd of spectators had already gathered, Stavros and I exchanging a mutual look of frustration at the sight. No matter how much we told people to stay inside, to keep a distance for their own safety, demon fights were often treated like entertainment.

And now, they had something new to watch.

“Good children of God,” Azariah addressed them, his injured wing tucked close to his body while the other stretched out above his head. “Have nothing to fear. Your brave priests and I will protect you. God will protect you!”

“I’ll pray for you!” One woman fell to her knees, hands already clasped together, with her face tipped skyward.

“Let your prayers be words of gratitude,” Azariah went on, golden feathers catching the light as his body turned. “You have your leaders, your community. But most importantly, your faith! Everything you’ve been through, and you still place your trust in God! I can feel it, my good people.”

“When did our people become yours?” I muttered under my breath.

Azariah placed a hand on his chest, and I swear some female tongues went wagging. “Your faith is my power, my strength. Bear witness to the miracles your faith can perform when channeled through an angel of the Lord.”

“Is he gunning for Zach’s job?” Stavros shook his head with a light laugh, once the angel finished his monologue.

“Gunnin’ for his dick, more likely,” I answered.

The young priest had been watching Azariah’s speech with rapt attention, his jaw setting hard as he raised his machete blade over his head, drawing cheers from the onlookers when the speech concluded.

Jesus, they were both turning this into a performance. I couldn’t tell who was trying to show off for who.

“All right everyone, stay back,” I instructed. “Remember to spray down the streets and roofs in case any embers make it over the gate.”

“God be with you!” someone called.

“Let’s get some wraiths!” Zach poured a few droplets of holy oil on his machete. It was all he needed before he flicked a lighter and the whole blade became engulfed in blue-orange flames. I caught Azariah staring at him, eyes bright with flickering holy fire.

Zach had every right to show off, if I was being honest. He had more demon kills than any of us. I might've had the army experience, but our pious young priest fought back at Hell with all the wrath of the Old Testament.

“Watch your back, don't get sloppy,” I decided to warn him anyway. I fell into my old role as sergeant disturbingly easily whenever we went into battle.

Bracing one hand on our misshapen crucifix gate, I hopped over in one swift movement. It always felt strange on the other side, wilder and colder, with the inescapable reality that we could very easily die out here.

Stavros followed my lead while Zach and Azariah crossed over another section of crucifix fencing, where the wraiths had gathered in denser clusters. These hellions were among the easiest to fight, but could gain the upper hand if we weren't careful. They looked like plumes of dark smoke, with the odd, human-like feature, such as arms or legs, or a skull in place of a head. They could merge together to form a swirling dark cloud, so impenetrable you'd think you were in the middle of a tornado. Our best strategy was taking them out before they got a chance to merge.

With my crossbow in my right hand and a water gun in my left, Stavros and I got down to doing just that.

“Let me know if you see a general,” I shouted over the hissing, chittering sounds of the wraiths. “Watch it!”

Stav spun just in time to shoot one that was trying to sneak up on him, dark smoke dissipating into nothing.

“There's some clustering near the fence on the church side.”

“Daisy will be fine as long as she stays in there. Get your head in the game!”

“Where’d Zach and Azariah run off to?” He sprayed down several wraiths about to merge, finally focusing with his right head.

“Not sure,” I admitted. “Let’s head that way.” Usually I could see Zach’s flaming blade across hundreds of yards, but the wraiths’ smoke fucked our visibility. I also couldn’t get rid of the nagging feeling about the angel. Should have kept those two in my sight at all times, especially on the battlefield.

A sudden bright, white light stopped me in my tracks and forced me to shield my eyes.

“Back to where you came from, damned creatures!” Azariah’s voice rang out as if amplified by a speaker.

I peeked one eye open first and then the other, to see that the smoke had cleared and the light emanating from the angel.

Or rather, he was the light.

His hands were outstretched, his whole body glowing as though he were made of sunlight itself. Single handedly, he broke up a cluster of wraiths that were merging. And what he didn’t kill immediately, Zach jumped into the fray and swiftly cut down what remained with his demon blade.

“More coming down over the hill,” Stavros said.

“I see ‘em. Be ready, Zach.” My gun out of water, I holstered it and pulled out my own demon blade, a short katana-style sword I kept strapped to my back. Lightweight, with a thin, beautiful blade, I could use it one-handed comfortably, while still keeping my crossbow ready in the other.

“Azariah?” I called.

“Yes, Father Kais?” The glowing angel turned to me, his smile cocky and irritating.

“There’s a cluster merging by the church. Will you go take care of them while we get these?”

“Certainly, Father.” He started in that direction far too leisurely, casually, for anyone in the midst of a battle, immortal being or not.

But I didn’t have time to worry about his pace. I had to deal with what was right in front of me.

Zach swung his blade with controlled rolls of his wrists, the fire cutting through the air with whooshing sounds and a dazzling figure-eight pattern.

“Zach, you ready?”

“Just waiting on you, Kais.”

His eyes weren’t on the wraiths coming toward us fast, hovering above the ground in their shapeless masses. They were on Azariah.

“Zach!” I barked. “Get your head in the fucking game!”

“I’m good, I’m ready!” he yelled back.

“On three,” I said. “Stav, cover us.”

“Got you, guys.”

“One.” I raised my blade. “Two.”

Zach and I moved toward each other, finally in sync as our shoulders touched. We could hear the wraiths now, their creepy hissing crawling over my skin along with the heavy, corrupted presence of Hell they brought with them.

“Three!”

We moved in tandem, our blades slicing through smoky forms. The shine on mine let me know that we still had light, that the wraiths hadn't succeeded in morphing and trapping us.

A small handful of our flock had been taken by merged wraiths in our early settlement days. We never found bodies, so we could only imagine they had been dragged back to Hell.

Not anymore, I thought as I slashed my way through the oppressive dark smoke. *We are the swords of God.*

All the while, I kept Zach's flame in the corner of my eye. I knew he could handle himself, but fuck if I wasn't still worried about the kid. Especially since that angel arrived.

“Kais, there's something else coming over the hill!”

I felt the spray of Stav's water gun raining down on me and welcomed the cooling moment. The smoke, heat, and heaviness in the air made my breathing labored, each inhale like a jagged knife sawing in and out of my lungs.

“What is it?” I never stopped cutting through, but the wraiths never seemed to stop either.

“Big, scary, ugly. I think it's the demon general.”

I cleared out the smoky hellions in front of me before pausing to turn and look. Oh no, those words didn't do this thing justice. This thing was nearly skeletal, its form black and brittle with red glowing lines all over its body, like dying logs in a campfire. And its body, if it could even be called that, was horrifically distorted. Impossibly long arms dragged along the ground, leaving small grass fires behind. A small, human-sized skull held up disproportionately large horns, just as long as the arms, twisted and gnarled like ancient tree roots.

“What the fuck...”

“Zach, look out!” Stavros’ usually calm voice was laced with panic.

I turned around, cursing at myself for being distracted by the monstrosity. All hellions were grotesque and ugly-looking. Well, except for Devya.

Zach slashed wildly in a hurried, desperate attempt to cut through the wraiths closing in on him, but the damned things outnumbered him. Rushing in, I forgot all about the demon as I saw the fear rising in the young priests’ eyes, his panic making his movements sloppy.

“Hold on, I got you!” I jumped in next to him, cutting through with all my might, but the smoke was thick, almost solid in its density.

“Kais, that big fucker’s coming!”

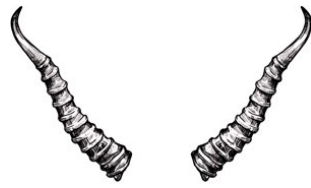
“Where the fuck is the angel?” I bellowed.

“Kais...”

Zach’s voice was hoarse, weak. At some point I dropped my crossbow and tried to feel around for him. The smoke was so thick, so suffocating. My limbs ached and my eyes burned, but I forced them open just to see the light of his flaming sword. I didn’t know if it was my eyesight or the smoke closing in that made the light grow steadily dimmer.

“Zach, grab my hand!” I called out blindly.

And then his light was snuffed out.



Fuck Angels, Fuck Hellions

OceanofPDF.com

I quickly decided that pacing around in the chapel while the guys were out fighting wraiths was not going to do me any good. Kais made it seem like it wasn't a big deal, but fuck, I was actually worried about them. All of them. Even Zach and Stavros, the little shits. Not Azariah though. I hoped those wraiths dragged him back by his good wing and kept him there.

My decision made, I headed out the front door of the church. As long as I stayed within the gate, I should be okay, I reminded myself. I just wanted to watch them for my own peace of mind and maybe show some moral support. I could flash them like with Kais in the gym this morning, if that would help.

Nah, better not distract them. Although Zach's face would be priceless. I made a mental note to ask him if he'd ever seen boobs in person before.

Each step toward the gate was a slow drag, as if through mud. Coming closer to that border of safety felt like I was walking directly into Kimaris' clutches again. My hands clenched in front of me and my pulse accelerated with every step forward.

Here's good. I can see them from here.

I had to admit it—the guys looked sexy in action. Desire and hunger rippled through me as I watched. Zach was precise and deadly with his flaming blade, making it look like a dance. Stavros and Kais looked like action heros with their weapons. Azariah? Typical fucking angel, putting on a show with his holy light.

Worry cut through my desire as a cluster of wraiths began to gather and morph just outside the gate right in front of me. I instinctively took a few steps back. *They can't get through. You're safe.*

Kais said something to Azariah, pointing to the wraiths closest to me. The angel answered and started in that direction. Too fucking slowly.

“Well, slow down a little. You won't want to attack them before their power goes up exponentially,” I muttered.

As if he heard me, the angel caught my eye and smiled as he started toward the gate. I glowered back, crossing my arms. He held up a long, lithe arm covered in slender muscle tone to summon his holy light again. Glowing like a miniature sun, he smote the wraith without breaking a sweat.

So he's a powerful one, I realized. Possibly one of the guardians closest to God. What could he have done to end up in Hell?

To my utter shock, rather than turning back to help the guys, he hopped over the gate and headed straight toward me.

“What are you doing?” I cried out. “Get back out there! They need you!”

“Ah, they've got it handled.” The cocky bastard waved a hand dismissively. “I figured now's the perfect time for you

and I to have a little one-on-one, First Daughter.”

“Are you fucking kidding me right now? They are *mortal*, they could die!”

“Oh, so you care if they live or die, despite having a plethora of food sources here at the ready.” Azariah stroked his chin pensively. “Very interesting.”

“You winged shit! Why the fuck are you even here?” I demanded.

“Why are you?” he countered.

I hated him almost as much as Kimaris at that point. Especially because up close, his cockiness practically making a film on my tongue, my instinct was to feed from him. To shove my tongue in his stupidly pretty mouth and rub the front of his pants until he felt like a steel pipe. Angels were like a superfood and a euphoric drug all in one. He’d power me better than Stavros, better than any of the morsels I took from the guys in their dreams.

And being with a human man made me attach sex to feelings. I hated Azariah and myself for wanting anything from him, even if it was just my biology buzzing.

I opened my mouth, ready to tell him off, when a red glow from beyond the gate caught my eye.

“Oh no,” I whispered. “Oh no no no no.”

“What—”

Azariah had barely turned around to look when I found myself running toward the gate.

I didn’t scream their names like the townspeople at the gate did. I didn’t want to draw their attention away from their enemies, not for a second.

“Succubus!”

“Fuck you, Feather Butt,” I snarled over my shoulder and then huffed at the weak insult. I’d think of a better one later when Zach wasn’t being surrounded by smoke wraiths and Stavros wasn’t pointing a freaking kid’s toy at a demon general.

Kais was busy trying to save Zach, but he was just a few more wraiths away from being swallowed up in their smoke with the younger man, and if Stavros was going to stand a chance against the general, he needed Zach and Kais at his side.

He needed *me*.

“Fuck feelings. Fuck angels. Fuck hellions,” I snarled, taking a running leap over the gate.

I hunched my shoulders and ducked my head down, horns thrust forward as I ran full speed for the wraiths, a snarl on my lips.

“Zach!” Kais gasped, digging through the smoke, his own lungs already scratched from the wraiths. “Deyva?”

I didn’t answer as I reached the melee, my hands shaped into claws, all the power Stavros had given me dressing my skin with electric energy. I ripped into the wraiths, shredding them like ugly, Halloween tissue decorations, their screams shrill and scratching in my ears.

“Holy shit,” Kais gasped as I tore through the tangled web of hellions surrounding Zach.

“Help Stavros,” I snapped. I caught one brief glimpse of Kais’ wide-eyed stare and then he spun around, hurrying back to Stav’s side, firing his crossbow into the hellish general heading toward us.

At my back, holy light burst forward, cutting through the wraiths, my own grasp flinging wraiths into the light until Azariah and I had carved our way into the heart of the tangle.

Zach, beautiful Zach, was white as a sheet, his skin marked with red claw marks, his breath shallow, and the two different colors in his eyes stark and vivid. Azariah burned away the last of the wraiths as I fell to my knees and searched for Zach's pulse. It was there, but faint, and I pressed my hand over his heart, softening the burn of the energy I'd used against the wraiths, and pressing it into him. I was low now, but it was enough to make sure his heart wouldn't stop before we got back to safety.

"This is my fault," Azariah murmured.

I growled, checking to make sure no more wraiths were near before standing and whipping around to face the angel.

"You're fucking right it is," I hissed. And then I reached for his shirt collar and yanked him against me, pulling unapologetically on his hair to bring his mouth to mine.

Azariah stiffened but didn't fight me, and I took two deep gulps of his life, his power, our mouths pressed together in a cold imitation of a kiss. The angel tasted of love and anger and fear and confidence, and something explosive, like the birth of a star in my belly. I moaned and ignored the flood of arousal that ran through me, pulling away and staggering back.

"Watch him. And if you let anything else happen to him, I will drain you dry," I warned Azariah.

He nodded, face stony, arms glowing. "And the general?"

"I'll manage the general."

Azariah knelt over Zach, sheltering him with his good wing, and I turned to face Kais and Stavros. Kais was on his

last shot, aiming carefully, and Stavros was checking the small tank of his gun. The general had nearly reached the gate, only a few yards away, and I could almost feel the faltering faith from the townspeople, the sudden doubt that their priests would survive this. I had a feeling that if that faith failed, so too would the gate.

“I’m out of holy water,” Stavros warned Kais. “Jesus, Deyva, what are you doing out here?”

“Aim for an eye socket and leave the rest to me,” I said, settling my hands on Kais’ shoulders, giving him some of the angel’s strength to steady his hand.

“You’re sure?” Kais asked.

Was I sure that Kimaris wouldn’t rise up behind this general and grab me in his fist and drag me back to hell? No. But I was sure I could take down this fucker first for my guys.

“Positive.”

“Deyva, no,” Stavros said, but he quieted when I raised my hand and covered his mouth with it.

I whistled, and the demon general turned away from the whispering, frightened townspeople by the gate, to face us. I squeezed Kais’ shoulder as he lined up his shot, both of us releasing a slow breath. The general ducked its head, a fire white gaze leveled at us.

“Now.”

Kais fired and the arrow flew true, lodging deep and centered in the general’s eye socket. I broke out from between Kais and Stavros, body bending into a feline gallop. The townspeople screamed as the general rose up and tumbled toward the gate, a bone-grinding bellow ringing out of it, full of static and a painful metal-on-metal screeching.

The air was full of the sour taste of panic, the ash and sulfur of Hell, and a fleeting thread of faith, hope. My body strained, even with the angel's gift, to push faster, and hit harder as I collided with the demon general.

"Kimaris' bitch," the general growled.

Which was really the wrong fucking thing to call me.

I screamed, tackling the warped and twisted body, my heart burning through the angel's power like a car gunning the gas, eating up the fuel. The demon fell back from the gate with me latched onto its side, tearing tree roots away, grabbing a bone out of the rib cage with a feral cry. The demon roared and the townspeople screamed, Kais shouted my name, and I ignored them all. My hands lit up with holy flames, thanks to Azariah, and I jammed one up into the demon's chest through the hole I'd torn. It thrashed side to side as I beat it roughly with its own bone, grabbing onto its arm and ripping it from its twisted socket.

My hand found the rotted old mess of a heart inside the demon's chest, squeezing it tight, making the beast arch back and stiffen, its cry cracking apart like an avalanche. I braced my foot on a root, balancing on its hip, and then climbed higher, wrapping one arm around its bony neck.

"You will pay," the demon screamed.

"You will vanish into nothing and be forgotten," I answered, and then I pulled as hard as I could, tearing the heart from the demon's chest, and its skull from the knotted roots of its neck. It rocked violently from side to side in its death throes, tossing me to the ground. I landed hard on my back, my borrowed strength leaving me in a sudden *woosh*. The chattering skull of the demon went silent in the crook of

my elbow. My left hand was coated in black sludge, an acid-yellow dust coating my fingers that had crushed a heart.

I stared up at the gray and purple evening sky and shivered, a pound of pain catching up to my brain after the wild animal rush of the attack. Everything was quiet, a sudden pause for breath after the hurricane of the attack.

And then a glow approached, the angel Azariah shining in the dark, stopping at my feet and turning his open hands to the remains of the demon, turning them to black and orange embers and then soft gray ash that floated away from the town.

“God bless!” Someone from behind the gate cried, and then subdued cheers went up, calls to the priests, cries of gratitude.

I blew out a slow breath and tossed the skull in Azariah’s direction, rolling to my side with a groan and a wince.

“Do you need—?” Azariah started.

“No.” I bit out, which was a lie. I did need to feed. I’d used almost everything I had in the fight. But more than that, I needed to get back behind that gate.

I stood slowly, keeping my eyes down as I headed back the way I’d come, toward the church gate. Kais had Zach up from the ground, still pale and scratched, but looking more alert.

“You good, Daisy?” Kais asked, frowning.

“Peachy keen. No, don’t touch me. I dunno what this hell gunk does, I’m just gonna go wash it off,” I said, waving my clean hand toward Kais before he reached for me.

“Deyva,” Stavros breathed as I passed him.

“Not now, Stav,” I answered. I felt strangely raw, my eyes tracking the shadows around me as I headed quickly for the

gate. I was supposed to be hiding out, laying low, taking advantage of the goodness of this town to keep myself safe. Instead, I'd run horns first out into the battle.

And when Kimaris found out I took down a demon general to protect human men? Shit was going to get real. For me and for these humans.

I climbed back over the gate, careful not to touch anything with my dirty arm.

"Deyva, wait." Stavros' footsteps were beating against the ground to catch up with me.

"I'm fine. I'm just gonna wash up in the locker room," I said.

But he didn't slow down. He grabbed my shoulder and I flinched, more out of habit than pain, but Stavros just spun me to face him. My body hurt, my heart hurt, my fucking head hurt, and I didn't want to deal with whatever it was he needed to say. Except he didn't speak at all.

There was anger in the tangle of his brow, and terror in the whites of his eyes. His hand grabbed my face and his other arm wrapped around my waist, pulling me roughly to his chest. I gasped as his mouth landed over mine, searching hungrily, devouring me, a groan vibrating in his chest as he kissed me over and over again. I wasn't human and I shouldn't have been so breathless, so weak-kneed. My heart shouldn't have beat so hard. I would blame the battle if anyone asked, not the desperately sweet flavor of relief on Stavros' tongue and the way he almost pushed his life to me, as if he knew how to feed me without me simply taking.

"You could've been killed, Deyva," Stavros mumbled against my lips, his nose nudging against mine, head turning

just enough to scratch his cheek against mine as he moved to suck on my lobe.

“Probably not, but you definitely would’ve been,” I said, leaning into him, shivering as he huffed against my neck. “If I had been, the town would’ve been relieved. You wouldn’t have to play sacrificial lamb anymore.”

Ew, you sound insecure and human, I thought for a brief moment. Then Stavros reared back, face stricken and pale as he met my eyes. A slow flood of shame ran down his face and I tried to pull away, but he only squeezed harder around my waist.

“Fuck. Fuck, Deyva, I’m a coward,” he said, pulling me closer, pressing a long kiss to my cheek. “There’s literally nowhere else in this world, or the one before the Rising, that I would rather be than lying around on that miniscule fucking couch with you. Or bending you over an altar.”

And like the completely basic human I was starting to resemble, I smiled a little at the warmth in his voice and the way it flavored the air between us.

“Come on,” he said, and it wasn’t the church he pulled me towards, but the front door of the priest house.



Succubus Soup for the Soul

OceanofPDF.com

*Y*ou really fucked this up like a professional, I thought, watching Deyva tip her head up to the stream of the water coming out of the shower head. It was probably only lukewarm, and I'd have to pull her out of there soon to keep conserving water, but for now I was just watching.

“We’re really gonna have to work on your guilt complex,” Deyva murmured, turning and blinking at me as water ran down over her head, her throat, her breasts.

I dunno why I made her leave the shower curtain open. So I could feel like a horny shitheel instead of just a typical asshole?

“Staaaaav,” she exhaled, shooting me an exasperated glance. “You can’t even do turned on right? Come here.”

I shook my head and crossed my arms over my chest as if that could physically hold me back from joining her in the shower. “I get in there with you and we’re not gonna be talking cause I’ll be too busy putting my mouth everywhere else.”

“Wow, sounds terrible,” Deyva said drily, turning away again.

I stood up from the counter and moved so I was standing at the very edge of the tub as she ignored me in favor of scrubbing the arm she'd shoved up inside of a demon general. I was getting misted by the spray of the shower but I didn't care. Despite my words to Deyva, I didn't really plan on us being clothed for a whole lot longer. It just wasn't gonna be in the shower.

"I owe you an apology," I said, watching her still, her eyes growing wide as she stared blankly at her own arm. "It was really easy to make excuses for what we've been doing together—"

"Fucking," she said in a sing-song voice.

"And make it about anything but what it actually was. I want you, Deyva. For myself. For the pure selfish joy of enjoying my time with you. For *liking* you." That was a little bit of a timid word for the actual feeling, but it was a good start. Especially considering the way Deyva's lips curled up shyly, her eyes slanting in my direction. "I want to continue having sex with you because you are fucking amazing. And I promise I won't tell anybody anything but that from now on."

"You like me."

"Yeah, you're funny as he—well, you know. And you're *brave*. I know you weren't faking how badly you didn't want to leave the gate, but you *did*, and you definitely saved our asses. And you're sexy. And I like the way you walk with your ass cheeks clenched when you're annoyed with us for being so dopey over that angel," I said, grinning as Deyva's head fell back and the shower boomed with the echo of her laugh. "Sorry about that, by the way."

Deyva settled and rolled her eyes before another giggle slipped out. "I mean, okay, I get it. You were *wrong*, but I get

that he's all shiny and I'm all..."

"Stunning. Exquisite. You glow as you come on my cock," I listed.

My entire body seemed to grow entirely new hypersensitive nerve endings at the sudden stare she levelled at me, eyes red with hunger.

"Stavros," she purred.

"Are you clean yet?" I asked. "I want to take you to my room."

I don't know if it was my calm tone, or the offer itself, but Deyva's sharp seductive stare faltered and she blinked at me with an unusual innocence.

"Your bedroom? Here? In this building?"

"I don't have extras."

"What about the others?"

I shrugged. "I mean, theoretically, I should probably talk this over with them, but also... Like, fuck, you just saved our lives. I think you should be allowed to, you know, sleep in an actual bed."

Deyva smirked. "Sleep?"

I smirked too. "Amongst other things. If it backfires, we'll both just have to figure out how to make that shitty office comforta—"

The water cranked off so fast I thought Deyva might've broken the handle, and then my arms were full of warm, slippery succubus, Deyva's long legs wrapping around my hips. My hands landed reflexively on the globes of her ass and then helped themselves to an appreciative squeeze. Her mouth

found mine, funny little happy squeaks with every press of her lips.

I wasn't planning on putting her back in the filthy clothes she'd worn in the battle but I also didn't want to accidentally run into Kais in the hall with a naked Deyva wrapped around me. He hadn't earned that shit yet. I grabbed a towel off the rack as Deyva busied herself sucking and nibbling on my bottom lip, and wrapped it around her back, making sure to cover her ass. It would get us across the hall at least. Out of the bathroom, the sound of voices carried up from downstairs, and I heard footsteps crossing toward the stairs.

I'd meant what I said to Deyva about sticking up for our connection, but I wanted that to happen later. After I'd had the chance to make up for being an ass. And when she was dressed and we could stand side by side against any judgment from the others.

I carried her into my bedroom at the end of the hall, gently nudging the door shut behind me. I had the corner bedroom, and while it was the smallest, it also had the most windows, something I was extremely appreciative of as I laid Deyva down on the bed.

Some nights I found the violent red hue that sunsets now took on an oppressive and ugly reminder that our world was covered in blood and hellfire too often. Tonight though, the colors cast Deyva's skin warm and rosy, like a blush that ran from head to toe.

Deyva stretched like a cat on my bed, back arching and breasts tipping up as if in offering. It was overtly sexual, and also entirely natural to her. She was meant to be seductive, and even in this pose there was something playful to it, the way her

toes slipped under my sheets and her head rolled against my pillow.

“Just kidding,” she said on a sigh. “Skipping sex for a nap on this cloud.”

I laughed and reached up to the collar around my throat, pulling it free and moving to undo the buttons. If she wanted a nap she could have a nap. Did I want her spread out beneath me, writhing in pleasure and dragging her nails down my back? Fuck yeah. But also I just wanted to see her smiling like that.

I was pretty sure I’d get both though, because her eyes tracked my hands on my chest with eager interest, her thighs shifting together.

“I’m sorry for being an ass,” I said, pulling the hem of my shirt free of my pants, going for my buckle next, feeling the blood rush from my heart to my cock as Deyva’s tongue peeked out and wet her lips.

“I know you are. Talk about me like a chore or a burden again and I’ll chain myself up in the basement to starve instead, okay?” It was a gentle warning but I swallowed and nodded, holding Deyva’s gaze before her eyes fell back down to my crotch. “Continue, please.”

I was no incubus, and I wasn’t about to make a real performance out of stripping, but I took my time and Deyva wasn’t shy about enjoying the view. One hand slid down from my pillow to drag her fingertips over her collarbone and then to play aimlessly with her own breasts as she watched me drop my pants and underwear to the floor, kicking out of them.

I don’t deserve this, I thought as I watched her thighs part in anticipation, but for once it wasn’t a thought laced with

shame. No man deserved someone as exquisite as Deyva. Well, maybe Zach, but he was an idiot for not seeing it and I wasn't planning on spelling it out to him anytime soon. Not when Deyva seemed content to have me.

"You feel really nice," she said dreamily.

"I haven't touched you yet," I said. We were both totally naked now, just gazing at one another, and I reached down to stroke my cock when her hand reached out and beat me to it, her perfect grip making me grunt and buck toward the bed.

"Your emotions are doing the work for you. I feel all... sunshiney. Keep it coming."

I mourned the loss of the picture of Deyva spread out for me as she rolled in my direction, shifting onto her belly and perching her face in front of my cock. But then I got the picture of her dark hair cascading down her back to rest just above the dimples over her ass. I liked that too.

"Oh fuck," I gasped as a warm tongue flicked out to lap at the head of my cock. "Wait, no, this wasn't—Dey, I was gonna."

"Lemme have a snack," Deyva said, pulling on my cock in a way that was both a caress and an urge closer.

I stumbled, my thighs hitting the edge of the bed and groaned as Deyva took me directly into her mouth, her ass wiggling happily on the bed as she slurped and licked lazily around the head of my cock.

"Deyva, babe—" she snorted at that, "Guys don't usually get their cocks sucked when they have to apologize."

"Guys don't usually get to feed hungry succubi who just went to extreme lengths to save their asses," Deyva said, pushing my cock up toward my stomach and flicking the tip of

her tongue back and forth over the ridge on the underside of the head in a way that made my thighs feel weak. “Consider it a perk. This is what *I* want, Stavros. You can have your turn next.”

I was totally gonna tell her to quit worrying about my heart rate and get me hard again as soon as she was done, so I could fuck her all slow and tenderly, the way I’d meant to.

Deyva drew me deep into her mouth, hollowing her cheeks and sucking hard and I groaned up at the ceiling, my hands falling into her hair. My fingertips bumped at the root of her horns and I realized I’d never touched them before. I took them in both of my hands, trying to distract myself from Deyva’s determined mouth and the way my cock kept nudging against the back of her throat like she’d never even heard of a gag reflex. I squeezed her horns and then all of the sudden she made a sharp whining sound that vibrated down my length and made me buck roughly.

Deyva gasped as I pulled out, my hands tangling in her hair as I tried to retreat.

“Shit, sorry, did that hurt, I—”

“Nooo, it felt good. Don’t stop.” There was a little bit of precum on her bottom lip and her pupils were blown black, just a warm ring of fire for her irises. When I hesitated Deyva leaned in, pressing a horn to my palm. This time I saw it, the full body quiver that ran down her spine and made her ass clench as my fingers closed around her horn.

“Please, Father,” she whispered in a breathy tone, one tiny glimpse of a wicked smile on her lips.

Oh wow, I was gonna go to Hell for sure now. I wondered if I could talk Deyva into making the trip down with me.

Her breath hitched as I took hold of the other horn again and then she moaned as I used my grip to yank her head back into position, tilting it back to stretch her throat.

“Open your mouth, Deyva,” I said, giving into the hedonistic thrill running through me, pooling hotly in my belly.

Deyva’s grin was there, even as she opened her mouth, laying her tongue out over her bottom lip in invitation. I tilted my hips, rubbing the head of my cock over her wet tongue, squeezing on her horns and watching her shiver as I guided my cock deep into her mouth.

“Ass up. You come when I come right?” She hummed around my cock in agreement and I gritted my teeth against the feeling. “Touch yourself and get ready to come.”

Deyva shuffled up to her knees as I used her horns to force her up and down my length, her eager sounds washing away any guilt and making me go faster, rougher. She spread her knees wide and a moment later I could hear the wet sounds of her touching herself.

“Fuck,” I gasped.

I rose up onto my toes, using Deyva’s mouth, feeling the echo of her cries sending sparks up my spine. I released one horn to gather her hair up off her neck, twisting it into my fist so I had the perfect view. Her red lips running up and down my cock, her back trembling as she worked her fingers between her legs, the flutter of her eyelashes as we both chased our finish. When my legs started to quake and the spike of heat at the base of my spine flashed in warning, I braced my knees against the bedframe and let Deyva take over. If I thought I’d been rough, she was ravenous, slurping and swallowing around the head of my cock.

I let out a sharp shout of her name as Deyva whined around my cock, the sudden electric rush making me stiffen and tremble in place as the crest and crash took over. With it came the familiar feeling of a tug on my heart, Deyva's careful feeding leaving me like she was pulling a kiss from my lips. Deyva lapped at my cock until I twitched and pulled away, her own hands glossy with her release as she sat up on her knees. I crawled into the bed on trembling legs, still holding on to her horns and using them to push her down into the pillows. I kicked her legs open, grinning at her wide-eyed gaze as I settled between her thighs.

“Make me hard again.”

“But—”

“You're tired. I'm tired. You got what you wanted, and now it's my turn. I wanna be buried in you, kissing everywhere I can reach, until we're both too tired to keep moving. Come on, one more,” I said, grinning.

I slid one hand around to cup the back of her head, letting her bear my weight on top of her. I'd seen her against that demon. She could take it. I grazed my lips over hers once, and then slid my tongue between her parted lips, chasing my own flavor mixed with hers.

“Fine,” she sighed as I pulled away, a soft smile on her lips. “Just one more.”

She rested her hands on my shoulders and it came on like a deep weight and a heavy burn, my heart thumping, but holding steady as my half-hard cock grew rigid again, heading directly for the one place it wanted to be.

“If they do kick us out of here, we're gonna take the bed with us,” Deyva moaned, wrapping her legs around my waist

and rocking up into me.

I didn't have the heart to tell her that this bed was a piece of shit with springs that always left knots in my back. She hadn't had better to sleep on, and I could make sure to leave her the best spots at night.

"How do I taste now?" I asked, thinking of all things I wanted to do for the woman in my arms.

Deyva's breath caught and she only answered with a deep kiss, winding tighter around me as I took my time enjoying every little bit of her.

MY WHOLE BODY was limp and loose and kinda sweaty, but Deyva was cool where she lay over one side of me, my fingers still snagged in her hair, her breath still panting softly against my neck. My heart had calmed from the wild race to the finish and there was a little thread of guilt tickling in my thoughts as I realized that I was going to fall asleep instead of getting up and tidying us both. But everything felt too good to interrupt the moment by pulling away from the woman in my arms. I tilted my head and rubbed my cheek against Deyva's horn, grinning at her shiver.

"Stavros..."

"Mm?"

"What...what emotion is that?" she asked.

A nervous thump of my heart, her hand pressed over the spot so she could feel it perfectly against her palm.

I opened my mouth and then shut it quickly. *Don't play stupid*, I told myself. *Don't downplay shit with her anymore.*

“What’s it feel like?” I asked instead, turning my head and pressing a kiss to her forehead.

Deyva’s breath hitched and she sat up, arms crossed over my chest, wide, liquid green eyes staring down at me. Her lips parted and I watched her tongue wet the bottom swell, a less illicit version of a look she’d given me earlier.

She winced at me and whispered in a fragile tone, “Please.”

For a minute, we were both silent, watching each other with equal parts caution and hope.

“It’s...it’s the feeling of falling in love,” I said, tense beneath her as she held my eyes. When she didn’t say anything, I added dumbly, “With you.”

Her lips twitched and my hand in her hair tightened. “Oh.”

“Uh...yeah.”

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck.

“Nope, nope, stop that,” she said, swatting my chest, her grin filling her cheeks. “I like the falling in love flavor better, keep it coming.”

Laughter burst out of me, and Deyva scrambled, climbing onto me fully, her legs tangling with mine as my free arm squeezed around her. I untangled my fingers from her damp hair and brushed the strands off her face.

“You like the flavor or—”

“Shut up, I like the... I like the knowing you’re falling in love with me,” she said. “I like not being the only one catching the feels.”

“The *feels*? Aren’t you like, a lot older than me? I feel like a dirty old man when you talk like a teenager.”

“You like feeling like a dirty old man with me,” she said, arching an eyebrow.

Guilty. Guilty in the best way. The strain of happiness on my heart in this moment was an even bigger feeling than Deyva making me hard again for more sex. Speaking of...

“What’s it taste like?” I asked.

She shook her head. “There’s no equivalent. Not one I’ve tasted. Except...maybe like, really good soup?”

I gaped at her, watched the flush on her cheeks, enjoyed the toying of her fingers in the hair on my chest. “Soup?”

“It’s...you know, it’s comforting and really warm, hot even, and it’s like...knowing that someone cares about you,” she mumbled out, head ducking shyly. “I dunno, it’s been a while, okay?”

Was I having a heart attack? That’s what this felt like, except in a wonderful way.

“And what if I were a succubus?”

Deyva snorted. “Well, you’d have tits for starters.”

“What?!”

“Incubus. Succubi are female, Incubi are male.”

“Fine, whatever. What if I were like you? What would I be tasting right now?”

Deyva’s blush was so fucking cute it made me actually want to bite her cheeks, which was one of the dumbest impulses I’d had when it came to a woman probably.

“You’d be pretty soupy right now too, I guess,” Deyva said, biting her lip.

Suddenly, the comparison made a fair amount of sense because I did feel warm, hot even, and definitely like I was overflowing. I rolled Deyva under me and took that lip she was biting for myself, sucking on it as she giggled, our arms and legs binding us together into a perfect fit.

OceanofPDF.com



Hell, Heaven, and
Purgatory

OceanofPDF.com

The marks on my skin were an angry shade of red, like burn welts, and I hissed as I pressed on one scratching down my side, but it wasn't the wraiths I was thinking of.

White arms, coated in soot. Gold feathers tinged with black. Deyva tearing down the demon with her bare hands, a wild predator's rage and focus sharpening her face into something demonic. Demonic and beautiful, fierce. Azariah's eyes creased with shame.

I closed my eyes and tried to push them both from my mind, but it was only the angel who retreated. Deyva remained in all her ferocious glory, an avenging angel, if angels had horns and looked bloodthirsty in battle.

She's a hellion.

A hellion who saved my ass.

There was a thump and a giggle from the next room over and I covered my face to stifle my groan. Kais had grabbed a shower first and then come down to warn us. Deyva was with Stavros.

Feeding.

It had been over an hour now, and while the sounds I'd caught for the first half literally made me feel like I was about to burst out my skin—they sounded like they were dying in a way that had made me harder than I'd ever been in my entire life—now it was all just laughter and quiet talking, the occasional squeak from the bed.

Castration was an option, right? Because I wasn't sure how much longer I could stand feeling like this.

“How are you feeling?”

My thoughts about her were so loud, I didn't hear the soft swishing of feathers as Azariah came to sit next to my bedside, a glass of water in one hand. His brow was pinched, his entire body wrought with tension. The complete opposite of the relaxed giggling and sighing coming from the other room.

“Pretty rough,” I admitted, accepting the water. “Thanks.”

I gulped it down greedily, not realizing until that moment how thirsty I was. A bright, feminine laugh floated up from Stavros' room. I got a mental image of him tickling her and as luck would have it, my next gulp went down the wrong pipe and I immediately started coughing.

“Here, sit up.” Azariah slid a hand along my upper back, gently pulling forward so I could catch a breath. His hand remained there even as my coughing dissipated, a warm, comforting weight with his thumb gently stroking the back of my neck.

“Thanks,” I muttered, stealing yet another glance at his face. “Again.” Ever since he came to our gate, I couldn't seem to stop myself from looking at him.

His lips pressed with concern, brows still knitted as he met my gaze. “I failed you.”

“It’s...” I didn’t know what to say. He was right. My knee-jerk reaction was to reassure him, to tell him everything was fine. But he *did* fail us. We could have had the upper hand the whole time had he just kept his head in the game. Deyva wouldn’t have had to go outside the gate and drain all her energy, wouldn’t need to feed so loudly from Stav in the next room, although I had a feeling that would have happened regardless.

“I screwed up too,” was my chosen reply before a nervous swallow. “I...should probably confess something.”

Azariah’s hand was in my hair now, fingers massaging the base of my skull. He scooted closer, until he was nearly lying in bed with me. The feathers on the tip of his wing brushed against my pant leg.

“Dear one, what would you ever need to confess?” he asked, gaze drifting to my lips. “You fought so bravely, a true soldier of God.”

“I don’t usually run in so recklessly,” I said in one rushed breath. “I’m normally a lot more careful, but I—” My eyes lowered, taking in the long, athletic lines of the angel’s lithe body. “I wanted to impress you, I guess.” My face burned, shame filling me from head to toe. “To prove myself worthy to you. To God. I’m guilty of the sin of pride, and that too was no help to us.”

Azariah didn’t react immediately and the shame pooled in my stomach. Then warm fingers lifted my chin, bringing my gaze back to his. Fuck, he was so beautiful to look at, I nearly wanted to shut my eyes. I didn’t feel worthy to gaze upon an angel.

And yet, today was proof that even angels were fallible. They made mistakes. Deyva mentioned something about her

kind behind God's first mistake. Was it just the nature of creation to have flaws? Could anything, even divinely made, ever be truly perfect?

"You are guilty of *nothing*, Zachariah." Azariah said the words with such absolute conviction, it felt like he was speaking to every moment of my life when that oppressive feeling permeated through every corner of my soul.

Since I was a child, I believed I was destined to Hell for the feelings I had, toward boys and girls. Feelings I couldn't seem to stop. The guilt was just as heavy on a ten-year-old as it was now, thirteen years later.

"I am guilty of so much," I said, barely above a whisper.

"No." Azariah's eyes were bright and laser-focused. I knew he could see it all. The tainted parts of my soul. The desires that would damn me, no matter how devout I was. "God made you this way. And he made you *perfect*."

"How—"

The question evaporated into nothing when Azariah's lips touched mine. Barely a ghost of a touch at first, just the warmth of his breath. And then the soft, but firm pressure of the most sensual mouth I ever felt.

My lips parted on a gasp of pure shock at first, then the electric desire singing through me at the contact. Azariah's tongue darted out, searching for mine which couldn't stop itself from seeking his in return. This was nothing like the fast kiss he planted on me in the chapel. That might have been friendly affection, but *this*. There was no mistaking this. Heat surged in my body, my injuries all but forgotten as my cock stirred to life. Fuck, this was good. *Too* good.

I'd only kissed one other person before, and his lips were chapped—the kiss a clumsy rush so as to not get caught. We had been anyway, and then I ended up in this Godforsaken place. The same place where an angel was now caressing my neck and face as he was kissing me, sensual tongue licking as he took soft pulls of my lips.

I never wanted him to stop touching me. Was this what Stavros felt like with Deyva? I'd never fault him again if it felt as good as this. My cock was aching for a hand, a mouth, anything. But a lifetime of shame for my desires, and promises of eternal damnation ever since I understood what Hell was, did not evaporate with a few amazing kisses.

“Az...” I murmured, the first syllable of his name prompting another flick of his tongue inside my mouth. “This...” A light suck at my lip with a graze of teeth. “...is a sin.”

“Is it now?” His voice was low, husky as his mouth skimmed to my neck. “Does it feel like a sin?”

He sucked the skin just above my rapid pulse, sensation and ardent *need* coursing through me as a moan escaped my throat. My hands had clasped his arms before even realizing I'd held onto him, the hard muscles flexing under my palms.

“Too good to not be,” I sighed, angling my head back despite myself. His mouth felt like heaven on my neck and I wanted more of it. I wanted his mouth on every part of my body and to explore him the same way.

“God made you to enjoy this.” Az returned to my lips with a soft peck. “So enjoy it.”

He cupped the side of my neck for a deeper kiss that I was all too eager to return, his palm sliding over my collarbones

and splaying flat on my chest. My heart crashed against his hand as our foreheads touched, his nose nudging mine as he waited.

Azariah was a fucking angel. He wouldn't be doing this if it was wrong, right? Imperfect as he may be, he still carried out the Word of God, still enforced His divine laws. The scriptures could have been interpreted wrong, with some kind of agenda in mind. Holy beings like angels knew the truth of God's Word, didn't they?

My decision made, I pulled him in for another kiss. He let out a pleased hum as he returned it, our tongues mating as our lips slid across each others'. This time I dared to touch more of him, sliding my hands around the top of his back. The edge of my palm grazed where his wing jutted out from his shoulder blade, and he shivered with a moan, breaking our kiss with a loud gasp.

I yanked my hands away. "Did I hurt—"

"No, Zach." He mouthed down the column of my throat, hands pressing my shoulders in a gentle prompt to lay down. "But every moment you're not touching me is fucking torture."

My back now flat to the shitty mattress, the next kiss came from above me as Azariah straddled my hips. His good wing extended over the edge of the bed, as if shielding us from prying eyes. As his body lowered, his cock nudged mine, solid as iron through my borrowed pants, and I couldn't fight the moan that followed, nor how my hips bucked to feel more of him.

"Az..." He caught my mouth in another kiss as I attempted to say his name, my fingertips drifting down his firm abdomen to pause on the waistband of his pants.

“Do it, Zach,” he urged with a small thrust toward my hand. “Touch me. Take what you want.”

“What in fucking Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory is going on?!”

Azariah’s wing folded back as he sat up, revealing a very rumple-haired and angry Deyva in the doorway. Her irises were blood-red, petite nostrils flaring above her well-kissed, scowling lips. She took a step into the room, hands clenched at her sides, murderous gaze trained on the angel on top of me.

I lifted to my elbows, my instinct to scoot away until my back hit the flimsy headboard. Azariah turned to her, his hand up as though attempting to calm a wild animal. We had both seen what she was capable of—ripping the heart out of a fucking demon general. She looked ready to do the same to Azariah.

It was probably the wrong thing to think in the moment, but there was something absurdly sexy about it.

“There’s nothing to be angry about, First—”

“You’re *on top of him!* You both have raging hard-ons!” She pointed and we both dumbly looked down, as if checking to make sure. “I tasted lust in the air and thought nothing of it at first. I figured Kais or Zach was just jerking off.”

“Um, no,” I protested. “I don’t do that—”

“But the taste kept getting thicker and more potent, and what do ya know?” Deyva spread her arms out, palms wide toward us. “I tasted angel lust in there too, and thought, no, he wouldn’t. Even though he’s an arrogant prick who turned his back on an active battle to chit-chat, he wouldn’t *dare* actually make a move on the most pious and naive priest here.”

“Hey, I’m not *that* naive—”

“And here we are!” She crossed her arms, still glaring daggers at Azariah. “Even for you, Fallen for whatever fucking reason, this is fucking low.”

“Ah, lighten up, succubus.” Azariah resumed sitting next to me, his sculpted shoulder lifting in a casual shrug. “It was consensual. Wasn’t it, Zach?” He looked over at me, blue eyes still flicking over my body in a heated gaze.

“Yes,” I whispered. I wanted him to keep looking at me like that, to feel his mouth on me again.

“He is a *priest!*” Deyva snarled, angling her chin down in a way that made her horns look longer. “He made vows.”

“Hah,” the angel barked out. “Says the woman who’s been fucking one for days. You know as well as I do, all that purity stuff is bullshit.”

“It isn’t to *him!*” she growled back. “He takes those vows seriously. You’re just fucking with his head.”

“What’s going on?” Kais poked his head in from the hallway, water droplets still in his hair and tan skin from his shower, a towel around his waist.

“What I told you would happen,” Deyva said, her gaze softening just slightly at the sight of him.

“All right now,” Azariah stood up from my bed, his erection thankfully gone. I didn’t need it distracting me. “Let’s all just take a—”

“No.” Deyva got in his face, nearly a full foot shorter than him, but no less deadly. At the right angle, her horns could have speared up through his chin. She looked mad enough to do it too. “You don’t dictate shit around here. This settlement is under the care of these three men. I don’t know why you’re here or what you want, but you’re obviously invested in

fucking this place over in some way. And as long as I'm here, I'm not fucking letting you."

No one dared to interrupt the standoff, to break the thick, palpable tension between the angel and the demon. But it wasn't that simple, was it? The horned woman from Hell saved our asses, saved *me*. And not just my life, but my virtue. Which for that matter, did it even fucking mean anything?

"Get out of my room," I insisted gruffly, swinging my legs down to the floor. "All of you." A stab of pain shot up my side, making me wince.

"Zach—"

Azariah and Deyva started toward me at the same time, their hands outstretched to help, comfort, or touch me for some other reason, I didn't know. And I didn't care, I just wanted everyone gone.

"I said, get out!" I huffed. No one moved, so I pushed past them and out the front door of the cottage, heading for the only place that ever made any sense to me.

The chapel doors were propped open, allowing people to come and go. I didn't care for anyone's company, but hopefully people would know to stay clear. I was here for myself, not for them today.

I slid into an empty pew near the front, the soft whispers of prayer surrounding me fading into background noise as I clasped my hands together and pressed my forehead to my hands. Stavros and Deyva fucked on that altar, so I couldn't bring myself to look at it. Even here, in the most sacred and holy of places, I couldn't escape her.

I couldn't pull myself from the confusion. Everything about her was paradoxical. She fed on sex for Christ's sake,

why would she care if I had broken my vows with Azariah?

She just cares.

The thought bubbled up from a random place, but it clicked and solidified in my conscious mind. She wasn't just fucking Stavros to feed on him, she cared about him. She cared about all of us. Otherwise she wouldn't have drained herself, risked her own life to fight that demon.

She wouldn't have run out of the safety of the gate to save my ass. She wouldn't have been watching us like a hawk to make sure we were okay.

Just say it.

“I misjudged her,” I whispered to my folded hands. “I was ungenerous and unkind. I was too proud of my own piety and I failed to see another person's good intentions.”

Shame rose up, making the back of my neck hot, as if God's stare was burning into me. But there was no answer from Him, only the one ringing in my own mind.

I owed that succubus an apology.

OceanofPDF.com



Idle Hands do the Devil's
Work

OceanofPDF.com

Coffee bubbled in the percolator on the stove and I dug my knuckles into my temples, trying to excavate the headache pounding in my brain. Behind me, feathers rustled anxiously.

“Father Kais.”

I frowned and my fists lowered to the stove door handle, clenching tightly. “Not really in the mood right now, Azariah,” I bit out.

Listen to the way you’re talking to an angel, part of me thought, still a little dazzled, still marveling at being so close to one of God’s closest children. Forever coming to grips with the fact that all of this was real. It was one thing to believe, to want to be a priest, to guide people in their faith and through their troubles. It was another to wrap my head around the fact that there was a man standing behind me, with massive golden wings, who could produce light from his hands that defeated the hellions that hovered at the edges of my world.

Suddenly, the years before recent weeks, when it was all super soakers of holy water and crossbows pointed at monsters, seemed so simple.

“I have an explanation to give. To all of you.”

“Well, Zach’s not here right now, and I haven’t gotten any fucking sleep tonight, so like I said, not in the mood.” Not that I ever got much sleep.

And then, because it was my luck or my burden, the door to the priest’s house opened and I heard the telltale thunk of Zach kicking his boots off by the door like a kid who’d just arrived home from school.

“Where’s Deyva?”

“Zachariah,” Az breathed, plaintively.

I was living in a teenage supernatural drama.

“No. Don’t. Kais, where’s Deyva?”

I was one hairsbreadth from slamming something and telling them all to go fuck themselves, and I wasn’t even entirely sure why. Was it seeing Deyva take down that demon general? The slam of my heart in my chest as I watched her, and the violent jealousy of how *easy* she made it look? Or was it all this bullshit of who was fucking who and whether or not it was moral, while I was stuck with my fucking hand in the shower?

Zach hurried past me as I snapped the cupboard door closed and poured myself some coffee. This wasn’t going to help. I’d end up with the shakes and there was still a ton of work to be done, especially on that old house we’d started on yesterday. But the last thing I wanted to deal with right now were the night terrors.

“Oh, Deyva. I...I need to talk to you,” Zach said softly, his face turned up the stairs, none of his usual sneer directed at her.

“Please,” Azariah moaned, standing by the old avocado-green refrigerator. “I need to speak to *all* of you.”

“Move,” I growled at him. I kept my rice milk in the fridge.

He stumbled over to Zach, who inched away and revealed Deyva.

She'd been pale after the battle, haggard and angry looking. Now she had pink in her cheeks and, even as she glared at Az, there was a mischievous smile on her lips.

I opened my mouth to ask if Stavros was still breathing and then shut it quickly again. Deyva deserved better than that. And a moment later Stav was thumping down the stairs in a pair of sweatpants, shirtless. Shirtless because his old Boston U t-shirt was hanging down almost to Deyva's knees.

“Coffee?” Stavros asked me, eyebrows waggling. He had a hickey on his neck and some scratch marks on his back I was pretty sure he didn't know about, ones that made Zach's eyes bug out.

“Help yourself,” I grunted.

“What's up?” Deyva asked Zach, whose eyes were tracking Stavros with an expression I wasn't sure how to read.

“Would you all just *listen* to me for a minute?!” the angel barked, words heavy with power and windows rattling with his command.

I stiffened, clenching too hard on the brown carton in my hand and Deyva's nose wrinkled.

“Don't get your panties in a twist, angel boy,” Deyva muttered.

Zach's jaw clenched, but he didn't correct her or snap back, and Azariah just shuddered with frustration.

“Fine. Dining room table, everyone. Azariah has something he’d like to say.” The others looked at me, everyone ready to argue, and I raised an eyebrow, hushing them all.

“It can wait, I guess,” Zach whispered to Deyva.

“Babe, you want honey?” Stavros asked.

Zach and I shared a wide-eyed glance as Deyva twisted shyly in place, reaching up and fingering the end of one of her gold horns. “Yes, please.”

For a moment, I let my brain go in a direction I really shouldn’t have. What kind of sex did it take for a man to feel comfortable calling a woman ‘babe’ after watching her tear into a monster’s chest and rip out its heart? Brain addling, no doubt. But Deyva seemed cautiously delighted as Stavros passed her a steaming cup of coffee sweetened with a spoonful of our hives’ honey.

And then we all moved into the dining room like the universe’s most dysfunctional family unit.

I took the head seat by the window, Zach on my left, and Deyva and Stavros cuddled up in the chair to my right, as Azariah stood at the other end, his hands braced against the back of the chair.

“I...I have a confession to make to you all,” Azariah said softly, meeting each of our eyes, stopping with Deyva and holding hers longest. Her eyes narrowed back at him and his head ducked. “I would like to begin though, with...with my fall from grace.”

Deyva’s eyes rolled and accidentally landed on mine, a brief moment of understanding passing between us. Was this

more holy bullshit we were about to be fed on Azariah's sanctimonious platter?

"I questioned God," Az said, some of his usual elegance fading, the words coming out flat. "When Hell rose up, I assumed my maker had some plan, that it was all part of the divine cycle. I thought perhaps the holy fleet would be sent down. The rapture is primarily a human concept, but I even considered the possibility that the blessed would be shepherded home. After...a time, too long I think, I realized that there was no help from Heaven that would be sent to Earth."

It was strange. Azariah's words were like a reflection of my own mind. I'd wondered at first if I was being tested. I wondered if I'd been found wanting. And then after a very long while, even after finding Bethel and setting up our sanctuary here, I'd felt abandoned.

Poor Zach. His face was sheet white right now, his eyes fixed to the top of the table in a crushed kind of horror. I would've spared him this moment if I could have.

"I implored God to send aid, and when I was refused I grew frustrated and I..." Azariah cleared his throat and Deyva leaned forward, catching his eye. He shrugged once, and Deyva nodded. "I made accusations. My faith faltered, and then so did my wings."

"What?" Zach gasped. "No. No, you are not telling me that you—that because you were upset for *our* sake that God—"

"Zach, it's not that," Deyva said softly.

"God may yet have designs for his earthly children," Azariah said.

“An angel’s flight relies on their faith and love for their maker,” Deyva said to Zach, ducking her head to meet his stare. “If Azariah’s anger fractured his trust, his belief in the righteousness—”

“That isn’t *right*,” Zach bit out.

“My love for human beings compromised my love for God,” Azariah said. “My fall was my own doing, my inability to hold faith.”

Deyva looked between all of us, worry creasing her brow. I’d thought this woman was evil when she arrived. She’d told us of Heaven’s faults and we’d thrown her nature back in her face, and now here she was, worried over our feelings at Azariah’s revelation.

“I’m sorry. That is only the beginning of the story. What you really need to know begins with my time spent in Hell,” Azariah murmured. “An angel’s fall is cause for celebration in Hell. If we can be converted, we make powerful warriors. If we cannot...”

“Angels are endless sources of powerful feeding and the enjoyment of harming someone for the sake of it,” Deyva finished for him. Her eyes narrowed up at him. “They wouldn’t have let you walk out. Not unless there was a reason.”

“Wait, you’re saying Hell sent Azariah *here*?” Stavros asked. “Why? Because of us?”

Azariah’s lips pressed into a flat line and his gaze never left Deyva’s face. The color she’d been sporting in her cheeks, the smile in her eyes, all of it faded.

“Whose domain did you land in? What demon broke your wings?” Deyva breathed, eyes going yellow and pale.

“Kimaris.”

Deyva hissed and launched herself off Stavros’ lap, jostling the table, coffee splashing out of our mugs as she edged away from Azariah, toward me and the windows.

“First Daughter,” Azariah said, his hands raised as he moved to round the table.

All three of us stood up out of our chairs, Zach and Stavros flanking me on either side. Out of the corner of my eye Deyva was visibly trembling, body hunching in on itself.

“Don’t fucking call me that,” she hissed. “Kimaris sent you after me.”

I stiffened, the answer written plainly in Azariah’s wince. The bruises and cuts on Deyva’s body, the *old* scars around her ankles.

“I’m sorry. I was promised freedom. I was only there for months and the agony was unimaginable. He must’ve had you for—”

“Shut up,” Deyva snapped, cutting Az off, jumping forward between Stavros and I. Over her shoulder I glared at the angel, my arms crossing over my chest. At my side Stavros scanned the room for a weapon.

“It seemed such an easy exchange, returning a succubus to her domain and then taking an opportunity to find my way back to mine. I never expected you to be *here*. I never expected you to be...” Azariah trailed off, glancing at us, the humans who stood tense and ready to protect the woman who had escaped Hell to reach our gates. “You are doing an angel’s work in a demon’s body.”

“I am *not* a demon!” Deyva shouted. “I fell too! I fell first, and I fell *hard*, but I have not been and I never will be a

demon.”

Stav’s hand reached up and clasped Deyva’s shoulder. I expected her to tear him a new one but instead she just leaned into the touch, her feet stumbling back. My hand raised and rested against her spine, feeling the swell and release of her sigh.

“You’re right. I’m sorry,” Azariah said, the picture of repentance with his shimmering locks curtaining around his diamond-edged cheekbones. But he looked tainted in my eyes now.

“You lied to us. You tried to *use* me,” Zach said.

“I—no. I thought I was helping you all at first. I never imagined she would be—be—”

“She’s a good fucking person and you’re an asshole, is what I think you’re trying to say,” Stavros growled.

Azariah’s good wing drooped, his grip rigid on the back of the chair as his gaze nearly bore a hole in the tabletop.

“For what it’s worth,” he ground out. “Seeing what you’ve done here has been remarkable. I’ve always admired human resilience, their will to take care of each other. Even if my faith is not completely restored, seeing Bethel come together and refuse to give up has given me hope. I’m not postulating, Fathers. You have truly done God’s work here.” His eyes lifted to the succubus across the room. “And I’m glad Deyva has been here to help.”

“So are we.” Stavros growled, pulling her back to his chest as his fingers kneaded into the flesh of her shoulder. “At least *I* am.”

I couldn’t be sure if that dig was meant for me, Zach, or both of us. All I knew was that my hand was still pressed to

Deyva's back and I had no desire to drop the contact. A growing part of me wanted her to know I was here too, that I'd defend her like a knight in battle-torn armor if she had room for me.

"Now what?" Zach looked crestfallen, his stare bouncing all around the room like he didn't know who or what to believe.

"Clearly, you were all doing fine before I came along." Azariah held the young priest's gaze for a moment before returning to face us. "I'll leave immediately, if you would prefer that."

"Go out there?" I pointed a finger out the window. "And what'll happen to you then?"

The angel shrugged, his wings lifting with a soft *swish* of feathers. "Best case, I find a community like this one, filled with attractive people who won't balk at an angel with a sex drive." His lips started on a weak smile, then quickly faltered when no one in the room returned it. "But the most likely scenario is being found by demon scouts and being returned to Kimaris, obviously without fulfilling my part of the deal we made."

A heavy silence filled the room as Azariah straightened up, as if wanting to accept such a fate with dignity. I couldn't fault him for that, but also knew too well of the world outside our gate. While he was immortal and could fare better than any of us humans, it wouldn't exactly be a happy-go-lucky time either.

"Stay."

All eyes fell on Deyva, stepping away from mine and Stavros' hands and toward Azariah. He watched her warily,

like an injured bird being approached by a cat.

“As much as I don’t like you,” she went on, chin lifted. “No one deserves to be sent back to Kimaris. If you are truly remorseful and don’t cause trouble, I can...tolerate you being here, I guess.”

Azariah lowered his head again, the humility so clear in his body language, I wondered if Deyva could taste it.

“You are kinder than I deserve, Deyva.” It might have been the first time he used her actual name.

“Having an angel around is good for morale, I’ll give you that much.” Stavros crossed his arms, still glowering. “I’ve never seen the town in such high spirits before. Stick around and you might be good for something.”

So that was two votes in favor of Azariah staying. My eyes slid over toward Zach, who was still looking like he was having the biggest existential crisis of his life.

“What do you say, Zach?” Even if Deyva hadn’t spoken up, I had no doubt she could handle the angel as a thorn in her side. But I wasn’t so sure about our youngest priest.

He took a long moment to reply. “Yeah, we shouldn’t be sending anyone out to their death, or worse.” The words came out on the tail end of a heavy sigh, like he was tired of wrestling with it all.

“All right then.” I didn’t know when I became the head of our little ragtag gang of misfits, but the role seemed to fall on my shoulders regardless. “You’ll stay in Bethel, given that you don’t touch Zach, you don’t undermine us, and it shouldn’t have to be said, but you definitely don’t bring any demons here. Otherwise, I won’t hesitate to nail you by your good wing outside our gate and leave you there to rot.”

Only Deyva gasped at the threat, the soft sound making my gut churn in regret at having said anything. Zach and Stav knew my nature, knew how unflinching I could be in the face of violence, even while it tormented me at night. Azariah simply nodded in acceptance at the terms I laid out, but it was Deyva's stare that I couldn't shake. For some reason, I didn't want her to know that side of me. What if I reminded her of this Kimaris asshole that scarred her skin and made her flinch at unexpected touches?

My foot jiggled underneath me. I needed to walk off all this shit. Especially the shit about caring what this woman—Stavros' woman—thought about me.

"If that's settled," I turned and nudged my way to the door, "we can go back to business as fucking usual."

The door slammed behind me louder than intended, even over the crunching of gravel under my boots. I flinched at the sound and hurried away faster, no destination in mind. Just *away*. Away from thinking, wanting, wishing, questioning.

Idle hands do the devil's work, I reminded myself, heading into town. There was always something to do here. Something to repair, something to clean. Deyva, Azariah, my past failures—none of it compared to making sure families had heat for the winter, or food for their children.

Christ worked in the service of others. He worried for nothing, because he had nothing but God's love. Had I been standing on a pulpit as I did years ago, I might have preached about learning to give for the sake of giving, and not to take in hopes of filling a void. It was a lesson I often needed to remind myself of.

I headed for the house where Deyva had removed the tree branch from the roof. When was that, today? Yesterday?

Everything from before watching her snuff that demon seemed like a different time period altogether.

“Morning, Father,” Dan Phillips greeted, neatly stacking firewood logs in a hitch trailer as I approached.

“Morning,” I grumbled in return, realizing I hadn’t had my usual second cup of coffee with our heated discussion at the cottage. “What needs doing?”

The middle-aged man turned around slowly, scratching his head. “Well, we’ve got all the wood chopped from the branch the little demon girl brought down. I got Kyle raking up the leaf litter for compost, the wife’s canning in the cellar, and once I get this stacked up, I’m gonna go around the neighborhood to stock everyone up.” He returned to look at me with a shrug. “I think we’ve got it covered.”

I bounced on my toes. There was always *something* that needed to get done.

“How about that generator? I know you were concerned about it a little while ago.”

“Ah.” He waved a hand. “Once you got that wind turbine up and running, it started taking in juice again, so turned out to be nothing.”

I nodded, my teeth gritting. “How about your neighbors? Anyone need appliances fixed? Dry rot in the walls? Anything?”

“Um, I don’t think so, Father. But if anything comes up, we’ll be sure to let you know.”

Well, fuck.

I jerked my chin down in a sharp nod. “All right then. We’ll see you Sunday.”

“God bless, Father.”

Yeah, sure.

Something bright orange and yellow caught my eye as I started to turn. The flowers with their ruffled petals planted next to the Phillips’ house. Deyva had been so careful not to drop the tree branch on them.

I like marigolds, she had said.

“Hey Dan?”

“Yes, Father?”

I pointed to the wheelbarrow of mulched leaves and bark next to the flower bed. “Are you gonna pull those flowers up?”

“Yeah, it’s getting late in the season for ‘em and Jenny wants to plant spicy peppers there next year, so she wants to ___”

“I’ll take them.” The words left my mouth before I could change my mind.

“Oh, sure. Go ahead.”

The next thing I knew, I was headed back toward the cottage with a fistful of marigolds, their musky aroma clinging to me as I stepped inside the now-empty dining room and made my way to the kitchen sink. Rinsing the dirt off their roots, snipping the stems with a small pair of gardening shears—I told myself it was all just to *do* something, to keep myself busy.

I kept telling myself this, even as I found an empty pitcher in the top cupboard, filled it halfway with water, and stuck the flowers in it. Only when I placed the pitcher in the center of the dining room table and entertained the thought of wondering if she’d like them, did I realize how fucked I was.

“What the fuck am I doing?” I grumbled, turning to leave again.

“Kais?”

I should have continued on my un-merry way and pretended not to hear her. But my feet stopped at the way Deyva said my name, the curious inflection in her voice.

“Hey,” I grunted casually. “Where did everyone go?”

“Stav is napping upstairs.” She tilted her head, horns pointing toward his room. “I think I wore him out. From actual sex, not feeding.”

“Ah, well thank you for clarifying.”

She bit her lip in the wake of a smile. “I think Zach went back to the church. Azariah, I’m not sure. But if he’s causing trouble, I’m sure we’ll find out.”

“I’m sure we will,” I agreed.

Deyva was still wearing Stavros’ shirt, and likely nothing else underneath, as my lizard brain enjoyed reminding me. Her eyes trailed from me to the flowers in the center of the table, widening as her mouth fell open.

“Marigolds! Did you bring these in?” She leaned over to smell them, the shirt riding dangerously high up her thighs.

“Unless Stav can sleepwalk or Zach is faster than me, it must’ve been.” I averted my gaze, hoping she’d take my dismissiveness as a sign that it was nothing. I didn’t pick the marigolds for her. I totally just grabbed flowers out of the ground randomly and stuck them on the table all the time.

“Thank you, Kais. This is really sweet of you.” Of course she wouldn’t. She could probably taste how badly I wanted the flowers to make her happy.

Deyva straightened up and padded toward me on bare feet, her smile downright devilish. “Marigolds are *much* better than daisies.”

“I don’t know about that. You’d look pretty cute with a crown of daisies around those horns.” I wanted to kick myself. Why was it so easy to flirt with her?

She was made to feed off that energy, you idiot.

“You wouldn’t,” she huffed, pouting in mock anger. “I’ll tell Stavros on you.”

The laughter barked sharply out of my throat and wouldn’t stop coming. She looked so fucking cute when she said that, and for some reason, knowing she could kill me with the strength in her pinky finger made it even funnier.

“Right,” I wheezed. “So you can kill demons and what’s Stav gonna do, hug me to death?”

She let out a girlish giggle, wrapping her arms around herself as the joy spread plainly across her features. It wasn’t just Stav having the time of his life since she’d been here.

“I know, right? He’s such a teddy bear.” Her eyes grew dreamy, still hugging herself as she swayed from side to side. “He tastes so sweet when he feels loved. It’s like I want to protect him from everything out there, and make him feel like that all the time.”

“That’s Stav, alright.” I cleared my throat, sobering up from my laughing fit. “The guy thinks he’s especially susceptible to lust, but it’s not that. He just has a lot of love to give, and people have taken advantage of that.”

Deyva made an adorable little growling sound. It made me smile and caused a pinching sensation in my chest at the same time. Stav was damn lucky.

“I worry about people taking advantage of Zach too,” I said quickly, hoping to steer the conversation away from her love life. “Even before Azariah showed up. He’s just...”

“Young,” Deyva and I said together. “And idealistic,” she added.

“He’s always seen things as black or white. Good or evil.” I chopped through the air with my hand to illustrate. “So it’s a fair assumption that he’s learning some nuances now and that things aren’t always what they seem.”

Deyva laced her hands in front of her, her expression turning pensive. “Has he ever told either of you?”

I blinked. “Told us what?”

She sighed. “That he’s bisexual, Kais.”

“What do you think?” I scoffed. “I’m not surprised, but I also know he’d be a sexless Ken doll if he had any control over it.”

“It’s just, when we caught him like that with Azariah...” She chewed her lip, brows furrowing. “I tasted so much embarrassment from him, so much pain and shame. I know he’s not the biggest fan of me, but I just want to wrap him up and protect him too. To tell him it’s okay.”

“After everything that’s happened in the last twenty-four hours, I think he’s a bigger fan than you realize,” I said. “He just needs to stop clutching his pearls first. But I understand that need to protect him. The world is harsh to kids like him, even before the Rising.”

At some point during our conversation, Deyva and I had drifted closer together. She stood directly in front of my feet now, face angled up towards me and well within the reach of a caress.

“And who protects you, Kais?” she asked in a breathy whisper.

I tried to huff out a dismissive laugh, but it got stuck in my throat. “I look after myself. Always have.”

“How’s that working out for you?” Her green irises shifted to gold, sharp and reflective. “I’ve tasted your pain, Kais. You don’t have to face it alone.”

Her lips reached toward me until they were close, so close. And then they were touching mine.

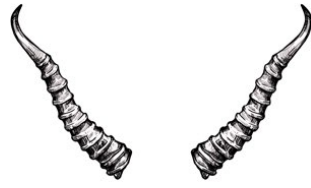
The heat of her mouth felt like a brand. The reality, knowing that this was no longer a dream, shook me down to my shoes. And her tongue flicking out to taste me might as well have been on my cock the way fucking thing jumped to attention. My instincts screamed at me to kiss her back. To sink into the taste of that mouth I’d been missing in my dreams, to remember the shape of her luscious body under her baggy T-shirt.

I grabbed hold of her upper arms, fighting the burning need to draw her into my chest and shoved her away instead.

“Never fucking do that again,” I growled before jamming the kitchen door open with my shoulder, and letting it slam behind me.

Once again, I hurried to get away from thinking or feeling anything. If there was nothing to do, I’d carry fucking rocks back and forth across town.

I could only hope I made it clear that she wasn’t mine. And unlike with Stavros, she couldn’t fix what was broken about me.



Love is Kind

OceanofPDF.com

“*Y*ou okay up there, babe?”

I suppressed an eyeroll, but let the smile shine through. I didn't care for pet names, but Stavros tasted so happy when he called me babe, I couldn't bear telling him to stop.

“Just fine, sugar dumpling!”

His laughter tasted bright and bubbly, like the champagne I had at a New Year's Eve party back at the dawn of the eighteenth century. He held the ladder steady beneath me while I cleaned the dirt and grime from the stained glass windows of the church.

“Once Azariah's wing is healed, we can just make him do this,” I suggested, adding under my breath, “He can keep his busy little hands to himself for once.”

“Have you noticed he's healing a lot slower than you did? You know, after you and I started...”

I glanced down and Stavros waggled his eyebrows at me, deep dimples carving into his cheeks with his grin. I clutched at the top of the ladder, resisting the urge to tackle him into the ground and ride him like a county fair pony where anyone could see.

“Angels aren’t that different from my kind, I guess. He needs love to really heal, and he’s down here, not up there at home,” I said, shrugging and finishing up with the window.

“You think that’s why he went after Zach?” Stavros asked.

I frowned and sighed, slowly stepping down the ladder, smiling as Stavros refused to pull away and let me sink down between his arms. I turned and leaned against the ladder and he leaned in too, both of us wearing that same ridiculous smile. As it turned out, the human feels were kinda nice.

“Look, I’m not happy about what happened between him and Zach, mainly because I knew Az was hiding something, and Zach’s not someone who should...risk his principles for lies. But in Az’s defense, Zach’s faith and, you know, all around choir boy perfection? That had to be a beacon for the angel.”

“Was my lust a beacon for you?” Stavros asked. He was calm, nonjudgmental, and I shrugged off any defensiveness that prickled at me.

“It wasn’t your lust that called me to your dreams, Stavros. It was how badly you craved care and affection, touch. You needed those dreams as much as I did,” I said, leaving the rag on the ledge of the ladder and cupping Stavros’ cheeks in my hand, scratching gently into his beard and drawing him to me for a slow, drowsy kiss.

“Whatever happened back there, if you ever need to talk, you know I’m here,” Stavros whispered back. “So are Zach and Kais for that matter.”

“Like a confession?” I asked, frowning. “Pretty sure that would...take kinda a long time. I’ve been around—”

He cut me off with a kiss, pulling away with a crooked grin, deep honey eyes laughing. “Doesn’t have to be like that. Priests do more than assign Hail Marys and baptisms. Sometimes we just listen when people are having a hard time. I heard Azariah, Dey. You went through something unimaginable.”

Through centuries of it, actually, even if the worst had been more recent. Altogether it would be enough to make Stavros’ hair go gray with just a decade’s worth of unburdening.

“I wasn’t always the victim,” I admitted, biting my lip and wishing I could take the words back, fixing my stare to Stavros’ strong chin.

He just nodded. Not surprised, not disappointed, just listening.

I released a long sigh and then glanced at the church. There were people inside, praying, teaching, reflecting. And also...

“Can I show you something?” I asked.

“Of course.”

I took Stavros’ hand and led him into the church, through the gym and the halls, right up to the chapel. Zach was in the confessional booth, listening to the murmurs of a woman who was full of spite. Az was up in the balcony, a kind of hollow anger around him. In the pews, a few individuals sat in prayer, wrestling with hope and hopelessness in equal measure. And there, by the devotional altar, was a couple lighting one of the many candles that waited there.

“Tell me about them,” I whispered in Stavros’ ear.

“Those two? Uhhh, that’s Heather McCann and Jeff Byrne. She comes twice a week to light a candle for her mother and he comes with her,” Stavros answered with a shrug. “They got together this past year. Her dad isn’t a fan. Probably a lot of the town isn’t a fan.”

“Why not?” I asked.

“I guess it’s because he’s about her dad’s age. They think he’s taking advantage.”

“Do you?”

“I dunno... It’s a gap, isn’t it? And she was always fighting with her dad.”

“He loves her,” I said. “He loves her *so* much it terrifies him. And she loves him too, but in a steadier way. She feels safe and secure and calm with him. They feel more connected to the world around them when they’re together. And they just give off love, *constantly*, unconsciously. Most people love in specific moments, little instances where it strikes them, and they string it all together and call it being in love, but actually it’s just small bursts. These two? They *love* one another.”

Stavros’ hand slid up my back, and I revelled between the love of the couple standing with their backs to us, and Stavros’ own brief burst of emotion for me.

“Watch,” I said, closing my eyes.

The glow was there, warm and rich, pulsing like a heartbeat on the other side of the chapel, just shedding light on the world without asking for anything in return. I pushed at it, taking the perfect beautiful web of emotion and wrapping it back around the couple rather than feeding off it for myself.

Stav’s breath hitched and I opened my eyes, smiling at the almost-imperceptible glow surrounding the young woman and

the older man. They turned to one another and the space between them was full and vibrant and aching, their eyes gratefully soaking each other up, remembering and savoring their own depth of feeling. Jeff Byrne bent and kissed Heather McCann's forehead, taking her weight as she leaned into his chest as the rest of the occupants of the room watched, all of us just a little more aware that this still existed, there *was* still so much love left in the world. My eyes drifted up to the balcony and found Azariah leaning over the edge, watching the couple with all of an angel's serenity.

I turned to Stavros, soaking up the waves of awe and gratitude, and then I broke the spell. "That was what I was made for. But that was not how it was used in Hell. I can take pain, despair, self-loathing, endless agony, and I can force it back into a soul over and over again. It's horrible, Stavros. It's unforgivable."

Stavros' lips pressed thin as he stared back at me. Maybe I'd only said that in the hopes that he would absolve me. Or maybe I was self sabotaging and trying to scare him off.

Stavros leaned in and pressed his lips to my forehead, the bridge of my nose, grazing against my top lip. In the chapel, someone gasped, but Stavros didn't even flinch.

"I'm glad you made it here, Deyva," Stavros said, drawing me to his chest.

I WAS PRETENDING TO NAP, because despite Stavros' claims, his bed was an exquisite luxury, when there was a knock on the door.

Guilt, nervousness, reluctance, shame.

“Come in, Zach,” I called.

The door cracked open and Zach’s face appeared, a little nervous twitch of his eyes as he caught me stretched out on the bed. I resisted the urge to spread myself out in invitation just to tease him, and pushed myself upright, swinging my feet down to rest on the floor.

“Hey, I didn’t mean to bother you,” Zach said, leaning in the doorway, not committing to actually joining me in Stavros’ bedroom as his eyes shied away from mine and landed anywhere else.

“You’re not bothering me. I was just avoiding Kais and his grumpy pants downstairs,” I said. Since the man couldn’t fucking take a kiss in a nice way, apparently, and I was trying not to be really sullen about it.

“He just needs to sleep. He’ll crash tonight,” Zach said, shrugging. He looked at me, away again, swallowed, and then back to me. I did my best to offer him a welcoming smile but that just seemed to make him more anxious. “I, uh... I owe you an apology, Deyva.”

Oh. “No, you don’t.” Okay, maybe he did, but I didn’t want him to have to give it.

He finally stepped inside, bare feet shuffling across the floor, his body landing heavily on the edge of the bed next to me. “Yes, I do.”

“Zach, I wasn’t really expecting you guys to roll out the welcome mat for me, you know? I get...I get why you were suspicious.”

“I wasn’t just suspicious, Deyva, I was cruel. I accused you of horrible things, I let myself be biased against the very

idea of you, against everything you demonstrated yourself to be.”

“I poked at you, and I antagonized you—”

“You teased me,” he said, smiling and glancing at me. “Which...at the time I thought you were trying to shake my faith, but now I realize that you—you actually—”

“I like your faith,” I said, bumping my shoulder into his. “It’s doing the world good, doing everyone here in this town good. And I’m sorry if the stuff Az said yesterday changes anything for you. I don’t think it should. I have...some comment cards I’d like to submit to Heaven, but I’ve got zero real clue what comes next, and Az doesn’t either.”

“You don’t have to do that, you know?” Zach said. He was hunched over, staring at his hands folded on his knees as if he were praying, and he frowned at me as he turned to look up. “You don’t have to...to cover God’s ass when I’m struggling with doubt.”

“Okay, fair enough.”

Zach sat up, his frown tangling deeper. “I know everyone wants to see me as all shiny and sure and full of faith, but I’m struggling too, same as everyone else. I’m coping with the same shit pile everyone else is and I...I’m struggling with...sinful urges too,” he rushed out, voice strangled and color filling his cheeks. “I’m not the golden boy everyone wants to see me as.”

I bit my lip. Zach was absolutely the golden boy, but I understood where he was coming from. “Zach, no one expects you to be sure every second of every day,” I said, and then I thought of the town. “At least, not here.”

“Kais and Stavros—”

“Kais and Stavros might like to believe you’re not struggling, but they would absolutely want to be the ones to support you when you did,” I said quickly, watching that frown melt a little bit.

The anger started to fade, but the shame replaced it quickly.

“I’m sorry if I...interrupted something I shouldn’t have yesterday, by the way,” I said softly, testing the waters.

Red flooded Zach’s cheeks and his jaw clenched. “No, you were right. I was in a weak moment and I would’ve regretted giving into—I should’ve known an angel wouldn’t—” His hands clenched to fists on his lap and I cracked, reaching over and taking one in mine.

“That’s not what I meant, look...I...I know I’m probably not the authority on the subject that you’re looking for, but—”

The door opened and Stavros paused in its frame. “Oh, shit. Sorry, I can—”

“No, I should go,” Zach said on a gasp, rising up from the bed, his shoulders up to his ears.

“Wait, no, both of you stay!” I said, jumping up and dashing between them. I raised one hand to hold Zach in place and used the other to tug Stavros inside. “Okay, listen. We’re gonna rip the band-aid off on this one, alright? Zach, it is not a sin to be bisexual, or gay, or just anything other than hetero. Stav, back me up on this, cause I know it’s kind of weird to take seriously coming from a succubus.”

Stavros blinked and I glared at him. “Oh, well, yeah. I’m bi. I don’t really advertise it because...you know, priest. I should. It should be talked about more. Zach, really, you’ve been worried about being gay?”

“I’m not gay,” Zach spat out and then groaned, turning his back on us, and covering his face with his hands. “I’m not gay. I just haven’t ever been with a woman, or anything.”

Stavros’ eyebrows jumped. “Wait? You’ve been with a man?”

“No. No, not like that. It was...we were messing around. We got caught,” Zach squeezed out, head still shaking. “I begged God for forgiveness and I swore it would never happen again and then yesterday, that *fucking* angel... Fuck!”

“Whoa! Whoa, okay.”

I backed up as Stavros headed for Zach, his hands settling on the younger man’s shoulders, turning him and pulling him easily into his chest. Zach shuddered, growing smaller against Stavros, and I bit my lip at the pair of them wrapped up together like that. It was sweet, and heartbreaking too, and I held still so I wouldn’t remind them that I was here, watching. Zach was soaking up comfort from Stavros like a sponge, so easily I wasn’t sure he even realized it, and Stavros was as steady as a rock, something similar to what he’d felt with me warming the air, but deeper, a love that was more than new and blooming, but had already weathered some storms together.

“Who caught you?” Stavros asked.

“Father Montgomery,” Zach whispered, muffled against Stavros’ chest. “When I was at the rectory.”

“Lemme guess, real old school fuck? The kind that cracked knuckles on Sunday school kids and talked about hell more than heaven?” Stavros asked.

Zach shrugged his arms off, his face pale and eyes red, and he nodded, gaze glancing in my direction but then right back

to Stavros.

“Come on, Zach, is that the kind of leader you want to be? Scaring kids out of their dignity and sense of self over some genuine feelings for each other?” Stavros asked.

“Of course not, but—”

“I know homophobia wasn’t about to be solved in the Catholic church before the Rising or anything, but that’s some bullshit, and a lot of the church was learning to say so. Fuck that guy. Fuck how he made you feel,” Stavros said softly, still holding Zach’s shoulders and his eyes. “Look, I know I’m probably not the man you’d ask about piety and purity, alright, but Kais would *gladly* tell you the same. You’re a *good* priest, and it’s not because you’re resisting any sexual urges for men, or for women for that matter. It’s because you care about people and you believe in them and you uplift them. You remind them of their duties of kindness to each other and to themselves. Remind yourself too, Zach.”

Maybe I should’ve interrupted them, because Stavros didn’t know the effect his speech was having on Zach, too caught up in his worry over how his friend, his *family*, was tearing himself up inside. But I knew. I knew the moment it was all too much for Zach, and that twisted, knotted, mass inside of him was ready to explode.

I opened my mouth, but it was too late.

Zach grabbed Stavros’ face in both hands, surging up and slanting his mouth against the other man’s, deep and aggressive and desperate, his fingers digging into Stavros’ hair and holding him in that endless, violent kiss.

Fuuuuuck was it hot.



Divine Sin

OceanofPDF.com

Oh shit.

Oh *fuck*.

I moaned as Stavros' tongue slid against mine, hot and bitter and stroking, searching. I was pushing him away, wasn't I? I needed to be fucking letting go, running out the door, or apologizing. Or throwing myself on a fucking pyre.

Oh shit.

Stavros' arms banded around my ribs, pulling me closer, hips grinding together in sudden and fiery friction.

Oh fuck.

It was too fucking much and not nearly enough. When our mouths parted for air, reality hit me like a brick to the chest.

"Fuck...fuck!" My hands balled into fists on Stavros' shoulders. I jerked to pull away, but his arms held me in place.

"Zach, Zach." The rough bristles of his beard nudged my temple. His mouth, that mouth I could still taste, made soft shushing noises like he was comforting a child. "It's okay, Zach. You're okay. You're safe."

"No." I buried my head in his shoulder, simultaneously wanting to disappear and curl against his chest. My gaze rolled

to the side, finding Deyva staring at us in our locked embrace. “You two are together and...fuck, I’m so sorry.”

“Zach.” Deyva stepped forward, her hand finding gentle placement on my shoulder. “You have nothing to be sorry for, nothing at all.”

Stavros let out a chuckle, his hands loosening around me just an inch. “I don’t think she minds, Zach.”

“Just the opposite, actually.” Deyva wet her lips with her tongue, her eyes red and hungry. I wondered what we tasted like to her. “That was brave, and...really, really sexy.”

“Don’t beat yourself up. I know that’s where your mind is headed.” Stavros’ arms released slowly from around me until his hands rested near my elbows.

His expression was concerned, protective. Seriousness, but without the stern judgment of the priests who had raised me. I knew that look well—he wore it the same day the bus dropped me off in Bethel. Stavros was not concerned with my immortal soul, but concerned for *my* well being.

“There’s nothing wrong with what you just did, what *we* just did,” he said. “If you want to explore this, I’m willing to do that with you. I just—” He glanced at Deyva, tongue flicking out over his lips in the same way hers did. “My main priority is that you feel safe and comfortable at all times. I never want you to feel pressured.”

“I—but...”

There was no question of whether I felt safe with Stavros. He’d been a mentor to me, watching my back and growing closer as a friend since I ended up here. I’d rib him about his habits with women and he’d entertain my many theological

discussions. I trusted Kais too, but he'd always been more closed off. I never connected with him like I did with Stavros.

With him, it had always been there. A simmering undercurrent I thought I had under control. If Deyva hadn't shown up, it probably still would be. She was the catalyst, somehow bringing forth everything I tried to bury. I was scared to death to face it—that I had sexual desires toward men and women equally. I felt like a fake, a failure.

And yet also...relieved? Like a burden had been lifted? The person I trusted most knew my darkest, most shameful secret, and it turned out he was the same as me. He still cared and wanted to look out for me. But...

“You two are together.” It was the most coherent thought I could string together, looking between Deyva and Stavros. “I know you haven't made vows or anything, but—”

Deyva snorted, reaching up to scratch absently at one of her horns. “Yes, we can get into how patriarchal and oppressive sexual fidelity is later. What do *you* want, Zach?”

I turned back to Stavros. “It doesn't bother you that she just said that?”

The older priest shrugged his broad shoulders. “She's had all of us in our dreams. And yeah, I kinda figured Dey didn't subscribe to the same principles of monogamy as us.”

“I guess I've never *really* been in a relationship before, come to think of it.” Deyva tapped her chin thoughtfully. “Stay, wanna be my boyfriend? I'll let you fuck Zach.”

My heart nearly beat out of my chest at the words, but there was a comforting plainness to how she said it too. Like the notion of us together was as normal as her offering us this arrangement.

Stavros coughed out a surprised laugh, a blush darkening his cheeks. “Uh, sure babe.”

“Zach, want to be my other boyfriend? You can play with Stav all you want. You don’t even have to let me watch, but I’d be very grateful if you did.”

“Um—” *Yes! Yes, yes, yes.* My hands tightened on Stavros and I barely nodded before she continued.

“Great, it’s settled.” She clapped her hands once. “We are now in a relationship, so no more worrying about those boundaries being crossed. Now back to the matter at hand. Zach,” she pressed her palms together as if in prayer, “Stavros and I support you, whatever you decide. Nobody wants you to feel guilt or shame for who you are.”

Stav’s forehead nudged mine, a simple reminder that he was still close, but would back off if I showed any reluctance.

“God made you exactly as He intended.” His breath fanned over my face. “But if you don’t want this with me, or anyone, no one will push you. I promise you, Zach.”

I watched his lips move as he talked, the want now overwhelming. It was steadier, not explosive like moments ago, but no less consuming.

I lifted my chin, angling my mouth toward Stav’s. A small movement, but one he saw and understood. Dark eyelashes fluttered down as his mouth slanted over mine, lips pressing with a firm tenderness that wasn’t entirely lust-fueled.

My heart pounded so hard, I was certain he could hear it. My body felt weightless, solid only where he touched me. I reached up, finding his coarse beard beneath my fingers as our mouths parted and reconnected with a sharp inhale of breath.

Strong arms locked around my waist, holding me secure, while I couldn't help but sigh and melt into him. This was Stavros—he'd never prey on me or let me fall. Who knew if or when I'd fully come to terms with how I felt, but I couldn't feel more glad that it was him with me.

His tongue slid into my mouth again, licking and tasting, enjoying me. I'd always loved the way he smelled, the rustic shampoo and beard oil he used. Now his scent was everywhere, his taste coating my tongue, and I wanted to be baptized in it. To be born anew without all the shame, guilt, and fear riding on my shoulders.

My lips tingled and pulsed, sensitive to touch and thirsty for more. Stavros paused after a long, languid kiss, our ragged breaths mirroring in the space between us before his lips slid across my cheek.

“You decide how far this goes,” he murmured, low and sexy on the corner of my jaw.

Over his shoulder I spotted Deyva watching us with flushed skin, red eyes, and the same hungry look I recognized from my dreams.

“Here, Zach. Feel this.”

I opened my mouth to ask what, when the pulse of emotions hit me. Warm affection flooded through me, comforting and secure like a fire and hot chocolate in the winter. Weaved in were sharper emotions—heady desire and a fierce protectiveness, like the rich bite of wine.

“What is—”

“This is how Stavros feels about you,” she said. “It tastes beautiful, but it's not meant for me. I thought you should feel it.”

Stavros' cheek was against mine, lips resting on my neck while his hands still clasped around my back. I knew. She didn't have to show those emotions to me, I already knew. Still, getting confirmation from Deyva erased all doubt of what I wanted. At least for right now.

"You can feed on us, right?" I asked her. "If we, um..."

"I can, yes." Her teeth pulled at her lower lip. "But if you'd rather I—"

"Stay. Feed." My hands dove into Stavros' hair, pulling his mouth back to mine for another kiss. "Maybe you could give me some pointers, and um," I felt like smiling for the first time in weeks, "you *are* my girlfriend, I guess."

It was a bit of a jump. I'd barely finished apologizing to her, but she'd saved my life once, and then my dignity with Azariah. And I wanted, *needed*, to know what it felt like to do all the things I'd dreamed of with her, in person.

Deyva grinned and let out a girlish squeal, bouncing on her toes. "Oh, my boyfriends are so cute! Okay, you guys sit on the bed and I'll watch."

Stav chuckled as we made our way to his bed, our knees brushing as we lowered down. "Didn't think we'd be putting on a show, did you?"

"I came up to apologize to our girlfriend," I smiled against his lips. It really did feel nice to say that. "And yeah, didn't expect any of this to happen at all."

"Like I said." Stavros pecked my lips, turning so he had a leg on either side of me. "You decide what happens here. Nothing more."

Our lips slid against each other again, mouths open and tongues exploring. Distantly, I heard Deyva dragging a chair

closer as our hands moved more freely. Dragging my lips across his beard, I found the warm skin of his neck. His moan encouraged me, and I sucked harder over the thrumming pulse. I got a secret thrill out of giving him a hickey that matched his other one from Deyva.

Strong hands slid up my thighs, fingertips digging into my leg muscles. My cock had been stiff since he first held me, but it was *aching* for him right then.

“Zach,” he rasped, still leaning into my kisses and sucks on his neck. “Do you want me to...?”

“Yes.” I gasped the word out, barely audible with how tight my chest had become. “Please, Stav. Touch me.”

He caught my mouth with a growl, teeth grazing my lip as his palm pressed to the front of my slacks. A whimper burst out of me, both from the harshness of his kiss and the delicious pressure on my cock. I bucked into the touch, ground myself against his hand, and groaned as Stavros pressed closer to rub himself against my hip.

Deyva’s gaze was a brand on my face, a fire in my blood as I thought of how close she was. I tore my mouth from Stavros’, his hand sliding under my t-shirt to pin me to his chest, teeth scratching and grazing my down my neck as I arched into him. I turned my head and there she was, legs folded in her lap, arms crossed over the back of the chair with her chin resting on top, and her eyes lit up like a stoplight.

“Hey,” I rasped, riding Stavros’ hand on my cock, my eyes half-lidded and my mouth burning from the rough kiss.

“Hey,” she said, tongue flicking out over her lips. “You good?”

Stavros' mouth gentled on my throat and I reached a hand up to clutch at his hair and encourage him to go back to those nips and sucks that made me twitch against his palm. I nodded at Deyva and she smiled, sweeter than I expected, gentle compared to the grunts and gasps Stav and I were making.

"You're both so beautiful," she murmured, more to herself.

"How does it taste when I do this?" I asked, and then I yanked on Stavros' hair, pulling him upright and wrestling his shirt up his chest. He pulled his hands away from me to take it off and I hunched, biting at one of the flat brown nipples on his chest, grinning at the jerk and rock of him against me as he moaned and searched for more friction.

Deyva hummed and giggled. "Lemons and honey," she said, and then she worked her little magic trick again, pushing the flavors and emotions we were feeling back at us.

I hit me like a sudden grip in my gut, around my cock, dizzy and sticky and sharp, and I shouted as I nearly came, gritting my teeth against the punch of pleasure.

"Fuuuck, Dey, babe, warn a guy," Stavros gasped and shuddered. He combed his fingers through my hair, a little squeeze on the back of my neck to make me sit up.

Deyva grinned, but she didn't look the least bit sorry. "I'm just in a sharing mood."

I bit my lip and jerked my head at her. "C'mere for a sec."

She shook her head. "Uh uh. I'm having a voyeur moment over here."

"Come and kiss your boyfriend," I said, oddly giddy. Had I ever really been anyone's boyfriend before? Just school dances and the odd county fair, too afraid of what I was always

feeling. Afraid of having *this*. Being able to lean into Stavros' strength, being able to sink into Deyva's softness.

That same softness that was putting a candy-sweet smile on her lips now, gaze glittering back at me in that wild shade of red that probably should've been terrifying, but now just reminded me how fucking *hard* I was.

She slid up like liquid from the chair as Stavros pulled my shirt up over my head, swatting my hands away as I reached up to fix my hair. His hand cupped the back of my neck again, just tight enough to hold me still as Deyva rested one knee on the bed and arched over me.

She smells nice, I thought, and then her nose brushed against mine, her tongue flicking out and tracing my lips. I shivered, trying to rise up into the kiss but held in place by Stavros' hand. Deyva kissed me like I was an ice cream cone, all delicate flicks of her tongue and little sucking swipes of her lips until I was whining and ready to beg. When her mouth finally fitted fully over mine, I panted, so absorbed by the stroke of her tongue that I missed what else was happening.

Pressure eased around my cock, a little *snick snick snick* of the zipper, as I tried to kiss Deyva back, trapped between her teasing mouth and Stavros' tight grip. There was a kiss of air and then a sudden warm and closed grip around my length. I flailed and clutched at Deyva's arm, my hips fucking into Stavros' hand, groaning at the shock of someone else's touch where only mine had ever been.

I chased Deyva's kiss as she pulled away, whimpered at the pluck of her teeth on my bottom lip, arched into her hands as she stroked my bare chest, fingers swirling over my nipples. Stavros held steady on my cock, not moving, aside from a

little swipe of his thumb over the head of my dick that made my eyes fall shut.

“Fuuuuck,” I breathed out, rocking into his hand.

“His pants are open too if you wanna touch,” Deyva said softly.

My fingers were clumsy, numb almost, the entire focus of my brain on the feel of *Stavros’ hand holding my cock like it belonged to him*. But I managed to reach for him, to feel his stomach jump under my fingers. My eyes opened on his face, the flush of his cheeks and the little damp mark on his bottom lip I’d left with my kiss. Deyva moved behind me, her cheek rubbing against my shoulder. Stavros’ hand left the back of my neck and I heard a soft sound by my ear.

“She likes her horns rubbed,” he said, grinning at me.

“He likes it when you moan and call him ‘Father,’” Deyva added, kissing my skin.

I laughed, a little scandalized, a lot turned on. “Pervert,” I said fondly, and then I slipped my fingers down over his skittish belly button and through the happy trail of dark hair, into the waistband of his boxers, watching Stavros’ breath stutter the second I touched his thick base, circling it with my fingers.

Deyva pushed gently at my pants, so slow like she was waiting for me to tell her to stop. As if I could. As if I’d ever be able to stop now that this had started.

“The first week here I had a dream that you sucked me off in the confessional,” I gasped out, eyes wide. “Every time I was in there I couldn’t stop thinking of it. Still can’t.”

Stavros’ grin was bright and I choked on nothing as he squeezed my cock, pulling and twisting over the head, rubbing

my own precum over my skin and his palm.

“I was hard that time you came in to brush your teeth while I was showering, thinking about you doing squats in those stupid exercise shorts of yours. Couldn’t wait for you to leave so I could jerk off, and then the water went ice fucking cold.”

“Do what he’s doing,” Deyva whispered in my ear, the devil on my shoulder. Or the angel for getting me here, putting Stavros in my hands, on my mouth, chest to chest.

I wrapped my fingers around Stavros’ cock, thicker than mine, pulse pounding against my palm, and the head of him sticky against my fingers as I squeezed. He was uncut and easy to pump, soft skin gliding over his length. Deyva soothed her own hands up and down my back, over my ass, squeezing a little and making me glance back at her.

“You’ve got a nice peach,” she said, winking.

“Babe, we can take turns grabbing bites later,” Stavros said.

And then I died, probably, thinking of the pair of them behind me. Or Deyva under me as Stavros fucked my ass, wondering if it would hurt like hell or be the heaven I imagined. Deyva giggled at my frozen expression, kissing my cheek. I wanted them, I would’ve done literally anything they asked me to in that moment, things I’d actively avoided day dreaming of, things I definitely wasn’t ready for. Deyva’s red gaze softened and she nuzzled my shoulder, humming happily as I rubbed my cheek against her horn, surprised to find I liked how it felt, cool and solid against the heat flooding me.

“It’s alright, Zach. We’ve got you.” Her arms circled my ribs and Stavros and I both sighed as she pet our chests, our

stomachs.

Her fingertips grazed over my knuckles as I stroked Stavros as gently and aimlessly as he did me, pleasure simmering and blooming in little bursts. And then her hands joined ours, and suddenly Stavros wasn't just touching me as I touched him, but our cocks were nudging together, sliding and rubbing as Deyva's grip circled us both.

"Oh, Jesus fucking Christ," Stavros hissed, hips kicking, cock stroking mine.

"Don't take the—holy shit," I whined as Deyva squeezed our sticky heads together as we pulled out and then cupped us close as we slammed together.

"Look at you two, Zach," Deyva murmured.

Stav and I both looked, our foreheads bumping as we stared down at the perfect, strange tangle of hands and dicks, so much fucking touching, so many kinds of friction. I wanted to savor it, but it felt too good, and I started moving faster, my breath coming short.

"I'm going to be so greedy one day," Deyva continued. "I want the both of you fucking me. Think of how good it would feel to have you both all pressed together like this, inside of me? Have the both of you losing yourselves, and I get to be wrapped up in the pair of you."

I moaned and rocked, my thighs burning, my body tensing. Stavros' hand left the cluster of us and I whined until it returned, this time cupping and massaging my balls so perfectly I started to shake. He pulled my mouth to his, biting on my lip.

"Keep going, babe," Stavros whispered, before sliding his tongue into my parted, panting mouth, fucking me there with

his kiss at the same pace of the drag and press and rock of our cocks.

“Stavros and I can share you too. You can pin me down and fuck me with that perfect pretty cock of yours while Stavros fills you up,” Devya said.

Her words were a spell. For the first time in my life I didn't give a fuck whether God did or didn't approve of my sexuality, I just wanted to be with these two people, touching them, being touched by them. Stavros held my face in one hand, my balls in the other, our chests pressing together with every labored, moaning breath.

“I want to fill my mouth with you. To taste you as Stavros kisses you until you can barely breathe.”

I made a sound like a wounded animal into the kiss, white lightning starting to threaten to crack and send me tumbling out of this heavy, heady place and into an inferno.

“Now that's an idea,” Stavros said, pulling away from the kiss.

“Fuck, fuck, I'm going to—”

“Hang on, Zach,” Stavros said, and then he pushed on my chest, Deyva scooting back to hold me in her arms, my aching, pounding cock suddenly beating like a drum and with no one to touch it.

And then Stavros was on his hands and knees, hovering over my twitching length, licking his lips and smiling up at me. “This good?”

Oh, fuck. I gaped at him and he started to sit up. No! I reached out, grabbing his face and pulling it back to my crotch without thinking, his warm breath skidding over my swollen cock, making it leak.

“Yes, Father,” I said, holding his gaze, grinning with him for a moment.

He licked once, and I thought I might explode. He must’ve known how close I was because he didn’t tease or hesitate, just wrapped those wide lips around me and started to suck, sliding right down and circling my base with his hands.

I shouted and bucked, tapping the back of his throat and making him grunt around me. Deyva’s lips were against my temple.

“We’ve got you. You’re so beautiful. Just let go, Zach, it’s alright.”

It was more than alright. It was blindingly bright and scorching. It was wet and dense. Stavros’ happy hum as he lapped at my length did me in, Deyva’s hands stroking my chest and comforting me as I shattered, arching in her embrace, fucking Stavros’ mouth as I came, and came, and fucking came. Like I hadn’t ever really done it before. Like I was feeling this all for the first time. Stavros sucked and I whined, trying to escape the sting and sweet heat, Deyva kissing my cheek and making a soft sound in my ear, almost like a purr.

“Do you want to taste him or do you want to watch me finish him?” Deyva asked.

“Both,” I said, not really thinking it through, just sagging into the weightless feeling that was taking over.

Stavros pulled away, giving me one last pat and a wet kiss on my hip, and then I twisted just in time to watch Deyva tackle him down to the mattress. Stavros’ head hit the wall as she swallowed him whole, his hands diving into her hair. I’d thought I lost control as I came, but Stavros was almost brutal

by comparison, scooping up Deyva's hair in his hands, grabbing onto her horns, and fucking her mouth wildly and without pause. She hummed, her eyes shining gold, and then green, lashes batting as Stavros' stomach swelled and then trembled.

“Oh, fuck, babe, Zach! Fuck!”

I pushed myself around on wobbly arms and took Stavros' mouth in a kiss as Deyva finished him, swallowing his shocked bellow against my tongue, tasting myself there. One of Deyva's hands slid up his chest and covered mine over his heart, the pair of us sharing the pounding rhythm under our fingertips as Stavros came and then sank into soft shudders.

Deyva sat up, squeezing my hand and I turned her to her next, ready and waiting. Her mouth met mine, hungrier than before, and her tongue was coated in Stavros, bitter and salt and musk. We licked each other, moaned and chased every bite and suck and stroke. Stavros pulled Deyva up his chest, and the three of us were one complicated circle of legs and arms and lips until I lost track of whose mouth was on my neck, whose hand was in my hair, whose skin I was stroking.

If this was sin, it was divine.

OceanofPDF.com



Feasts of Flesh and Touch

OceanofPDF.com

“*H*oly Mother of Beelzebub,” I hissed, squeezing my eyes shut as I pulled on the flight feather on my right wing. Fire burned up my back from my twisted position, and agony ran through the muscles of my wing.

“You’re going to do serious fucking damage like that.”

I gritted my teeth and glared over my shoulder, raising one weak and wobbling wing to see the succubus standing in the doorway of the locker room.

I was naked, taking her advice and trying another soak in Bethel’s limited supply of hot water, and her eyes made a cursory pass over my form. There was no hunger in her gaze and I couldn’t decide whether or not I should be offended. I knew I was an especially well formed angel, and I should’ve been bait to a hungry succubus.

With a second glance at her, I realized she wasn’t hungry at all.

“Are you here to watch me torture myself, or did you come to rub it in?” I asked.

She was practically glowing, all juiced up and happy, flush with a good feeding. I didn’t know how I knew, only that there

was a distinct shine to her that spelled one thing out clearly to me.

“I didn’t mean to hurt Zach, and I certainly didn’t mean to chase him into your arms,” I snapped.

Deyva arched an eyebrow and crossed her arms over that exquisitely ample chest of hers. I was naked. Could I convince her to get naked too so I could settle her onto my cock and suckle on those pretty tits of hers?

If Zach had known the way I think, he never would’ve made the mistake of trusting me.

“Do you want to be a petty bitch, or do you want me to help out with those fucked feathers of yours?” she asked.

“It really isn’t fair of you to make me choose,” I moaned. When she didn’t relent, I sighed and turned my back to her, letting my arms fall to my sides. “Help, please.”

“Turn the water off, come sit on one of the benches.”

I shivered as I left the warm stall, surprised to find that the succubus had set out a towel for me to sit on. “Is this the part where you tell me what hole I’ll end up in if I go after one of those men again?” I asked.

I startled at the first gentle brush of Deyva’s fingertips over my feathers. She was brushing the water away with a careful touch, gently smoothing semiplumes over flight feathers, finding all the kinks and tears still remaining. She lifted up a jar of anointing oil and smoothed it over her hands before carefully massaging the spines of slightly nicked and kinked feathers.

“I don’t need to, the guys can speak up for themselves. You know why I was angry, right?” she asked.

“Because they automatically trusted me, no questions asked, while they were still giving you the cold shoulder? Ow!” I flinched away, hissing as Deyva plucked a feather right out of its socket.

She passed it to me and I understood why; it was missing some of its plume and had a deep, unhealed gouge up its spine. It was never going to repair, but growing the new feather was going to be a bitch. She soothed the aching spot with her finger and I settled again, swallowing my moan and letting my eyes fall shut.

“Yes, and?” she said, surprising me.

I sat in sullen silence for a minute, waiting for her to strike again, before finally giving in to my own impatience. “And I abused that trust. *Mother Mary on the cross!*”

Deyva tossed another feather to the floor. Was this care or punishment?

“I’m not sure I *need* to fly again,” I whined, rustling my wings out of her reach, forcing her to lean away or get swat at.

She slapped my back underneath the right one, almost playful. “Get over it, you overgrown baby bird. Man, Heaven really wasn’t preparing you for war, were they?”

Which only made me think of what I’d gone through in Hell. What *she* must’ve gone through. I spread my wings down to either side again, feeling the sting of my bruised tail feathers brushing against her legs.

“And yes, that is why I was so angry with you. You abused Zach’s trust, his *faith*,” she said softly.

“And now you’ve restored it in you,” I tossed back.

“No. Zach’s faith should be in himself, and in God, if that’s what makes him happy.”

I fell into silence, biting on my own lip and grunting as she pulled two more feathers out by the root in quick succession.

“There, the rest just need a couple grafts and a good cleaning. You know these have to be tended now. You can’t just run in and out of battle and not take care of them,” she murmured.

“In Heaven—”

“You aren’t in Heaven now, Az. This is what’s left of the real world, and it’s the best you’re going to get. You said you fell because you wanted Heaven to help these humans? Well you’re here now. You’re their best chance of survival. Quit fucking around and show-boating and actually do some good. Learn to live with them, respect them, protect them.”

It was a hard and unsympathetic speech and I suspected it was meant, at least in part, for herself too.

“Do you...do you remember what it was like before you fell?” I asked, trying to twist to look at her. But she had a good grip on my sore wing and I gave up at the first twinge.

Deyva was quiet. Her breath was making the downy feathers up at my joint flutter. I wanted to raise my wings and have her slide in underneath, wrap herself against my back, stroke my feathers over her shoulders and hold her to me. I missed contact with another body, cuddling even.

“A little,” she whispered, fingers pinching and smoothing a broken shaft.

I blinked at the tile wall and smiled slowly. “Do you remember what it was like between angels and your kind? The feasts of flesh and touch? Don’t you miss it?”

I expected her to tell me to shut up, or for her to jump up from the bench and leap onto my lap to swallow down another mouthful of my energy in a rough kiss, like she had in the battle. What I didn't expect was the bright giggle at my back.

"Jesus, Az, are you *that* horny?" she laughed.

I frowned and huffed. "No! No, I just...miss, you know, the touch. Angels are—"

"Very affectionate little sex fiends, I remember," Deyva said fondly, and then she took mercy on me, reaching underneath my wing to stroke my back as she worked. "And yes, I did miss that. For millennia."

I waited, hearing the unspoken 'but' at the end of that statement. I glanced over my shoulder and around my wing, blinking at her. She was busy examining my feathers and her eyes were an almost cat-like golden-green. She was sated. On only two human men? Even if things had gone well with Zach, I probably still would've wanted more. I hadn't thought of myself as a sex-fiend like Deyva said, only that Heaven was a place full of love in all its forms, and that usually included a fair share of physical appreciation for one another.

"Who knows," Deyva murmured, pinching another flight feather shaft, her fingers coated in the fragrant oil. "Maybe I don't remember it that well, so it's easier to live without. Maybe I was working the rounds in Hell too long. But things with Stav and Zach are...a little more precious. It's not about what I was created for, it's about who they are, and who I am to them. It makes me think about who I am to myself too. In Heaven, it was always us as we were a reflection of God."

"Your time with them is selfish," I said, not meaning to be unkind.

“Personal,” Deyva corrected with a soft smile.

“You’re not feeding to your fill.”

“Eh. No. But I am feeding enough, and I’d rather take what they’re willing to offer than snatch a meal from any angel in Hell. *Or*, any angel who is missing his family and looking for a pleasant distraction from loneliness.”

“So you’re saying I should just be lonely?” I whined, mostly teasing.

“I’m saying, if you want your dick sucked by anyone in this town, you have to fucking earn it, Az. And to quit hitting on me now that you’ve decided I’m not some Hell-crusted bottom feeder. My *boyfriends* are already mad at you, and they’ll try and kick your ass if they hear about it, and then I’ll have to finish kicking your ass on their behalf.”

I groaned and rolled my eyes. “*Boyfriends?* I knew you came to gloat. How was it? Was Zachariah especially decadent? His ass is very plush.”

“I will bite your dick off, Az,” Deyva said sweetly, sliding off the bench. “Now, wrap that towel around your waist.”

I did so.

“Good, stand up. Hold your arms out at your sides.”

I stiffened, lifting my arms slowly at my sides, watching Deyva approach me warily. “Did you mean you’re going to bite my dick off *now*? Can’t you just lick it for a minute or two fir—”

My words stopped abruptly as Deyva pressed herself to my front, wrapping her arms around my waist and resting her cheek against my bare chest.

“And before you ask, this is all you get,” Deyva said.

I stood there, frozen for a moment, before sinking into the hug, squeezing my arms around her too, nestling my face down between her warm horns. It was awkward and comfortable at the same time. It wasn't grinding against Zach in a shabby little bedroom, and it wasn't a rage-fueled kiss on a battlefield, and it certainly wasn't getting my brain sucked out through my dick by a hungry succubus.

But it was nice enough. For a hug.

"OH."

Zach stiffened as he turned and found me behind him. It was dark, and the air was thick and cold and smelled of ash.

"Your patrol partner...Davis, I think, he's ill. I offered to take his place," I said.

Zach frowned at me, brow furrowing, and glanced around as if he was waiting for someone else to appear and relieve him of this duty. Of me.

"Kais was in prayer with a few families and Stavros—"

"Alright, fine," Zach snapped. "There's nothing to see anyway, the smog is too thick. Something could be ten yards past the gate and we wouldn't know."

"I'd probably hear it or smell it. Angels have especially strong senses," I said. So strong, I could hear the faint growl he tried to stifle as he turned away and started marching along the edge of the gate. "Zach—"

"Hey, Az? How about we don't?" he tossed over his shoulder.

“I understand that you’re angry,” I started, jogging to catch up with his quick pace.

“Oh, cool, you understand.”

Ugh. Humans were so in love with their sarcasm, weren’t they? As if they’d invented it.

“I betrayed your trust.”

“Yeah. You did. And you fucked off during an attack, one where you told us we could depend on you. And you shit-talked Deyva when you were here to *drag her back to Hell*. And you said all this stuff about—about how *great* I was, and how I shone with God’s light, and that must’ve been *bullshit*, right? Because He’s...He’s not watching us? He’s not waiting for us to win, is He? So that means—”

Fuck. I should’ve let Deyva bite my dick off after all.

“Zach, I—Okay, I had a falling out with the Almighty, it’s true, but that doesn’t mean you don’t shine with His light,” I said, grabbing Zach’s arm, only for him to rip it away from me again. Fair enough.

He glared at me, his eyes eerily reflecting the smog beyond me over the gate, distorted in the two different shades of his irises. “Don’t suck up to me, you’re not going to fool me like that again.”

I sighed and rolled my shoulders. Deyva’s attention to my wing earlier in the morning, or maybe her gift of the hug, had already done a world of good for me.

“You *are* special,” I continued. “To this town. To your friends, to—to Deyva. And to me.”

Zach scoffed, and shook his head. “Honestly, I think...I’m really pissed at you because of how easy it was for me to

believe you. I was getting a savior complex and I...well, I was wrong about a lot of stuff.”

“Well, I was being a pompous dickhead. But I wasn’t just encouraging you because I wanted to deceive you. I do believe in you,” I said gently.

Zach seemed to ignore me, his gaze alert and carefully checking every gate post, scanning through the town and then back into the smog.

“I was wrong about the succubus too,” I said.

“Yeah, you were,” Zach said quickly, and at last I got a glimpse of his smile. It was due to her, not me, but it lit up his expression so beautifully that I really didn’t care. “Is it...it’s true? All that stuff about her being created before Adam and Eve?”

I opened my mouth, about to crack the Adam and Eve myth wide open, and then shut it again. Zach probably wasn’t ready for that blow.

“Yes.”

“And God really cast her out because...”

“Well, God’s children are notoriously willful. When Deyva’s kind and the angels began to form unions that revolved around each other rather than the Holy family, yes, those unions were forcibly fractured.”

“And Deyva was one of them? So there’s an angel out there missing her?”

I blinked at Zach and then realized he was being sincere. He genuinely thought Heaven was a small infrastructure and I would’ve known his succubus.

“That’s her story to tell, I guess,” I said, evasively, watching him frown. “For the record though, many angels fell with their lovers, or not long after. More likely she went with her brethren in support.”

He relaxed then and my lips twitched. Would he be jealous? Was he already so possessive of her?

You could’ve had that if you hadn’t been such a fucking tool, I reminded myself helpfully.

“Does that look weak to you?” Zach asked, pausing and frowning at a spot in the gate.

I went and jiggled the post, shrugging.

“That’s not good. A good storm could take that out, and I still think this smoke is probably meant to be hiding something from us,” he said, crouching down. “We might need to go get some cement to reinforce—”

“Here, let me,” I said, wrapping my hands around the top of the crucifix post, closing my eyes and conjuring up the best of my Holy light. I was lucky to still have it, even if I hadn’t been in Hell very long, and it made me wonder about the way I’d been cast out.

Zach’s arms were crossed as I finished giving the post deeper roots in the ground, strengthening it at its joints and adding a little extra boost to the prayers and holy water cast over its structure.

“Does it wear you out to do that?” he asked, staring at the post consideringly, rather than at me.

“I’m not sure. Not yet,” I said.

Zach brightened, and finally he met my eyes. There was a hard glint in his gaze that left me a little hungry for that sweet

mouth of his. He'd been so tender and malleable beneath me during my one opportunity, but I wondered what fun it might be to have him glaring at me like that while we were wrestling, preferably naked.

“How do you feel about a hate fuck?” I asked, at the exact same moment he said, “Looks like you just found yourself a new job around town.”

There was a beat of silence, Zach's eyes growing wide, cheeks suddenly turning pink.

“What?!”

I jumped and moved over to the next post. “Yes, definitely. Reinforce the gate, I can absolutely do that, of course.”

Zach choked behind me, but I thought I got something almost like a laugh out of him.

OceanofPDF.com



Well-Fucked & Well-Fed

OceanofPDF.com

“*Y*ou don’t have to come,” Zach said, head turning back and forth between Deyva and I.

“I know I don’t have to, but you guys are going, and the smoke hasn’t cleared up at all, so you can’t tell me you know what to expect outside the gate,” Deyva answered back, shrugging her shoulders stiffly, her hands clasped tight around her arms.

Thirty minutes ago she’d been languid on the bed, after happily watching Zach and I kiss and fondle each other for over an hour before breakfast.

“I don’t know why you keep looking at each other like that, I’m the one that took that general down. You know I can handle it,” Deyva snapped.

“It’s just...at the time we didn’t know...” I stalled, looking to Zach for help next, but he was staring anxiously back at me.

Kais cleared his throat at the table, a spoonful of oatmeal raised to his mouth as he watched the three of us in our negotiation. “We didn’t know you had a heavy-hitting demon general trying to drag you back to Hell. One willing to send an angel back out of the depths to get the job done,” Kais said. “Now that we do know, well...”

“We’re just concerned for you,” I said cautiously, not sure what to expect from her in retaliation.

Zach looked like he was bracing himself for a fight too, which is why we were both surprised when Deyva relaxed and brightened.

“Wait, you guys are trying to keep me safe?”

“Of *course* we are,” Zach said, with all the devotion of a protective lover, his eyes wide. Deyva’s smile went soft, and then so did his, and they stepped closer together. Kais’ eyes widened as Zach’s head ducked to hers, their lips *almost* kissing. “This isn’t just outside the gate, we’re gonna have to drive about five miles out of town.”

“But it’s so obviously a trap,” Deyva said, grimacing.

“Yeah, but babe, what if it’s a trap set for *you*?” I asked.

She wrinkled her nose and pursed her lips. “Then all Kimaris has to do is grab one of the three of you and I’m gonna have to make a trip down to Hell to cut his balls off and jam them up his nostrils with hot pokers anyway.”

I blinked at the imagery, Zach looked inordinately flattered, and Kais sat stiffly, staring at an oblivious Deyva. She’d included him in her declaration, hadn’t she? Ha. He was so fucked and he wasn’t even getting to enjoy it yet.

“Well, uh, I’ll be here. So that’s one less priest for you to worry about,” Kais said, focusing on his oatmeal.

“We could take Az with us,” Deyva said.

“No,” Kais, Zach, and I all said at once.

Deyva’s eyebrows bounced. “Oh, wow. We all really swapped places on that angel, didn’t we?”

“He was trying to kidnap you or something!” I said, trying not to shout.

“Yeah, I mean, I think he feels bad about it now,” Deyva said with a shrug. “And he could be handy.”

“That may be, but it’s way too convenient for his old plan if he goes out that gate with you,” Kais said, shaking his head. “Az can earn our trust, but he hasn’t yet. If he’s here, he can help me protect the town. We know the windmill breaking down again is probably a trap, but we don’t know what the actual plan is. What if they want Stav, Zach, and I to leave you here unguarded?”

Zach’s arm slid around Deyva’s shoulder and he tugged her into his side, tucking his chin over the top of her head. “I’m still not convinced you should leave the gate.”

Deyva’s smile was sweeter than it was smug, but it was a close call as she twined her arms around his waist. “Yeah, well, I’m not sure you should either, but you’re definitely not going out without me, okay?”

“Make it a quick trip,” Kais said to me. “If there’s something wrong that can’t be fixed in under, say, thirty minutes? Just come back and we’ll find a solution here first. And we need to give Deyva a weapon.”

Deyva scoffed and rolled her eyes, her cheek pressed to Zach’s chest. “Oh yeah, cause, like, I nearly broke a nail last time.”

I grinned and waggled my eyebrows at Zach. “What do you say we give her John?”

“DOES she have to keep fondling the sword like that?” Will asked, glancing in the rearview mirror to where Deyva was petting the authentic crusader’s sword I’d stolen from the archdiocese.

“Sorry, Will,” Deyva said, looking up from the thin, tapered blade. “It’s just so pretty.”

“Maybe sheath it while we’re in the car,” Zach said in her ear, smiling at her like she’d just finished sucking him off.

I would’ve been a little jealous—Deyva hadn’t even really touched Zach much, and *I* should’ve been the one getting that dopey look—but she did look really cute and starry-eyed with the ancient blade in her lap. And Zach never failed to express his appreciation for any second we spent together.

She sighed and slid it into the replica sheath, her hand going down to rest against Zach’s on the seat. It wasn’t holding hands, Zach was probably going to need some time before he was comfortable enough to be so open in his affection with either Deyva or I, but I caught their fingers brushing together in a way that made my chest ache.

“Ah, here’s the turn,” Will said, steering the truck onto the utility road that led to the windmill farm we’d been using as one of our main sources of energy in Bethel. “It’s one at the back western end.”

The truck bumped along the dirt road, great monolithic windmills glowing like dark shadows on either side of the vehicle as we passed them.

“Open a window?” Deyva asked me.

Will lowered the window, all four of us grimacing at the sulphuric smell of the air. Will twitched as Deyva leaned to his left, her ear pitched to the window.

“Can you hear anything?” I asked.

She shook her head. “I don’t think so, and hellions aren’t great with subtlety.”

“Zach, you’ll help Will out on the windmill, and Deyva and I will keep an eye out on our surroundings, good?”

“Good.”

Will pulled up to the concrete base of the windmill, his door facing the control panel at the base. The farm near Bethel was the vertical axis style, lucky for us, which meant as long as there was air-flow, we were gaining a little power from all the mills, regardless of what direction it was coming.

“Is there any chance it’s something in the wiring on the way to town?” I asked.

Will shook his head, pulling an air-filtration mask up to cover his nose and mouth. “If it were, it wouldn’t be just the one mill down. It should be an easy fix, maybe just a patch in the computer. Kit?”

I grabbed his kit from the floor, passing it to him and then looked back to Zach, nodding. The smoke was dense enough that unless one of us heard something first, an enemy could sneak up almost directly on top of us before we’d know they were there.

Our doors opened in unison and Deyva smiled as I stepped out, reaching to help her down from the back of the massive truck.

“We’ll stay close, right?” she asked, eyeing the smog around me.

“Yeah, just enough of a perimeter to give them a little extra warning. Don’t worry. John and I have your back,” I said,

grinning as Deyva gleefully pulled the sword back out of its sheath she had hanging over her shoulder. “Shoulda known you were a girl who liked weapons.”

“Pffft, ‘girl.’ You’re cute for someone who’s less than one percent of my age,” Deyva teased back.

I glanced over the hood of the truck, checking on Zach and Will’s shadows by the windmill before pushing Deyva back against the passenger side door, pressing her to its surface, and ducking my head for a quick, deep kiss.

“Come on, we’ll stay in sight of either the truck or the windmill so we don’t get lost in the smog,” I said, taking her hand, not caring if Will saw.

Bethel was going to have to get used to Deyva because I was fucking set on keeping her around. She’d given me the best and weirdest weeks of my life, not to mention being a catalyst for Zach and I finally addressing the desire-shaped elephant in our friendship. She was good for me, good for *us*. She’d be good for Bethel too.

Deyva’s hand was tight around mine, and she made me stand on the inside of the perimeter, like it was *her* job to protect *me*, instead of the other way around. Will was explaining the tech to Zach, who responded with a polite amount of interest, and Deyva’s eyes were narrowed on the smog around us, her steps quiet even in the torn up old sneakers we’d found for her.

“So, tell me, are two guys enough for you? Like in terms of feeding?” I asked, watching her eyes blink rapidly.

“Uh...what? I mean, I’m good, Stav,” she said, glancing at me out of the corner of her eyes.

“Okay, you’re good. But are you, you know, as strong and healthy as you could be?”

“Why are you asking this?”

“Because this morning when you said you’d go back to Hell to save us, you included Kais in the equation,” I said, smirking as Deyva stiffened, her step scuffing against gravel.

“I...Kais is...um.” She frowned and paused in place, looking at me, at the blurry shape of the windmill, at the obscured world around us. “I forgot to tell you that I kissed him.”

Oh. “Oh!”

“Shit. Stavros, I’m sorry—”

“No, no, babe. It’s okay, honestly. I’m not mad, I’m just surprised.”

“I should’ve said something.”

I grinned at her. “I mean I’m surprised that all you two did was kiss.”

Deyva gaped at me for a moment and then jumped up, smacking my lips with a hard and hungry kiss before drawing back again. “Are you fucking serious? Aren’t you humans all into possessiveness and jealousy?”

“I mean you have two priest boyfriends now, why not go for the hat-trick?” I teased. She snorted and I sobered. “Was this before or after Zach?”

“Before. Shortly before.”

I nodded. “Okay, look, I’m good with whatever makes you happy, you know? But we’ll have to talk to him since you made us an official thing.”

Deyva squirmed happily and then whipped around, glaring into the smog.

“You hear something?”

“No, but it seemed like a good time to sneak up on us, you’re distracting me. Keep walking,” Deyva said, bumping her hip against mine and raising John in front of her. “Anyway, yes, we can talk to Zach, although I feel like I should mention that Kais was all ‘grump grump, I’m a lone wolf who don’t need no lovin, grouch’ about it. He pushed me away.”

“Huh. And I thought Zach was the repressed one,” I said, smiling as I thought of the way Zach had basically climbed on top of me and humped me like a cuddly little bunny rabbit this morning. He made us both a mess, but he’d been so happy about it and Deyva had looked totally blissed out by the contact high.

“Well-fucked is a good look for you, Stav,” Deyva said, grinning.

“Well-fed is a good one on you,” I tossed back. She hummed and smiled agreeably. “Kais will break.”

“Maybe, maybe not,” she said, shrugging. “I don’t want you or Zach to think about it in terms of how I’m feeding though. The two of you are enough for me, in all physical and emotional senses.”

There was room for more though, I thought. Deyva deserved *more* after everything she’d been through. Maybe she didn’t realize how much she’d changed in such a short amount of time, but she’d gone from guarded and sarcastic, nipping playfully at us with barbed digs about our piety, to... Well, to a fluffy cinnamon roll of a woman, one who made sex with me about caring for one another, and who was working with Zach

on his own self-acceptance. Who amplified love between a couple of humans who hadn't accepted her.

She could work her magic on Kais and he might even learn to trust himself again.

Deyva's hand squeezed around mine suddenly, so tight it actually pinched. We were halfway around the windmill when her head suddenly snapped to one side, looking out into the smog.

"Dey, do you hear—"

"Shh." She raised a hand to silence me, gaze locked on something indiscernible out in our hazy surroundings.

I listened hard, hands tense on my water gun, but couldn't make out anything beyond the whooshing sounds of the wind turbines cutting through the toxic air. Deyva remained eerily still, like a statue, her hand still hovering in the air from shushing me.

My gaze shifted toward Zach. He'd already seen us pause and listened intently, alert and poised with his machete Joan, for anything moving. His jaw clenched, mismatched eyes hard and determined on Deyva and me. I sent a nod back his way, hoping to reassure him we were fine and he should focus on protecting Will.

"Something's out there," Deyva whispered with a slow lowering of her hand. "But it's keeping its distance."

I opened my mouth to ask what she'd heard, when a bone-chilling scream rattled through all my senses. My feet carried me in a sprint toward the base of the turbine, muscle memory powering me before my brain made sense of the fact. I'd heard that scream before. Too many times. It was the sound of someone being dragged off by a hellion.

Will's repair kit was scattered all over the base of the windmill. Just beyond his tools, their forms quickly fading in the low visibility, two men fought for their lives.

"Zach!" I rushed in, my fear of losing him taking on new heights, new meanings since the start of our budding relationship.

"Get Will!" he shouted back, cutting through one of the hellions in a wide arc, continuing the movement in a graceful spin to slice through the ones coming for his back.

I ran blindly into the sulphuric haze, following the sound of Will's cries and his body dragging along the ground. The poor man was able to grab hold of a craggy rock sticking out of the ground, buying me a few seconds of time to catch up before the creature cruelly yanked him loose.

These hellions were unlike any I'd ever seen before, and I'd seen enough to last lifetimes. Their proportions were more human-like than most, and they seemed to be wearing odd clothes and masks. The one pulling Will away wore large trash bags over its torso and legs, wrinkled black plastic covered in dust and ash. A cheap clown Halloween mask covered its face.

I aimed my gun and sprayed holy water the moment I had enough visibility. The creature paused and stared back at me, water running over its mask and trash bag-clad body. Then it let out a rattling sound, a hellish taunting laugh that made my skin crawl, before continuing on its way.

"No, no please!" Will's hands scrambled for purchase on the ground as he continued to be dragged, blood darkening his fingers. "Save me, Father, *please!*"

My gun clattered to the ground, hands reaching for the knives sheathed on my sides of my legs. He would *not* be

taken because I failed him, because these monsters figured out how to shield themselves from holy water. Arms and legs pumping to catch up, the demon would be in stabbing range in just a few more feet. I raised one arm, aiming for the back of the neck, while keeping the other poised at my ribs to stab through the trunk of the body.

In less time than it took to blink, something hit the demon from the side with the force of a freight train. I nearly tumbled over my own feet as I stopped abruptly, looking around desperately for where the demon flew off to while I knelt to help Will.

“I got you, buddy. You’re okay.” I hovered over him, knives still out in case anything else decided to drag him away.

That dry rattling sound returned, making my hairs stand on end. I whipped around, knife blade singing through the air, just in time to see a trash-bag clad body drop from the sky with a heavy thud not ten feet away. And not a moment later, Deyva dropped from the clouds, her sneakered feet landing on the demon’s chest with a sickening crunch.

“You don’t touch my humans,” she snarled, pulling John from his sheath.

The demon let out another rattle of protest before she swung the blade down, separating its masked head from its body like a knife through butter. It crumbled to dust underneath her and I couldn’t have been more proud, but we couldn’t afford to celebrate yet.

“Dey, look out!” I screamed the moment I saw more figures moving in through the smog.

“You too, behind you!” she shrieked.

I spun, stabbing my blade through a grey-skinned hand that had been reaching for Will. It poofed into a cloud of ash-like dust that made my eyes sting and water. Turning back to Deyva, I saw that Zach had beaten me in becoming her hero.

Our girl kicked through the chest of another hellion, while Zach stabbed mercilessly through another that had tried to sneak up on her from behind. Once that one crumbled, and Deyva successfully decapitated another with John, the others began pulling back into the fog.

“What are you scared of, fuckers?” Zach taunted the retreating silhouettes. “You hate followers of God so much, come get us!”

“Let them go.” Deyva placed a hand on his shoulder, the tension visibly draining out of him from the contact.

“It’s weird for them to retreat though, right?” He looked over at me, brow furrowed and chest lifting slightly with exerted breaths. “Have you ever seen that before, Stav?”

“No,” I admitted, sheathing my knives. “But Deyva’s right. No point in going after them.” I lowered my knees to the ground, next to Will who was still face down and shaken. “Hey man, they’re gone. We’re all okay. I’m gonna help sit you up, okay?” Deyva and Zach came closer, their expressions concerned as I pulled Will up by his shoulders. “That’s it, get your knees under you. You’re okay.”

The man’s breaths continued to saw in and out shallowly from his chest, panicked and hyperventilating. He shook like a leaf and his eyes darted around, focused on nothing, with pupils the size of pinpricks. I felt awful for him. As an engineer, he usually didn’t jump into the fray of our fights with demons, seeing himself as more useful maintaining our utilities to keep Bethel comfortable.

Now his first real confrontation with a demon and he nearly got dragged off to that unthinkable place.

“He’s in shock,” Zach murmured, kneeling in front as he took one of Will’s bloody, ragged hands. “You were so brave, Will. Make no mistake, God is watching and He is proud.” The young priest’s Adam’s apple bobbed with a swallow. I didn’t have to be Deyva to sense his uneasiness with giving reassurances about God when his own faith was shaken.

“Careful,” I warned. “His wrists might be sprained or broken. We better get him back.”

“We can manage with one windmill down,” Zach agreed. He rose to his feet and moved to help me lift Will under his armpits.

“May I?”

Our eyes fell on Deyva, green gaze shimmering and her kissable mouth in a small pout as she looked at the injured man between us.

“What are you going to do?” Zach’s tone was curious, without a single note of accusation.

“Just make him feel a bit better.” She looked at me, chewing her lip. “Do you think he would mind?”

Will barely seemed aware of the fact that she was standing in front of him, much less asking to use her abilities on him. The poor guy would continue to suffer long after his physical injuries healed, I had no doubt of that. If she could ease that suffering a little, even temporarily, how could I deny it?

I nodded at her. “Go ahead, babe.”

Deyva placed a delicate hand on his arm, closed her eyes on a deep inhale, then pushed a concentrated dose of emotions

toward him as she breathed out. Whether she did it on purpose, or just because I was holding him up, I got a hit with the bundle of emotions she directed at Will.

I felt the deep ache of relief, of immense gratitude that we lost no one in this scuffle, and all four of us were here to see another day. I realized it had been what I was feeling already, just in a gathered, concentrated form thanks to my girlfriend's powers. She used it to take precedence in Will's mind, outshining his terror at nearly being taken away.

Despite my weariness, I smiled gratefully at her, the soupy feeling of falling in love filling me to brim. I couldn't wait to wash the stink of the atmosphere off me and sandwich my little succubus in bed between me and Zach.

Will stopped trembling so hard in my arms. His eyelids blinked slowly, pupils returning to normal size. "I...I think I'm good, Fathers. Thank you." He got his feet under him, standing on his own as Zach and I stepped away. When he looked at Deyva, the urge to protect her reset the tension in my body. If he blamed her for the hellions or twisted her ability to help into something else—

He hugged her.

Deyva's shocked face over his shoulder mirrored mine and Zach's as Will squeezed his arms even tighter around her.

"Thank you," he muttered. "You saved me and I...I feel better. I was wrong. We were all wrong. The Fathers were right. I'm sorry."

She patted his back with light taps. "It's okay, Will. You're welcome."

Zach reached over and slapped Will's shoulder. "It's been a long day, already. Let's get out of here."

Will reluctantly let go of Deyva, a blush rising in his cheeks. “Actually, I...I was almost done with the fix. I think I can keep it together long enough to get it done.”

“Will, no.” I shook my head. “No one will be upset about wonky electricity. You almost got taken, just chill with your family for a few days. We’ll revisit it later.”

He turned to me, the definition of calm and determined. “Let me do my job, Father. There’s no reason why I can’t.”

My gaze shifted to Zach, who just shrugged. Deyva looked adorably smug and pleased with herself. It made me all the more eager to see the facial expressions she’d make when I sank into her tonight.

“Fine,” I sighed. “If you insist.”

KAIS BARELY WAITED until the car was back inside the gate before going off on us. Deyva’s sigh of relief was short-lived as he marched toward the vehicle.

“What hell took so fucking long?” Naturally, it was my ear he chose to yell into. “A half-hour, Stavros. Thirty fucking minutes! Did you not agree to come straight back here—”

“I know, man. Back the hell up.” I forcefully pushed on his shoulder, knowing he’d be content to stay in my face unless I put space between us. “We ran into some hellions, but we handled it.”

“Handled it?! Will’s covered in blood! He looks like he got dragged behind a pickup truck!”

“Oh good, you’re finally back.” I looked over to see Azariah, his injured wing looking healthier, if a bit bald,

walking along the crucifix gate with his hand casually dragging over the holy fixtures. “Kais has been pacing around with his ass clenched so hard that he’s petrified the stick shoved up there.”

“No shit, I was *this* close to hauling ass out there and seeing what the hell was the holdup.” Kais ignored the angel. “And clearly, I fucking should have!”

“Like I said, we handled it. Or Deyva did, rather.”

“What a surprise, the immortal with special powers saves the day,” Azariah mused.

“And what did *you* do while we were gone?” The question came from Zach, he and Deyva were both helping ease Will out of the car.

“I’ve been repairing the weak spots in the fence.” The angel tapped a sideways crucifix affectionately. “As we decided, it’s my new job here.”

Zach scoffed, saying nothing in response as he and Deyva led Will up to the infirmary. He did not hesitate however, in glancing at the angel over his shoulder one more time. Azariah caught it and looked away, chuckling to himself as he turned back to the fence.

That’s...interesting. I watched the interaction with a narrow-eyed gaze. Had those two been alone in close proximity again? Zach didn’t look especially perturbed if that was the case. And he didn’t say anything to me.

I shrugged it off, figuring he would let me or Deyva know if the angel bothered him again. She *did* say she trusted the angel more now, which could only be a good thing.

Kais was still huffing and puffing, his frustration palpable. I knew he was moments away from running laps around the

town or scrubbing our whole house with a toothbrush.

“Look, sorry we didn’t come back right away,” I said. “We’re back, we’re in one piece, you don’t have to arm yourself to the teeth this time. Can you just relax for once?”

“Relax? *Relax?*” He stared at me incredulously. “Stavros, we’re in the fucking apocalypse and you want me to relax? You’re damn lucky you had it *handled*, but what about next time? What if there’s something out there that’s stronger even than her?”

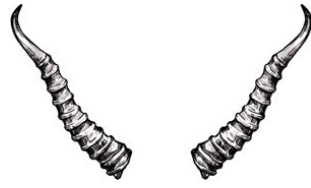
It would be important to mention that the hellions wore protective coverings against our holy water, but now didn’t seem like the right time. Kais was on edge, and he needed to walk away from it.

“What are you really worried about, man?” I kept my tone even, the epitome of calm. “Is this like the whole squadron thing or—”

“Fuck you, Stavros!” He spun on me, fists clenched at his sides. and for a moment I thought he might actually take a swing. “Just...fuck off.”

Kais took off before I could say another word.

OceanofPDF.com



Thoroughly Debauched

OceanofPDF.com

*K*imaris grinned at me, mouth full of long fangs at jagged angles. I gasped, fear forming a brick in my chest as he leaned in close to me. His breath was hot, rancid garbage and I couldn't get away.

“Deyva, Deyva,” he taunted, repeating my name in a sing-song way. “My minions tell me you're feasting on priests, protecting their precious human settlement.” He dragged a long claw down my cheek and my skin burned from the unwanted touch. “I'm so disappointed.”

“Leave me alone,” I hissed, trying to gather courage in my voice. “You pushed me out.”

“You ignite such passion in me, succubus,” he purred. “I did it to teach you a lesson, but playtime is over. King Belial wants his favorite toy back.”

I shuddered, bile rising in my throat. My back was pressed to a rough surface, shredded stone or metal scratching at my back as I tried to scramble away.

“Look at you, your feast of sweetness has left you weak,” Kimaris hissed, lowering himself closer to me, the heat of his flesh abrading every inch of me, my eyes dry and stinging.

“How do they taste, little succubus? I think I should like to find out.”

“No!” I cried, strength finally returning to me. I thrust my hand forward, ready to tear into Kimaris, to protect my men at any cost, to rend him down to bones and then grind that to dust and toss it in the deepest well of fire Hell had to offer.

I sat up with a gasp, my hand grasping at air, a strangled scream in my throat. My free hand rose to clutch at my chest where my heart was hammering so hard it burned.

“Deyva?”

I flinched at the sleepy murmur, my shoulder striking the wall, before the vision of Hell’s wildly shifting dark depths and Kimaris’ face, huge and vivid in front of me, finally faded in my mind.

“Deyva,” Zach soothed, his hand reaching up to pull mine down from the air.

We were in Stavros’ room, the gap in the bed between us still mussed from when Stav must’ve gotten up to patrol. Zach squeezed my hand in his, resting it on Stavros’ pillow, his eyes squinting and blinking in the dim dawn light filtering through the window.

I meant to reassure him that I was fine. I only needed a shower to wash away the itch on my skin and the char taste in my mouth.

What came out of my parted lips was a tiny whimper. I pressed my mouth shut and tried to turn away from Zach, but he was too quick.

“Hey, hey, come here,” he breathed, scooting across rumpled sheets, sitting up just enough to catch my shoulders and then drawing me gently down to the bed.

I remained stiff but Zach was patient, wrapping me up in his arms inch by inch, slowly pressing closer until he replaced the stinging aching sensation on my back from the dream with his own warm chest. I blinked, but it was Kimaris behind my eyelids and I shivered, pressing back into the rise and fall of Zach's chest.

"Better?" he asked.

"I'm okay."

"You know what I've been thinking about for...years, basically?" Zach asked, nuzzling into my hair. I shook my head and he continued. "Well, nightmares are kinda run of the mill around here. And even when I was...you know, taking celibacy really seriously, I kept thinking about how nice it would be to just come in here and curl up with Stavros after one of those nightmares. Just have somebody hold me. So if you want me to let go, I will, but for now I'm gonna hold you."

The bite of my tightly wound muscles eased and I slid one hand back and forth over Zach's strong arm wrapped around my waist. "You should've done it."

"I would've popped a boner."

I snorted. "You definitely should've done it."

Zach huffed and then grunted as I twisted in his arms, loosening his hold just long enough to let me cuddle directly into his chest, his cheek rubbing at the top of my horn. "It's better with you, I think," Zach whispered. "I'm less afraid of what I want. You make everything better, Deyva."

My eyes widened, Zach's Adam's apple bobbing just in front of me, and I leaned in, taking a deep, clean breath of him, and then giving into the urge to kiss his throat. Zach was

cuddly and sweet and protective, but he was also mostly still exploring his interest and feelings for Stavros. I didn't mind, it was incredible to be a part of them together, to soak up all the emotions and sensations they shared with one another. I hadn't realized until right now just how much Zach included me in that vibrant, wild affection of his.

Kimaris will only make this so much worse if you keep falling for all of them, I thought, but instead of letting Zach go, I reached out to clutch him closer, our hips sliding together.

It was Zach's turn to shiver now, his morning wood rubbing against me. My legs were bare, the t-shirt I'd stolen from Stavros riding up to my waist, and he was only wearing a pair of boxers, his body leaning in to nestle against me.

"Wow, that feels—you feel really good," Zach breathed, voice going rough and husky.

I grinned, sliding one knee over his hip, and then nipped at his throat, nuzzling into his groan.

"I can pull back if it's too much, or if you're not sure about..." I trailed off, sighing happily as Zach shuffled closer until I was on my back, his body cuddling provocatively on top of mine until he was fitted between my thighs.

"Sure about what? About *you*?" Zach asked, slowly letting his weight rest on top of me as I stroked his back. He shifted down a little and both our breaths hitched as the rigid outline of his erection settled against my panties.

His face hovered over mine and I blinked, startled by his beauty, absently wondering which of his eyes were my favorite. The gold one maybe, almost the same shade as mine.

"Just cause, you know, the whole succubus who spent millenia in Hell thing," I said, shrugging and then wiggling for

his benefit as he started to frown.

“You think, I still—Deyva, shit. I don’t...I mean, I care about what happened to you, but you’ve more than proved me wrong about pretty much everything I thought of you,” Zach said. “I’m so sorry I haven’t said as much.”

He started to lift off of me and there was no way I was going to give up the feeling of Zach’s body on top of mine now that I was finally getting to enjoy it for real. My hands snapped to his ass, yanking him back down against me. Zach groaned, eyes fluttering shut, body automatically working over mine, grinding his arousal against me before stuttering to a stop.

“Shit, sorry, I didn’t want to, I mean I *do* want to, but—Um.” Zach’s cheeks flushed pink, his hair flopping down and catching the first rays of sunlight. “Can I kiss you?”

I’d always been of the personal opinion that when two adults were already starting to hump each other in their underwear, it really wasn’t the time to start being polite about who was kissing who. But with Zach there was an undeniable sweetness to the question that left my insides all melty.

“Yes, please,” I said, arching up from the pillow, raising my lips in offering.

Zach bumped his forehead against mine, a little nervous laugh slipping out just as he pressed his mouth to mine, all pillow soft and dragging gently as he nudged closer into the perfect fit. I licked at his bottom lip, sliding my hands up his back to grasp his shoulder blades and pull him against me. My legs wrapped around Zach’s hips, my body arching into his, and every surge of the kiss rocked us together.

“I’ve—I’ve never kissed a woman before,” Zach breathed, pulling away just enough for me to feel his grin, his body keeping the shallow, shifting pace on top of mine.

I sucked on his bottom lip, squeezing his hips with my thighs. “Is it much different?”

“Um...this is,” Zach whispered, reaching down and grabbing my ass, rolling his hips against me and moaning. “Softer. More like sinking in.”

I bit my lip briefly, kissing my way to the corner of his jaw. I definitely was hoping Zach would be up for *sinking in*. He certainly felt like he was, his cock stiff between us, pressing perfectly to where he would fit if we just stripped and —

“This is different too,” Zach said, stroking his hands up to cup my waist and then slide beneath Stav’s t-shirt, fingertips walking up my ribs to tease at the undersides of my breasts.

I squirmed under Zach, trying to wiggle my way into his grip, to feel his touch everywhere at once.

“Can I?”

I laughed and held Zach before he could pull away, nipping at his ear, his throat. “Zach, you could honestly do anything you want to me right now and I would bite the hand off anyone who tried to stop you.”

Zach brightened, sitting up so I could see his goofy grin. “Yeah? I didn’t know if I’d be any good.”

Honey, we haven’t even started yet, I thought, but instead I settled one of my hands over his, encouraging it higher until he was rolling my breast against his palm and starting to squeeze.

“That’s good, Zach. Your touch is perfect,” I murmured, frowning as he scooted away from me.

He tugged my shirt up over my breasts and my frown vanished as he eyed my breasts, his hands taking one each and working them experimentally in his grip. His eyes widened and he lifted one hand away, grinning as he revealed a sharply pointed nipple. What an adorable dork.

“What does Stavros do?” he asked.

“Who cares? What do you want to do?” I answered.

Zach grinned, and for a moment I could almost picture him with a pair of horns of his own, an angel who’d acclimated to Hell. It made my heart sting with worry, a reminder of my dream and Kimaris’ threat.

And then Zach descended, kissing my breast with teeth and tongue, latching on to my nipple with a force that made me bow on the bed, moaning up at the ceiling. My hand over his showed him how to pinch and play with the other, and my legs around his waist held him in place as I writhed against him from below.

“Oh God, Zach!”

He pulled away and nipped at my flesh. “Don’t take the—nevermind, actually.”

I giggled and left him to his feast of flesh, pulling my shirt carefully off, trying not to jostle him as he devoured my breasts with deep kisses and long licks and the kind of suction that made my toes curl into his ass. He had less finesse than Stavros maybe, and more curiosity, but that just meant he found unexpected places to press and bite, leaving me panting and whining as his patience seemed to go on and on.

Wasn't this kid hard? Why was I getting all the torturous pleasure?

I slipped my toes under the waistband of his boxers, trying to sneakily shimmy them down his hips. I reached down between us, pressing my breast up into his mouth as I reached for his cock, a wet moan vibrating against my skin as I wrapped my fingers around him.

“Ohhhhh, fuuuuck. Fuck, I—Deyva, uhhh.” Zach’s groans were musical, his body going tense and wired as I gripped him, and it took me a moment to realize that some of that tension wasn’t just pleasure.

I softened my touch around him, pulling away slowly to be sure, watching his eyes flutter open and his body lean away.

“Sorry, too much?” I asked, studying him.

“I... Fuck, I don’t even know,” Zach gasped, falling back. I bit my lip and then eased as he gathered me up and pulled me to his chest for another snuggle. “Sorr—”

“Don’t you dare apologize,” I said, grabbing one of his nipples and twisting.

Zach’s shout was garbled with a laugh, a cute little snort escaping in the middle. “No, it’s just... I *want* to. Like, a lot. And I know it’s dumb and I’m already thoroughly... debauched—”

“Oh, dear,” I choked out through a laugh.

“But, there’s uh...it seems like a bigger deal somehow to be *inside* someone,” Zach said, eyebrows raising.

“Because it’s the societally constructed marker for losing your virginity,” I said with a shrug.

Zach blinked at me and then nodded slowly. “Yeah, I guess so.”

“You will always be in control of the pace, Zach. You don’t have to apologize or justify why or when you want to stop.” I kissed his chest and then stretched up to kiss his mouth again for good measure.

Zach beamed at me, all golden from the morning sun and flushed from making out. “You’re so *good*, Deyva. How’d you survive in Hell so long when you’re just...”

Zach trailed off as some of the warm, cozy feeling he’d been giving off withered in my chest. I didn’t want Zach to know how I’d survived. Kais was right, he was still so set on good and evil. I’d moved from one category into the other in his mind, and what Zach failed to realize was that I was capable of both, and I’d been heavily sided with evil for a *long* time. If I was good now, it had more to do with him and Stavros than my own inclinations, probably.

“Deyva,” Zach said softly.

I offered him a bright smile for reassurance, even if it felt brittle. “Oh, you’ve seen me fight. I’m scrappy.”

Zach just frowned. I kissed his chin and then his lips, before sitting up and patting at his arms as they tightened around my waist, echoing the pinch in my chest.

“I didn’t mean anything,” he started.

“Hey, I’m okay. I’m just going to go grab a shower before Az wakes up and uses all the hot water in the tank,” I said.

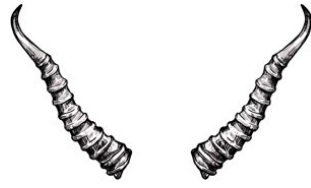
Zach’s eyes flicked back and forth over my face, his smile feeble. Cool, now I felt guilty for crashing his good mood too. “Wanna help me make holy water today?”

I frowned, thinking of the way the hellions had been armored in the fight against the holy water. I wasn't sure I wanted to risk the chance of the holy water not being strong enough because I'd helped make it.

"I'm not sure I'm the girl for that job, but I'll definitely join you," I said, grabbing another quick kiss before jumping out of the bed.

"I'll make us coffee then," Zach said softly as I hurried from the room.

He was right to stop us. I was getting too tangled up in these men, pretending that the inevitable wasn't coming. That Kimaris wouldn't find a way to get his claws in me again. And when he did, it was going to hurt so much more to lose my priests. I needed to be thinking less about how to get in Zach's pants, and more about how to keep him out of Kimaris' clutches when the time came.



Hail Mary

OceanofPDF.com

“*N*ow there’s a guy,” I lifted my chin, “who can help juice up your holy water.”

Azariah lounged on the front steps of the church, talking to an elderly couple. Next to me, Zach looked at the ground and laughed lightly to himself.

I poked Zach’s side as we made our way across the grassy lawn. “Has the angel been giving you shit? Because if he has, I will happily pluck his wings bald.”

“No, it’s fine.” Zach’s hand bumped into mine, the brush of affection not quite hand-holding, but just enough for me to taste his amusement. “It’s a good idea. We’ll add it to his job description.”

We walked up the steps just in time to catch the tail-end of the conversation between Az and the elderly couple, the man who was now frowning.

“Oh, I don’t know...”

“Now the first time can be nerve-wracking, but once you get started, you’ll wonder why you never did it before!” Azariah sounded like he was trying to make a sales pitch.

“I don’t think it’s for us.” The woman’s eyes flicked away nervously.

“Martha, I wouldn’t be suggesting a threesome to strengthen your marriage if the success rate wasn’t overwhelmingly successful.”

I couldn’t hide my snicker, while Zach coughed awkwardly. “Good morning, Azariah. Mr. and Mrs. Nelson.”

“Ah, good morning!” The angel spun to face us, feathers whooshing softly from the movement, while the elderly couple took the opportunity to shuffle away. “How is Bethel’s new opposites-attract power couple?”

“We’re fine, thank you,” Zach answered smoothly, standing taller. “Did I hear right that you’re trying to get in bed with the Nelsons?”

“Not *me!*” Azariah gasped dramatically and slapped a hand to his chest. “Lovely couple, but they aren’t my type. No, I just felt their need to rekindle some passion through their prayers and offered some suggestions.”

“A threesome?” I repeated what he said, another giggle bursting through.

“Don’t act like you wouldn’t suggest something similar, First Daughter.” For once, Azariah’s teasing wasn’t grating on me.

“Hence why you’ll never see me giving marriage advice.” I stuck my tongue out at him. “Long relationships are not my strong suit.”

Zach scoffed, his fingertips grazing along my lower back as he leaned in to nuzzle me. “You’re a pretty great girlfriend so far.” He brushed a kiss along the base of my horn, the sensation and affection in his voice making my insides flutter.

I put on a smile, meeting his eyes as I leaned away. “Just give it time.”

My tone was joking, but a sense of dread stamped out any highs from his touches, his sweetness. The realization that I might have to break up with my boyfriends sooner than I imagined was so incredibly human, I nearly laughed. I was fucking immortal—I’d seen generations of men live and die. And still, the mere thought of cutting things off with these priests just made me want to cling to them more.

Zach, oblivious to my inner turmoil, just made a dismissive sound at my self-deprecation. Az however, missed nothing, his eyebrow lifting slightly.

“I’m about to make a batch of holy water,” Zach announced, changing the subject. “Want to help?”

“With you?” the angel grinned. “I would love nothing more.”

“Keep your hands to yourself,” I said in a mock growl. “No touching.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it,” Azariah clasped a dramatic hand over his heart again. “But if you two *are* looking to spice things up with a threesome—”

“We’re good, thanks.” Zach breezed past him into the chapel, heading down the aisle to the pulpit.

Azariah laughed softly, watching him stride between the pews. “The little lamb is growing some horns of his own.”

“Confidence is a good look on him,” I agreed.

“You’re good for him, Deyva.” Azariah leaned against one of the open church doors, his wings spreading out to the sides. “I mean that with no underhanded spite at all.”

“Good, bad,” I snorted. “What is with everyone trying to fit me into one category or the other? You, of all people, should know better.”

“Oh, I do know. Good for him doesn’t necessarily mean good in general.” He smirked. “There’s just no denying the effect you have on him, that’s all.”

I shrugged off this information, stepping inside to follow Zach, but not before Azariah’s whisper reached my ear. “He would be devastated if he lost you. They all would.”

They’ll get over it, I thought, gritting my teeth. They had to. Sure, they might remember me fondly. Sex with other humans would never compare, but they would move on with their lives. The sooner I cut ties with them, the faster they would recover.

It still fucking hurt to think about, though. A type of hurt that had nothing to do with facing an eternity at the whims of Kimaris and King Belial.

My march between the pews must have looked angry to the humans scattered inside now that my mood was thoroughly soured. I tasted the unease and apprehension, but kept my gaze straight ahead.

Who the hell did Az think he was? He probably faced the same consequences as me if Kimaris ever found us both. But Hell had barely touched him, whereas it was deeply ingrained in me. Kimaris probably couldn’t get into his head like he did with me. The winged fool probably thought he was in the clear.

I never would be. Not until Kimaris got what he wanted. And if Belial got wind of me being hidden on earth, he’d punish Kimaris, who would, in turn, take it out on me. The

longer I stayed here, the worse the outcome would be for everyone involved.

I slid into an empty front pew while Az walked up to Zach at the pulpit. Buckets of water were already set up on the stage, with Zach muttering soft prayers over them as his fingers passed over rosary beads. He looked beautiful and serene, completely in his element. Moving from right to left, he paused at each bucket to say a prayer with the fingers of his opposite hand moving down the rosary. I recalled those fingers tweaking my nipples this morning in much the same way.

Azariah followed him, hovering a hand over the surface of the water after Zach moved on to the next one. His holy light was subtle, but still miraculous to the humans watching. The angel's palm and fingers glowed golden, like sunlight in late afternoon. No one had seen the quality and color of such light since before Hell's Rising. The gasps and mumbles of the onlookers were filled with reverence, their faith and awe tasting sweet on my tongue.

Of course, Azariah's presence didn't cancel me out. I also tasted the uneasiness people felt about me being here, and no doubt some of those whispers were also about the evil, horned temptress who had been getting awfully close to their priests.

"May I sit with you?"

I looked up at the human standing at the end of my pew. I was caught off-guard, focusing on the holy water ritual while blocking out everything else.

"Will." I didn't bother to hide my shock. "Are you sure?"

He smiled kindly, the scrapes on his face cleaned and his hands wrapped in fresh bandages. "If you'd rather be alone, I'll leave you be."

“No, I, uh—it’s alright with me if you want to.”

He slid along the bench to approach me, ignoring the looks of shock from the family a few pews behind us. “I have a lot to be thankful for,” he said, easing himself down next to me. “One of them being you.”

I blinked rapidly, the emotions coming from him both pleasant, yet unfamiliar. “This is...gratitude you’re feeling right now?”

“Oh yes.” He leaned forward, clasping his hands together on the back of the bench in front of us. “Immense gratitude. A whole new outlook on life, you could say.”

“He’s sitting with the demon....”

Will whipped around, his hesitation nonexistent. “This woman is no demon! She saved my life. She’s saved all of us.”

The woman who’d whispered clutched at her throat, her eyes widening in shock. I laughed, I couldn’t help it. The giddiness of being accepted by this one human I’d never done anything remotely sexual with flooded me. It was quickly chased by the dread that sank into me since Zach and I got up this morning. Now it wasn’t just the priests getting attached to me, but their flock.

Jesus, Joseph, and Mary. I’m sorry to say your names in vain, but I am so fucked.

Up on the pulpit, Zach and Azariah seemed to have completed the holy water ritual. Zach now wore the rosary around his neck, his hands clasped calmly in front of him as he spoke with some parishioners. Az had a small gathering of admirers as well, like usual. I wondered if he was preaching to them too about the miracles of threesomes.

“Father, will you please pray with me?”

My gaze narrowed on a young woman, about Zach's age, who had approached him. He met my eyes briefly over her head, a sheepish look crossing his face before he smiled at her.

"Yes, of course, Caitlin."

Caitlin turned, her pretty, twenty-something face almost smug as she slid into a pew with Zach right next to her. I snapped my eyes away, only to find fucking Az staring at me with a knowing grin.

"Jealous," he mouthed without speaking.

"Chicken wings," I mouthed back.

His amusement at my expense filled the air of the chapel, more overpowering than any human flavor.

"I'm going to take a walk," I muttered, rising from my seat.

"Have a good day, Deyva," Will muttered, his forehead still resting on his clasped hands. "Don't let 'em get to you, sweetheart."

I froze for a moment, like his words had physically restrained me. Who exactly was I supposed to not let get to me? My priests? Human women who took my priests' attention? Kimaris?

I had no destination in mind as I walked along the perimeter of the chapel. Some cartwheels in the gym could help me blow off some steam. Or...

The confessional, with its dark wooden paneling stuck out like a sore thumb against the cream-colored walls. It was tucked off to the side of the pulpit for the privacy of those seeking to confess. I normally didn't like small, dark spaces, but my feet led me up to the slightly warped wooden door.

It felt like nothing like the dark, small cells I'd spent centuries in. If I reached, I could taste emotions still hanging in the wood itself. The cathartic release of baring your soul to someone you trusted, the vulnerability of such an act, and the safety and support this little box offered to so many people.

I opened the door and climbed inside, the lingering emotions pulling a sigh from my chest as I sat on the small bench. Closing the door behind me, I got a stark reminder of Stavros. His flavors so dark, heady and deep, yet so comforting.

Time escaped me while I sat in there. Maybe I even dozed off. Zach's form suddenly appeared through the slats, his expression puzzled as he looked around. I bit my lip, a sudden playfulness driving me as I reached for the door, trying not to make a sound.

“Boo!”

“Fuck—Deyva!” His hand slapped to his chest, face bewildered. “What are you doing in there?”

“Sitting, thinking.” I shrugged. “Waiting to scare you.”

His mismatched eyes brightened as he pulled the confessional door open and stuck his head inside. Did I detect a hint of mischief in those eyes?

“Maybe you're not so good after all,” he teased, kissable mouth pulling into a grin.

That fucking G-word again. I was going to scream and headbutt someone if I heard it one more time.

“I'm really not, Zach.” My voice came out in a whisper, all humor gone. “If you want to understand me...you should just know that.”

He frowned, and before I could protest, ducked his head and maneuvered his broad body into the little booth with me.

“Aren’t you supposed to sit on the other side of the screen?” I laughed, squished up against the wall. It was cramped enough with just one person.

“I like this better.” He took up most of the room on the bench and pulled me into his lap. My horns just barely scraped the ceiling as I slid my thighs over his to straddle him. “Did I upset you this morning?” The lattice pattern of the screen cast shadows on his face, deepening the lines of his frown.

“No.” I pressed a kiss to his lips, fingers cradling the base of his skull. “I’m just...trying to figure some stuff out, I guess.”

“Isn’t that what we’re all trying to do?” His weight shifted underneath me, strong hand on my hips to hold me in place.

I hissed in a breath. He was getting hard and purposely rubbing himself on me. “Zach...”

“What?” His lips came to mine, sucking and pulling in that sweet, slightly clumsy way he did this morning.

“We don’t have to rush anything. I know this morning you ___”

“Will you show me how to... you know?” Even in the dark booth, I could see his blush. “To get you off? I don’t want to be one of those guys that’s bad at it.”

“Oh, Zach.” I kissed him again, deepening my tongue in his mouth with a light pull of the rosary around his neck. He was just too fucking cute, too sweet for his own good. And now I had to crush his hopes by explaining that I didn’t work like human women in that way?

“I already regret stopping things this morning,” he groaned, hands sliding up my ribcage to my breasts. “I couldn’t stop looking at you sitting in the pews, wishing we were still in bed together.”

“Oh really?” I fingered the beads around his neck. “Even while you were praying with Caitlin?”

Fuck. I might as well cut off my horns and start identifying as a human with all these petty human emotions. Kimaris was right about that, at least.

“Is that what you’re upset about?” Zach held my chin in his hand, making me look at him.

“Not *upset*, just...”

“Jealous?” He smirked.

“No,” I scoffed.

“Deyva.” He punctuated my name with a kiss, full of tenderness and desire in equal measure. “I don’t want her like that. I don’t want anyone like that, except you. And Stavros.”

“I have no right to be jealous,” I murmured, leaning my head on his shoulder. My horns scraped the back wall of the confessional. “If you want to be with a woman, it should be a human.”

“Says who?” he challenged. “And why would I, when no human woman compares to you?”

Get off his lap. Stab him with a horn. Tell him about all the souls you acclimated to Hell. Do something to make him stop talking and looking at you like that before you break his sweet little virgin heart.

But I didn’t move. Didn’t argue. And when he pressed a kiss to the corner of my mouth, my lips parted to accept the

next one greedily. I was every bit as weak as Kimaris said.

Zach's hand slid around my waist, coming to my lower stomach between us. "Show me?" he asked again, fingers inching lower.

Without a word, I guided him down over my leggings to my clit. After I finally grew the stones to stop being selfish, he could please human women this way. Once I was gone from his life, he'd still have this knowledge. At least that was what I told myself as I directed his touch in a circular motion over that hard nub.

"Like this?" His breath was already ragged, mouth pressing excited kisses to my throat as his hand worked between my legs.

"Yes, that's good." I rode his hand, tangling my fingers in his hair. "You can rub me faster." The stiff pole in his pants created friction against my inner thighs, but I knew better than to touch him there.

"Fuck, I just want to..." He buried his face in my chest, mussing his hair even worse than my hands.

I pulled off my shirt and bra, balling them up in the corner between the bench and the wall as Zach feasted on my flesh.

"You can touch me too," he mouthed between my breasts before dragging his lips over to one nipple. "Take me out of my pants."

"Zach," I whimpered at the sweet bite of his mouth on my sensitive peak. The combination of that and his hand working tirelessly at my clit had me writhing. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure," he groaned, licking a path back up to my neck. "I wasn't ready in the moment, but I'm dying to feel you touch me again."

He bucked when I palmed his thick shaft, groping the shape of him before I went for his belt and zipper. His hand pulled away from between my legs as I freed him, and for a moment I wondered if he had second thoughts. Before I could ask, his hand slipped *into* the waistband of my leggings, coming into contact with my bare, slick pussy.

“Oh, you’re wet,” he grunted, dick twitching in my fist. “So wet.”

“You can...oh, Zach! Yes, that!” Exploring fingers had found my entrance already, pressing inside as his thumb swept over my clit.

“Bad little virgin,” I purred, sinking onto his fingers as I twisted my hand around his base. “How did you know to do that?”

His already-blushing face darkened even more. “I...might have seen a video or two before.”

“Naughty.” I clicked my tongue, tightening my grip on his cock. “Good thing you’re at confession, Father.”

“Is that what this is?” He pumped his fingers into me harder, attacking my other breast with his dirty little mouth.

My retort was lost on a moan as I found a rhythm on his hand that was *just* right. He watched me with hungry eyes, so eager to please and learn. We didn’t speak, only the wet sounds of crashing flesh and ragged breaths filling the small box.

“Zach...” My breath felt stolen from my lungs every time I tried to tell him something, words lost as my brain tried to compute the pleasure coiling inside me like a compressed spring. He wasn’t that close yet, so why did I feel like...

“Zach,” I whimpered, filled with disbelief. “I’m gonna... I’m gonna come!”

“Yes, Deyva.” His growl was low and sexy, something I expected more from Stavros. “Let me feel it.”

My grip had slackened on his cock at some point, trembling hands now clutching his shoulders as I hovered over his lap. His fingers crashed into me up to the last knuckle, curling against my walls for more friction as his thumb remained steady on my clit.

What the fuck? This isn't supposed to happen! Pleasure overrode my shock as I bit Zach’s shoulder to stifle my scream. The explosive pulses of my release shot out in all directions before settling into heavy bliss.

“Holy shit, Deyva!” Zach’s arms now wrapped around my back, holding me to him. “I think I felt some of your pleasure, that was so fucking hot.”

“I...wow, yeah.”

I couldn’t make any rational sense of it. All my life, I believed I could only feed from someone else’s orgasm. No other succubus or incubus had ever mentioned being able to come like a human.

But then again, no one had ever insisted on pleasing me to that point, either. Stavros had tried, but I brushed him off, assuming it wasn’t possible.

“You okay, there?” Zach nuzzled kisses along the side of my face, as if I wasn’t already melted and gooey enough.

“Yeah, just...recovering.”

He chuckled, the swell of pride from him tasting decadent. “Sit on me when you’re ready.”

“Hm? You mean...?”

“On my cock, yeah.”

The word sounded especially dirty coming from his mouth, and I had to pull away to make sure I heard him correctly. He pushed my leggings down my thighs and I watched dumbly as he wrestled me out of the fabric.

“You want to...?”

“Lose my virginity to you, yes.” He swallowed, looking determined. “I wasn’t sure this morning, but I am now.”

“Zach, that wasn’t that long ago. Are you sure—”

He pressed down on my hips, so swiftly that I had no time to think about resisting, until I was impaled on his cock. The abrupt thickness of him filling me up seemed to push all the air out of my lungs. My fingers curled into his shoulders, finding the string of rosary beads once again.

“No going back now,” he said, his words tight.

I pressed my knees into the bench, lifting myself up his length before lowering back down, his moan reverberating in the enclosed space.

“They’re going to hear you, Father,” I warned, riding him in slow, undulating movements.

“I don’t care.” He pressed me down again, my ass bouncing off his thighs from the impact. “I want this. You and Stavros, I want you both.”

I closed my hand around both sides of the rosary, holding the string of beads taut, just below his throat. “Then sit back and enjoy the ride.”

My mind went blank as I rode him like a rodeo queen, holding the rosary tight around his neck for leverage. I didn't let myself think about how much I was growing to care about him, swallowing his moans with hard kisses as my pussy swallowed up his cock. Nor did I think about how badly I needed to get away, to protect him and the others. That would just be hypocritical as I encouraged him to grab my ass, to fuck me from below so we crashed into each other with hard smacks of flesh.

The whole church had to know why the confessional rocked and scraped against the wall, but that dark, tiny little box was our whole world for a few moments. My greedy, selfish ass never wanted it to end. I couldn't get enough of his gasps when he was seated all the way inside me, or the red marks on my skin from his hands and mouth.

When he swelled and stiffened, then clutched me like a lifeline as he spilled his release, I forced myself to feed in tiny sips, not wanting to drain him too much. The potency of him washed over me in shivers, like aftershocks of another orgasm.

He stayed inside me while softening, still holding me and panting. I searched for regret, loss, any of that familiar shame or guilt in his taste, but there was none.

"I have a confession, Father," I whispered, nuzzling a kiss onto his neck.

He huffed out a tired laugh. "What is it?"

"I don't want to leave."

He couldn't know if I was talking about Bethel in its entirety, or the confessional. I wasn't entirely sure myself, but he just tightened his arms around me and kissed my forehead.

"Then stay right here."

OceanofPDF.com



Not Even God

OceanofPDF.com

“*W*hy are you spread eagle on the floor, and why did Caitlin Marks tell me you were evacuating the chapel?”

Azariah opened one eye, his wings stretched out at his sides and a notable bulge in his borrowed sweatpants. He had a glazed smile on his lips and I was a little afraid of what his answer to my question might be.

“I wanted to give them their privacy,” Az whispered.

His head turned to stare down the aisle and I followed his look to the dark wood of the confessional booth. There was a groan, ragged and male, and then a bright female gasp.

“Oh fuck, Zach, yes!”

It was quiet, but not quiet enough for me or Az to miss it, and the angel sighed and squirmed on the cold stone floor. Still, it took me a minute to process what I was hearing, and I huffed and covered my face as the confessional squeaked and thumped, twin muffled cries slipping out, before the chapel went totally silent again.

Az hummed happily. “Shit. That was good. You should’ve heard the sounds he got out of her *before* they started actually

fucking. Sincerely impressive for a virgin, I gotta say. I think most of your people missed it though.”

“But you stayed,” I ground out, moving my hand to glare down at him.

Azariah winked at me. “Come on, Father Kais. Can you blame me?”

The fucking angel was a voyeur. Honestly, why didn’t that surprise me at this point? Worse, I couldn’t answer his question because I’d gotten off the night before listening to Deyva’s soft whispers as Stav and Zach moaned. It wasn’t them, my two best friends touching, it was just the idea of her in there. Were they touching her too? Fucking her? Or did she need my cock filling her up as she watched them?

“Yeah, it’s *hard* when you’re left out of the fun, isn’t it?” Azariah asked, adjusting himself in the sweatpants. There was a little laugh, Zach’s, from the confessional, and the angel’s eyes flicked in the direction of the sound.

“Is the entire holy fleet made up of creeps, or is it just you?” I asked.

“It’s very silly for you humans to think that sin invented sex,” Azariah shot back. “The notion that something must be bad for you because it feels so good is entirely man made.”

That was...kind of a relief actually. I crossed my arms and stared down at the angel. “Did they *invite* you to listen, Az?”

He pouted and rolled his eyes. “No. Did they invite *you*?”

Guilt made my face flame, and I wasn’t sure if Az meant just now, or if he knew about the earful I was getting—and taking advantage of—at night in my bedroom.

The door of the confessional opened and Zach staggered out first, fully dressed but so obviously fuck-happy with his flushed cheeks and hair sticking up in odd directions, the world's most obvious grin on his face. And I honestly couldn't help it, I smiled too. So did Azariah. Fuck, so did Deyva. She looked...

Actually.

She was glowing with joy, like Zach, and probably with the energy of a fresh meal too. She was wearing a smile and her hair was mussed and her lips were swollen. And yet... Her eyes flicked to mine and there was something sad in them that made my fists clench and my stomach cramp.

Zach blushed as he found Az and I staring at him, but as soon as he saw that the church was empty he turned back to Deyva, drawing her into a long and eager kiss, messy and enthusiastic. She leaned into him, smiling with him, giggling as he petted her everywhere, like he couldn't decide where he wanted to touch first. So it wasn't Zach that put that look in her eyes, or he had but not—

Is this any of your business? My stare snapped away.

“Bravo!” Azariah lifted his hands in the air and clapped at the disheveled couple wobbling out of the confessional. “Stellar way to lose the V-card, Zach. Make sure you tell that one to your grandkids.”

“Get up,” I said to Azariah.

“Spoilsport,” he sang softly, rising from the floor with a grunt and an uncomfortable twitch of his wings. “Hey succubus, you got any extra juice you could share for my wings?”

Zach reared back, glaring at the angel and I grimaced at the thought of what ‘juice’ might be, but Deyva only sighed and rested her head on Zach’s shoulder as she studied Azariah.

“You really had to listen in?”

“You could’ve done that *anywhere*,” Az answered. “I assumed you must’ve wanted an audience and thought it might be wise if I were the only one.”

Deyva’s lips pursed and her eyes narrowed. Then she turned to Zach, pressed a kiss to his jaw, and murmured something in his ear before leaving his side to cross to Azariah. Az’s arms spread wide and his grin grew almost feline.

“Come on, you overgrown chicken, don’t make this weird,” Deyva said.

Azariah just wiggled in anticipation, groaning happily as Deyva wrapped him up in a hug. Zach’s eyebrows rose, but his lips just quirked as he watched Az sink into Deyva’s embrace, his weight pushing on her. It looked like a good hug. I might actually have been as jealous of the hug as I was of the idea of cornering Deyva in a confessional and fucking her silly.

Deyva’s hands stroked Az’s back and then there was a... almost a shimmer of light around them. Az groaned, Zach frowned, and I watched as the bald patches on his wings sprouted new feathers.

“Ow!” Az yelped, his wings flapping, but Deyva squeezed tight around his waist.

“Oh, didn’t I mention that would hurt?” Deyva asked.

She held on for another longer moment and Az sank back into the hug, sighing again.

“That’s some good shit,” Az sighed. “Zach you are just a bundle of—”

“Okay, and we’re done. Keep it in your pants, Az,” Deyva snapped, pulling away and leaving Az to stumble forward.

“Um...what just happened?” Zach asked, brow furrowed and smile crooked.

“Deyva just shot me up with a great big dose of l—”

“Angels need strong positive emotions to heal,” Deyva said louder than Az, cutting him off before he’d finished. “I only shared a little bit, I hope that’s okay.”

“You can heal people? Angels?” I asked.

“She healed me a little during that battle,” Zach said, wrapping Deyva up in his arms and drawing her back against his chest, rubbing his cheek against one of her horns in a way that made Deyva squirm and sigh.

I noted the touch, as I noted the way Deyva had refreshed the marigolds every morning since I’d picked them for her, and the annoyed twist of her lips every time one of the local women spoke to Stavros and leaned in too close, and the way she took her coffee.

“And she healed Will when that demon grabbed him, didn’t you, Dey?” Zach asked.

“When the fucking what?!” I barked, eyes bugging out.

Deyva hissed and grimaced, twisting back to glare at Zach. “We said we were gonna get him drunk first.”

“YOU’RE TELLING me the three of you have known for days that the demons are learning to defend themselves against us, and I am just now hearing about it?” I growled.

Deyva was seated between Zach and Stavros on the couch in the priest house, and I was just as annoyed with the picture of them as I was with the news they were feeding me.

“What were you going to do? Wait until the gate was being attacked to tell me? What if this changes how our defenses work too?”

“Kais,” Deyva started gently.

“No!”

“Hey, this is *not* her fault,” Stav snapped. “Zach or I should’ve given you a full report. That’s on us, Kais.”

“It sure fucking is. We are *days* behind this! And the three of you have been using that time to—”

“Kais, cool the fuck off!” Zach sat forward, his shoulder in front of Deyva like he was defending her from me.

Which just made my mood so much fucking worse. Deyva was becoming an issue. A distraction. A temptation.

She’s always been that, a gentle voice reminded me.

“Kais, honestly, you’re right, man. We should’ve told you, but you were kind of... You’ve been...”

I started to growl again, and I was so annoyed by the sound that I whipped around and marched to the hall just to move, to not be staring at the three of them all close and cuddly together.

“Can I just point out that this, yes, should’ve been brought to your attention earlier, but also is kind of not that big of a

deal?” Zach asked mildly.

“How is the fact that demons now have a defense against holy water not a big deal?” I ground out.

“Um, because Deyva can literally rip their heads off? Because we also have crossbows and swords and machetes and basic artillery at our disposal that aren’t kids’ toys?”

“Azariah’s reinforcement to the gate will hold,” Deyva said, and I flinched at the careful, quiet tone of her voice, that she was afraid that I’d lash out at her again.

I swallowed hard and was relieved to find her sitting up straight, meeting my stare head on. “You’re sure?” I asked.

Deyva nodded. “If the gate had fallen down naturally, I don’t know if your blessings would have held, but I honestly think so. This entire town is practically consecrated ground. There’s a reason I came here. Well, you know, aside from the three of you.”

Stav and Zach both beamed at her, the tension rushing out of them at her simple words. I wanted to flip a table over and scream. Every little movement of her mouth made me think of that kiss, of the soft press of her mouth on mine, of the twinge in her eyes as I pulled away. Did Stav and Zach know? She kept adding me into statements like that and it made me feel like I was back in those dreams of her, tossing endlessly on soft mattresses, burying myself into her heat over and over again. But maybe I was just reading too much into it?

“Either way, Azariah’s work didn’t hurt. And if you wanted him to bless those weapons too, a trash bag won’t stop them from working against hellions either. You could even train other people in the town to—”

“Absolutely not,” I snapped, marching forward.

“Wait, Kais, we should—”

“No fucking way, Stavros. We’ve talked about this. Our people are civilians, *we* are their protection.” Lord knew it was hard enough for me to watch Zach walk out of that gate sometimes, and he was the best of us. But he was so *young*. And Stavros was an almost comically accurate example of ‘lover, not fighter.’

“I’m beginning to agree with Stavros,” Zach said gently. “After everything we’ve learned recently...are we really more qualified than them to fight back Hell? I thought I was God’s chosen vessel before but...honestly, I just want to *live* Kais. Just like they do.”

“It is not happening,” I said, each word as hard as stone.

“No one would *have* to fight,” Stavros continued, watching me carefully, even as he and Zach kept fucking ignoring the words coming out of my mouth. “But you know there are people here who have wanted to help. Why not show them how?”

“We are not letting vulnerable people—”

“You’re vulnerable.”

I stiffened, glaring down at Deyva, at her high chin and the thin press of her lips as she stared up at me.

“You are human, Kais. You’re vulnerable. Zach and Stavros are vulnerable. *I* am vulnerable. So are the demons. Fuck, so is Azariah for that matter. No one is safe. If someone wants to fight, really wants that right, you don’t have the authority to stop them. No one does. Not even God.”

My throat burned and my fingernails bit into my palms. I wanted to be sick, I wanted to hit something, I wanted to turn my back on them all. I wanted to wrap up this entire fucking

town in an impenetrable blanket and put us all to sleep and never wake up again, just so I'd never be there for the moment it all went to shit again.

“And when something happens to them? No one will save them, Deyva, not even you,” I said. And I left the room.

I WAS OUTVOTED between Zach and Stavros, but I was surprised that they bothered taking it to the town as an offer, rather than just a new fact. Did the town as a whole want to continue to lean on us, their priests, for protection? Or did they want the opportunity to stand up for themselves?

For about ten seconds at the start of the vote, I thought the offer would get beaten down. Surely these people, who'd expressed so much faith in us, so much gratitude for the relative peace of their lives, would want to continue in the way we'd established.

As it turned out, I knew shit all.

Dozens of hands were lifted to the air, resolve written over the faces of our settlement as they gazed back at us from the pews. Even the women, which gave me an inkling that I might've been more sexist than I'd originally thought.

I expected Stav or Kais or Deyva to look smug. They didn't. They looked worried. I was worried. But I knew what needed to be done.

I stepped forward on the dais to join the others. Deyva and Az were sitting together in the front pew, both of their faces solemn. Azariah was antsy in his seat, but Deyva had convinced him to sit this announcement out, to let us speak to

our people directly without his heavenly presence influencing their decision.

I turned my gaze up to the many hands raised into the air. “Any volunteer fighters should report to me every evening at eight and again at seven the next morning. We’ll train in the gym until we set up a good target practice area outside. Brody, can you add that to the list of town reno?”

“Why twice a day?” One man, who didn’t even have his fucking hand up, called out.

“Because Hell doesn’t attack at our convenience. Because fighting this war is long and messy and exhausting, and I need you all to be prepared, to be safe, and to understand that this isn’t fun, it’s grueling and ugly and—”

Stavros coughed into his hand and my rant stalled briefly. In the front pew, Deyva was shooting me a serious ‘what the fuck’ look.

“No one taking this seriously expects it to be easy, Fathers,” Angus Miller said, rising from his seat. “We never thought it was easy for you, we knew how lucky we were. But I, for one, am ready to stand at your side, and I’ll do whatever you ask of me so you can be as confident in me as I am in you.”

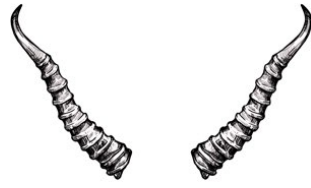
Stavros and Zach both puffed up proudly, their smiles beatific as they thanked Angus. I tried to mimic them, tried to feign that claim of confidence so that no one would know that my stomach sank like lead inside me.

I’d worn that face years ago, I’d stood side by side with men, shone with confidence as we faced down a legion of Hell. And in the end, I’d been the only man left standing, and then running. Running for my life with the image of the

soldiers who'd been slaughtered burning in my eyes as their blood tracked down my face.

I couldn't hold Angus' gaze and mine found Deyva instead, the sting of sympathy so clear that it matched the bile burning in my throat.

OceanofPDF.com



Demons Don't Wrestle

OceanofPDF.com

I was hauling a massive basket into the diner, full to bursting with potatoes from the school house garden, when I found Azariah there at the bar, surrounded by fawning women. Their fingers were in his wings, on his arm, breasts brushing against him as they leaned in close, batting eyelashes and tossing their hair. And why was I feeling prickly all of the sudden as Az shuddered and twitched his wing away from their touch? I wanted to believe it was because one woman was going against the plume grain like an idiot but...

“Deyva!” Azariah called, brightening on his stool, shimmying out of the cluster of women and rushing to me.

I pulled to a sudden stop and a potato rolled out of the basket, Azariah catching it just before it hit the floor.

“Let me help you,” he said, grabbing the basket from my arms. It was twice the size of what any of the humans could manage, but I’d already finished the shooting range and some local repairs, and I was trying to stay as useful as possible in Bethel.

“Showing off?” I teased Az as he grabbed the basket from my arms.

“I need an escape route,” he hissed. “They’re ravenous, especially now that rumors are out about you and the holy men.”

Right, because what would top banging a priest or two? An angel, of course.

“Pretty sure you could talk a couple of them into a threesome,” I said, plastering on a vapid smile and wiggling my fingers at the women as I followed Az behind the counter toward the kitchen. “If not an outright orgy.”

“Mm, I’m considering it,” Azariah said with a shrug.

My smile dropped immediately and I cleared my throat.

“But, and correct me if I’m wrong, I have a feeling they might be looking to put me...”

“In a gilded cage?” I supplied, opening the door to the kitchens for him.

“I was going to say their pocket, but yes, I suppose. I’d be a token fuck, basically,” Azariah said.

The kitchen staff, some of whom I’d managed to win over in the past few days with my willingness to try anything they experimented with, and do heavy labor while I was at it, greeted both of us.

“Ohh looks like shepherd’s pie is on the menu tomorrow night. And hashbrowns at breakfast.”

“What would Zach have been?” I asked Az, crossing my arms over my chest.

Az sobered and turned to face me, ducking his head and frowning at me. “Zach would’ve been the closest thing I could come to being with one of my own kind again, and I would’ve cherished every second.”

I swallowed and tried not to fidget under the force of the angel's stare, until he sighed and straightened.

"But I fucked that up, I know."

I couldn't really argue with Azariah on that one, so instead I took his arm and led him through the kitchens to the back door. "Here's your escape route. Let's go and see if Kais will take any help in the training room."

"Gotta say, he's not my favorite of the three," Az mused as I dragged him out of the diner and down the alley toward the church. "He either needs something pulled out of his ass, or inserted into it, I haven't decided."

"He doesn't need to be your favorite," I hissed over my shoulder. "And quit thinking about his ass."

That ass was mine, whether or not Kais was in the mood to admit it.

"What?! I'm on your side, he could stand to loosen up a bit, and I know just the succubus to—" Azariah cut off with a pained *oof* as I elbowed him roughly in the ribs.

"Az, I am begging you, praying even, to keep your angelic asshat nose out of this one," I said, cutting down the side of the church and drawing to a stop outside of the gymnasium doors. "Kais is..."

Az sighed and relaxed, his smirk sliding away and head bowing in a nod. "He has very powerful protective energy, but he spends it all on others and spares none for himself."

I nodded, stomach twisting uneasily, and frowned up at Azariah. "If I...if anything happened to me, you would look out for them, right? All of them?"

Azariah frowned. “First Daughter, what would happen to you?”

I shrugged and looked away, reaching for the handle. “We’re at war, aren’t we?”

“When I was younger, war came with starvation and illness. Here it comes with shepherd’s pie,” Az said softly, lips quirking. I opened the door to the gym, the sound of bodies slapping against mats and voices grunting with impact rushed out into the church’s side garden. “Yes, Deyva. I would look after them.”

I didn’t look back at Az, only nodded and stepped inside, my eyes adjusting quickly to the darkness of the gymnasium. There were eight mats set up around the vast space, each of them occupied by two to four people in various stages of combat. On one, a woman was being attacked from all sides by the three men and she was using evasive maneuvers to escape. On another, two older men were taking turns practicing quick, sharp offensive moves to disable and escape their partner.

“No, no. That won’t work,” Az said, jogging over to them. “You’re betting on the hellions being single jointed, but most would let you break their arm before letting you go. Here, try this.”

I found Kais at the back of the room, engaging in an earnest wrestling match with the man who’d complained about training twice a day. I walked slowly around the edge of the gymnasium, ignoring the stares of suspicion coming from most of the humans, keeping my eyes fixed on Kais. He was out of his priest robes, dressed in those addictively clingy sweatpants of his and just a tank top. There were women perched on the bleachers, drinking water and looking barely

rumpled as they stared hungrily at my—at Kais—actually fuck that, at *my* Kais.

Kais looked like a predator, his eyes focused and sharp, constantly flicking over his opponent, waiting for the glimpse of an opening. My tongue ran over my bottom lip and I paused against the wall as his muscles tensed. The other man lunged and Kais caught him easily around his ribs, swinging him and making him lose his footing before driving him down to the mat with a hard smack and a great groan. I winced and Kais caught his breath, covering his face with his hand briefly before smoothing it back through his dark curls and rising. He held out a hand, which was ignored, and the man rolled to his side to rise on his own.

“If we’re supposed to be learning to fight demons, why don’t we just throw around the one we have inside the gate,” a voice muttered.

Kais and I turned to them at the same time. He was young, big, and his eyes were drinking me up in a way that made it pretty clear he would’ve liked to throw me around, but not on a mat in a crowded gymnasium.

“She’s not a demon,” Azariah said, prowling through the mats, drawing eyes with every step as he crossed his arms over his chest and glared at the kid.

“No, but I have the strength of one,” I said with a shrug, stepping forward from the wall.

“Jason, I saw her fucking lift an entire tree, man. Don’t be stupid,” one of Jason’s younger friends called.

I glanced at Kais who blinked at me and shrugged. “Just don’t break anything,” he said.

I grinned and turned back to young Jason, who had a pair of murky brown eyes fixed determinedly to my tits. “Okay, Jason. I’ll give you three tries to put me on my back.”

Jason grinned and somewhere from the bleachers, too quiet for anyone but me and Az to catch, a woman muttered under her breath. “Isn’t that kind of just what she does though?”

“More like she gets on her knees,” another whispered.

“Ladies, you’re both right,” I called loudly across the room, and the entire gym gave up the pretense of paying attention to anything but me.

I stepped forward to meet Jason on the mat, his friends backing away, Az moving to join Kais at the sidelines to watch.

“If it gets to be too much, just say ‘uncle,’” I said, smiling up at Jason. He was pretty enough, but he wasn’t one of my priests, and there was a mean hunger to his lustful emotions that reminded me too much of Kimaris, enough that I had to stamp down the shudder as he grinned back at me.

“Oh sweetheart, the only one who’s gonna be feeling too much is you when I find you down in whatever basement they’re keeping you in tonight,” Jason whispered.

Huh. So not everybody knew about me shacking up in the priest house yet?

Jason charged as I mulled over this discovery, and behind me Kais barked my name. Like he thought I wasn’t even paying attention. *Please*. I let Jason wrap his arms around mine, squeezing tight around my ribs, as I balanced on my toes, pushing back as he tried to tackle me to the ground and found me immovable. He grunted, snarled in my ear, and pushed and pushed and strained against me.

Azariah laughed. “She’s going to give him a hernia.”

I jumped, pressed my feet to Jason’s knees to unbalance him and then used the momentum to slam him down onto his back. He released me with the smack of his flesh against the rubber and I rolled away, bouncing back up onto my feet in an easy beat.

“One,” I said.

Jason snarled from the floor, twisting and grabbing for my ankles, but I only stepped lightly out of the way and then down onto his back, pinning him to the mat again.

“You wasted that chance. Two. Don’t attack again until you know what your plan is,” I snapped, leaping away and rolling my eyes as he growled on his way up to standing. “Quit thinking of me as a woman you want to teach a lesson to and look at me as your enemy. I could break your neck in a heartbeat. You need to focus.”

For a moment, it looked like my advice was wasted. Jason tensed, ready to spring mindlessly into action. Then he blinked, released a slow breath, relaxed, and took a longer and more studious look at me. Better, good. I even got a nice whiff of Kais’ appreciation from the wall.

Jason jumped forward and I dodged out of his way, pleased when he didn’t look annoyed, just cautious and considering. His heartbeat was hammering loudly enough that I could hear it and the lust was mostly gone from the air, replaced with his determination and also a wary understanding.

He lunged, aiming lower than before, diving and wrapping his arms around my hips, twisting quickly and trying to take me down in his own fall. I pulled free mid-landing, shoving him away with a gentled kick and rolling back to my feet. He

huffed and smacked the mat with frustration as I righted myself.

“That was good, actually. I’m smarter and I have better balance than your average hellion. If you had a knife, you could’ve taken the opportunity during the fall to land a blow,” I said.

Jason’s sneer mellowed as he sat up, my praise unexpected. His jaw tightened up at me, ego unavoidably bruised, but he nodded once in acknowledgement.

“You knew from your first attack that she was stronger and faster than you, and you tried something too similar, but she’s right. You got close enough to land a blow,” Kais said, moving to join us, eyeing the rest of the room until bodies returned to their practice positions.

“If I was up against a hellion, they would’ve been armed too,” Jason muttered, standing up from the mat still scowling.

“Some would, others would count on their abilities or their natural defenses,” I offered. I opened my mouth to say more until I felt the slight touch on my back, Kais’ hand resting briefly at the base of my spine as he stepped to my side.

“I saw Deyva take down a demon general while he stood there snarling, totally unprepared,” Kais said.

“A lesser general,” I corrected until Kais gave me one of his perfectly expressive *looks*. This one said *please shut up, Daisy*. So I did, sliding back off the mat to join Azariah at the wall.

“Why do I feel like I did something wrong?” I whispered to Azariah.

“I think you just reminded the humans what they’re up against,” Az whispered back. “That even the strongest of them

is no match for someone like you.”

“Oh,” I said, frowning.

“But you also reminded them that they have you on their team,” Azariah added with a shrug.

I bit my lip, aware of the stares drifting back in my direction, of the changed flavor in the air. It wasn't quite pleasant or sweet, but it wasn't so bitter either, and that was a nice change.

Kais was still with Jason, the two of them talking out some moves, until Kais shifted into place opposite the younger man, the two of them getting ready to spar. For the first time I noticed the bruise on the back of Kais' shoulder, and the slight tremor in his left leg.

“He's tired,” I whispered, more to myself.

“Mmm, he patrols more than the others. Works on more projects. Now this.”

Jason was more measured in his movements with Kais, and it was obvious that when he wasn't being a little douchebag who thought he could take me down just because I had tits and horns, he was a pretty good fighter with some training. He grappled against Kais, and the two shouldered their weight against one another, surprisingly evenly matched in weight and strength. Kais changed his angle of pressure, tipping Jason and then flipping him to the mat in a sharp move, but I saw the pause before Kais was ready to stand again.

I wanted to replace Kais on the mat. I had plenty of energy to tackle and train Jason, and Kais was wearing himself out from every possible end. They met in another clash of limbs,

bodies straining, Kais' teeth bared in a snarl. Az hummed from my side, head cocking.

“Am I really this thirsty or is this pretty hot?” Azariah murmured.

“Stop,” I said, huffing a little. It *was* hot, but it also made me cringe, even as Kais gained the upper hand again, taking Jason down to the floor and pinning him there. “Demons don't know wrestling moves! Just try to strike or run!”

“Shhh, let me have this,” Az whispered.

Kais ignored me, but Jason actually nodded, the two of them helping each other up before facing off again. My own body was tense as I watched, wanting to barge in between them, toss Jason away, and gather Kais up. Also, yeah, Az was right. It was super hot. Kais was potently attractive as he fought, and he wasn't a slouch even when he was just slurping at his coffee in the morning. His skin was flushed and dewy with sweat and I wanted to lick every inch, to feel him flexing as he pinned *me* to the floor.

Except Jason was a quick learner. He caught Kais by the back of his left leg and it gave out easily, Kais' eyes went wide with shock as he fell back to the mat, his breath rushing out of him audibly as he landed. Jason, taking my advice, jumped back as if he were prepared to run, and looked eagerly up at me. I wanted to hiss and punch him right in his baby face for dropping Kais like that, but I forced a smile on my lips.

“Good,” I said, nodding, swallowing around the lump in my throat of Kais' bitter defeat and frustration. “Get the humans out,” I added to Az in a whisper.

He grunted and nodded, clapping his hand and putting on that big pompous smile of his that the humans seemed to love

so much. “Incredible work, all of you, Children of God. The Lord would be most impressed with your incredible efforts. But now, I think it’s time for you all to enjoy a moment of respite and slumber.”

The room followed Azariah’s suggestion eagerly, even the bleacher girls who’d grown increasingly flustered during the match between Jason and Kais. Kais grimaced as he stood, patting Jason on the back and ignoring my approach as the room cleared out.

“You’re pushing yourself too hard,” I said, as quietly as I could.

“I’m doing what needs done,” Kais answered, his words snapping.

“You are, but you aren’t the only one here capable of taking care of those tasks, Kais,” I said, crossing my arms over my chest. “You’re—you need to sleep, right?”

Kais glared at me, glancing briefly over his shoulder to see the last of his trainees leaving the gym, Az’s wings following their departure, until it was only the two of us left in the room.

“You were about to say I’m only human, right?” Kais asked.

“Well...I mean, you *are* human,” I said, frowning.

“Yeah, I’m well fucking aware, Deyva. I think about that every day. Every time I walk outside of that gate. I am—we are all outmatched. And your little showdown with Jason didn’t help.”

“I’m sorry. I totally showed off. I just wanted to put him in his place.”

“That’s just it, Deyva! We humans? We fucking know our place! We know it’s only a matter of time!” Kais roared, arms spreading at his sides.

I fought not to flinch. It wasn’t Kais’ anger that affected me, but the strangled grip of terror wrapped around him, like ice cold acid in my throat.

“Kais, I know it’s not—not what you had before the Rising, but this town? These people? It’s an incredible sanctuary, believe me,” I said, reaching out cautiously to rest my hand over Kais’ pounding heart.

Kais frowned down at me, the warmth in his dark eyes going molten as he stepped forward. “And I know how easy it would be for Hell to rip that away, Deyva. Believe me, I’ve seen it.”

“Kais, I promise, I’m not going to let that happen.” His heart was pounding unevenly beneath my palm and I spared a little energy to soothe him, to soften the strain and ache and exhaustion that was weathering away at his body.

“You can’t take on all the legions of Hell,” Kais said flatly.

I grinned up at him, hoping to cut through his ugly mood with a little teasing. “I’m sure I could try.”

Instead, Kais’ blood rushed from his face, a low growl rising from his chest. His hand snapped up, wrapping around my wrist, and I gasped as he pulled my hand from his chest, twisting my arm behind my back and then shoving me against him, his face diving down and mouth slanting over mine, tongue searching and stroking, claiming me in the kiss.

“You think I’m gonna feel any better if something happens to you, Daisy?” he asked, voice ragged, grip on my wrist desperate as he shook me against him. His forehead pressed to

mine, head shaking slowly. “You show up here and you just raise the stakes. If I lose you...I just can’t. I *won’t* let that happen, do you understand?”

“Kais,” I whispered, wrapping my free arm around him, sneaking it beneath the hem of his tank top to soothe at the cooling, damp skin of his back. “Honey, you cannot save these people by killing yourself. You need to loosen up on the reins. Teach them how to survive. You can’t carry this town by yourself.”

“I can’t sleep. I can’t fucking take half a second break without seeing their faces, their eyes empty, all that blood. Shit, Deyva, I—” Kais made a choking sound, trying to pull away and I held him fast to me, pressed my face into his throat and took a long breath of that sharp pine and sea salt smell of him.

“What do you need?” I asked, shamelessly licking over his pulse just to feel it thrum. His cock twitched and swelled between us, nudging against my thighs. “You want to fight? Fuck? Set something on fire? I can wear you out or I can hold your hand. Whatever it is, I’m here.”

“Daisy,” Kais growled, pulling my arm tighter at my back until my shoulder protested, his free hand sliding down to my ass to pull me into his hips, grinding himself there. “I am not in a fucking mood to be sweet.”

I smiled, nuzzling into his jaw, turning my head, and then taking a great big bite of the muscle of his throat, grinning into the bite as he grew thicker and harder against me, snarling at flare of pain. I pulled away as he started a rhythm of friction against me.

“You know I can take it, Kais. Three tries to put me on my back,” I murmured, arching in his arms and rubbing a little

more against his cock, letting him see the flush of my cheeks, the way my eyes grew heavy-lidded as his fingers dug into the swell of my ass. He looked unsure, even as one of his feet wedged between mine, spreading my legs enough for his sweatpants-covered cock to rock between my thighs.

I twisted out of his grip on my ass, moving to run, but Kais just wrapped that arm around my ribs like a vice, kicking my legs out from under me and then taking me down onto my knees, his body bowed over my back. I arched my spine, giggling at his groan as I nestled my ass against his cock.

One of his hands swept under my t-shirt, eagerly diving for my breast, taking it in a full grip and squeezing roughly. I sat up, leaning into his chest, turning my head and pouting my lips. He twisted me in his hold, pinched my nipple between his thumb and forefinger, and moaned as I craned my neck and licked at his lips.

“One,” I said, laughing and pulling away.

OceanofPDF.com



Blessed Relief

OceanofPDF.com

This was sick, probably. I growled and lunged for Deyva who jumped to her feet and ran from me, turning to taunt me as she jogged backwards onto a different mat as I rose up from the floor, stalking her.

It wasn't how I'd imagined seducing Deyva, not the firelight and flowers approach I'd been thinking of. Then again, maybe that was more Stav and Zach's speed. Right now, with Deyva's eyes glinting under the fluorescents, her hands skimming teasingly over her chest until she reached the hem of her shirt, pulling it up over her head... Yeah. This felt more like us.

I was also hard as a fucking rock at the sight of those perfect breasts bouncing in anticipation, her smile softening as she tossed her shirt aside.

"You give up?" she asked, smirking.

I let out another one of those growls that always seemed to come up when Deyva was around, grinned at the way her nipples tightened in answer, and then charged. Just like she had with Jason, Deyva waited for me to slam into her, but instead of resisting me she simply took us down to our knees, her thighs wrapping around my hips. Our bodies collided with

a force that was almost painful, my hips rising into hers, her body immediately rocking over mine.

Those ripe tits were right in my face. I wrapped my hands over Deyva's slender shoulder blades and pulled her to my mouth, biting roughly on her flesh, savoring her gasps at the scratch of my teeth, laving at the goosebumps that rose in answer. Her own hands grappled at my back, tugging and twisting on my shirt.

"Kai, Kais, take your fucking shirt off," she breathed, riding my lap like we were already fitted together, my cock screaming at me, warning me that I either needed to get inside this woman or I was gonna rocket off in my pants like a teenager. I ignored both of them in favor of pulling Deyva's nipple into my mouth and sucking so hard it made her whine.

There was a tear and then cool air hit my bare back, my chuckle rough as Deyva ripped away my tank, her nails leaving a scorching hot trail over my muscles.

Her hands slid to my shoulders and then she slammed me back to the mat, the rubber stinging against her scratches.

"Two," she panted, one breast shining from my mouth. She grinned down at me and then began to ride my lap with a deliberate slowness, all of the sensation dulled and muffled from our clothing, but still horribly, temptingly dense and sweet. "One more chance," she said.

And then she was up.

I was faster this time. She hadn't even made it to her feet when I was up on my knees, one hand grabbing for her hip, the other her horn.

Deyva let out a wild howl as I gripped the solid, golden horn in my fist, forcing her down on her hands and knees. I

didn't think. I didn't ask. I was pure adrenaline and instinct, only caring about one fucking thing in the entire world. That I wasn't already inside of this woman.

I yanked her legging down to her knees, and then my own sweatpants and boxers. Deyva moaned as the head of my cock tapped against her hot, dripping entrance, and then she screamed as I slammed into her with one stroke.

The room flashed, and sizzling pleasure ran up my spine as I sank in to the hilt, Deyva's ass cushioning my hips as I snapped into place.

Jesus Christ, what the fuck is wrong with you?

“Oh God, Kais, *yes!*” Deyva cried.

I huffed, looking down to where my hand was clenched around Deyva's ass, my cock buried in her, stretching the swollen pink lips of her sex. I pulled out slowly, gaping at the glisten of arousal now coating my length, eyes slowly rising to catch the quick rise and fall of her long back, the drape of dark hair over her shoulders, the lean of her head into the grip I had around her horn.

“Please,” she whined. “Please, Kais, don't stop.”

“Not on your fucking life,” I said, laughing a little. I released her ass to grab her other horn, pulling her into a deep arch that let my cock sink in even deeper and made Deyva go into a full body shiver.

I snapped my hips, sinking back into her with a sharp thrust, a heavy groan rising out of my chest as I arched into the heavy electric sensation. Deyva tilted her hips, already driving for more friction.

“Spread your legs,” I rasped.

She did, as much as the leggings around her knees allowed her. I held tighter to her horns, noting the gentle give of them under my grip. There was obviously sensation there and Deyva made soft, needy whimpers as I squeezed. I drove into her, our skin slapping noisily, voices pleading and moaning with every retreat, every buck. Deyva met me eagerly, her hands lifting from the floor to rise to her breasts, playing with them as roughly as I had. I fucked her with all the worry, all the need, all the desperate desire I'd been trying to ignore for weeks.

She was theirs, Stavros and Zach's.

She was mine too, and I wanted her to feel it in her cunt for days, in the bruises I'd leave on her ass from the way I rammed into her. She was right, she could fucking take it. Based on the squeeze and flutter around my cock, her body already trying to milk my finish out of me, she fucking *liked* it.

My balls were pulling up, threatening to end this wild moment, one I never wanted to end. Reality would return, surely? Even if it was a little sweeter after this. I wanted to put that off for as long as I could.

I pulled roughly on Deyva's horns, grinning at her garbled moan, lifting her onto my lap, holding her still to stave off my release. She squirmed, trying to get the friction back, and I bit down on her shoulder, releasing one horn to reach around and pinch roughly on her clit.

"Oh, Jesus fucking Christ!" Deyva yelped, squirming and then moaning and shuddering against me, her cunt sucking and gushing on my cock as she came, nearly taking me with her.

I pulled her off of me and tossed her onto the mat, wrestling her leggings off as she panted and stared at me with a wide-eyed, dizzy expression. She bent her knees, spreading

her thighs for me and I paused, briefly transfixed by the sight of her silky, slippery pussy still open and begging for me.

I crawled over her, kicking my own sweatpants off and balancing with already weak arms over her body.

“Three.”

Deyva blinked at me, then grinned and giggled, a sound I quickly turned into a moan as I sank back into her.

I had no patience this time, I was too close, too on edge. I was going to crash so fucking hard after this and part of me was terrified of what would come next. But the rest of me was just relieved at the prospect of my brain shutting down a bit.

Deyva’s hands stroked gently over my back, her chin lifting for my kiss, teasing my lips with her tongue.

“Fuck me, honey,” she breathed.

It was clumsy and animal, desperate. Our skin squeaked against the rubber mat, our rhythm uneven as the end chased my heels. Deyva’s legs clasped around me, her mouth sucking my jaw as I moaned and pinned her beneath me, driving into her over and over, the aftershocks of her orgasm kissing and coaxing my cock. Little licks and nibbles of lightning ran up my spine, squeezing around my throat, making me lose my focus. Deyva flipped me, and I was helpless, already in the throes as she rode me determinedly to the end, her head tossed back and throat flexing with a long moan as I came, my fingers digging into her hips as I arched and let the heat take me under.

THE PRIEST HOUSE WAS QUIET. Az was taking the first shift of the night on patrol, along with a few of our flock. I

expected Stavros and Zach to be waiting like eager puppies for Deyva's return, but they were missing.

Her hand was in mine. Our sides brushed and bumped into one another.

"You ate dinner, right?" Deyva asked, frowning at the bottom of the stairs and glancing to the kitchen.

Why did I feel so fucking shy all of the sudden? I'd been balls deep in this woman. I'd literally used her horns as sex handles and she'd been moaning for it.

"Uh yeah. You?" I was weary, but not more than I expected to be given the lethargy that came after that kind of fucking—something I'd barely ever experienced in life before.

Deyva smiled at me, stepping closer, and I sighed as she lifted her face for my kiss. I cupped her cheek, taking softer, sweeter sips from her lips, glad I could have this too. The wild brutal rush between us and this careful tenderness.

"I'm good," Deyva said and then she giggled. "My legs still feel weak."

I grinned at that and then released her hand to stroke and cup at her ass, just because I could. I could, couldn't I?

"I—do you—you should, um, go up to them right?" I asked. *Can I have you tonight?*

Deyva sighed and my heart sank. "I should."

I nodded and then stepped back, gesturing for her to go up ahead of me, following her up with an ache that grew worse with every step.

"Kais."

“I’m good. Gonna crash like I haven’t in...well, you know. Thanks, Deyva.”

We stood at the top of the stairs and her eyebrow arched with an uncanny awareness. “Oh, sure, honey. No problem,” she said tartly.

I grimaced and hurried to my own room, ignoring the annoyed huff of her breath behind me, the creak of Stavros’ bedroom door.

My room was cold. I mean, partly it was cold because I’d left a window open. But also I was suddenly wishing that I’d just stayed on that mat, sweating and panting with Deyva collapsed against my chest. Fuck if anyone showed up early for training. They could just deal.

I stripped out of my sweatpants, debating on a shower and then discarding the idea quickly. I smelled like Deyva, all dry and sweet and spiced. My sheets were cold, my back still ached from all the work of the day and the drag of Deyva’s nails. Exhaustion was lingering at the edges, but it came with a sour aftertaste. I would wake up by myself. Whatever had just happened in the gym—they call that fucking, I reminded myself—might’ve just been a momentary thing?

I squeezed my eyes shut, suddenly eager for sleep to swallow me up for once, at least giving me relief from my spinning thoughts.

And then my door opened.

“You stupid, restrained, bastard,” Deyva said fondly, walking over to my bed and flipping my sheets back. She was wearing Stavros’ shirt and nothing else and she landed heavily at my side as I gaped at her. “You really thought I was gonna wrestle-fuck you and peace out?”

“But Stav and—”

“I mean, they’re my boyfriends,” Deyva said, eyes wide and innocent as she nestled closer and set her head down on the pillow next to me. “I have to keep them in the loop, right? But they know how I feel about you, and they can entertain themselves for the night.”

I laughed at the waggle of her eyebrows, rolling to face her, reaching under the covers to pull her closer.

“Oh now you wanna cuddle, huh? Mr. ‘Thanks-for-the-Fuck.’”

“Hey, you deserved that thanks,” I said, fighting my grin. “You did real good.”

“Fuck all the way off. Right off the other side. I’m serious,” Deyva said, wiggling and pushing at my chest as I wrapped her up in my arms until I had her as close as I could hold her. She sighed and settled, kissing my throat. “I’ll sort out the sleeping arrangements, but you can just get your ass used to me, alright?”

I nestled down into the top of her head, her horns framing my temples, hair ruffling with my breath. Already I could feel the drowsy weight of pleasure returning, loosening all the tension I’d been carrying around for who knows how long.

“I have nightmares,” I warned her.

“Mm. Then I’ll eat them,” she said.

I fell asleep with a goofy smile on my face.



More Blessed to Give

OceanofPDF.com

“*B*reaker is fixed,” I said, joining Zach in the kitchen, shaking the leaves off my boots to the mat and hanging my jacket up.

He smiled at me and flicked the stove on, setting down a pot of stew to warm. “Worth it to warm up the loaf in the oven?”

I hummed and shook my head. There would be new loaves baked tomorrow to share with the town, but for now we had only had the remnants of last week’s and it was getting pretty stale. “Probably better just let it sit in the broth to soften up. We haven’t had much sun or wind lately and I think Bethel’s power is low.”

Zach turned away from the stove, immediately grinning at me and moving closer. He was just a little bit taller than me, but slimmer too, and I hesitated over the impulse to press him up against the wall just to enjoy the way he fit against me.

The door opened, and we both swung around eagerly, hoping for Deyva to walk through. Instead, it was Kais, a little sweaty still from training.

“Water?”

“Cold,” Zach said, shrugging.

Kais frowned, but nodded and then looked past us to the stove. Zach and I were only a few inches apart and it never failed to surprise me the way Kais took the shift in our relationship in stride. The most we'd gotten out of him in response had been an arch of his eyebrows and a nod of his head, and he never looked surprised or disturbed to walk in on a moment where Zach and I were kissing or standing close to one another.

"Making soup. There's enough for all four of us," Zach told him.

Kais nodded. "Deyva's working with some of the women still."

"Alone?" I asked, frowning. Bethel was, in general, still pretty frosty where it concerned our lovely succubus, but some of the women had been especially discouraging.

"Nah, Az is with her."

"Not sure that's reassuring," Zach muttered. His head tilted and he gave Kais a longer examination. "You look good. Younger, almost."

Kais grunted, but his cheeks turned a little rosy and he rushed for the stairs.

"I bet it's Deyva," I whispered to Zach.

"I thought they only...you know, the once?" Zach said, smirking.

Oh God, he couldn't even say it, and for some reason that only made me want to strip him down until he was chanting 'fuck me' over and over.

"Yeah, but she's been making sure he sleeps through the night," I said. "The dark circles under his eyes are fading and

he quit slamming all the doors.”

“Oh! It *has* been quiet lately,” Zach said, nodding and grinning.

“You’re gonna be okay with it though, right? If she and Kais do keep, *you know-ing?*” I teased.

“Yeah! Yeah, I think so,” Zach said, shrugging and heading for the stove again.

I watched his back as he moved and wondered if I was imagining the tight set of his shoulders. “You think, huh?”

“I mean...it’s not like you and I are just...you know, who she wants in the meantime, right? So...” Zach stirred his stew studiously, avoiding my gaze.

“Do you think you’re a lot like Kais?” I asked. “Or that I am?”

Zach snorted and rolled his eyes, finally looking up at me speculatively. “Hell no.”

“Exactly, so why would we be placeholders?”

Zach’s smile tightened for a moment, his gaze drifting away thoughtfully. “Okay, yeah, I see what you mean.”

I forgot sometimes that of all us, Zach was really the one who’d never been in a relationship before, had never had to deal with those emotional negotiations. And it wasn’t like what we had with Deyva was really a conventional model either.

“Deyva wasn’t a placeholder for you, either.”

“Of course not!” Zach rushed out and then blinked at me. “Ohhhokay. Yeah, I get it. It’s about her appreciating all of us as

different people, and not about, like, how hungry she is, or that fact that she's sharing us with each other.”

“Mmm, exactly,” I said, cozying up to Zach's side, smiling as he slung his arm over my shoulder. “I'm sure Deyva minds sharing us just about as much as I mind watching the two of you together.”

Zach blushed, remembering the night I'd made them fuck each other for my viewing pleasure and I'd ended up making a mess of myself without either one of them touching me.

“Got it,” he said, his voice getting rough.

“Or when I have you to myself, in my mouth, begging. Or when Deyva let me eat her out until she nearly ripped my hair out—”

“Stav,” Zach ground out, turning to face me, clutching my hips and grinding against me so I could feel how hard he was getting. Man, I forgot how easy it was to get up in my twenties and I laughed and grinned, sliding my hand down between us to cup and rub him. Zach moaned, his forehead dropping to my shoulder. “I fucking get it now. But if you wanna remind me some more, we could turn the stove off and Kais can have his soup cold while you finally do that thing I've been begging for.”

It was my turn to groan. Zach said it all cute and casual and shy. That *thing*.

“You know I'm not—” I cleared my throat, “I've only done that like once before, Z.”

Zach was outright humping me in the middle of the kitchen, and I would not put it past him to get himself off in his pants, just rubbing against me while we talked about me fucking his ass for the first time.

“I trust you,” he breathed, turning his face and burrowing into my throat. “Your finger felt so good.”

I huffed and then grunted as Zach slid his leg between mine, using his thigh to tease my cock into interest. “I dunno if you’ve noticed, but my finger is significantly smaller than—”

“Stavros, *please*. Can’t we just try it?” Zach whined, lifting his head and grinning at me, all flushed and glassy eyed. “Think about what Deyva would say.”

I laughed and bucked against Zach, my arms circling him to savor his shudder in response. “Fine, after dinner.”

“You really wanna wait?” Zach asked, gaze glinting wickedly. He leaned in and I moaned as he licked a stripe up my throat. “We both just showered. I stole a stash of coconut oil from the diner.”

“Zach,” I gasped out, eyes growing wide with feigned shock. “You stole? *You* stole?”

Zach huffed but his cheeks turned bright red. “Shut up, it wasn’t like I could tell Georgie what I wanted it for.”

“I’m not sure I should be encouraging such lewd and delinquent behavior,” I said, digging my fingers into his back and then thrusting against him, watching his red tongue flick out over his bottom lip as he sighed. Upstairs, the water shut off and my decision was made. “Get your ass upstairs and on my bed before Kais walks out of that bathroom.”

Zach ripped away from me, storming up the stairs, and I caught my breath and held my laughter in check. Fine, dinner could wait. The stew had just started to bubble, so I turned the stove off and put the lid on over the pot. Kais wouldn’t care if we vanished and he probably wouldn’t want me to leave a note explaining why.

I hurried for the stairs, barely sneaking into my bedroom as the bathroom door opened. I turned and found Zach wrestling himself out his clothes with a comical urgency, one arm trapped in his sleeve, cuff still buttoned.

“You’re gonna rip your buttons off,” I said, moving to him, and catching his arm as he yanked on the fabric. As soon as I had his hand free, he moved them both to his belt. “Hey, hey, come here. Slow down.”

Zach puffed as I caught his face in my hands, lifting it up and drawing it to mine, skimming my mouth over his until he sighed. He relaxed against me, pants open at the waist and I kissed him slowly, thoroughly, teasing as much as I could until his arms were wrapped around me, tongue trying to chase and claim mine.

“This isn’t something we wanna rush, I promise you,” I breathed against his lips before pulling one between mine to suck and bite gently. Zach groaned and nodded a little, trying to press himself closer, rocking against me as he had in the kitchen. “You’ve been thinking about this for a while, haven’t you?”

“Yes, yes I—” He swallowed hard and then leaned back, blushing deeply. “I tried to...with my own fingers once, a few months ago.”

Now it was my turn to swallow, imagining Zach alone in bed, trying to fuck his own ass with his fingers. Oddly, my heart ached for the self-inflicted shame he must’ve suffered, every bit as much as my cock ached at the mental picture.

“Did it hurt?” I asked.

Zach shook his head. “I got two in, but it was mostly awkward and I came jerking off before I got any further. I

was...I was thinking about you.”

“Fuuuuck, Zach.” Zach was every bit as seductive as Deyva in all his natural desire and innocence. “Take off my clothes.”

Zach was quick to follow orders, which was its own kind of heady thrill, just being able to stand still and watch as he rushed to strip me, like I was a present wrapped up under a tree. I pulled his zipper down, reaching greedily into his boxers to stroke his length. Zach might want me to show him how this felt, but I was almost equally eager to have him do the same to me someday.

“Oh fuck, Stav. Wait, I’m too close already and I wanna come with you inside of me,” Zach whined, trying to back away from my touch as I kicked my pants off my legs.

I laughed and shook my head. “I get to choose how this happens and I’m definitely getting you off first. You’ll be more relaxed and less likely to tense up. Anyway, it’ll still feel good even if you’ve already come.”

Zach’s eyes lit up at that. “Yeah?”

God, I hoped so. I paused, taking the opportunity to take him in, in all his bare, pale glory, so muscular and lithe. I brushed my hand up the side of his thigh, and then higher, over the planes of his stomach, watching them twitch under my touch until I reached his chest. I ignored the bobbing length of him, leaning forward to lick one small, flat nipple and then bite the other, Zach wobbling forward as he tried to find satisfying friction.

I stood, grabbing his face in my hands and pulling his mouth to mine and thrusting my tongue in, fucking it against

his own until Zach was moaning and trying to wrestle closer against me, precum sticking against my stomach.

I pulled away from his mouth, drifting my kisses over to his ear, licking the shell. “Go to the bed, lean forward on your elbows.”

Zach shuddered, blinking slowly at me, wet lips red from my kiss, cock jumping. He turned and I sighed as I finally caught sight of his ass. I almost wanted to wait for Deyva in that moment. She’d enjoy this. But if Zach was feeling a little unsure of our dynamic, I wanted to be able to reassure him that he had me, regardless of anything else. I had no doubts about Deyva’s feelings for us, but equally I had no doubts about my feelings for Zach. I was his. He was mine.

Including his ass, I thought, grinning.

Zach shivered as I sank down on my knees behind him. His legs trembled as I stroked my hands up and down the back of his thighs. His head was hanging down toward the mattress, breaths heaving, and I watched him as I reached up, taking two great handfuls of his ass, squeezing roughly and then pulling his cheeks apart.

“Oh God, I’m gonna come like this,” Zach squeezed out, voice choked.

I glanced at his ass, caught his hole winking at me in anticipation, and chuckled before repeating the touches all over again. Up and down his legs, tickling the back of his knees and feeling them nearly buckle, up to his ass cheeks to squeeze and pull them apart. I reached down to cup and roll his balls in my hand, tugging a little and then squeezing. Zach fucked the air in tiny jerks and I watched a small dribble of precum running down the underside of his cock, debating on whether I wanted to catch it on my thumb and lick it.

Instead I gave in, pulling Zach's ass cheeks apart and leaning forward to catch a dark whiff of him before licking a stripe from his balls to his puckered hole, teasing the muscle with my tongue. Zach's legs shook, knees bending, but I had a good enough grip on his ass to hold him in place, swirling my tongue over the same spot as Zach buried his moans and whines into the sheets.

I prodded his entrance with the tip of my tongue and one of Zach's heels rose up from the floor, trembling in the air like a puppy's. He moaned as I chuckled against him and I leaned back, petting his tense muscles until he relaxed again.

"Where's the profit of your criminal exploits?" I asked.

"Whaa?" Zach moaned, frowning and twisting his head to blink at me.

I grinned, and squeezed one cheek, leaning in to press a noisy kiss to his skin. "The coconut oil."

"Oh!" He blushed and nodded his head to the bedside table where a little jar waited. He'd even twisted the lid off already.

"Go on and climb on the bed, your legs are gonna give out on you," I said.

Zach was fast, up on the bed, ass high in the air, and hands digging into the edge of the mattress at the foot of the bed. I setted in behind him, taking a small round of coconut oil and letting it melt in my hands. Zach watched, leaning back to rub his ass against my cock until it was twitching against him.

"You really sure?" I asked him, running slippery fingers down his crack to his hole, prodding one finger there gently.

Zach moaned, head tilting back and eyes falling shut in the perfect picture of lust, and then pressed himself onto my digit. He squeezed tight around my finger and I stared down,

watching him swallow it up in his ass, before starting to pump, to grease him up for everything to come.

“Definitely fucking sure, Stav,” Zach rasped.

I traded one finger for the other and reached around Zach’s hip to take a full grasp of his warm cock, as hard as steel and still dripping expectantly. Zach whined, hands rising up to the bed frame, and he seemed to tremble between both of my hands, not sure which touch he wanted to chase more. I stroked him inside and out, grabbing more coconut oil and repeating the teasing touch in his hole over and over until the glide was smooth and easy.

“Stav, I don’t wanna come like this,” Zach gasped. But despite his claim he was bucking eagerly into the hand around his cock.

“I hate to break it to you, but you are definitely gonna come like this,” I said, chuckling and then slowly pressing a second finger into his ass to join the first.

Zach tensed, and in the mirror over my dresser I caught the sight of his eyes widening, lips forming a perfect ‘O’, brow furrowing. “Relax,” I said gently. “Breathe out.”

Zach released a long, high breath and relaxed around my fingers, my other hand swiveling over the wet and weeping head of his cock. I scissored my fingers and Zach tensed briefly before sighing again, eyes falling shut.

“S’good,” he said softly, starting to ride and rock again.

“Yeah? You like it?” I asked.

“Mmmm.” Zach nodded loosely, head starting to fall forward. I pressed a third finger in and he hissed, tensing again. “Ffffuck!”

I held my fingers inside him still and focused instead on his cock, stroking it quickly, twisting my hand over his head, watching his back flex and tremble in answer until he was more focused on that pleasure than the burn of the stretch.

“Oh, Stav! Oh fuck, please, please.”

Corkscrewing my fingers in him and pumping him quickly, Zach seemed to vibrate all over, one long, extended moan rising into a whine. As soon as his cock began to jump in my hand, I pulled my fingers free, ignoring his cry of protest in order to slick my own hard cock with oil.

Zach came, fucking my fist, ass stretched and begging. I guided myself there, pulling Zach back until I was pressing into him as he gushed in thick white stripes over my bed sheet. It was worth the sacrifice of the linens just to feel his ass taking the head of my cock so smoothly. I only got an inch or two in before Zach’s body noticed the intrusion, clamping down on my length like a vise, drawing a garbled groan up from my chest. Zach fell forward, face in the sheets, and he panted and shook.

“Hey, Z, I got you,” I soothed, trying not to grit my teeth over the incredible grip he had on me, and ignoring the urge to drive into him fully. “Too much?”

He shook his head.

“Come on. Look up. Relax for me?”

Zach pushed himself on wobbling arms and our gazes caught in the mirror, his face red, eyes glazed, lip bitten roughly between his teeth.

“We can stop,” I said gently. My hands were greasy with coconut oil and sticky with Zach’s cum, but I figured we could

clean up later and I needed to touch him, stroking his sides and rubbing gently at his ass.

“Don’t wanna stop,” he said, frowning, and then he finally began to relax, loosening just the slightest bit around me.

I grabbed more oil, let it melt down the crease of his ass onto my cock. I held his gaze in the mirror as I started to shift, retreating just a little, pressing in just a bit farther, Zach puffing with every shift.

“Kinda stings, but doesn’t hurt?” Zach said.

“Yeah, it burned like a motherfucker when I tried,” I said, laughing. “Hey, your ass smells tropical now.”

Zach laughed, a bright and ridiculously joyous sound, and his body gave, letting me push in another inch or two before he moaned and tightened around me.

“Shhittt, that’s...wow,” Zach gasped, eyes going wide. “I want...I want you close enough to kiss me.”

“Mmm, we can make that happen,” I said, trying to hang on to my sanity and control and not give into the wild urge to just fuck Zach right down into the mess he’d made in the sheets. He was so fucking tight, so hot, and he kept squeezing down on my dick like he was trying to make me explode.

I pulled him up, wrapped my arms around his chest, and Zach took over the motions, rocking, riding up and down my cock, until we were flush. I squeezed my arms around him, pressing my forehead to his shoulder as Zach shifted against me.

“Why’s it feel so hot, and also so much like someone shoved a molten light post up my ass at the same time?” Zach asked, breathy and clenching around me.

I grunted, kissing his shoulder, his throat, up to his jaw until he twisted and our lips met. “That’s kinda flattering, I guess,” I said, and Zach grinned. “You want it to feel, like, too good?”

His eyebrows raised and he nodded eagerly. He’d denied himself this kind of pleasure for so long, and it was fun to see the way he wanted to soak it up like a sponge with Deyva and I now. I moved carefully, settling back against the headboard, and Zach arched and twisted as that left him sinking onto my cock, seated right to the hilt.

“Hollllyy shitt, Stav, I’m not sure that’s—”

I laughed and he moaned at the vibration, pressing his cheek into my lips as I kissed there. “Just hang on. Spread your legs a bit for me, yeah?”

He did, thighs tense and trembling. His breath hitched as my hand moved down between us, playing with his sac a bit before searching under, fingertips pressing and waiting for that moment of—

“Ah!” Zach yelped, hips kicking, fucking himself on my dick in a way that made my eyes cross. His soft cock twitched and started to thicken as I swirled my fingers over the spot.

“Told you I’d have you coming on my cock,” I gasped out as Zach started to buck.

“Oh Stav, fuck, oh God, yes!” Zach spewed a litany of praises and pleas as I worked his prostate, trying to focus on him and not the way he gripped me so tight I thought my dick was about to break off.

“Well, what do we have here?”

Zach and I both paused, panting, as Deyva pressed the bedroom door shut behind her, gaze red with hunger as she

stared at us on the bed.

“Hey, babe,” I greeted, breathless, making Zach squirm for her pleasure with my fingers against him.

“Hey, honeypot,” she answered, lips quirking.

“Uhh...happy one month,” I said. I’d meant to do a thing, but Kais kinda had a lock on the bringing her flowers routine, so this would do. “I got you a present.”

Deyva laughed and grinned, eyeing our flushed and sweaty lover as he tried to ride me, whimpering and whining for more. “Prettiest present ever. Looks tasty too. Can I lick it?”

“Please,” Zach moaned. “Please, please, please.”

“The present approves,” I answered, voice tight as Zach clenched.

Deyva ran for the bed, pouncing on the mattress, making it—and Zach and I—bounce, a plethora of moans rising. Deyva swallowed Zach down with little effort, and I figured all of Bethel probably caught his resulting howl. She batted my hand away, taking over the work of tormenting him, and I settled my hands on his hips, helping him ride me. I figured we might end up owing Zach an apology for the litany of sacrilege that came out of his mouth next, but it was worth it for the way his ass milked me like the greediest mouth ever.

“Not gonna last,” I gasped.

“Go on,” Deyva said, lifting her head enough to let me see the vibrant shade of crimson in her eyes. “Fill up that pretty ass. I’ll lick it clean too.”

Zach and I were both goners after that, bucking and fucking like wild animals, giving Deyva every last drop of lust, cum, and desperate pleasure we had to offer.

I WAS FINISHING CLEANING up the remnants of the schoolroom art project the next day, musing that paper maché goop and cum were disconcertingly similar, my lips twitching at the sexual turn my brain had taken, when a hand settled on my shoulder

“Father Stavros.”

My smile turned into a cringe and I wrestled it down into a smooth, impassive expression before turning to find Emma Smythe at my back, standing a little too close. There was nothing particularly cringe-worthy about Emma, only that she’d caught me in a weak and somewhat inebriated moment a couple years ago and had proceeded to make use of me every few months, up until Deyva’s arrival. She was married, and eighty percent of the time she and her husband seemed happy. The other twenty percent, one or both of them was looking for release elsewhere. It wasn’t totally uncommon in Bethel, we all felt a bit caged up in this town, but I had a feeling that if I had Deyva’s ability to flavor emotions, Emma’s around me might be tinged with something unpalatable.

“Mrs. Smythe,” I said, nodding. “I’m just finishing up here.”

“I know, I...” Emma’s head turned, a lock of auburn hair falling over her cheek as she pretended to blush. “I was hoping to speak to you alone.”

The windows of the room rattled and I glanced in their direction, eyes widening at the whip and toss of the trees outside, a flurry of brown leaves streaking by. It had been nice out, relatively speaking, just an hour ago when I’d left Kais at

the shooting range. We definitely hadn't been expecting a windstorm.

I turned back to find Emma even closer, and I backed into the low tables, a kid's sized chair scratching against the linoleum.

"Stav, I just can't—" she started again, eyes blinking rapidly like she was about to cry, or trying to fake it.

"Emma, I'm going to stop you now," I said, catching her hands and ignoring the clutch of them around mine as I pushed her back a step and moved to give myself room to move away. "I know that you find some...relief or comfort in looking outside your marriage, but unless you want counsel, I can't be that for you."

Emma's jaw tightened, blue eyes flashing. "You provide plenty of comfort and relief for that—that *creature*."

"Deyva and I are in a relationship, yes."

She gasped, eyes growing wide. "You're a priest!"

Like somehow a committed relationship was so much worse than one-night stands that just kept regrettably happening?

"I was, or maybe I am," I said, shrugging. "I want to be here to support Bethel in whatever struggles you all face. Just as this town has been there as I've struggled. I'm whatever I can be, considering the situation. But I am *very* happy, and I plan on being very faithful to my relationship." She didn't need to know yet that my relationship included Zach. That was up to him when he wanted to share. "And I really recommend that you try talking to your husband, or your friends, and see if you can find a way to be too. Even if it's an understanding about what you both need outside of your marriage."

Emma's shoulders sagged, mouth twisting with distaste as she blinked up at me. "I don't understand what you see in her."

I shrugged. "Have you even tried?" Outside, the wind roared, drawing my gaze back to the window. "Emma, I think I better go check and see if we're looking at a storm or something else."

"Right, well...thanks for nothing," Emma muttered, sweeping her hair back off her face. "I suppose I can't be surprised you'd end up with a hellion made to suck dick all day."

"Emma," I snapped, fists clenching. Except what could I really do? If it was her husband, I probably would've snapped off and hit him, but that wasn't the right reaction either. I glared at her, jaw grinding as she crossed her arms over her chest. "Sort your shit out," I said slowly. "And quit fucking trying to add me to the pile."

She blanched and I left her alone in the room, dropping the sticky mess of shredded newspaper into the wastebasket on my way out. It was harder to hear the storm outside from the church hall, but it was banging the doors by the time I reached them. The sky outside was dark and thick with clouds—no, not clouds but smoke.

Figures stood out in the street, and it took a surprising amount of effort for me to shoulder the doors open, their gunfire-bang as they slammed shut ominous, even in the howl of storm. I jogged against the incredible current of the wind, so rough it was like hands pushing me backward, trying to tear my clothes back, burning my eyes dry. The air was far hotter than it should've been, as if it were the middle of July instead of the tail end of October.

My eyes watered and it took me a minute to pick out the familiar silhouette of Deyva in the crowd, that usual wide berth of space from the others surrounding her. I moved to her side and she jumped as my arms wrapped around her shoulders, clutching her against my chest.

“We haven’t seen this before,” I said in her ear, not sure if she could even hear me over the roar.

I didn’t hear her answer, but I watched it on her lips. “I have.”

I looked up, frowning, and finally saw the monster in the smoke, my eyes growing wide, tears tracking down my face as the wind snapped them away.

There was an inferno in the smoke, a dark black spiral of dense smog, occasionally thin enough to reveal the red blaze inside. It spun like a tornado with limbs reaching out, clawing at the ground outside of the gate, dragging itself closer. A shadow loomed behind me and I jumped, turning to find Az at my side, his wings tucked as close as they could be to his back, feathers rustling.

“What is it?” I shouted.

“Hellhound,” Az and Deyva said at once.

I frowned and looked back to the tangle of flame. It took me a moment to see it, the slow shifting at the bottom, a massive head the size of a car snuffling and blazing along the ground. Christ, the thing was the size of a house, headed straight for the gate.

“What does it want?” someone cried. “What is it doing?”

“Searching,” Azariah answered, but he looked to Deyva with a rare solemnity, and my arms tightened around her, not sure if I was trying to comfort her or reassure myself.

Deyva only watched the beast, the cracks in its black form reminding me of lava bursting and cooling in a constant cycle. The smoke and smog surrounding the hellhound billowed back and revealed a figure seated astride the creature's massive shoulders. Massive, and made from that same shifting and smoking fire as the hellhound, the rider's face was blank aside from two ruby red eyes glinting.

"Another fucking general, just what we need," I hissed. I turned to Azariah. "What can we fight a hellhound with?"

He shook his head. "The gate will hold. It can't come in. It will return to Hell soon."

"Az," Deyva said, and I twisted so I could see her frown, the smoke reflected in her eyes.

"The gate will hold," Azariah repeated.

Kais and Zach found us, urging the residents back into their homes, but quickly giving up the effort, coming to stand at my side, Zach's hand catching Deyva's.

The hellhound and its rider prowled closer, some of the roar of the storm blending into the beast's low chuffing as it searched the ground, right up to the gate. The hound's head lifted from the ground at last, and it looked nothing like a hound, more like a dragon, but the flare of its nostrils was clear as the massive head bowed to our small, shabby little gate. The hellhound huffed and growled so loud that the ground vibrated. Fire-yellow eyes stared over the gate to us, and I thought for a moment my eyes might burn right out of their sockets as I stared back, before I realized it wasn't *me* it was looking at.

"Az, are you sure?" I asked. "What if it—"

“Flesh bags!” The voice was sudden and crackling, flames licking out of the rider’s mouth with every word. “I am sent on behalf of King Belial to retrieve what was wrongly released from his service.”

The townspeople around us turned to stare at Deyva, and I held on tight to her as she shifted in my embrace.

“No,” I growled in her ear, but the general continued before I could.

“Hand over the angel Azariah, and your town will remain unscathed. The armies of Hell will never march to your gates again if you comply.”

For a moment, silence blanketed the entire crowd gathered at the gate. And then all hell broke loose.

OceanofPDF.com



Call of the Hound

OceanofPDF.com

*H*ow could I explain to the others that brief and ugly moment in my own mind when I'd considered—seriously given genuine thought to—agreeing to the demon general's terms. One angel, only recently arrived, and a bit of a thorn in my side, in exchange for my town's safety? *Permanent* safety?

“Not a fucking chance!” Jason bellowed. “That's *our* goddamn angel!” He bent, grabbing a fist-sized rock from the ground as the rest of the crowd cheered around him, and whipped it across the gate and into the chest of the general. Impressive, actually.

The hellhound bucked, rising onto back legs the size of tree trunks, and our human cries of defiance were swept under the horrifying howl that followed, raising every hair on my body and piercing at my ear drums. Beside me, Azariah backed away with a pale face, his head shaking slowly, apologetic eyes on mine.

“I won't go.” The howl covered his voice, but I read the words on his lips, the dark refusal in his eyes, and it reminded me of Deyva's own terror. She was braver than him, our succubus, but I couldn't blame him for his reluctance in getting dragged back to Hell.

“We won’t ask,” I said, nodding.

Az’s shoulders sagged and he nodded, before pointing up to the sky. “Then you better get ready to back that promise up. The hound has called for backup.”

“You said the gate will hold.”

“It will,” Az said, nodding, and then his hand pointed up to the sky. “But I’m not sure what we’re going to do about those!”

I looked up to the sky and released a string of curses at the sight of the winged creatures approaching, scaled, snarling faces spitting clods of fire down as they flew with bodies the size of house cats. This was everything I’d been afraid of for years. A mass of unarmed, untrained civilians about to face an enemy they were unprepared for. The faces of my unit superimposed themselves over the ones looking at me now, and it was only Deyva’s—her gold eyes too eerie, horns refusing to be replaced—that grounded me in the moment.

“Stavros, go and get the water hoses, those fuckers aren’t wearing trash bags. Azariah, fly defensively, but give us what you can against this. Candice, grab up anything on the ground that Jason can use to strike them out of the sky.”

Jason’s chest puffed proudly, another rock already fisted in his hand. He turned and faced the enemy, taking a brief breath before winding up and letting his weapon fly. It hit squarely on target, knocking the nearest flyer out of the sky before it could cross the gate.

“I’ll grab the cross bows,” Zach said, marching away.

“I’m going up high, I bet I can leap and grab some of those little gremlins,” Deyva said, squaring her shoulders and pulling away from Stavros’ arms.

My heart slammed in my chest, my eyes on the sky as it turned black with the flying hellions. I grabbed Deyva's elbow as she passed, yanking her closer, fighting the order on my tongue. I wanted her to get into the church, to be hiding safely away, but I knew by now there was no chance of her agreeing.

"You don't put a hair over the edge of that gate," I snapped. The flyers had tiny little limbs, nothing serious enough for them to be able to grab her, but they had big jaws that might get a hold of her long enough to pull her within reach of the demon general.

"I'm not the target," Deyva said.

"Doesn't mean you wouldn't make a good prisoner of war," I tossed back. Her jaw ticked and her eyes narrowed, so I leaned in, whispering directly into her ear. "Remember what I said about how I can't lose you?"

I wasn't expecting the shadow I saw pass over her face, but she nodded. "I'll target the stragglers and keep well away from the gate."

I wanted to kiss her, not because she was listening to me, but just because her face was close and her lips were full and I *always* wanted to kiss Deyva. But I already felt as though I was choking on the stress and panic barely contained in my chest, and I knew that any little indulgence might snap my restraint. Her hand settled over mine on her elbow and she squeezed briefly before we both let go.

"Alright, everybody, keep your eyes up. Watch out for fire, and make sure we don't lose track of any of these creepy crawlies in town! Candice, get the word out around town. Tell families to get cover and..." I hesitated over the next words, swallowing down the knife in my throat. "And send anyone prepared to help out to meet us."

Jason was fast and incredibly accurate, but he was only one person. He'd already knocked six of the fliers out of the sky outside the gate, but twice that many had flown overhead, spitting fire down onto our town. A shadow passed between us on the ground and the hellbats above, golden wings spread and a flash of light from Azariah as he covered us and then swooped away before reaching the gate.

“Kais!”

I turned, catching Teresa, my crossbow, mid-air in one hand, and then the sheath of bolts easily with the other, swinging it over my shoulder and loading a bolt into place. All around me, Bethel's residents launched into action. A young boy—so young I wanted to scream and find his mother—joined Jason in chucking stones at the fliers. He wasn't as accurate, but he made them swerve away, missing their firing targets.

“This would be so simple, flesh bags. Just turn over the angel, and your town will be left in peace,” the general called across the gate. “I could call my minions off in a moment.”

“How about we just send you and your minions right back to Hell where they came from, barbecue face?” Heather McCann shouted, before charging forward, aiming a fire hose at the hellhound, and letting loose.

The hound howled and the general backed the beast away, but Heather just turned her spray up to the fliers, the water sizzling and burning through black, webbed wings. From a tree branch, Deyva leapt through the air, catching two of the hellbats in her arms before she landed running on a rooftop, tearing the creatures apart and tossing the pieces back over the gate like gory confetti.

It was messy and vicious. Hellbats were dropping from the sky and Georgie, our elderly line chef with a long, white braid swinging down her back, was skewering them into the ground with a sharp rake. The hellbats swarmed centrally above us and Az did his best, burning off the line of them at the edges without flying too close and risking getting himself snapped up in those ugly little fiery jaws.

Finally, distantly, I realized that I could relax. Yes, we were in a new kind of battle, nothing had ever gotten so close to us like this. But my people were fighting back, holding their own. They weren't frightened, and while we might've been underprepared, we knew what we were up against. This wasn't like the frontlines in the early days. Every man, woman, and child alive knew what Hell brought in war, and was prepared to match it.

"There's a small cluster aiming for the gate, wash 'em out!" I barked over the howl of the hellhound and the screeching of the bats.

Heather, and a couple of the other women armed with garden hoses, aimed up at the bats by the gate.

"Cover them!" I shouted to Zach and Jason and the others.

Deyva was getting caught by the water spraying up at the hellbats, but she leapt back and forth from roof to tree, snatching hellbats out of the air.

"Here, Father Kais." I spun and blinked at the young man behind me, holding out a handful of crossbow bolts. "We've been pulling them out of the hellbats on the ground."

I nodded my thanks and turned back to the fight, relaxing into the rhythm of aiming and firing, barking an order, and checking on my people. The hellhound paced in aggravation

on the other side of the gate, and I lifted my voice to the air where Azariah was circling.

“Will these rodents back off if we take down the general?” I called.

“Maybe some. It’s the hound’s howl that controls them,” Az answered.

From the gate, a wild scream sounded, and Az and I both rushed forward. A hellbat that had broken free of formation was on Heather McCann’s back. Deyva landed at the gate first, tearing the creature off the young woman and then grabbing the gushing hose out of her hands, tossing it to Az.

“Get up in the air and fire it right down the hound’s throat,” I snarled, joining Deyva.

Az jumped into the sky, wings beating as the town covered him against the hellbats. I knelt with Deyva as Heather McCann crumbled, her back twisting as we both braced her by her shoulders and arms, keeping her from clawing at the wound on her spine.

“Holy water,” Deyva snapped at the woman to her left, who quickly turned the hose on us all.

I watched as the blackened bite from the hellbat sizzled and spat out a murky, brackish fluid before slowly rinsing red. Heather moaned and relaxed in between us.

“We need to get her back from the gate before anything else reaches her. Jeff was an EMT, he can patch her up,” I said.

And sure enough it only took a second of searching through the crowd of late arrivals to find Heather’s partner running for us. Deyva scooped the woman—who was at least Deyva’s size, if not a little bigger—up off her feet and

marched her through the townspeople who closed in around us.

“Almost there, Azariah!” someone cheered from the ground.

I turned and looked back to see the angel beating his wings hard against the onslaught of smoke and hellfire. Az had the hose turned up to full blast, holding it up at chest level with one hand as he directed holy light into the stream with the other. I stumbled a few steps back, stunned by the smoke and the sight of the hellhound on its hind legs, tossing and flailing, its howl garbled by the sizzle and steam of the holy water rushing down its throat. It took a moment for me to realize its rider was nowhere to be seen, and I scanned the smoke-covered landscape in a panic.

There! Yellow eyes with no pupils shone like a pair of headlights near the hellhound’s feet. The demon general had dismounted and its dark and expressionless face was turned in our direction.

“You’ve only brought yourself future desolation beyond what any flesh bag has yet faced,” the general called. “You will surrender your souls to Hell!”

“Not on your crispy ass!” Zach bellowed.

The hellhound groaned and coughed, tipping sideways and landing so heavily it made the ground shake. I held my breath as it rolled to its feet, maimed but still not dead. But the demonic creature stayed low, snarling in pain as it began slinking away into the smog. It was retreating, the demon general turning its yellow gaze away from us to follow its mount. The hellbats above us that still remained were either being shot down, or were losing their focus and drifting away.

We'd won the battle.

"I REALLY AM FINE," Heather murmured.

She was curled up on the couch of her and Jeff's place, leaning into Jeff's chest as his hand soothed cautiously around the bandage he'd placed over the bite mark.

"I'm gonna stay and keep an eye on them both, but your de—our succubus seems to have her healing nicely," Georgie said, smiling up at me. Georgie was a petite and grandmotherly figure of a woman, but she'd made it plain tonight as we'd fought how she'd managed to survive the apocalypse so long. If anything got hairy tonight, she'd be able to raise the alarm.

"Tell her I said thank you, Father," Jeff said, nodding.

"*We*," Heather corrected, not lifting her cheek from Jeff's shoulder. "We say thank you."

"Will do. You two just rest up this week and Bethel will chip in on anything you need," I said.

That made Heather sit up, and she did so with narrowed eyes. "No way. I'm gonna be back on those training mats tomorrow, Father Kais. Not letting another hellion get the jump on me."

"We will both be on the mats, but not until I know your stitches won't pull," Jeff said, looking surprisingly at ease for a man who'd had to give the woman he loved stitches after she was bitten by a flying hellion.

Only five stitches, though. Five stitches for Heather and a scratched up and twisted wing for Azariah. That was all the

fight had cost us. I couldn't quite wrap my head around it.

"Go get your own rest," Georgie said, frowning at my probably dazed expression.

I nodded and bade my goodbyes to the three, leaving the small brick apartment over the diner behind, pausing on the small staircase outside their door. The night was so calm now, cool and quiet. The heavy winds had blown away the smog that'd been blanketing Bethel for weeks, and the world almost looked...normal. Or at least, normal for our times.

There was a pyre burning down the street, cleaning up the remains of the hellbats, and larger-than-usual parties of patrollers waved at me as I passed, our numbers doubled up, just to be sure. The people I greeted looked tired, but happy too, like fighting back tonight had made them feel safer than ever.

Deyva was standing in the small garden between the church and the cottage, facing the gate and staring into the dark.

"Heather and Jeff send their thanks," I said.

Deyva jumped, eyes wide and yellow as she spun to face me, and I raised my hands at my sides, surprised that I'd startled her. She'd been so confident, so determined earlier, but the woman standing in front of me now looked frightened again, as she had weeks ago.

"Hey, what's wrong? Everyone's fine and I thought...well, I kind of thought you'd be glad to know they came for Az and not you this time," I said, grinning sheepishly.

Deyva blinked and ducked her head, relaxing slowly. "Umm, yeah, that was a nice surprise, I guess."

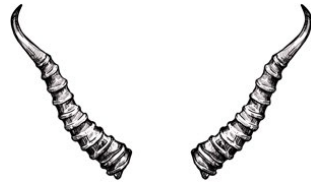
I opened my mouth, a million things on the tip of my tongue. *She* was a nice surprise, better even than uncomplicated and relieving sex dreams, better than having an angel arrive at our gates. I wanted to bury myself inside her again, to feel her strangling my cock as she whined and thrashed with pleasure. I wished that she'd been with me, at my side, to receive Heather and Jeff's thanks herself.

"You tired?" I asked instead, fully aware that Deyva didn't really need to sleep.

Her head lifted and her lips curled seductively. "Sure, Kais. Tuck me in."

I swallowed down all the wicked ways I wanted to take that statement, and reached for her hand, leading her inside and up to my room, just to get another good night's sleep with her at my side.

OceanofPDF.com



Faith, Hope, and Love

OceanofPDF.com

“*T*hey’re looking better every day.” Zach came up to my side, hand drifting around my waist.

“They are,” I agreed, leaning into him. “I think the run-in with the hellbats gave this army some confidence.”

Kais had been leading Bethel citizens in their fight training for over a week now, with Azariah’s help on hellion knowledge and Zach leading the weapons drills. After the initial grumbling of soreness and fatigue that came from training twice a day, the flock was starting to shine, treating the recent battle as if it were a learning exercise instead of an attack. Their tenacity was truly impressive—the strength and muscle memory settling into their limbs made them more confident, and their recent experience encouraged their own improvisation.

In that same amount of time, Kais and I danced around each other with suggestive jokes and playful banter. He did seem less on-edge after our rough fucking on the mat, so it must have done him good. His taste was lighter, more at ease lately, although he didn’t approach me about repeating it. And like a damn human, I couldn’t bring myself to walk up and ask, “Hey, wanna grab my horns and pound the Hell out of me again?”

It didn't stop me from crawling into his bed at night though, and holding him through the nightmares that still plagued him. He thrashed in his sleep, cold sweat on his brow until the moment he touched me. I stroked indulgently through the dark curls on his head, rubbed his back, and pushed to him all the emotions that Zach and Stavros filled me up with.

My boyfriends didn't seem bothered by me going to him at night. They had each other, and somehow seemed much better at keeping their jealousy in check than I was.

"Do you think they'll be ready for the next attack?" Zach pulled me possessively against his hip. Once so closed off to any physical touch, he started raining down the affection, almost overnight.

"The water supply is restoring and Az blessed all the weapons." I nodded as I scanned the gym full of people moving through their drills. "You'll have a fighting chance for sure."

And if I could just bring myself to leave, maybe you wouldn't have such a target on your back.

"And with you," he pressed a kiss to my horn, pulling a soft gasp from my mouth, "there's no way we can lose."

I looked up with a smile, leaning into him as he tugged at me for more not-so-sneaky kisses, but the sense of dread was always looming. He had no idea how weak I was, that every time I talked myself into crossing over the gate, he or Stavros would kiss me like *that*, and I couldn't bring myself to leave. Not even to save these men from Kimaris' wrath and King Belial's conquest. I'd imagined that Belial wouldn't be pleased to find out about Az's release, but I hadn't imagined he'd be willing to bargain.

If Belial wanted Azariah back so much, nothing would stop him from tearing Bethel apart brick by brick on his way. *Unless* I could convince Belial that Azariah wasn't worth the bother. That I would more than make up for the loss. If I could just bring myself to leave in his place.

Fucking coward, I thought with every indulgent taste of Zach's mouth.

"Ugh. Who needs to see that?"

Zach tore away, his head whipping around in search of who'd offered their commentary, but everyone on the bleachers was conveniently looking the other direction.

I rubbed his shoulder with a sigh. "It's okay, Zach."

"No, it's not," he growled, mismatched eyes narrowed dangerously. "You've been here over a month now. You've done so much for this town already, by helping out and by protecting us. If I could get over myself, so can they."

"Some people will never look past the horns." I shrugged. "The conditioning runs too deep. And I'm sure it doesn't help that you're their priest."

"Well...yeah, I guess." Zach admitted sheepishly. "Vows of celibacy just don't seem as significant at the end of the world."

The young priest perked up when Azariah walked in through the side doors, answering the squealing calls of his name with smiles and waves. From here I could see how his jaw tensed.

"I just got an idea," Zach announced, his eyes following the angel. Excitement wafted off of him with the bright flavor of fresh-squeezed orange juice.

“Do tell.”

“You should heal Az fully,” he said, returning his gaze to me. “In public, where everyone can see.”

I wrinkled my nose. “I don’t like this idea.”

“Why not? It’ll show everyone the good you’re capable of. Not that you haven’t been doing that with your own actions lately. But sometimes people need things spelled out for them and you *know* Az will bite at the opportunity to demonstrate. He owes you.”

“First off,” I counted on my fingers, “it’s going to be painful as Hell for Az, worse than just letting him heal naturally. Secondly, I have to, you know, touch him a fair amount for it to work.”

“It doesn’t bother me if you touch him.” Zach snuck a quick peck on my lips. “But it’s sweet of you to be concerned. And sure, ask him first, but you think he’d turn down an opportunity to show off a miracle?” He nudged my shoulder. “And to talk you up?”

“Ugh, you’re right,” I groaned. “He’ll grin and bear it if it’s a moment in the spotlight.”

“Oh, I don’t think it’ll be *that* painful for him.” Zach’s chuckle sounded nervous.

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Did you have someone like him?” His voice lowered to a near-whisper. “An angel who was your...partner? Before you fell, I mean.”

“Oh, Zach.” I leaned my head on his shoulder with a sigh, an old ache winking alive again in my memories. “That was so long ago.”

White feathers veined in pink and eyes laced with lightning. He carried me down in a spiralling flight, with laughter like thunder. For a moment, we'd thought we were free.

“Sorry I asked,” he mumbled, an embarrassed flush creeping up from his collar.

“I did love an angel, yes,” I said. “We fell together. He became...unrecognizable after only a few centuries.”

Sometimes Kimaris would parade Ahlaeus out when he was feeling especially sentimental, and now my once-lover only reminded me of my worst enemy.

“I’m sorry, Deyva.”

“Honestly, it’s just one thing on the list of many terrible things that goes on in Hell.” It happened so long ago, the beautiful moments hardly felt real anymore. I had even forgotten what love tasted like, until Stavros reminded me.

Zach wrapped one hand around my knee and gave an affectionate squeeze. “We’ll make sure you never go back there.” He angled his lips down for another kiss. “Promise.”

My heart panged in answer. I thought in coming here I’d find sanctuary. Instead I’d found salvation, and it was going to lead me directly to my own destruction.

“WELL, didn’t you just hit the jackpot?” Azariah strutted around me, feathers fanned out like a peacock. “A pretty virgin who turns out to actually be good at fucking, with brains to boot. Not everyone is so lucky, succubus.”

“I’m starting to doubt the brains thing,” I muttered, arms crossed over my chest, while the citizens of Bethel gathered into the gymnasium. Azariah had wanted to use the chapel, but Zach said it wouldn’t hold the whole town, and he was determined to make every Bethel resident witness my “miracle.”

Azariah and I stood in the middle of the basketball court, the bleachers folded back so everyone in the town could fit into the gym to watch the spectacle. With every person that filed in, I regretted going along with Zach’s idea more. The tastes of confusion, awe, and fear mingled in the air, amplified by all the bodies pressing in.

Only a few people tasted genuinely curious. Will gave me a smile and a wave as he walked in. I returned the gesture, but groaned as I turned to face Az.

“How do we know this is even going to work? They’re probably just going to hate me more for touching you, on top of already getting with the priests.”

“Have faith, First Daughter.” Azariah grinned through his teeth, waving at a giggling group of women. “Shall we get started?”

“Yes, please, let’s get this over with.” I raised my palms, ready to wrap around him in a hug, but the angel caught my wrist to stop me.

“Ah-ah. Speech first, succubus.” I groaned again as he spun in a wide circle to address everyone in the gym. “Thank you all for coming!” His voice projected to the gym walls and ceiling with a slight echo. “I understand there has been some confusion about Deyva, Bethel’s resident succubus, and lover of priests.”

“Seriously?” I hissed through my teeth at him, my smile so stiff it actually hurt my face. “Can you *not*?” It didn’t take long for the flavors in the air to shift to disapproval. Not like it was a secret, but fucking hell, he didn’t have to announce it like that.

“I call Deyva First Daughter because,” Az went on, ignoring me. “Her kind was the first of God’s sentient creations. She came before humans, and God loved her well.”

I stiffened. Alluding to what Zach brought up earlier, I had forgotten what it was like to be in God’s favor as well. Who knew if anyone in this room would feel that again?

“But she’s from Hell!” someone called out. “Just look at her!”

“She’s no more a hellion than I am,” Azariah snapped. “She has horns, yes. And what do you call these?” He pointed at the golden spikes pointing up from the top of his wing joints. “Hell starts corrupting you the moment you step into that realm, no matter how pure your soul is. And the succubi,” he stole a glance at me, “they were almost too perfect. God made them to be sustained on love, and for them to give love, so others would feel God in their hearts.”

Az’s voice had softened to the point that made it seem like he was only talking to me, that this was a conversation only between us and not a few hundred people. I stared back at him, trying to read what the crafty bastard was thinking.

“So why’d they all end up in Hell?” came the question from the crowd.

“Only because they turned that love toward each other,” Azariah continued, his eyes glued to me. “And to the angels, instead of using their abilities to spread the Holy Word. They

were punished by a young God millenia ago, before anyone realized that maybe it was their *imperfections*,” he breathed, “that made the Lord’s first creation so beautiful.”

“Are you done?” I growled through gritted teeth.

This was so uncomfortable. I figured he’d go off preaching, but had no idea he would prop me up this much. My guys, all three priests, beamed at me from the sidelines, and I wanted nothing more than to hide behind Stavros’ wide shoulders.

“Succubi also have the ability to heal injuries.” Az grimaced as he stretched his injured wing. “All through simple physical touch and harnessing the power of love.”

It was all I could do to not slap a hand to my forehead. He wasn’t stopping.

“Why didn’t she heal you right away?” someone asked.

“Because it hurts like a motherfucker.” A few gasps arose from his choice of words. “And we didn’t exactly *get off* on the right foot.” He nudged me with his arm and I wondered if God would listen if I prayed to be swallowed up by the floor. “But we’re here today to put your fears to rest, and to let you all witness what God’s first children are capable of.”

He sucked in a pained breath as his wing fully extended, the muscles stiff at the recently twisted joint, and openly displayed the bald spot of missing feathers. “Go ahead, Deyva.”

“I hate you,” I muttered, turning into him and wrapping my arms loosely around his torso.

“Good. Give me some of that hate-fucking that Kais filled you up with.”

“Shut up and let me concentrate.”

He laughed amusedly, chin brushing one of my horns as he draped his arms around my shoulders. I ignored the shiver that ran down my spine as a result. Damn horns, why did they have to be so sensitive?

I turned my cheek to rest on the center of his chest, closing my eyes to block out our spectators. My palms splayed against his back, and I pulled up every good moment since I arrived in Bethel.

The subtle shifts in my priests as they began to trust me. Stavros being the first to bravely, openly want me, and how he was never satisfied until he kissed every inch of my body and wrapped me up in a cuddle. I focused on Zach facing his feelings and his fears—which were one and the same until recently. He was so much happier, lighter now that he got to be himself with Stavros and me. It would hurt him so badly when I’d have to—

No. Positive emotions only. I already felt the dread tainting the flavor of healing energy I was gathering. I pushed it away and turned my thoughts to Kais putting the marigolds on the table. I drew up our flirting and sexual innuendo, gathering up the morsels of peace I was able to give him from his nightmares, the recent shift of his burdens being lifted as he realized his people were as strong and capable as he could wish for them to be.

I gathered up all the sweetness and warmth I’d ever felt in my long life, the vast majority I’d tasted here in my time with these humans. Drawing my hand across Azariah’s ribs, I flattened my palm to his chest and pushed it all into him.

His arms tightened around my shoulders, mouth parted on a soft groan as feathers sprang through the exposed skin. The

plumage grew to full size in a matter of seconds, a shining pale gold, with no black of Hell tainting it. Gasps and murmurs arose at the sight.

“Deyva.” Az breathed my name almost amorously, his fingers cupping the back of my neck, stroking along my jaw as his lips hovered above mine.

“Extend your wing,” I whispered, wrapping my hands around his forearms.

He did, fanning them up and out to the sides like an eagle soaring. They were in perfect symmetry now, majestic and breathtaking. He beat them once, pushing a strong current of air through the gym. Everyone’s hair and clothes fluttered as he beamed down at me, seeing only me. Not his adoring fans surrounding us.

“Thank you, Deyva.” His breath fanned over my face, lips angling like he wanted to kiss me.

I took his hands from my face as I slowly backed away, getting a full view of his wingspan in all its glory.

“You’re at full power now.” I gave him everything I had, my last parting gift.

“Get back to your men and recharge then, you little Energizer Bunny.” The angel sent me off with a playful swat and a beaming smile.

I walked stiffly to the wall, ignoring the eyes following me, the ones that saw me in a new light. I tasted the shifting emotions in the air, but everything felt like sand on my tongue in that moment.

“We’re proud of you, babe.” Stavros drew me into his chest and planted a kiss on my forehead. Zach leaned over and smacked one on my cheek.

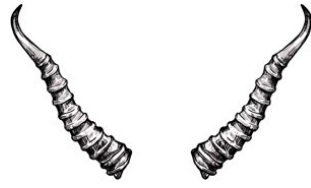
I soaked in their pride and love, putting on a smile to keep my hollowness from showing through. With Azariah at full strength and the citizens learning to defend themselves, Bethel didn't need me anymore. Azariah deserved this place, these people. And this town deserved an angel as ridiculous and precious as Azariah. They would fight for him, against all the armies of Hell, but it would cost them. And if I finally sucked it up and went back to Hell? Maybe they wouldn't have to pay that price. Maybe I could convince Kimaris and Belial to just take their anger out on me, and me alone.

Even with Az at full power, no battle came without a heavy dose of risk. And any loss was too much for this little human settlement I'd grown attached to.

I couldn't afford to stall anymore.

I had to return to Hell.

OceanofPDF.com



Living Sacrifice

OceanofPDF.com

“O hhh Gooood,” Zach moaned, breathy and uneven.

He was beautiful, trembling and whining, his face pressed to my cheek and weight holding me to the bed beneath him, stealing my breath. Stavros and I stroked his back with every shudder as Stav took Zach in long, gentle strokes.

“Tell me you’re good, Z,” Stavros gasped, his brow furrowing.

Zach answered with a tilt of his ass, meeting Stavros’ thrust and then sinking deeper into me with their momentum, the heady pressure landing inside of me and against my clit as I rocked up into Zach.

“So good,” Zach panted, chanting our names until they blended messily together.

Stavros grunted as Zach started riding his cock, fucking me urgently at the same time, his own eagerness breaking our patient pace. I wrapped my legs around them both, my heels just barely managing to reach Stav’s ass, watching Stav nearly buckle over Zach, his fingers digging deep into Zach’s ass.

“Fuck, that’s it Zach, oh fuck! Deyva, babe, come with us,” Stav hissed, eyes meeting mine, smile brilliant.

I nodded, unable to speak, the surge of affection, of love, of relief and joy all piling and pouring into me like rich dark honey and something deep, earthy and satisfying.

Zach yelped, thrashing between us as he came, his face twisted in agonized ecstasy, and Stavros followed quickly, throat strained and stretched as he shouted up at the ceiling. I turned my face away as their pleasure dragged me under with them, the beautifully tense and twisting sensation rushing through me, bittersweet and strangling at my throat. I didn't feed.

I didn't want to take more from them than I already had, and I wasn't really interested in feeling strong for what came next.

For a moment, as Stavros and Zach collapsed, I was buried under a mass of warm, sweat-dewed male muscle. I let myself imagine just being stuck here like this, pinned beneath them in that endless moment, aftershocks teasing at us all gently.

Then Stavros sighed, retreating from a hissing Zach, and rolling down to my left, Zach on my right, both of them cuddling close.

"Shit," Zach said, wearing a loose and languid grin. "Deyva, you're like..."

"Our insatiable little succubus," Stavros murmured, nuzzling into my shoulder and leaving a wet kiss.

I hummed, glad it was dark, relieved they couldn't see the tears tracking down my cheeks. I'd made a night of it, dragging their pleasure out over and over in every way I could think of. Not for my hunger. Partly for their enjoyment and because I'd just *wanted to have this*.

Mostly though...

“Love you, Dey,” Stavros mumbled. “Love you, Zach.”

“Lovyaboth,” Zach answered drowsily before making that sweet little ‘hmm’ as he started to fall asleep.

Mostly I’d fucked their brains out so they’d sleep through my departure.

“I love you,” I whispered, the tears already thickening my voice, but the guys were too wiped out to catch it.

I gave myself a few minutes of this—this peace, the warmth of them surrounding me, Zach’s cock still damp against my hip, his breath puffing warmly against my horn. Stavros’ hand was cupped just under my breast, his leg tangled heavily over mine.

When Stavros was snoring and Zach had flopped onto his back, I heard the cry from the hall. I slid out of the bed and Stavros wiggled unconsciously to the middle, the pair of them used to me drifting away in the night now. I stood naked in the room, moonlight filtering through mist to brush against my toes on the floor. Stavros’ t-shirt, the one I’d basically claimed, was draped over a chair with my leggings, and I longed to slide it over my head.

But I didn’t want to take any piece of my strong-hearted lover with me back to Hell. I didn’t want to take pure Zach either, or—

The groan called from across the hall, and I slowly pulled the bottom drawer of Stavros’ dresser open, fishing out the dress I’d arrived from Hell in, still torn and ragged. He’d tucked it there for me at my own request, although I’d read the confusion and discomfort on his face at the time.

I shuddered as it slid over my head. The fabric was cool and silky, like a wet tongue laying claim to me again, and I bit

back the whimper in my throat, heading for the door.

Azariah had taken over the night shift patrols, less in need of rest than my priests, and Kais had grown used to a full night's sleep in such a short amount of time now that I was pulling away his terrors. I padded to his room, found him on his back in his bed. He was pressed close to the wall, one arm spread across the mattress like he was waiting for me to take my place next to him.

Kais was perhaps my greatest regret. Stavros and Zach had found one another in this, they could take comfort in that when I left, but Kais...

I sat down at his side, watching the lines carving into his face go smooth as I pressed every beautiful drop I'd unwillingly caught from Stavros and Zach into him, enough to ensure he'd make it through the night. Enough to leave me drained, a little tired and hollow, and not sure if the full body ache I was suffering was a symptom of hunger or the understanding of everything I was giving up.

Everything you're trying to save, I reminded myself.

Kais sighed and started to shift toward me. I leaned down, taking a brief whiff of him, skimming my lips over his forehead, and then stood, moving quietly out of the room and leaving him to his rest. He was stronger now, every day a little more at peace. He would survive me leaving too, although I knew he'd be cursing my name for a while.

It had been selfish to come here. Selfish to turn to these men for safety and not think of the kind of spotlight I'd be shining on them, calling to Hell to come and finally wipe out the defiant good still left in the world.

It was time to go.

Every step out of the priests' house brought another clawing stab to my chest, but somehow the pain just made it easier to leave. I really did love these men. I really was capable of saving them, saving Azariah. I would make sure of it. I would let Kimaris and King Belial torment me for millenia.

I would turn my soul black in Hell if it meant I could keep those same marks from touching Stavros, Zach, Kais, and Az.

The night was cold, fall heavy this time of year, frost already starting to dress the bushes. I'd stayed later than I meant to, I wanted to be far out of sight of the gate by the time morning came.

I headed for the churchyard gate, rather than moving through town and risking being spotted by Az or the patrollers. There was a moment's hesitation at the posts. My hand rested on one and Az's blessing warmed my hand.

That was all I needed. He could really do it. He could keep them safe, and in a weird way I'd grown kind of partial to that angel. He deserved to keep his ass out of Hell. He was worth my place as his sacrifice.

I ducked under one of the blessed crucifixes and marched barefoot away from Bethel.

MY TOES WERE ICICLES, my skin was probably blue with cold, my teeth were chattering. Everyone assumed Hell on Earth was meant to be hot, but actually in Maine, it was still cold as fuck in late October.

I'd made it out of sight of Bethel just as the sky started to brighten, and I was wandering through the remnants of a woods—trees toppled and torn up at their roots, burnt to husks and left to crumble—waiting for Hell to come and find me, when I heard the drums.

I was climbing up a low hill, and the army waited on the other side, a great mass of hellions armed in plastic bags and crude masks, beating their fists on shields made of refuse—one scorched red stop sign pumping in the air. One of Kimaris' generals, Gamaeron, stood at the center of them, his massive hooves beating down the earth underneath him into a pit. I was either too late, or right on time. This army was obviously meant for Bethel and they were preparing for battle.

I searched the crowd for Kimaris and couldn't decide if I was relieved or disappointed when I didn't find him. If he were here, it might've made it easier to turn the army around. But I couldn't really be mad at putting off our reunion.

I would just have to talk these fuckers down and hope they were leaning more toward the sin of sloth than the sin of wrath for the day.

I hurried down the hill, not caring that I was starting to catch their attention as I leapt over felled tree trunks and hissed as my feet scratched against the razed ground.

The drumming faltered at my approach, but the war cries raised, yelps and barks and nails-on-a-chalkboard screeches echoing in the air. I slowed as I grew closer, the cloud of brimstone and sulphur and rot heavy around this crew. My chin raised high, my gaze yellow in warning as I neared their mass.

“Brethren,” I called, the word bitter on my tongue. I glared at the masks, wondering exactly what kind of creatures I was

dealing with. Were these the former souls of humans, twisted into weapons against their own kind? Or were these the beasts that grew in the spite and pain of Hell's pits until they breathed with a life of their own?

"Sissssster," one hissed in greeting as they started to back away and part to make room for me.

I stopped in my approach, finding the raised face who'd spoken.

"Your sister is *hungry*," I snarled, and I jumped forward, ripping the mask away.

It was a pain hellion, and I mourned my former diet of sweetness and affection as I pulled the beast to me and drained it, my body protesting with every drop, agony rushing through me like a whip of blades.

The beasts around me howled, some in protest, and others in celebration of my violence. They parted like a corridor leading to Gamaeron, who was crouched in anticipation of my approach.

I dropped the withered pain beast to the ground, saw its papery skin wrinkling and then dissipating like a nest of maggots, burrowing into the parched earth. Gamaeron, with the head of a vulture and uncannily knowing eyes, only watched me with every step. I was not friends with the generals of Hell, especially not the ones who served Kimaris, but Gamaeron had perhaps been the least offensive of that lot. He had no taste for my flesh or my habits, so our paths never crossed in my torments.

"General," I said, resisting the urge to flinch as I bowed, my neck bared for his great beak to snap. I knew he wouldn't.

Kimaris didn't want me dead or broken by any hand but his own.

"Tsuccubuts," Gamaeron clacked. "You turned against ussss, eater."

"I killed one measly little general," I said, rising and trying to find a cheeky smile to wear on my face as I shrugged. "It's not like it would've been the first time."

Hell warred with itself more often than not, especially in the centuries of its captivity in its own realm. Only now that it had claimed Earth had the legions and armies and kings been so fucking harmonious with each other.

"You have orders to take me back," I said, as Gamaeron turned his head to stare at me through one milky red eye. "And here I am. Bet you haven't had a day's work this easy in a while, right, Gam?"

"I have orderts to retrieve you, yesss. And orderts to burn the little human tsettlement. Orderts to reclaim the angel for our Majessty."

I blinked at Gamaeron feigning innocence. "Oh yeah? That place? I just got done corrupting it."

This caused stirrings of excitement from the crowd of hellions around us and Gamaeron cocked his head in interest.

"Oh yeah. Three priests broke their vows. Got some sodomy going too," I said, hating myself with every little word. "Stirred up suspicion and jealousy. Broke a devout man's faith in God."

I hoped this was worth their safety. It had to be.

"But, you know. It got to be a little bit repetitive by the end. Profanities, fucking, threesomes, yada yada yada. I'm

ready to return,” I said, my chest burning as I struggled for breath, holding Gamaeron’s too-canny gaze. “To Hell. To my Lord Kimaris.”

I bowed again, letting my eyes squeeze shut, my mouth vise-tight as I tried to bury the urge to be sick on the ground with my own lies.

Gamaeron hummed in thought and the sound was the wheeze of one hundred men’s dying breaths.

Please let this be enough, I thought, starting to rise.

And then with a rustle of sharp feathers, a hoof came down on my back like an anvil, pinning me to the ground and snapping a rib.

“I don’t believe you, eater,” Gamaeron snapped, and the hellions screamed with new excitement. “Let us tsee for ourselts, hmm?” His hoof twisted and ground into my spine, the pain blinding. “You were kind enough to leave an opening in the gate for uts, yesssss?”

No, and I never would! My scream was lost in the dirt as he pressed me into the ground. My arms and legs flailed at my sides in panic. The army would not be able to enter, but if they got close enough, a spark of hellfire could torch homes, the church, everything.

The hellions’ screams rose higher, scratching at my eardrums, and with them came a strange and horribly familiar whooshing sound.

“Hey, bird brain! Release her!” Azariah boomed from overhead.

I groaned as Gamaeron’s hoof pressed harder, suddenly regretting how much energy I had spent before leaving Bethel, unable to lift myself up. The ground was growing brighter,

glowing, and I couldn't tell if I was on the edge of blacking out or if—

“I will burn every one of these creepy-crawly little rat bastards in the meantime,” Az warned.

The pain hellion's screams were at a fever pitch, shields dropping to the ground, plastic bags tearing and shredding as they began to boil under Azariah's holy light. I cringed as one melted into those poisonous little worms in front of my face, and then gasped as Gamaeron stepped off of me, only to grab me up in the scorpion pincer of his tail, hanging me over the ground.

Azariah was shining in the air above me, John raised in his hand—wait, that fucker had taken my sword?!

“Az, go back, you dickhead,” I screamed.

“In league with angelssss, eater?” Gamaeron bellowed, thrashing his tail and shaking me, my ribs jostling horribly.

“Just this one,” Az said, a bright grin popping onto his face even as his brow remained furrowed with worry.

“Azariah, I am going *back* to Hell,” I snapped, glaring at him, crying out as Gamaeron's tail bit harder into my shoulder, blue blood rushing from the wound.

“Fucking are not,” Az snapped.

I growled, ignoring the scream of pain, all the resistance of my weak form, to throw my good arm out and grab at the pincer, trying to pry it open.

“I chose this,” I snarled, not able to say what I really wanted to in front of Gamaeron. That this would protect Bethel, protect my men, protect Az.

“Don’t be a dumb bitch!” Az cried out, and then with a great beat of those enormous golden wings, he dove forward, swinging the sword directly at Gamaeron’s neck.

The blade struck quick, shining with Azariah’s angelic blessing, and with me still in the tail’s grip, Gamaeron was missing his best defense. He reached for Azariah, but it was too late, John sliced cleanly through Gamaeron’s neck.

The pain hellions scrambled away as I dropped like a stone to the ground, barely managing to roll out of the way as Gamaeron’s head landed with the wet smack of meat and his body went toppling over.

“Azariah, stop!” I screamed, but the sound was weak, my breath watery. Had a rib punctured a lung?

He ignored me, wings beating and glimmering, growing in brightness until he was brighter than the sun, his entire being *shining* so fiercely that my eyes stung with a rush of blood. The pain hellions dissolved like they’d been struck with acid, and Azariah dove to the ground, knees landing on either side of me.

“Quick, feed,” he panted, the glow fading rapidly.

“Noo,” I whined, sobs catching in my burning chest. “You *fucked* it up, Az. I was trying to—”

“You were trying to go back to Hell because you thought you could convince King Belial to stay out of Bethel,” Azariah snapped, one fist punching against the ground by my head, squishing some of the remnants of a pain hellion beneath his fingers. “But it wouldn’t *matter* Deyva, even if you succeeded, which you wouldn’t have. Kimaris and Belial will burn them to the ground whether you’re there or not. And if they won’t,

some other demon will. Or Kais or fucking Stavros or even perfect Zach will try and go *chasing* after you!”

Fuck.

Fuck it all. He was right.

I curled in on myself, sobbing at my failure, crying at the truth of Azariah’s words. Bethel had a target painted on its back before I’d arrived, simply for having humans living safely inside its gate.

“I can’t lose them,” I gasped, something rising in my chest, drowning me with every breath I tried to catch.

“Well, leaving seems counterproductive to that plan, Deyva,” Azariah said, gentling his tone, slipping his arms underneath me and wincing in sympathy as he lifted me off the ground and I moaned.

“You can protect them,” I said.

“Of course I can. And I will. But so can you, just get over this self-sacrificing hero’s story bullshit,” Az muttered. “Together, we can make sure nothing *ever* happens to them.”

I tried to breathe, but I couldn’t so instead I only squeezed out, “They deserve better.”

Azariah rolled his eyes and smirked. “Sure, but they keep turning me down. So you’ll have to do. Feed, Deyva.”

“You deserve better,” I said, appealing to his selfish side.

Azariah blinked at me. “We both do. Now feed.”

He didn’t give me a choice, one hand moving to the back of my head, his own lowering to press his mouth over mine. I moaned into the kiss. Azariah’s lips were smooth and hungry, doing more than the necessary press of connection to let me

feed. He was searching, pleading, bleeding his strength into me and clutching me closer. For a moment I wanted to scream with the fiery ache, but then the feeding did the work on my ribs, and his grip didn't hurt so much.

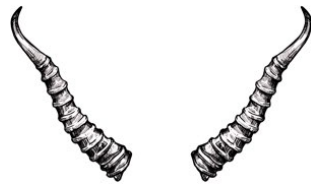
His smirk was even deeper when he raised his head, eyes warm and openly admiring. His eyes drifted down to my shoulder where I was still bleeding and the expression shifted, going sly.

“Man, I can't wait to see what Kais has to say about you walking out of Bethel on a death mission,” Az said, grinning and turning back the way I'd arrived. Around us, the ground squirmed with the remnants of pain hellions, but none moved toward Azariah.

“Kais?” I asked, frowning. And then I stiffened. “Az... wait! Finish healing me!”

I definitely wasn't healed enough to take whatever punishment Kais would dole out for this stunt.

Azariah just laughed, wings starting to rise and spread, lifting us through the air with one massive beat. “Nope, don't think I will. You'll live and I think your men deserve to know what you nearly put yourself through. Your ass is gonna be so *red*, little succubus.”



A Cross to Bear

OceanofPDF.com

*A*zariah carried me high over the gate, over the dark homes where Bethel's citizens still slept, none the wiser to the army he destroyed mere hours away. The angel swooped down low in front of the church, its stained-glass windows glowing with the light of dawn approaching.

In front of the heavy doors stood a solemn man, dressed for battle in his tactical gear and crossbow. Kais' expression was unreadable, neutral and blank as Az swept lower and dropped me lightly on my bruised feet.

"You two kids have fun." He barely touched the ground before he was off again, golden wings propelling him into the air. "Don't do anything I wouldn't do."

Fuck. I looked at Kais, withering under his hard stare. He didn't look hurt, betrayed, or even surprised. Like he all but expected me to take off running. His emotions clamped down, I couldn't get a sense of what was brewing underneath.

"Kais, I—"

"Get inside." He turned to the side with a stiff pivot of his feet, like a soldier.

My breath already shaking from fear and anticipation in equal measure, I ascended the stone steps and slipped through

the ajar door of the chapel.

“Walk.”

He barked out the command with the same harshness as a flogger on my back. I took small steps down the aisle, feeling like some kind of dejected bride in my tattered dress as I approached the altar. Behind me, hinges groaned and metal clanked as Kais closed the church doors and locked them shut.

I stopped at the edge of the pulpit, eyes darting over the candles, rosaries, flowers, and statuettes of the saints looking down at me from the altar. Judging me. Kais’ heavy booted footsteps followed between the pews after me.

“So you left us.”

He said it flatly. No emotion, just an observation as he strode up to the pulpit and jumped up, looking around at the church relics, but not at me.

I swallowed. “I’m sorry, Kais—”

“Did you hate being here so much?” He picked up a silver chalice, turning it over in his hands for a moment before setting it down.

“No!” The protest came out desperate, weak. “I wanted to protect Bethel! I love being here, Kais. I loved it too much. Az and I are drawing Kimaris and Belial here, putting you all in danger. I thought I could bargain for your safety.”

“Hm.” He said nothing else as he picked up a rosary next. Wrapping both fists around the ends, he pulled it taut. The wooden beads snapped together with a soft clack, then he set it down. When he finally looked at me, his gaze was penetrating. “Take that fucking dress off.”

For once, I wanted to talk this out with Kais, but I shoved the tattered material off my shoulders, shoving it down over my hips then let it shimmy down my legs to pool at my feet.

“We’re going to burn that thing.” He seemed utterly unimpressed with my naked body as he picked up a cross next, a large golden one inlaid with stones and jewels that reflected light at different angles. He slapped it into his palm a few times, testing its weight.

“Yes, Kais,” I said demurely, noting how satisfied he seemed with the crucifix over the other objects.

“Yes, Father,” he corrected me harshly, jumping down from the stage.

“Yes, Father,” I repeated. My thighs snapped together, the desire to feed both an ache and a burn. I was still aching from Gamaeron’s hoof and claw, and I’d started my journey hungry to begin with.

“You so badly wanted to prove to us that you weren’t a hellion.” His voice dripped with disapproval. “You wanted us to trust you, to not judge you for the place you spent centuries in. And the moment we do,” he sat down in the front pew, dark eyes glued to the crucifix in his hands, “you take off back to that place you sought sanctuary from.”

“I’m so sorry, Kai—Father.” My own emotions spilled over, tears blurring my vision and my heart aching from what I’d done to them. These men I loved. “I thought I was protecting you by leaving, but Azariah was right. Hell will come here whether I return or not. If you’re going to fight, I’d rather be with all of you, giving humanity its best possible chance.”

Kais watched impassively as I spoke, spreading his knee and extending his hands along the back of the pew.

“Show me how sorry you are.”

My legs crumpled underneath me like I was a puppet and he controlled my strings. I crawled the short distance to him and he seemed to appreciate the view, an approving grunt escaping him as I wedged myself between his thighs. Freeing his cock with shaking, eager hands, I drew his thick length into my mouth. He was already semi-hard, pulsing and hot as I dragged my lips over him. I glanced up and his eyes were on the blood on my shoulder, but he didn't look concerned. He knew what I could withstand.

I pulled out all the stops, giving him my absolute best while he sat back. He didn't touch me and barely made a sound while I sucked him deep, hands and mouth working in equal measure as he stiffened and grew. I was unsure about meeting his eyes, the woman in me desperate to please him, to hear praise, affection, and forgiveness. But none came. Even now, his emotions were still clamped down. Only small touches of anger flavored his arousal.

“Did I tell you to fucking stop?” he hissed when I paused.

His hips drove up before I could react, while his hand wrapped around my horn and shoved me down at the same time. My moans gurgled around his cock as he fucked my throat wildly, just as roughly as he fucked me in the gym. I relaxed my throat and leaned into his rough handling, my horn pulsing under the pressure of his hand like it was my clit. My nose tapped the base of his pelvis as I deep-throated him, taking his rough punishment like I deserved.

Just as my breaths began shortening, he pulled me off, arching me back with his firm grip on my horn. My saliva

coated him and made a mess of my lips as we disconnected.

“Stand up,” he ordered, voice rough and breath coming out in soft pants. “Spread your legs,” he added when I obeyed.

He picked up the cross at his side, eyes glued to my face as he held the long end out toward me, moving it toward my pussy. I whimpered when it made contact—the hard, textured object unlike anything I’d ever felt before. Kais’ eyes dropped to watch as he rubbed it between my legs, gliding the gilded cross between my folds and my wetness.

“Look at that.” He sounded pleased as he pulled it away, angling the end up to show me. “You’re fucking soaked, succubus.”

“Yes, Father,” I whispered, biting my cheek against the plea for him to call me by my name, by Daisy, anything else. I’d rather hear that stupid nickname over the simmering anger in his voice.

He stood abruptly, glistening cock bobbing between his thighs, and I lowered my gaze to wait for his next command.

“Bend over the pew. Hands out in front of you.” He moved behind me and I heard the rustling of clothes coming off as I hurried to obey.

Dropping to my knees again, I leaned my torso over the bench seat and pressed my forearms against the back.

“Good.”

It was the only word of praise I’d gotten from him yet and I soaked it in for all I was worth. My back arched and my hips lifted in anticipation.

Something touched me, but it wasn’t the warm, rounded head of a cock. It was cold, metallic, and studded with jewels.

“Kais!” I gasped when the first inch of the cross penetrated me.

He withdrew it and then the hard, unyielding smack of the object came down against my ass.

“What did I tell you to call me?”

“Father,” I whimpered, my pussy clenching around nothing with a painfully empty feeling. “I’m sorry. Please, Father.”

“Please, what?”

“Please...fuck me, Father.”

“Hm.” He smoothed the crucifix over the flesh of my ass, taunting me with it. “You want me to fuck you with this or my cock?”

The cross tapped lightly on my right cheek as he waited for my answer. A test, one he was warning I’d be punished for if I gave the wrong answer. My mouth was dry, all the moisture concentrated between my legs. I was so hungry, both for sustenance and for him to split me apart with his rough touch.

The tapping became more insistent, ramping up to a spanking level the more I kept him waiting.

“I want whatever you’d like to do to me, Father,” I said, casting a glance over my shoulder. “Punish me however you want to for leaving.”

Kais was kneeling and naked behind me, a feast of tan skin and sculpted muscles. I longed to turn around and inhale him, to run my tongue all over his body and soothe his anger into bliss. But that would be just putting a band-aid on what plagued him. He needed an outlet, and even though it hurt, I

was more than willing to be the target of his anger. Especially if it meant I could keep him.

“Face forward,” he barked.

I dropped my forehead to the bench seat between my arms, tilted my hips up as high as they could go, and waited.

The end of the cross dragged over my flesh, inching toward my pussy again. He was right about how soaked I was, using the cross to spread my juices as he dragged it lazily around, not penetrating me. I bit back my whimper as he used it to give a few taps and rubs to my clit. It was nowhere near enough to make me come, but my pleasure’s short fuse had been lit since he ordered me to take the dress off.

Ever since Zach got me off in the confessional, coming on my own felt so much easier, like a mental wall had crumbled away. Who knew if Kais knew this, but he was dragging this out like he took great pleasure in denying me.

I lifted my head with a gasp when he finally pressed the long end of the cross inside me. The jeweled object rubbed against my pussy walls like nothing I’d ever felt before, and I’d had some very unusual cocks in my day.

“What if this was happening to an actual demon, huh?” Kais mused curiously as he pumped it in and out of me.

“It, um...” I struggled to concentrate as he sped up. “It would be torture. They’d be burning from the inside out.”

“But not you, huh, Daisy?” he said, his tone still taunting. “You like getting fucked by the symbol of Christ, don’t you?”

“Yes,” I whimpered, throwing my head back with the hope he would grab my horns again. “Yes, Father.” I pressed back as he thrust it forward now, my pussy loving the pressure and textures of the object inside me.

“You like punishment, don’t you?” He pulled it out and must have flipped it around before fucking me with it again. The part inside me now was shorter, the joint of the crossed section tapping my clit in a way that was almost *too* good. “Is that why you went back?”

“No, I—ohh...” He angled the cross now for maximum contact with my clit, stealing my breath away.

“You what, succubus?” His palm came down on my ass with a hard crack that reached the rafters.

“I...I only want punishment from you, Father.” My moan was guttural, hips wiggling as I chased my elusive orgasm.

Kais pulled the cross out of me and I could have screamed with agony. I was so close, the pleasure so tightly wound within me and nowhere to go.

When he slammed into me in one violent thrust, my scream did echo off the chapel walls and ceiling. The cross came down on my left butt cheek, jewels biting into my skin as he crashed into me. He pulled back, then brought the cross down on the other side as he surged forward. With each powerful thrust he punished me, bringing his wrath down on my skin and inside my body.

“You’ll never leave us again,” he growled through harsh breaths, dragging the cross down my spine, back to my sore ass. “You’re no hellion. You are ours. Do you understand?”

“Yes!” I cried, pussy quaking around his cock, legs trembling under the sting of the cross on my ass. It hurt and I tensed up waiting for the next hit, but it was also a rush. This was nothing like Kimaris’ punishments. Kais was still mindful of my pleasure, despite keeping it just out of my reach.

“Yes, what?” He grabbed a horn and used it for leverage to fuck me harder, his abs like a rock wall against my ass. The cross tapped against my stinging flesh.

“Yes, Father! I’ll never leave you, never leave Bethel.” I looked at him upside down, my body in a deep arch with his grip on my horn. My clit buzzed insistently from his pounding, his touch just as harsh as it was sweet. The emotions were overflowing just as much as when I first saw him. “I love you, Kais.”

His dark eyes locked onto me, his emotions flowing freely for the first time. The taste of them overwhelmed me, loosening the tears from my eyes. He wasn’t angry. He was worried. Confused. Hurt. He thought he’d done something wrong and had driven me away.

“Oh, Kais,” I whispered, taking in sips of his emotions and savoring them, before sending my feelings to him. How much it killed me to walk away, how loved I felt in my last moments with Stavros and Zach. And how much I never wanted to leave Kais’ side after chasing the nightmares away.

“Deyva,” he groaned in return, loosening his grip on my horn. His hand remained in my hair, fingers surrounding the horn’s base. “I mean it. You can’t ever fucking leave us. I told you. I *told* you I couldn’t take it if I lost you.”

“I won’t.” My hips pressed back, dragging my pussy along the length of his cock. “And I mean it too. Punish me how and whenever you want. I deserve it, Kais. I was stupid to think I could keep Kimaris away.”

“You were thinking of us.” His fingers stroked through my hair now, leaning over me to the point of nearly being able to kiss me. “Not just us, but the whole town. You were willing to turn yourself over to Hell for humanity. That’s not stupid at

all.” His fist closed in my hair with a growl, aggressive thrusts bouncing off my ass again. “And I would have marched after you myself and shot a bolt through Kimaris’ fucking eye.”

“Az said as much,” I sighed, meeting each thrust with a backward press of my hips. “But here’s a question.”

“Hm?” He tugged on my hair, pulling me back just enough to drop a kiss on my forehead.

“Were you going to let me come after you’re done punishing me?”

He laughed heartily, delivering a swat to my ass with the cross that made me yelp. “Keep going and see, Daisy.”

He picked up speed, our breaths and crashing of flesh the only sounds reverberating in the church. I gasped when I again felt the smack of the cross against my ass. Kais wrapped a hand around the front of my throat, squeezing with light pressure on the sides as he brought his mouth to my ear.

“Call me Father again,” he rasped. “And maybe the good girl will be allowed to come.”

“Yes, Father,” I cried, melting at the careful control he wielded over me. I was over two-thousand years old and powerful enough to kill demons, and this mortal man made me *want* to submit to him. “Please, Father. I’ll be good—oh, fuck!”

Kais slid the cross underneath me and pressed the flat side of it against my clit. His thrusts rocked me back and forth over it, the pressure unrelenting.

“Oh Father, please!” My hands curled around the top of the pew as I absorbed him, his thick cock swelling and turning to steel inside me. “Grab my horns, please Father!”

I expected another swat on my ass for that, but Kais did as I asked. His hand wrapped around the base of the opposite one he held earlier, and he used it to fuck me deeper, harder. That sensation was the final catalyst for me to explode, pleasure shooting from my clit to all my extremities, even my horns.

“Oh God,” Kais roared, his hips still snapping forward. “Feed, Deyva, fuckkk...”

His release spilled deep inside me and I took some, using the energy of his orgasm to heal my shoulder and where my ribs were still sore, but left the red marks on my ass alone.

We slid to the floor, a sweaty, tangled mess of arms and legs. He leaned his back against the pew and hauled me into his chest. The rhythmic rise and fall of his chest was soothing enough to put me to sleep, the salty taste of his sweat intoxicating.

“You get enough?” he grunted, lips brushing over my forehead.

“Mm-hm.” I nuzzled into his chest, dragging my hand over his stomach. “I should save some for Stav and Zach anyway.” I sighed, sagging against him as I looked at the sunbeams on the church floor. “They must be up by now. They’re going to be so upset.”

“Good thing I got to you first.” Kais smoothed a hand over my red ass, admiring his work. “They could never punish you like this.”

“Their sad faces will be punishment enough.” I pushed myself up to standing, extending my hands to Kais.

I thought he’d do some macho thing and stand up on his own, but to my surprise, he accepted my outstretched hands and used them to pull me into his chest. Bringing a hand under

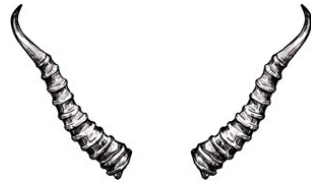
my jaw, he tilted my face up and pressed a deep, possessive kiss to my mouth.

“I love you too, Deyva,” he murmured. “I didn’t think you could heal me, but you do. You’ve...you’ve saved all of us.”

“This was my original purpose,” I admitted. “To love and to heal.”

“Thank God for you,” he said with a kiss to my forehead. “Maybe He sent us to you, intentionally or not, but,” his arms came around me, crushing me to him, “either way, we’re never letting you go.”

OceanofPDF.com



Forgiveness

OceanofPDF.com

“*K*ais, what the fuck?” Zach snapped, his hand gesturing to my red and intricately patterned ass.

“Dey, you were seriously going to go back there?” Stavros whispered. He was sitting on the lid of the toilet as Zach and Kais filled up the rest of the small bathroom, their chests puffing.

“Zach, I’m electing not to heal them. It’s fine,” I said, and Zach only shot me a sharp glare. Yep, still in that doghouse too. Speaking of, I reached a hand out of the shower to Stavros who only stared blankly at it. “Stavros, I’m *so* sorry.”

“But you came back,” he said, frowning.

I shrugged. “Az rescued me.”

“Az?” Zach squawked.

“He saw her leave,” Kais said. “Came and woke me up. Swore he could bring her back.”

“And you didn’t fucking think we should *know* about it?!” Stavros shouted, face turning red.

“I did, if there was anything we needed to do about it. Thankfully, Az handled it. He knew what he was doing and I

trusted him on that.”

“Deyva,” Zach said softly, brows drawing together. “You really wouldn’t have come back on your own?”

“I...” God, the air in the bathroom was thick with the rotten, meaty flavor of betrayal and I wanted to gag a little, but I didn’t think that would help the situation. I was the betrayer in the scenario. “If I’d...it’s just that...” I sighed, shoulders sagging. “No. I was determined to go.”

Stavros made a strangled moaning sound and Zach fell back against the wall, face crumpling.

“She thought she could talk Hell out of attacking Bethel any further.”

“The whole thing with the hellhound was a warning, at best. A threat. I figured if I could keep Kimaris and King Belial busy for like, the next sixty years or so torturing me, you’d all...” Be at peace by the time Hell remembered it wanted its revenge against my men.

“We won that battle,” Stavros said.

“Yeah, but it was only hellbats! You didn’t see it, but there was an entire *army* out there,” I said.

“Five,” Kais said.

All three of us turned to stare at him and I shut the water off with a quick snap. “*What?*”

“There are five, now four, armies surrounding Bethel. Az reported that last night too,” Kais said. “And the four haven’t retreated.”

My mouth hung open, water dripping off me into the tub. Part of me couldn’t help thinking that if I’d maybe left a week

ago—but no, I’d marked these men long before I’d really even touched them.

They had marked me too. That was why I came back. Well, that and I’d had a bunch of ribs broken and Az hadn’t given me a choice.

“How much time do we have?” I whispered. It wasn’t just my ass that had to heal. I was stronger than a human, but I’d been pushing all my strength at everyone else for the past week, and I had some catching up to do if we had four armies to take on. Oh God, four armies.

“Even if every single volunteer was really ready—” Zach stopped short and shook his head.

“Azariah is no slouch,” I said, blinking as Stavros leaned forward, grabbing the towel and passing it to me, his eyes taking a furtive look over my body. “He probably needs to power up after blowing it on those pain beasts though.”

“We’ve got eyes on them, and they’re not moving,” Kais said. “Azariah isn’t the only one who needs to catch his breath. *When* something changes, we want to be ready.”

Zach nodded and then he and Stavros both watched as Kais crossed the small space, stepping in front of me in my little towel, cupping my face and lifting it to his. He pressed his lips fully to mine, arms wrapping around my shoulders to hold me in a firm embrace.

“We are going to survive, Daisy,” he whispered, our breath mingling. “You’re ours now.” He stepped back, smile faint but shining in his dark eyes, even as he glanced down at Stavros and arched an eyebrow. “Kiss and make up, yeah? We’ve got shit to do.”

“Yes, sir,” I said, saluting Kais’ deliciously tight ass as he spun and marched out, and then immediately regretting it when Zach and Stavros stared at me with those blank and wounded expressions. “You guys...”

“Deyva, how could you leave?” Zach asked.

“I know...I know how stupid it seems. I didn’t know about the armies! I just...I didn’t come here expecting you to—to—”

“Fall in love with you,” Stavros said slowly, eyebrows raising.

I bit my lip and nodded, bracing myself against the rising wave of his frustration and heartache as it battered against me. “I didn’t know that I could even still feel those things either. For you, for Zach...for Kais. God, even for this whole freaking town, even though the majority of people here hate me. And fucking Az? I mean he deserved not to get dragged back to Hell when he decided not to do the same to me, right? I thought I could *fix* it.”

“We never would’ve stopped searching for you, fighting for you,” Zach said. And even though he sounded so *offended* by the notion that I hadn’t considered this, I couldn’t help the warmth that grew in me at his declaration.

“In my defense, those aren’t really the kind of gestures that get exchanged in Hell,” I said meekly.

“Bullshit,” Stavros snapped, standing, grasping at my shoulders. “Don’t lie. You knew. You had to feel—feel *this*,” he growled, taking one of my hands and pressing it roughly over his heart, letting an ocean of love and agony and need well up inside of him, his eyes growing wet and mine with him.

“I’m sorry, I’m so sorry. I—I would still give up anything, even that, if I knew it meant you’d all be safe,” I whispered.

Stavros growled, but he only pulled me into his chest. Zach quickly joined us, sandwiching me warmly between them. His own feelings were comparatively tentative, but they glittered against me, little kisses of salt and honey on my tongue.

“You don’t ever, *ever*, pull that shit again,” Stavros snarled. “I don’t care if the Devil himself promises our health and happiness in writing. You don’t fucking risk us losing you.”

I nodded against him, my throat too tight to say the actual words.

“Chin up,” Stavros said.

I lifted my chin and he took it in a hard grip, his mouth slamming over mine with such hunger it drew a moan right out of me, as his tongue thrust against mine.

“Feed,” Zach murmured, kissing my shoulder. “You look pale still.” His hands pushed the towel up over my hips and he rubbed at my hot, aching ass over the marks Kais had left and I’d elected to keep. It was a pleasurable sting and I rose up to my toes, rocking lightly between my men, taking careful sips from each of them.

Stavros ripped away, glaring down at me, but the heat in his gaze was full of love. “Fucking feed, Deyva,” he snapped. “Take everything you need.”

I can’t. You need it more, I thought, drawing a little more, but still too cautious to really feast. There was only one way that I was going to be ready for war without wearing my men out.

And it was such an obnoxious solution, really.

“THIS IS A PRETTY BIG STEP, isn’t it?” Zach excitedly looked at the empty space in Stavros’ closet as he set a box down at the foot of the bed.

“We already live together.” Stav’s chest rumbled with a soft laugh under my head. “But yeah, moving your stuff in here makes it more official, I guess.”

“How do you feel about it, Zach?” I wound my leg over Stav’s, lifting my head at an angle to scratch his beard with my horn.

“I’m...really excited.” The young priest’s eyes were so bright and his smile infectious. His joy tasted sweet and rich, coming off of him in thick waves. “I know I’m just moving my stuff from next door, but making this *our* room feels really good.”

“Finish putting your stuff away later and come here,” Stavros said in a gruff growl, extending his free arm.

Zach put the box on a side table and took a running leap over the foot of the bed. He bounced once before Stav wrapped a thick arm around him, pulling him into his opposite side for a nuzzling kiss. Zach and I loved on him together, exchanging kisses and locking our hands together on Stav’s chest. Our legs wrapped around each of his, holding him captive in our cuddle pile.

“What are you gonna use the empty room for now?” I asked, looking at Zach across Stav’s body.

He chewed his lip, eyes darting to both of us. “I was thinking, maybe Azariah could have it.”

My head lifted in surprise while Stavros let out a thoughtful, “Hmm.”

“You’re okay with him living here? Like permanently?”

“I mean, he’s proved himself enough. Don’t you think?” Zach released my hand to scratch Stav’s beard. “If he had any ulterior motives, he would have just let you leave, right? But he brought you back to us. He’s strengthened our defenses, and helped bring the people around to accepting you. It’s not much of a bedroom, but I feel we ought to offer him something.”

“That’s sweet of you.” Stavros wrapped tighter around him, tilting his face in for a kiss. “But after what he did, you’re okay with him being so close to us?”

“It’s not like he coerced me or anything,” Zach huffed, a blush rising in his cheeks. “I was an equal participant in that, even if I wasn’t thinking about all the consequences at the time.”

“There’s something else we need to consider,” I piped up hesitantly.

“Yeah, babe?” Stavros turned his head, brushing a kiss along my horns.

I shivered at the sensation, smiling into his shoulder. “In order to be at full-strength for this fight, I’ll need to feed on Azariah.”

“Oh.”

“Oh!”

Both of my men's eyes widened at the implication of what that meant.

"It doesn't have to be sex, but," my fingers curled into Stavros' shirt, "for best results, it probably should be."

"Do you *want* to, y'know, be with him? Like that?"

Stavros and I chuckled at the innocent question from Zach.

"I like him more now than before," I admitted. "He's an angel, so of course he's attractive, and sex with his kind is on a completely other level. I mean—" I bit my lip at the twinge of hurt on Zach's face. "—feeding-wise, he can power me to full strength and not be drained himself. And he can feed on me in the same way. It's just because our species are so similar. Does this mean I want to make him my boyfriend?" I shook my head. "Not if my three don't want that."

They didn't even blink at me including Kais with them. In all honesty, they never had. Kais wasn't interested in a cuddle pile with two other men, but he was just as much a part of this love-rectangle.

Zach was blushing madly after I said my piece and looked extremely conflicted about saying something. He tasted curious and a little embarrassed.

"Spit it out, Z." Stavros kissed the side of his face, playfully biting the red apple of his cheek.

"Just, um." His blush deepened more, eyes downcast shyly. "Like, I love you two so much and I'm not saying this isn't enough for me, but—"

"Oh my God!" I sat straight up in bed, finally pinpointing the source of his feelings. "You still want to fuck Az."

“I mean, I’m just curious, okay? You keep saying being with angels is like this divine, holy experience, and I—”

“Sweet, beautiful, man.” I leaned over Stav to kiss him, only for Stav to grab my ass with a hungry growl as he watched us. “You’re allowed to be curious about anything you want. And if that’s something you really want to do, well...” I looked down at Stav, awaiting his input.

“I’m fine with it,” he said with a shrug. “But it’s Zach’s decision, and he should be the one to approach him,” he added with a protective growl.

“But what if he turns me down?” Zach pouted.

“Welcome to having a sex life,” Stavros laughed, pulling him closer. “Sometimes, you get rejected. Although I don’t think Az would.”

“He wants you just as badly.” I nodded my agreement. “I mean granted, he wants to fuck almost everyone, but you’d be his first choice.”

“Hmm, I dunno about that.” Stavros slid a hand up my ribs, holding my breast with a light squeeze. “I’d say he wants you both equally. He just *thought* he could have Zach.”

“I dunno if I’ll actually pursue anything,” Zach said. “Some things are just meant to stay fantasies, right?” He flopped back down onto Stav’s chest, grabbing my other breast with a contented sigh. “I have everything I need right here.”

I smiled at him, soaking up the delicious flavors of love and fulfillment coating all three of us. “If the urge ever strikes you, just know you have our blessing.”

“And if you want to make him your boyfriend too,” Zach looked at Stav, who nodded, “I get that it’s completely

different than being with a human. So, I'd be okay with it." His grin turned devilish. "If you share him."

"You naughty little priest!" I slapped his arm with a mock-gasp. "How dare you entertain such lascivious thoughts."

"Oh no! Please forgive me," he played along with an adorably bratty whine. "Do I need to go to confession?"

"Yes, you do." Stavros' voice was rough with lust as he leaned up and turned to pin Zach beneath him. "Your penance is ten *Oh Fathers*, sinner."

"Oh," Zach whimpered, the sound needy as Stavros pinned his wrists next to his head, thick thighs straddling the young priest's hips as he started slow, grinding thrusts. "Mm, Father."

"That's one." Stavros leaned down and took a rough kiss from his mouth. "Nine more. Up to you how long you want to repent."

"Ohh, Fath—wait, no! That one doesn't count."

I giggled, stretching out on my side to watch them and take sips of their love and playfulness. It wouldn't be many more *Oh, Fathers* before I jumped in for my own repentance.



Holy Staff

OceanofPDF.com

“*J*esus didn’t remain a virgin, that’s asinine.” The women in the front pews gaped at me like this information actually affected them. “I saw that guy with my own eyes, he turned some good tricks for a human. Nice ass on him too.”

“Did you ever...?” Only one woman was brave enough to ask the question, and she couldn’t even bring herself to say it fully.

“Me? Nah, he didn’t fuck with angels.” I shrugged. “He greatly preferred lovin’ on humankind, so that’s where he spent most of his time.” I brought the chalice of wine to my lips. “His loss.”

“I can’t believe this.” One woman looked on the verge of tears as she brought a hand to her chest.

“Aw, come on! This was the guy that turned *no one* away. He hung out with the outcasts, the lepers, the prostitutes. He had *all* the groupies, and you’re telling me he always kept it in his pants?”

“He wouldn’t sleep with prostitutes,” a younger woman argued. “Most, if not all, were forced into that life back then. Jesus wouldn’t take advantage of a woman in that situation.”

“You’re right.” I held my chalice out in a salute to her. “He wouldn’t and he didn’t. What he did was love everyone. The impoverished, disfigured, and abused—those who never felt love a day in their lives, he *loved* them.” I brought my opposite fist to my chest to emphasize the weight of that. “He loved the unlovable, something very few humans are able to do.” I brought the chalice back to my lips. “Sometimes it was through his teachings and acts of service, other times it was through his penis.”

A slow clap emerged out of the stunned silent church. I turned around to see Zachariah behind me next to the altar, an amused look on his pretty face as he applauded.

“You see, ladies? Father Zach approves.” I extended my chalice out to him, hoping he’d take a sip, despite the unlikeliness of it. “All right, that’s it. Tomorrow, I’ll tell you the real story of Sodom and Gomorrah.”

The women slowly filed out and I drained my wine after Zach didn’t come any closer.

“Nice sermon,” he smiled. “I can’t decide who’s been corrupting our people more, you or Deyva.”

“We do it in shifts,” I said. “She works from the top, down. Me, from from the bottom, up.”

A flush of color crept up his neck, but he was no longer the shy, frustrated virgin. It didn’t diminish my pull to him one bit. Rather, my attraction to him was even stronger now that his sexual confidence was growing, and his faith was not deterred. He also glowed with the love of his partners. It was all I could do not to run my tongue up his neck and taste every morsel of love they filled him with.

But that damned succubus had to go and claim him as her boyfriend.

“I never really thanked you,” he said, shoving his hands into his pockets. “For saving Deyva and bringing her back. So thanks, Az.”

“You know...” I uncorked the wine bottle and refilled my chalice. “Blowjobs are also an adequate gesture of thanks up in Heaven.”

“I’m sure they are,” he scoffed.

Damn. The old Zach would have squirmed with discomfort and try to reinterpret that as something completely not sexual. I wasn’t fucking him or embarrassing him anymore, and what was the fun in that?

“There is something else I’d like to offer you,” he said, growing shyer. “As a thanks for Deyva and everything you’ve done for this community.”

“Oh, a threesome, then?” I perked up. “I could use one.”

He bit back a smile. “I’ve, uh, moved into Stavros’ room at the cottage, so mine is empty. You’re welcome to it if you’d like.”

I nearly choked on my wine. “What, *me*? Live in the priest house with all of *you*?”

“It’s just an offer.” He shrugged. “I don’t know where you’ve been crashing since being here, but if you want privacy and a bed, it’s there.”

Like Deyva, I didn’t need to sleep, but was able to. I’d spent most of my time checking the gate. When feeling drained, I’d hover around the couples who exuded the most

love, like Heather and Jeff. Although it had increasingly become the priests, all starry-eyed for their succubus.

That house would be filled with love. Sure I'd be in a constant state of blue-balls listening to their fucking, but I'd never be drained of holy light. And I'd need all the power I could get if we were taking on the four Hellish armies closing in on us.

I had to focus on what was important. And for once, me being the only one not getting laid was *not* it.

“Thank you, Zach,” I said sincerely. “I’ll be happy to take your room.”

I CIRCLED OVER BETHEL, reassured by the tidy streets, the faint glow from a handful of windows, the soft voices of the stragglers leaving the diner and heading home for the night. I swooped down, wings stretching back behind me, and turned for the churchyard, nearly smacking into a stained glass window when I noticed the figure waiting for me in front of the priest house.

Deyva. Her lips looked swollen and her hair was damp, eyes that freshly-fucked, glowing green of hers.

“You’re not sneaking out again? Because I am not above reporting you to Kais in exchange for getting to watch him defile you,” I said, landing gently on my feet in front of her.

“Pretty sure I just got done defiling *him*,” she said. She bit down on that plump bottom lip and looked up at me from under her lashes. “Is...Kimaris out there yet?”

I shook my head, stepping toward her, pleased when she didn't tense up. "Haven't seen any hint of him yet, but they did replace the army we took out."

Deyva snorted and cocked her hip. "Pretty sure that was all you, Az."

I tried to resist the pride that rose up in me, but it was always my weakest spot. "Ah, well. All in an angel's duty."

"Mhm...you look a little tired though," Deyva said softly, head tipping up and down to examine me.

Why was I starting to feel like I was being cornered by a predator, and *why* was my cock such a big fan of the feeling?

"I'll be fine. Little bit of rest as Stav and Zach do their whole bedtime fondling routine and I should be good to go again."

Deyva grinned and then reached out between us, one delicate hand hovering in offering. "Come on. I think I can do you one better," she said.

I blinked at her hand. She was all stuffed full of good feelings lately. But was she really offering to share it with me again?

"Shouldn't you be saving up?" I asked. I'd been unexpectedly gutted at the sight of Deyva pinned beneath Gamaeron's hoof, of her silky blue blood coating her shoulder. It was difficult to resist the intensely delicious offering she presented, but I didn't want to accept if it risked her own safety if we were suddenly attacked.

"Azariah," she said slowly, my name all rounded and husky. "Come inside with me."

Oh.

It seemed a little too good to be true.

But I was not the kind of angel that resisted that sort of thing. Michael was the one with the holy staff up his ass, not me. I gave Deyva my hand, following her into the house, listening to the soft creaks upstairs from the bathroom, one of the bedrooms. Deyva led me up to the second story and right to Zach's room...now *mine*.

"You've got big talk, angel boy. But I wanna see your best cuddle game," Deyva said, glancing over her shoulder at me with a devilish smile.

It wasn't a 'dick me down, please, Az,' but I was sure as hell gonna take what I could get. Without waiting another second, I scooped Deyva up off her feet, clamping her against my chest and diving for the bed with a quick flap of my wings for speed.

"Oof!"

Deyva landed on the mattress on her back with me on top of her, my knees squeezing the outside of her thighs, arms twined around her, face tucked against hers.

"Huh, I kinda expected a better seduction than that, after all your threesome talk," Deyva mused, puffing out a breath.

Rolling over her words, I lifted my head. Deyva's hair was tousled around her face and over my new pillow, and she blinked up at me, lashes catching in the dark strands.

"Am I *allowed* to seduce you?" I asked cautiously. I reached one hand around to brush her hair away and she smiled at me. "Oh. This is for the battle?"

She bit her lip, tensing under me, and it was difficult not to catalog all the places we were pressed together—her breasts

heaving under my chest, my hips nestled perfectly on top of the v of her thighs.

“Az...you are *very* pretty—”

“And very powerful,” I said. “And you can’t drain me like you can with your boyfriends. And if we fuck, I’ll get to charge up too. And—”

“Az!” Deyva squirmed under me, freeing her arms and reaching up to hold my face.

The bedroom was dark but we both had better vision than any human and I could make out every little bruised capillary on her lips from kisses, the barely noticeable marks of a thumb and fingers framing her throat. She’d been with Kais, probably.

“Azariah, you are my favorite fallen angel,” Deyva said, smiling. “And you’re in my top four favorite people in Bethel.”

“Saying ‘top four’ makes it really clear that I’m placing fourth,” I said drily.

“And yes, if we do this, we’ll both be able to better protect Bethel and all of those people in it that we care so much about.”

“For the record, you’re in my top two.”

Deyva’s lips were parted to add to her speech, but they curved up at that. “Man, I really haven’t beat out Zach yet? What’s a succubus gotta do to get the gold?”

“Kiss me.”

I didn’t remember kissing another succubus, so I couldn’t compare, but Deyva’s kisses were like a full body blow job. That was probably inelegant and she probably would’ve

stopped kissing me if I'd told her, so I didn't. Instead I moaned as her mouth connected to mine, shifting one of my knees to press between her thighs and rub against her center. Deyva sucked at my tongue, her hands on my cheeks diving into my hair, nails scratching at my scalp and drawing me impossibly closer.

She didn't ask permission to feed, just gulped down deep draws from me, the feeling like an ecstatic pressure and suction, enough to leave me rubbing myself against her as I grew painfully hard. She was warm, she was brimming with the love gifted to her by her men, and even as she all but drained me with every slick twist of her tongue against mine and bite of my lips, she filled me up again.

"The guys," I gasped, pulling away and reaching for the buttons on Deyva's shirt, tugging them roughly open.

"Are totally aware and cool," Deyva panted, arching as the fabric slid over her chest, parting like a curtain to reveal perfect, heavy breasts and inviting, pink nipples. I took one into my mouth as I busied myself with my own shirt. Angelic garments had an irritating amount of fastenings to manage and, until arriving in Bethel, I'd never had to learn how to sew a fucking button myself.

"So this means threesomes aren't totally out of the picture then," I said, sitting up on my knees above Deyva and whipping my shirt off to the floor.

Her eyes turned to amber and then to a vivid, hungry red, tongue flicking out over her bottom lip as she stared up at me. Specifically, up at—

"Fuck, I forgot the blessings of angelic core strength," Deyva growled.

She was glowing from feeding on me, and my eyes bugged out as she snarled and then leapt, tackling me off the bed. I stretched my wings flat and grunted at the ache of landing on my back. It wouldn't do any damage, it just wasn't the most comfortable position. But it was worth it to have a ravenous Deyva sitting squarely over my cock, arching down and licking over the ridges of my abdomen.

It was true. Angels had the best abs, and I'd spent a lot of time flying since Deyva had finished healing my wings. I was pretty ripped.

"If Zach had seen these, I never would've gotten to fuck him first," Deyva rasped, mapping my chest with fingertips and tongue. Every lick was a little thrill of affection and by the time my abs were coated I was bucking up into Deyva, totally incapable of speech and only groaning with need.

"Feels like little Az is getting impatient," Deyva teased.

"Little?!" I squawked. "Oh, succubus. Have you forgotten about the blessings of angel cock too?"

I grabbed Deyva's hips and rolled, tossing her roughly down to the floor. She was juiced up with my strength now. She could take it. I surrounded us with my wings, pressing one hand to her breast bone to keep her still while the other wrestled to open my pants, my stiff cock bobbing restlessly as I kicked out of clothes.

"Behold! My holy staff!" I cried, grinning down at Deyva.

Who promptly burst into uncontrollable giggles.

It was, perhaps, not the most well-considered introduction to Little Az I could've given. To make up for it, I grabbed the waistband of Deyva's leggings, stripped her bare, settled between her thighs, and thrust.

“Oh, fuck!” Deyva yelled, arching up into me, her eyes rolling back in her head with that first, endless drive into her cunt.

I was equally undone, collapsing on top of her, overwhelmed by the incredible heat and clasp of her around me. Deyva’s arms surrounded me, hand very gently gripping to the base of my wings and making me buck again, both of us moaning.

“Guhh, it’s been so long,” I mumbled into Deyva’s shoulder.

She huffed, rubbing her cheek against my head. “You gonna make it, angel boy?”

I bit her, and then kicked my hips as she squeezed and fluttered around me in answer. “You know I can go all night,” I rasped, lifting my head and nuzzling against her ear, licking and sucking on the lobe.

“Mmm, I hadn’t quite remembered that fact. You should definitely remind me.” Her legs twined around my hips as she rode me from below, my brain too wired from pleasure to do anything but *feel* her in the moment.

But her rhythm, the slick glide of her, was too good to resist and soon I was echoing her movement, both of us groaning everytime we crashed together. A halo clung to our skin inside the cage of my wings, the glow just soft enough for me to see Deyva’s eyes as I lifted my head to kiss her, the decadent smile stretching over her lips. Her grip on my wing roots was like a guide, the harder she squeezed the faster and more desperately I fucked her into the floor, wood creaking as our bodies thumped.

“You feel them?” Deyva asked, stroking her cheek against mine. “Stav and Zach?”

They were on the other side of the wall, fucking like bunnies, their warmth seeping into every beam and board of the house, spurred on by Deyva and I together.

“Think of how much fun we might have if we live through this fucking battle and do this all in the same room,” I said, groaning as Deyva’s pussy tried to choke my cock. “Foursomes and moresomes, just like the old days in Heaven.”

“Holy orgies,” Deyva breathed. “Oh, Az, yes! Right there!”

I wrapped my hands around her hips, watching in awe as Deyva started to thrash beneath me, wordless little cries escaping her lips as I tilted my hips just so and struck the same place inside her over, and over again.

I grunted, her feet pressing hard on my ass, fingernails digging into the sensitive, tender muscle at the base of my wings, and watched as she came with a garbled yelp and a dopey smile, body shuddering and cunt trying to milk my pleasure.

“I didn’t know you could—”

“Neither did I, until Zach wouldn’t quit without getting me off first,” Deyva said, stretching lazily under me, soothing the bite of her nails with gentle rubs. “Now, show me what your holy staff is capable of, Azariah.”

I grinned and lifted my wings from the floor, Deyva’s eyes going wide with excitement. “Hang on, little succubus.”

My wings beat with my thrust, forcing me deeper, harder into Deyva. She yelled my name and the word was laced with a devotion that made me throb, halo to wingtip. Her hands left

my wings to slam to the floor behind her head, bracing against the next rush of my wings. Air stirred in the small room, spinning our shouts of pleasure around us, sure to share them with the other occupants of the house.

With the next flap, our hips rose from the floor, bodies connecting midair.

“Oh my fuck, Az!” Deyva squealed, wrapping herself tighter around me. “Don’t stop!”

I couldn’t have if I wanted to, and I sure as fuck didn’t want to. This was divine. This was the original definition. A pleasure so pure, so full of friendship and care, it was perfectly aligned to our original purpose. I ducked my head, ignoring our flight in favor of Deyva’s lips, savoring this gift from her, and doing my best to feed her with my own.

Even behind my closed eyelids, I knew the room grew brighter, holy light bursting out of me as I became electrified, urgent, desperate in our union.

“Azariah,” Deyva moaned, her lips traveling damply to my ear. “Yes, that’s it. Come with me, Az!”

I opened my mouth to say her name, but all that came out was a great shout, vibrating through me with the rocketing, explosive pleasure of release. My wings grew taut, pulling back as I came with frantic bucking, Deyva clamping like a vise around me, rigid in my hold. Barely aware, I rolled us as we fell to the floor, gasping and shuddering as I landed on my back, wings spread flat and limp, Deyva a wilted heap on top of me.

I panted, grinning, hips twitching with aftershocks as Deyva’s echoed around me.

“Oh hell yeah, I’ve missed that,” I gasped out.

Deyva hummed, licking my throat, nibbling on my chin, rising up on wobbling arms to stare down at me with her beautiful, green cat-tilted eyes.

“Not bad. But I believe you said something about all night?” she asked, smile crooked.

I growled, yanking her off me and tossing her to the bed, laughing when she yelped and scrambled backward as I chased her.

I HAD Deyva on my tongue, her fingers in my hair as she rode me like a county-fair amusement. The fact that one of her kind could get off without their partner’s release? Well, that was very fun news for me. Especially as Deyva happened to be especially cute in the throes of orgasm.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” she yipped, tugging on my strands and making the bed creak with her bouncing. I sucked hard on her clit and she squealed, arching above me, fingers sliding free as she tipped sideways and landed on my pillows, shivering.

I hurried to sit up, grabbing her limp legs and wrapping them around me, ready to start this whole depraved merry-go-round all over again, when there was a brief knock on my door. It opened without waiting for our answer, and there was Stavros, a smile on his lips that didn’t reach his eyes.

“You fully charged, babe?”

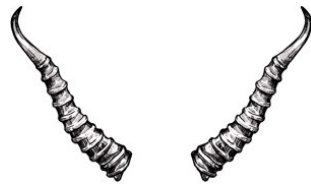
“She’s the energizer bunny,” I said, as Deyva wiggled to sit up. “So are you and Zach from what I heard.”

Stav didn’t look amused, but he didn’t look like a jealous boyfriend either.

“We’re good,” Deyva said, frowning at him.

Stavros nodded. “Good. Because they’re coming.”

OceanofPDF.com



A Time For War

OceanofPDF.com

Azariah circled slowly as he made his descent from the dark sky, the only bright spot among the thick, ominous clouds hovering over Bethel. The angel's face was grim as he landed in front of the priest house where me and the guys waited.

"They've surrounded the town on all sides," he reported. "I spotted six generals, but there could be more holding back for a second wave. The smog is just too thick even for me to tell."

"Kimaris?" I piped up.

Az looked at me and shook his head, the frustration evident in his eyes. He wanted to take out that sadistic demon just as badly as I did.

"How much time do we have?" Zach asked.

"They'll reach the gate within an hour." Az's eyes landed on Kais, the closest person to a general we had. "Battle strategy isn't one of my kinks, so I'll hear out whatever you suggest, Father."

"We meet them outside the gate with our best fighters from the town," Kais answered. "Everyone else stays inside the gate, but armed. Let them take out whoever slips past us with the help of the gate's protection. You and Deyva take out the

generals first, then help us wipe out the hellions once they're gone."

"Can I have John?" Azariah shot a grin at me. "He's like a good luck charm to me now."

"No," I huffed. "John is *my* sword. Stavros gave him to me."

"I'll give you Andrew," Zach told him. "He's my backup after Joan."

"What do we tell everyone?" Stavros had been mulling it over quietly. "They're waiting for us in the gym, and they're fucking scared. Should we, I dunno, give them some kind of morale boost?" He looked at Az. "You'd be good at that."

"Respectfully, Father," Az sighed. "These are *your* people. They've turned to all of you in their darkest times, all of which will pale compared to what's going to happen very soon. Some of them may not make it through this. They need to know their priests are with them."

"He's right," I said. "Az and I are the big muscle in this fight, but it's you guys the people believe in. They'll be the most comforted, the most ready, after hearing from you."

Stavros' gaze rested on me, his weariness and self-doubt the most distinctive flavors coming from him. We were all scared. And these men had been fighting for so long, always holding on by a thread. The sense of finality hung heavily over the town. Either this was when the thread finally snapped, or the first step for humans to take their world back.

I pushed a concentration of love and admiration toward him, not just my own, but what I'd gathered up from the people of Bethel. They owed their lives to these priests and not one of them took it for granted.

Stavros smiled at the swell of emotions that filled him, and he nodded in agreement. “You’re right. Thank you, babe.”

I turned to Kais next, snipping off a bit of what I gave Stavros for my warrior priest. The heaviness in his shoulders settled as he aimed a warm smile my way. After seeing what his people were capable of against the hellbats, the intense fears of loss plaguing him had lessened. And I had to give myself a pat on the back for fucking the nightmares out of him. Now, well-rested and balanced, he was ready to lead.

Saving the rest for Zach, my youngest boyfriend beamed with love and devotion, not only to his faith, but the people he protected. As the least jaded of us, the hope within him shined the brightest. I hoped—no, I *knew*—he would inspire the people of Bethel if things got bleak on the battlefield.

Once juiced up with a little extra love from me, the priests headed for the church where the townspeople awaited their instructions. Az and I followed a few paces behind them. The angel grabbed my hand with an affectionate squeeze, topping me off with warm emotions after I gave a little to the priests.

“You gave the spotlight to someone else,” I teased him. “I’m shocked.”

“Oh, I’ll have it again during the battle,” he grinned. “I’ll make sure everyone sees when I make balloon animals out of old Kim’s gonads.”

“I hope that’s not you claiming dibs on him,” I said. “Not to knock you off your high horse, but the honor of killing him should go to me.”

“Let’s share him,” Az suggested excitedly. “Pass him back and forth a bit, but you can deliver the killing blow.”

“That’s if he bothers to show up,” I grumbled, entering the side door of the church.

“He will,” Az insisted, following me down the hallway to the gym. “Naturally, he’ll let his hellions and generals get slaughtered first, but he’ll want to be there to claim you himself. But don’t worry, Deyva.” The angel stopped me just outside the gym door with a turn of my shoulder to face him. “I won’t let you get drained enough for him to take you. We’ll keep coming back to each other to keep each other juiced, deal?”

I nodded, trying to stamp down the fear before he could sense it. I wasn’t worried about him or me being powerful enough to take him on, but what if I choked? Kimaris rendered me a scared little shell just from his visits in my dreams. It felt like so long since I saw him in the flesh, what if I wasn’t mentally able to handle it?

Azariah promptly shoved those thoughts away by grabbing my chin and pressing a hard kiss to my lips. Pure, angelic love filled me, practically lifting me off the floor as his tongue stroked inside my mouth. One beat of those wings had my back pressed to the wall, Az’s hips pinning me in place as he filled me to overflowing with the inner strength I desperately needed.

“Are you absolutely certain we don’t have time for quickie right here?” He lifted my knee to wrap around his hip, fingers digging into my thigh as he pressed his growing erection against me.

“We should be listening to the speech,” I panted, reluctantly pressing back on his shoulders. “But thank you.”

“After we win then.” He smirked, stealing a final kiss before releasing me from the wall. “We’ll celebrate with that

threesome you promised me.”

“I promised you no such thing!” I giggled, darting a hand out to ruffle his feathers, but the sexy, winged jerk got away quickly.

We slipped into the gym just in time for the climax of the priests’ speech, the townspeople focusing on the three men with rapt attention and their blessed weapons ready. Zach, ready with a copy of the good book in hand, recited a passage from Deuteronomy.

“When you go out to war against your enemies, and see an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God is with you. And when you draw near to the battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the people and shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them, for the Lord your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.’”

He closed the book with a firm slap of the cover, raising his gaze to those of his townspeople.

“This will be unlike anything we’ve ever fought before, my friends.” Zach’s voice projected with authority and confidence throughout the large room. “These demons are literally the stuff of our nightmares, and they will be counting on us to be terrified, to run the other way. But they have forgotten one very important thing.” His mismatched eyes scanned over everyone in the building. “We are human. This is *our* world. We have an angel, God’s First Daughter, and God himself on our side.”

People started thumping their feet, clashing their weapons together in camaraderie. Az and I exchanged a knowing look

—we both tasted the fighting spirit, the faith and determination in the air.

“They’ve tried, but they have *not* succeeded,” Zach shouted passionately, “in taking everything from us. And we won’t let them!”

“YEAH!” Everyone shouted now, feeding on their own energy, cultivated by the three shepherds who had never led them astray.

“Are you ready to show them what humanity is made of?!” Zach demanded.

“Fuck yeah!” Jason shouted, a chorus of support roaring behind him.

“I’ll be damned, succubus,” Azariah mused. “We just might have a chance.”

“I hope so.” No one spoke or dared to think of what failure would mean. Anything but an outright victory would be beyond devastating.

It would be the end.

THE WIND WHIPPING around us had a strange coldness to it, not the ashy brimstone we usually encountered on a daily basis. Azariah’s holy light shining down on us from above provided some warmth, but the eerie chill was penetrating. These hellions must have come from the bowels, the deepest parts of Hell that not even heat from its eternal fires could permeate.

Zach stood to my left, roughly a hundred feet away. The holy fire engulfing Joan’s blade flickered, a beacon of hope in

the swirling, dark fog. Stavros stood somewhere another hundred feet to my right, barely visible. It was mid-morning, but dark as night.

Across town, Kais commanded his squadron of civilian fighters. And above us, Azariah could see all. Together, we braced ourselves and waited for the inevitable. Our task was simply to prevent as many demons as possible from reaching the gates of Bethel.

“Hellions coming up fast on Kais,” Az reported, his voice radiating power as it reached us. “Looks like they’re going for the maximum amount of humans.”

“Want me over there?” I yelled up.

“Nope. Already on it, sweet cheeks.”

Az’s dim glow turned overpowering, lighting up the sky like a miniature sun that illuminated the battlefield. Waves of hellions covered the landscape, their generals at the back of their formation. Some marched on us uniformly, like swarming ants. Others were misshapen, their movements slow and disjointed. Those would be the easiest for the humans to take out, so I focused on the organised units and their general.

No one gave an order. With one glance and nod to Stavros and Zach—their support warming me to my bones—I started running.

Better to catch them farther away from the gate, I figured.

The ground shook beneath me as I took off, Azariah’s holy light temporarily blinding. But it spurred me on, my surroundings blurring as I picked up speed. Power and strength coiled within me, eager to be unleashed on the hellions attacking us.

I have to save the best for Kimaris, I reminded myself as the hordes came closer.

When Az's glow didn't completely subside, I looked at my hands and saw holy light radiating from *me*. "Thanks for the juice, Az." I smiled before refocusing on my target.

With a sweep of my arms, I took out rows of hellions easily, their forms vanishing into dust as I cut through them like butter. I extended my fingertips, shooting holy light and pulses of my own out as far as the eye could see. Nothing got past me. They wouldn't even get within throwing distance of Bethel.

I cut a straight line through the unit, heading straight for the general, a multi-headed fucker with male and female faces by the name of Dantalion.

"The succubus!" multiple mouths wailed in unison.

That was all they got a chance to say.

I pulled John from his sheath, the blade a shining gold as I cut across my body, and severed all twelve of Dantalion's heads from their necks. Black sludge poured out of the gaping wounds as the body fell. I was careful not to let it touch me as I whipped around, taking out another horde of hellions who tried to attack me from behind.

Running across the field to the next general, each step was like a flying leap across the landscape. And I had barely dented my power reserve. Az was right—I really was an energizer bunny.

The area surrounding Bethel was barren and charred to a crisp, thanks to the hellfire and complete lack of sunlight. So a stag with an impressive rack of antlers was nothing if not a suspicious sight.

I stopped my run at the base of the hill from where the animal watched me, holding John at my side. “Who are you?” I demanded.

The stag’s ears flicked as it watched me wordlessly. It had to be a trap. No prey animal could survive out here.

I sliced the air in front of me, concentrating my strength as my body tingled with power. “This is your final warning. Name yourself!”

An awful screeching sound emerged from the stag, like metal grinding on metal, as batlike wings sprouted from its back. Its front hooves turned into humanlike hands with long, dark claws.

“You don’t slaughter your brethren and make demands of *me*, traitor succubus,” the demon bellowed. “I, Ferthur, will ensure you are begging for death when I return you to Kimaris!” His wings spread open to the sides as he dove off the hill, heading straight for me.

I clasped John in both hands and held the sword ready like a baseball bat. “You always were a liar, Ferthur.”

The demon’s claws extended as he reached for me, that ear-splitting scream ringing in my ears before I swung. John tore through his wing and the trunk of his body. He didn’t cut through as easily as with Dantalion, so while Ferthur thrashed with my sword embedded in him, I grabbed his antlers.

With a sickening crunch, I pulled and twisted the demon’s head to an impossible angle. Of course that didn’t kill him, but it kept me from getting stabbed by antlers as I finished the job. I yanked John out from his ribcage and hacked at Ferthur’s neck until he was just as dead and decapitated as the last general.

I panted slightly, watching his body dissolve into nothing. That took a little more energy, but I was still in decent shape. I could take out another general or two before going back to Az to top myself off.

My decision made, I wiped the black, sludgy demon blood off of my blessed blade and carried on.

“YOU’LL PAY for this betrayal, whore of humans!”

“Tell it to someone who cares.”

I drove John right through Ouras’ stupid horse mouth, silencing the demon once and for all. Leaning heavily on the sword, I rose to my aching, tender feet.

Two more waves of hellions and their generals had emerged from the fog, and I used more precious energy on them before I could get to Az or my guys. My run back toward Bethel was at a more human pace now, my lungs laboring with effort, and John feeling significantly heavier in my hand.

I didn’t see many hellions left, but it was still so dark out. I could only hope I was following the correct lights back into town, and another demon wasn’t trying to lure me into a trap. A whooshing sound came from above me and I spun defensively, raising John on instinct.

“Deyva, it’s me! Where have you been?”

“Az!” I cried with relief. He was burned out too, his holy light dulled to a faint glow, with ash and sweat covering his body. I probably didn’t look much better.

The angel swooped down and gathered me up in his arms. He sagged slightly under my weight, but never once touched

the ground.

“I didn’t see you for so long, I got worried.” He stroked my hair, cradling my head to his chest as he flew us back toward the town. “Why didn’t you come find me sooner?”

His concern was sweet, delicious, and it filled me up like an empty jar left out in the rain. I hugged around his neck, pressing kisses to his throat and jaw to replenish him in return.

“I felt fine after the first two generals, so I kept going. Then two more snuck up on me and I couldn’t get away without leading them right to you.”

“You should have, we could have fought them together.” He tugged at one of my horns, being chastising and affectionate.

“Well, I think all the leaders are gone, so we’ve done our parts. How are the guys?”

“Worn out, but holding on,” he said. “A few hellions slipped past them but the townspeople took them out with fire hoses.”

“Where are they?” I scanned the ground below us. “I need to replenish them.”

“Hold your damn horses, succubus. I need to replenish *you*.”

“Hurry the fuck up and kiss me then!”

Azariah laughed with a nip of my ear. “Let me find a place to land.”

“What’s the matter, fly boy?” I tugged his lower lip between my teeth. “Can’t fuck in midair?”

“Fuck me,” he groaned, hand sliding down my back to clutch at my ass.

“That’s what I’m trying to do.” I sucked hard at his neck, dragging my lips along the taut muscle as his hips ground into me. “There you go,” I whispered, my tongue against his skin. “You’re getting stronger already.”

“Quit distracting me and feed, you little minx.” He squeezed my ass, rubbing and grinding his cock against me while his wings carried us. “Only you could turn me on so much in the middle of a battle.”

“I’m sure Zach could too,” I said, taking greedy gulps of his desire while pushing love and affection back to him. We were an endless feedback loop, taking and giving to each other.

“Speaking of, I see the priests. Hold on, Deyva.”

Our bodies pressed together as he picked up speed, wings folding back as he dove toward the ground. Turning my head to look, I spotted my three guys forming a circle with their backs to each other, while hellions surrounded, closing in on them.

Az laughed amusedly at my protective growl. “Let’s save the day!” he yelled over the wind rushing in our ears.

Keeping one arm around his neck, I stretched the other out toward the enemies forming a gradually tighter circle around my boyfriends. Az copied the gesture, holding me secure against him with an arm around my waist.

Our outstretched palms glowed with holy light, growing brighter by the second. The hellions barely knew what hit them, blinded by the force of our combined power before being smited into oblivion.

“Deyva! Babe!” my guys called out to me.

Az released me, hovering a few feet off the ground. Within seconds, hands and mouths caressed me—touching my face, hugging me, kissing and caressing my horns. It all tasted beautiful, but I couldn’t allow myself to feed and drain them even more. I pushed strength into them instead, the resolve to win and end this. One by one, each man’s spine straightened up, their eyes growing a little brighter.

“Is anyone hurt?” I felt for pain, injuries, anything I needed to heal. To my immense relief, everything was surface level—scrapes and bruises. The guys were just exhausted. “How are the townspeople?” I asked when everyone had a chance to catch their breath.

“Good,” Kais panted, wiping sweat from his brow. “Back inside the gate, for now.”

“Is that...it?” Zach dared to ask, his face covered in soot. “Did we win?”

“As much as I’d enjoy that victory threesome now, I don’t think we should get too hopeful yet.” Az looked around, wings tense and high on his back.

The silence was just as eerie as the rattling, rasping, and shrieks of the hellions. Only a breeze howled softly as we walked along the gate’s perimeter, with Az buffing up the weak spots in the crucifixes. Taking out the few remaining hellions clinging to life, we all started to breath a bit easier upon nearly making a complete loop around the town.

Then the earth started to shake.

“You two, get in the air!” Stavros shoved me at Az, who pulled me into his chest and took flight despite my squirming.

“No, we have to stay with them!” I shoved at Az, struggling to remove myself from his grip.

“It’s not them he wants.” For the first time ever, I tasted sharp, genuine fear from the cocky angel. “It’s us.”

A massive crack in the ground appeared, an ear-splitting thunder rumbling over the world as the two sides began to separate. My priests ran for cover, Zach pointing and shouting at how close the fissure was running toward the gate. When the familiar black-clawed hand shot up from the gradually spreading canyon, dread filled me, like I drank from a poisonous well.

“Deyva.” Kimaris grinned, hoisting himself up. “At last we’re reunited.” His soulless black eyes slid over to Azariah. “No thanks to you, angel.”

“What can I say, Kim? She’s a much better lay.” Az’s grip around me tightened, his fingers locking at my waist.

Kimaris’ proportions were ridiculous here on earth. He was as tall as the church itself and almost as wide, his horns the size of helicopter propellers.

“Don’t you two look sweet wrapped up in each other!” The demon’s voice dripped with cruelty, likely already fantasizing all the ways he would abuse us. A memory of Ahlaeus, my first angel lover, popped into my head and I clutched around Az’s neck tighter. “It’s actually perfect that you two are together. Your screams will be most entertaining to our special guest.”

The ground shook ten times more violently than before, knocking my priests off their feet as they struggled to stand. The fissure in the ground stretched open like a gaping maw—or the Mouth of Hell itself.

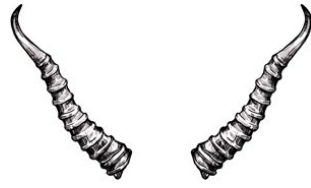
“What’s happening?” I could only hold on to Az and stare at what looked like the entire planet breaking apart.

“I don’t know.” Then, “Oh! Ohhh, *shit.*”

If I thought Kimaris was big, he was dwarfed by the monster crawling out of the earth. Clawed, gnarled hands the size of houses reached up, kicking up dust storms as the palms flattened against the earth. Wide horns emerged, the ends curving up like those on a longhorn bull, and a heavy blackened crown sat between them.

My dread morphed into a bottomless pit of despair as King Belial pulled himself out of Hell.

OceanofPDF.com



Not A Chance In Hell

OceanofPDF.com

“*W*atch me, my king!” Kimaris bellowed, looking child-sized compared to Belial. “As I deliver these unruly subjects back to the pits they find themselves too good for. Angel,” his nostrils flared, glaring at Azariah, “you can forget all about a fair trial and judgment.”

“You’ll have to catch us first, you ugly...I was about to say motherfucker, but no mother would fuck you.”

“Az!” I shrieked.

Kimaris was already lunging toward us, long, hooved legs stretching far. He used the burnt-out husk of an oak tree as a springboard, launching himself up in the air dangerously close to us. Azariah soared and twisted us in midair, changing direction at the last possible moment.

“Think of your priests, Deyva,” Az said, his voice tight with effort as we dodged Kimaris. “Think of how much you love them.”

“More than anything,” I said, scanning the ground but not finding them. *Oh God, please don’t let them fall into the canyon.*

“Good, hold on to that. It’ll fuel me.” He stroked a tender hand along my face, gazing at me for a moment. “And keep

taking what you need from me.”

I lifted my face and kissed him in reply, pulling that raw power and sweet holy light directly from his soul to mine. When we parted, our arms were already outstretched, palms glowing, a vicious wind whipping against us.

“Arghh!” Kimaris raised his arms to shield his eyes, his skin sizzling and hissing at the contact from holy light. But it would take more than that to kill him.

I glanced at Belial, who watched us impassively. His giant form looked too impossible to be real, like he was some kind of monument casting a shadow over Bethel. But his eyes, red-glowing slits with no pupils, focused on us with an unnerving intensity.

“Again, Deyva!” This time Az initiated a rough kiss, but something burning and rank hit us with the force of a speeding car.

“Az!” I screamed. We almost broke apart on our tumble down to earth from a swat of Kimaris’ massive hand. Loose feathers floated in the air, but my angel quickly righted us. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” he said through gritted teeth.

I pressed my hands to his back, sending every ounce of healing that I could spare despite my own skin blistering. “We have to take him out. We can’t afford to keep playing cat and mouse.”

“And what do you think that king’s gonna do?”

“I don’t know, but Kimaris is the threat right now.”

“I’ll break every bone in your wings, angel!” Kimaris roared up at us. “And you, succubus, will watch, while all my

legions take their turns with you.”

“You’re never touching me again!” I screamed back, all feelings of love gone. Pure hate roiled through me like an angry sea. “You’ll never have any of them!” I twisted in Az’s grip, freeing both hands to extend straight toward the demon I longed to kill for millenia.

My holy light wasn’t as strong as Az’s, but I succeeded in temporarily blinding Kimaris. Shoving myself away from the angel, I fell freely to earth, using my strength to drop harder, like a boulder. My kick landed on Kimaris’ chest, sending him backward and giving me room to pummel my fists into his face.

The force of my blows would have sent a human’s head flying from its body, but the demon’s head just snapped from side to side until he regained balance. With lightning speed, he bowed forward and headbutted me right in the chest.

Air shot out of my lungs as I flew backwards. Fuck, that hurt.

“Deyva!” Az dove straight toward me, getting close enough that I could see the worry on his face before an arm the size of a crane smacked right into him, sending him tumbling through the air.

“Aaazzz!” I shrieked, horrified as more golden feathers floated to the ground, my angel’s body landing with a hard thud and rolling before he stilled.

A shadow came over me, blocking out what little light remained in the sky. King Belial brushed golden feathers off of his arm, utterly ignoring me as his lava-red gaze leveled on Kimaris.

“This is an embarrassment.” The king’s voice vibrated through the air like there was a speaker right next to my head.

“I will end this once and for all, my king!” Kimaris’ speech slurred as he stumbled over, his jaw hanging at an odd angle.

“No.” Belial stretched both crane-like arms out toward the smaller demon. “You are the embarrassment, and I will end *you*.”

Something spurred to me to take off running, hurrying to Az stirring painfully slowly on the ground. Despite putting distance between me and the demons, I still heard Belial’s voice as though he were right next to my ear.

“You released the succubus with no authority from me, and sent a barely Hell-touched angel after her. Together, they overpower you. You are incompetent and a disgrace, Kimaris.”

“No! My king, please! No, ahhh!”

The sweetness of Kimaris’ death was tainted by Azariah’s battered body, his breaths coming in pained wheezes and wings shaking in shock. I kneeled next to him and pressed my palms against his skin.

“Sorry. This is going to hurt like a bitch.” I didn’t care that it would drain me. I healed him, and held nothing back.

“Gahhhh! Still better than getting fucked by Kimarisssss!” he hissed, arching and twisting as I repaired his broken wings. “Deyva, stop! You’ll drain yourself!”

“You’re our best chance of surviving this, Az,” I gasped, my body growing heavy and sore, my balance failing. “I was in Hell for millenia, I’ll never be strong enough.”

The ground rattled and I glared at Kimaris' withered body as it bounced against the dry earth, eyes black and lifeless, before sliding down into the cavernous ravine.

"Deyva, shut the fuck up and kiss me," Az said softly, and before I could pull away, he grabbed my shoulders and drew me in, slanting his mouth over mine.

I moaned, drinking deeply for one brilliant, restorative second, and then I gasped as a fist like a boulder wrapped around my waist, stealing me away from Az.

"Deyva!" Az cried, eyes wide with horror. He jumped up, wings beating and ready to fly, and was promptly batted roughly away by a massive hand.

My ribs screamed with Belial's grip, my legs barely able to kick, but I still had John in hand, and I used the sword to hack at the fingers holding me. On the ground below, rushing out from Bethel's gate, my men cried out, Zach's bright head running for Azariah where he lay discarded against the ground.

"Deyva, my wickedest eater, I suppose I should not be surprised you were tempted by sweeter fare," Belial boomed, my head throbbing harder with every syllable, the vibration of his voice so dense it made it hard to hold on to the hilt of my sword. "I should not have given you to Kimaris, he was not worthy and I failed to see it."

I was both terrified of turning and facing Belial, and determined. He was ghastly, enormous, and yet somehow exquisite in his power. Not handsome, but beautifully horrifying, with a jaw that extended from one twisted ear to the other, like a jack-o'-lantern, and bones that twisted and turned in every direction.

“I have a bargain for you, little succubus. You may have your human morsels. You may retire from my service. Deliver me the angel, and peace is yours.”

The world went quiet, or the alarm in my head rang so loud it blocked out the wind, the screams from the ground. Turn Az over to Belial and it would be over? Stavros, Zach, and Kais would be safe. Bethel would be safe.

I...I would be free.

I almost believed in the fantasy for a moment, except there was one obvious error.

And then Azariah called up from the ground. “Deyva, I’ll do—”

“Shut your mouth, Az!” I screamed back, craning over Belial’s fist to see him staring up at me, glowing with light, his face sorrowful, but not frightened.

“But you could—”

“Azariah, don’t be a dumb bitch!” I answered, grinning, seeing his smile, as weak as it was. I turned back to Belial and faced the snarl of his glare. “Not a chance in Hell, Your Majesty. You can have me for all I care, but there’s no way I’m letting you touch a feather on that angel, or a brick of that town, and we both know you can’t get in.”

“I will draw their feeble souls out, eater,” Belial said, crushing the words in his gore-dressed teeth. “I will destroy every one of their measly bodies for your defiance, and ensure their suffering for eternity.”

Demon kings were wordy bastards, but I was a woman of action. I grabbed John’s hilt in both hands, twisting my body and stabbing down into Belial’s wrist with all my strength, groaning as blessed steel struck demonic bone. Belial roared

so loud, my vision darkened, and I was falling through the air before I could see again, a scream shredding my throat.

“Oof!” Azariah caught me in his arms, wings beating unevenly at my back.

I buried my face in his neck, not out of fear—that feeling had already numbed me—but just to taste his skin with my lips again. “You’re mine too, Az. Just as much as the priests are. If I can’t surrender, neither can you.”

“I suppose I should’ve expected this. How could you not love me?” He forced out a scoff. “We’ll romance each other right once we’re done. Right now, we have work to do. Ready?”

“He has John!” I warned, staring up at where my sword remained piercing Belial’s wrist, the wound sizzling and festering.

“Leave it, take Andrew instead,” Az said, passing me his own blade. “I’ve got holy light anyway. And don’t fucking give me anymore of your strength, Deyva.”

I kissed his jaw anyway, just because he deserved the thanks. “Drop me on his shoulders.”

Az’s jaw gritted, his flight circling us cautiously around Belial at a distance. “Are you sure? We could get the guys, go inside the gate...”

“And what? Just wait for the water supply to get fucked, the entire town to starve?” I cried out. On the ground, our priests were trying to buy us time, Kais taking careful aim with his crossbow, catching Belial dead center in the throat. Another brain-splitting roar sounded, and even Az’s flight faltered.

Az's lips curled up, even as his gaze was weary. "You should've been in Heaven this whole time, Deyva, I swear to God."

"Drop me on his shoulders, Az."

"One royally fucked piggy back ride coming right up," Az said, swooping past Belial's raised fist, before tossing me carefully onto Belial's left shoulder.

I screamed, ripping into Belial's shoulder with my left arm, his thrashing starting, before stabbing roughly into the side of his throat. I didn't know if a demon king had a jugular, or even a pulse, but I knew getting stabbed in the throat had to fucking hurt. And it must have, because Belial reared back, a piercing scream raised to the sky which seemed to threaten to split for a moment. Black blood rushed out of the wound as I pulled Andrew free, cascading over Belial's twisted muscles, making my feet slip and skid over his leathery hide.

I waited for Belial's thrashing to calm before jumping, jamming Andrew into the base of Belial's horn, hanging on by a thread of strength as his head tossed me side to side. He reached for me, claws out, and I scrambled over to his other shoulder, repeating the piercing to his throat, his horn.

David had taken Goliath down with his slingshot. I would take Belial down with a thousand pinpricks if I had to.

"Deyva! Hang on," Kais screamed from the ground.

I tore my arm through Belial's ear, hanging on like the world's bitchiest earring, as Kais aimed and fired again, this bolt lodging itself directly into one eye, a vivid yellow spurting forth.

Belial bellowed, bowing for the ground, arms stretched out to swipe at my men. Azariah dove between them, holy light

spilling out of him, but I knew it wouldn't be enough, Belial would only end up hurting Az too much. I leapt, running for the knot of spine at the base of Belial's short neck, jamming in Andrew and then jumping. The blade cut through skin and muscle and tendons, their snap audible as I fell, Andrew's path down the demon's spine shedding a waterfall of black blood over my head.

Belial arched with his scream, one foot managing to reach out and kick Zach and Stavros aside, another hand swiping Az away, his wings skidding against the ground, gold feathers scattering. I landed poorly, an ankle rolling under me, and I realized that the blood running down my sides wasn't only Belial's, there was blue in the mix. He must've pierced my ribs while he had his grip on me.

“Deyva! Look out!” Kais screamed.

The foot that had kicked Zach and Stavros was heading to stomp on me, and Belial was shedding heat like a bonfire, beating Kais back and making him wince, sweat breaking out all over me as black blood stung my eyes. I jumped before the foot landed, scratching Andrew across the back of Belial's heel, mostly nicking bone.

I climbed up Belial's leg, shouting back to Kais. “Aim for his head!”

Kais fired again, one bolt after another, keeping Belial's focus upwards to try and defend his remaining good eye as I climbed up his leg, slashing at the back of his knee. My skin felt like it was boiling everywhere I touched him, his heat unbearable, but I couldn't stop, even as my palms sizzled and my arms were sticky with his thick, tar-like blood.

I gagged as I reached the top of his thighs. Demon King crotch smelled like battery acid. It tasted worse. But there was

one reliable place where all men, even the apex predators of Hell, were sensitive.

“Now, Deyva!” Zach cried out, and my relief to see him and Stavros on their feet, fire hoses of holy water at the ready, was all I needed.

King Belial, like many in Hell, had a bit of a pain kink. So as horrifying as the sight of his crooked, tangled, knobbly, and erect cock was, it was convenient. I jumped, aiming Andrew, prepared for my fall, and cut through his ugly, disgusting, torturous dick.

It wasn't a smooth slice, but it did the trick. Belial's howl cut through everything in my mind, erasing my love, my anger, my fear and replacing it all with pain.

I wasn't aware of anything, until the moment Belial caught me in his grip, squeezing and tearing his claws into my body. That was a fresher, separate agony, and it made my eyes widen, my lungs stutter as blood filled them. Above me, Belial sneered, both eyes bleeding, his teeth black with his own death.

“Very well, feeder. You and I will fall together,” Belial rasped, and the sound was knives scratching over my bones.

Then he tossed me over his shoulder like a toy, sending me right back to the pits, my lovers crying out for me until the sound was buried in the heavy black cloak surrounding me.



Holy Fuck

OceanofPDF.com

“*I* have you, Deyva. Hang on. Please. Please hang on.”

Compassionate worry, thick and sticky, sweet and sour and sharp all at once, like molasses and limes.

“Jesus Christ is she... Az?”

Heartbreak, wine turned into vinegar. Horror, the rising heat of a dangerously hot pepper.

“We can finish this, Fathers. Take her body inside where they can’t touch her.”

Sympathy, tacky and stale as three-day old cake.

“She’s alive.”

“Are you— How? Her fucking insides are outside.”

So many flavors passed over me and I didn’t want a single one.

“Kiss her. Kiss her, Kais!”

There was grunt, and then a numb pressure. A familiar, weary fear combined with guilt laced my tongue and someone, the one whose arms held me a little tighter, hissed. “Not like *that*. Not like you’re saying goodbye.”

“Here, let me.” There was a wobble in this voice, but with the first light touch over my cheeks I found faith, and love mixed in with all the bitterest flavors. “Hold on for us, Deyva.”

Zach kissed me gently, but determined, as if I wasn't broken in front of him, bleeding to death, shredded by Belial's claws.

“Good, keep going,” Az said.

A warm hand stroked my horns as Zach kissed me over and over, sweet presses to my lips, little hiccuping breaths full of tears as he waited for me to respond. Stavros was close, that was who else was touching me, pressing an endless well of hope into every careful brush of his fingers.

I groaned as Zach pulled away, a weak sound, all I could manage in the moment, but it was enough for my men.

“Oh, thank God,” Stavros breathed, pressing kisses to the crown of my head. I knew I was a mess. I must've been coated in Belial's blood as well as my own, but Stavros didn't care. Of course he didn't.

Zach moaned gratefully, and then his hands gripped my cheeks, kissing me thoroughly, not minding that I couldn't answer, but pouring in relief and worry, pride and regret, and most of all love. I gasped as he pulled away, my eyes opening and a smile wobbling as I stared up at him. We were inside the gate of Bethel, Zach was streaked with blood and soot, and all around us stood the worried citizens of the town.

“She's going to be alright?” someone asked softly.

“She'll be fine. She needs our care,” Azariah said, beaming down at me. He looked especially battered and my brow furrowed at the sight of the wicked gash along his cheek.

“Don’t. Don’t look at me like that. You’re burnt, you’re cut open, you can barely breathe. Don’t look at me like you’re about to waste your energy on me, I’ll be fine just as soon as you are.”

“Let’s get you to the church, to home,” Stavros murmured, before pressing another long kiss to my head.

“Kais?” My voice sounded awful, and all three of the guys surrounding me grimaced at the wet and broken noise.

Zach stepped aside, looking over his shoulder at Kais, who was sheet-white as he stared back at me.

“You still sort of look like something we found on the side of the road,” Az said gently. “Let’s get you more patched up before we finish the reunions.”

“Fuck you a little bit,” I managed to squeeze out, as Azariah carried me carefully up the street.

Kais let out a relieved huff of breath as Az’s lips twitched. I knew that angel. He thought it was funny to call me roadkill, even if it was kind of the truth.

“Shouldn’t we take her to the house?” Zach asked as Azariah headed for the main church doors.

“She’s gonna make it, you’re gonna make it,” Azariah said firmly to me as I whimpered with the motion of him running up the steps. “But it’s going to take some prayer, and I want to make sure God doesn’t have any excuse for not listening.”

Kais shoved open the doors ahead of us, Zach and Stavros running up to the altar dais to clear space for the five of us.

“Should we really leave the others on their own?” I asked, wincing as Azariah knelt to the dais floor, lowering me onto the dense carpet.

“As soon as Belial fell back into the cavern, it started closing up around him. There are only stragglers left, and they were running home last I saw,” Azariah said, looming over me. His wings were crooked and I reached a gory hand up before my eyes widened at the sight of my stained skin.

Zach knelt at my side, a deep bowl of holy water resting next to my head. “Let me clean you up a little.”

“But you should—”

“Shut up, succubus,” Azariah murmured, leaning over on my other side, turning my face away from Zach and toward his.

“You need to heal too,” I whispered.

“I will.” Az ducked and I sighed as his mouth covered mine, one long, firm press, full of desperate love and tender affection. I hummed into the kiss, sighing as Zach started to clean my arm closest to him. Azariah pulled away, just briefly, and looked at Stav, who knelt behind my head. “We need to undress her, but very gently. I’ll feed her while you two clean her up.”

Stavros nodded, petting my horns, running his thumb over a sensitive spot at the top that made me shiver and whine.

“Gonna start calling you Chip,” Az said, grinning at me. “You lost a little bit on one side. You’re gonna be lopsided.”

“I will make *you* lopsi-mp,” I grunted and then sighed as he kissed me again. It was sweet and uncomfortable all at once, my body too damaged to avoid missing the way it was knitting itself back together.

Stavros sighed shakily as his hands carefully pulled away the shredded ropes of the shirt I’d been wearing. Soft footsteps approached the dais, and then Kais’ warm hand was wrapped

around my ankle, his touch full of an overwhelming gratitude. For my fight in protecting him and his town, and for the fact that I was still alive. He slipped my shoes off my feet and then caressed the soles with a soft, damp cloth.

I was swimming in a dizzy, constant warmth from the four of them, Az pouring himself into the kiss, licking my mouth clean until the sharp tang of blood was replaced by his sweeter flavor. The pain in my torso rose to a fever pitch the more Az healed me, and I panted into his kiss, trying to restrain my cries as tears ran out of the corners of both my eyes.

“Keep kissing her,” Az said, pulling away and scooting back.

“My turn,” Kais snapped as Stavros ducked down.

Stavros huffed and rolled his eyes, taking a kiss anyway, offering a more gentle balm than the one Az had shared. Azariah peeled down the waistband of my leggings and I arched, a scream rising, until Stav, Kais, and Zach all pushed me down again with gentle but firm hands.

“Hold her still,” Az said. “This is going to get worse before it gets better.”

“Look at me, Daisy,” Kais said, sharp and commanding, and my breath hitched as my gaze met his. “You can handle this. You just took down a fucking demon king.”

I bit my lip and nodded, and Kais’ gaze lit up, a soft growl escaping his throat before he bent, bracing his hand on my breast bone to hold me still, and swallowing my first cry as Azariah jostled me in his attempt to undress me. Kais’ kiss was rough and claiming and he was full of fire that seemed to rush directly to my belly, lighting me up in a scorching blaze that made me want to thrash and scream at first, until the heat

ate away at the pain, soothing my muscles into a loose puddle as his tongue fucked my mouth.

“For a girl who just whacked off a dick the size of a car—”

“Whacked off is a poor choice, Az,” Zach murmured, sounding close to laughter.

“You’re being an awfully big baby about this,” Az finished, finally pulling my limp legs out of the leggings and setting them gently back to the carpet.

Fuck, could I move my legs? Had Belial broken my spine?

Az parted them and I relaxed a little. I had feeling, just no strength. That would come back gradu—

“Oh my God!” I gasped, yanking away from Kais’ kiss as Az settled on his belly and began to suck on my pussy.

“Ew, don’t bring *Dad* into it,” Az said, winking at me. “And hey. You’re sitting up.”

I was sitting up, just a few inches, and Stav was quick to support my shoulders.

“Don’t look,” Kais, said gently.

But it was too late. I was a mangled, meat-ground mess and I couldn’t believe that any of them had even been willing to come within a few feet of me, let alone kiss and care and touch me the way they had.

“You guys love me,” I said, catching a watery breath and blinking at them all.

Az rolled his eyes and then licked a stripe up my center. Kais took my chin between his fingers, turning my face back to his. He was still pretty pale. and I knew for certain that it

was going to be Az who had to restore me because my guys weren't looking too hot either.

“Of course we love you, Daisy,” Kais said, flashing me a wicked grin. “Do you think just anyone could make three war-worn, jaded, angry priests break their vows and take down six armies of hellions?”

He didn't wait for my answer, which was good since I was pretty much speechless. I tilted my chin and closed my eyes on the picture of my skin and muscle still in the process of reuniting, sinking into Kais' kiss. Az's mouth on my sex was determined, his tongue swirling steadily over my clit, and Zach and Stavros lifted me a little higher, lending him a hand or two as they groped gently over my freshly healed breasts. Soon the pain of healing was marrying pleasantly with the pleasure of all of their hands and mouths on my skin. Az's hands scooped under my ass, lifting me to his mouth as if I were a bowl of dessert that needed to be consumed to the last creamy drop. Dessert, that was what this tasted like, being surrounded by the four of them, all at once. I released Kais' mouth, afraid of taking too much of his energy, and raised my voice up to the arched ceiling as I moaned.

Azariah was nuzzling against my clit with his nose, his tongue fucking my cunt with that starving, determined pace of his. The gouges on my stomach were vanishing into shiny white streaks over my waist, and Az's wings were stretching smoothly behind him, a few crisp and torn feathers falling away as he healed.

“Az,” I called.

He grunted and closed his eyes, focusing on his feast and making me shudder.

“Let him heal you,” Kais snarled.

“Let all of us heal you, babe,” Stav echoed.

I glanced at Zach who was watching Az slurp and suck and lick between my legs with an avid hunger. He glanced at me, and his smile was wicked.

“You all need to strip,” I snapped. “Group participation is mandatory.”

Stavros laughed and Kais frowned, glancing over the others, but I was too busy rocking into Az with his clever tongue and his perfect mouth. He sang an angelic note into my pussy, and the vibration was everything I needed. My toes curled and I let out my own bright note, my fingers diving into his hair as I arched and came, Az and I sharing the perfect bliss of energy and adoration between one another.

I was sagged back into Kais’ chest when I landed back on earth, Az licking me clean. Well, relatively clean. I was still stained black and blue, and the orgasm hadn’t quite finished healing the green bruises on me. Stavros and Zach were standing, shedding their ruined clothes to the floor, Stavros running shirtless to the back of the altar and carrying back a little pitcher of holy anointing oil.

“This should help,” Stav said, grinning and setting the oil down by the floor.

“Um, am I the only one who’s not clear on the geometry?” Kais mumbled, watching Azariah lick his lips obscenely and then stand to strip.

“You get her ass, captain,” Az said, shooting Kais a wink. “And I get—”

“You get fucked, by Zach,” I said, glaring up at Az. I loved this angel, I really did. But he still had a little bit of making up to do, and taking it hard from Zach seemed like a fair start.

Az's jaw dropped and his eyes went dreamy, drifting to where Zach was gazing at the angel's ass. "Ohhh, yes *please*, Father. Just be easy on the feathers."

"Guess I know where that leaves me. I'm the caboose," Stav said, kicking off his pants and swatting Zach on the ass.

I realized then that Kais hadn't really said anything in all of this. Maybe an orgy wasn't quite his speed. Except, when I twisted to look up at him, it was like his eyes were on fire. His head ducked, forehead resting against mine, and his voice was ragged.

"You're telling me, after going through Hell and back today on that battlefield, wondering a million times if I'd lost you, and then feeling absolutely *certain* of it, I get to fuck that pretty little ass of yours?"

I grinned up at him, honored by his trembling awe. "As long as you don't mind."

Kais growled again, his mouth claiming mine, teeth and tongue demanding my attention. His hands were gentle on my waist, like he was still too aware of how close to death I'd been just a handful of minutes ago. But then they curled around to my back, one sliding up to hold the back of my neck and the other running down between my ass cheeks, fingertip swirling around my hole, pressing tentatively.

"When do I start?" Kais asked.

"As soon as you get with the program and get your clothes off," I answered, grinning.

Kais gasped and stood and then Stavros knelt down in front of me.

"I love you, so so much," I said before he could get a word out.

“That’s my line, babe,” he said, beaming back at me. “Figured you’d be out of reach and I just needed this,” he added, and then his arms wrapped around me, drawing me into his thick chest and holding me tight.

The hug was sweet, and sincere, and perfectly like Stavros, so wholesome and full of unharnessed affection he’d actually made himself sick over it. I pressed some of his goodness back into him, sending it to his bruised and torn muscles, and sighed as he shuddered and groaned, cock nudging against me.

“Quit bogarting our woman,” Az whined. “I ate all that pussy and for- ahh!”

Stav and I pulled away from one another, looking up and gasping at the sight of Zach’s hand around Az’s throat as our perfect priest kissed our depraved angel and worked his cock like he was trying to make Az see God. Az moaned and writhed in Zach’s grip and then whined as Zach pulled away suddenly.

“Our little deviant has come so far,” I whispered to Stavros.

“Mm, it’s hard not to be proud,” Stavros said with a nod, kissing me once more, thorough and sweet before pulling away with a grin.

Az dropped to his knees in front of me, his eyes wide and stunned, cock standing stiffly at attention. I glanced behind me to check on Kais who was kicking off his pants, before scooting over to Azariah.

“You good, buddy?” I asked, smiling.

Az swallowed, and then grinned slyly back at me. “You know, maybe it *was* for the best that Zach chose the two of you first. His purity was sweet but his command is *holy*,” Az

said, shooting an appreciative smile back at Zach who was watching us with his arms crossed.

“How are your wings?” I asked, holding Zach’s gaze and letting him catch the moment Az bucked and moaned as my hands wrapped around his wing roots.

“Ungh! Fine, fine, I— Oh, fuck, Deyva please,” Az groaned out.

Zach and I grinned at one another and he nodded, sinking down to his knees as I moved my hands to Azariah’s shoulders, bracing myself as I climbed onto his lap and settled myself directly over the head of his cock. It occurred to me in that moment that I was healed, Az was healed, the guys were safe...we could’ve left the chapel. And then I shrugged and seated myself onto Azariah’s holy staff, and we released twin cries of relief up to the ceiling.

If God *was* listening, he was about to get an earful.

Kais knelt, bracing my back as I settled, and his fingers were slippery as they returned to the crease of my ass, finding easy passage for one digit into my ass.

Az started to buck into me but then Zach mirrored Kais, grabbing onto his wing roots, and Az stiffened and panted, his head leaning back to nuzzle against Zach’s cheek.

“I’m a little afraid of hurting you after everything we’ve already been through today,” Kais said softly.

Stavros and was coaching Zach, Az moaning like a cat in heat for every little touch, and I held my place on his lap, turning to address Kais.

“Succubus’ are kind of made for group sex,” I said gently, smiling. “You won’t hurt me. You know how I like it,” I

added, arching an eyebrow before sliding my gaze over to the ceremonial cross Kais had *fucked* me with.

He grinned, totally unashamed, and pressed a second finger into my ass, studying my lips as they parted on my sigh. His fingers were coated in the anointing oil and at first I thought his touch was especially hot. But when the warmth grew with his second finger, I moaned.

“Ohhhhhh, what’s in that oil?” Az asked, his voice rising, hips rolling between Zach’s fingers and my cunt.

“Um, it’s an olive oil base?” Stavros said.

“Myrrh, cassia, lemongrass, and cinnamon,” Zach recited dutifully, as if he weren’t finger fucking an angel.

“Cinnamon,” we all said at once.

Kais started to pull away and I clamped down around him and Azariah, “No, don’t, it’s nice. Hot, not burny.”

“It’s um...it’s dick safe,” Stavros said, cheeks reddening from his spot behind Zach. “Speaking from past experience.”

Kais huffed a laugh, his head dropping forward to my shoulder, breath puffing over my skin before he turned his head and kissed my throat.

“That’s good, he’s ready, Z,” Stavros said, watching Zach’s progress over his shoulder.

“So fucking ready,” Az moaned.

Zach must’ve squeezed around Az’s wings because the angel stiffened, mouth open wide, and then released a long, low moan, rocking back and seating himself on Zach’s cock. It was Zach’s turn to look awed, and then he whimpered as Stavros began to prep him too.

“You good, Daisy?” Kais asked, gently pumping his fingers into me. His other hand slid between Azariah and I, circling my nipples with oily fingers. He clucked as I moaned and my head lolled on my shoulders.

As if they’d planned it, Kais and Stavros joined our union at the same moment, pushing Zach and I closer to Az, drawing us all together in one heavenly shout of pleasure.

“Holy...fuck!” Zach shuddered, eyelids falling closed as his forehead rested on the back of Az’s shoulder.

“That’s, mm! That’s precisely what this is.” Az leaned back, reaching with one hand to grab the back of Zach’s head.

As the angel’s fingers curled into Zach’s blond hair, their mouths finding each other in a kiss, I leaned forward, dragging long licks along Az’s neck and guiding Zach’s hands on him.

“Ohhh, you two are just...fucking, mm!” Az squirmed between us, breaths ragged and tight as we loved on him.

“Feel these abs, Zach.” I brought his hands around to the front of Az’s body, sliding his palms over the angel’s carved abdomen. Kais was rocking steadily against my ass, fucking me with a patient rhythm that made my voice bump with every thrust.

“Fuck, so hot.” Our innocent priest was lust incarnate, hands groping shamelessly and angelic mouth devouring. Every moan and clutch of flesh was punctuated by a needy whimper as Stav sank into him from behind.

I arched back, turning my head to give some attention to the gorgeous man behind me. “How you doin’ back there?”

Kais caught my kiss with a smile, oily hands skimming up my ribcage as his hips paused, cock fully seated in my ass, my body beautifully full of pressure. “Never been better, Daisy.”

“Really?”

Happiness and love tasted so beautiful coming from him, the emotions wild and bright, as if being freed from a long imprisonment. I pushed the feelings right back to him, watching his face light up and the shadows fade from his eyes.

“Can you believe it’s over?” he murmured against my cheek, delirious excitement in his voice. “Kimaris is gone. He’ll never hurt you again.”

“Kais...” I moaned, leaning back on his shoulder to absorb his deep, pressing strokes into my ass. His movement drove me up and down on Az’s cock as well, the angel and Zach still wrapped up in each other.

“No one,” he grunted, each word punctuated with a crash of flesh, “will ever hurt you again.”

I wondered if that was true, if Hell would leave us alone after this, and then I decided that if we had to fight a battle like today’s everyday for the rest of our lives, it would be worth it.

“I like you sweet,” I whispered with a kiss to the corner of his jaw. “I like you rough too. That doesn’t have to change.”

“Anything you want,” he growled, wrapping a hand around the front of my throat.

“Hey, Kais,” Azariah panted. “Want me to kiss you?”

“Not particularly,” he chuckled, nipping at my ear.

“Then move your hands, I want to suck her tits. Wait, actually, keep holding her there for me.”

Az dove for my lips, tongue lapping on mine with Zach’s sweet flavors clinging to him. I fed from him greedily, just for the pure, heady rush of holy light flowing over me like water. Kais dragged his teeth along my neck, his palm a comforting

heaviness on my throat as I swallowed Az's moans and shivers.

When Kais slid his firm hold down to both of my hips, Az's mouth trailed down where his hand had been, licking a path down to my aching nipples. "Succubi have the best tits ever created," he moaned, his mouth hot on my flesh.

He kissed, nipped, and sucked, rolling my breasts in his hands as he feasted on them. I stretched a hand over his back, drinking in his moans on my skin as I massaged his wing roots. The angel's bowed over position gave me a clear view of Zach and Stav, for a moment in their own little world, even with Zach's cock buried in Azariah.

Stavros held our young priest by a fist in his hair, mouths warring as they took and gave rough, sloppy kisses. His other hand roamed over Zach's chest, pinching his nipples to elicit sweet whimpers as he drove in and out of his ass, pushing him deeper and harder into the angel.

"Ohh, that perfect cunt better come on my cock soon," Azariah rasped, mouthing his way back up. His forehead leaned on mine as he angled a glance at the priests behind him. "You taught Zach well, Father."

"Fuck yeah," Stavros grunted, releasing Zach's hair to grab his hips and pound him with loud smacks of flesh that echoed all over the chapel. "I fucking love this tight little ass."

"God, fuck, fuck, fuck!" Zach cried, his face nestled somewhere on Az's back. "I'm gonna come..."

"Not yet, you don't." Stav's thrusts slowed, abs flexing with restraint and deep breaths as he slapped and groped the globes of Zach's perky butt. "How's that angel ass feel?"

"Too good," Zach whined. "I wanna come in him so bad."

“Deyva first, sweetheart,” Stav told him soothingly, running his hands up his back and leaning over to kiss his shoulder.

“If you don’t make her come, I will.” Kais’ hand slid between my legs to strum my aching clit, making me cry out and buck against the two men inside me. “I want to feel this pretty ass choke the life out of my dick.”

“We’ll make it a team effort, Father.” Az grinned. “Why don’t you hang on to those pretty horns?”

Kais obliged, stroking his fingers up through my hair until they wrapped around the base of one horn. A shiver wracked through me, the onset of my orgasm now a full-body sensation. Kais’ other hand grabbed a breast, with Az now toying with me where our bodies conjoined.

“Deyva.” Zach, blissed out and flushed, propped his chin on Az’s shoulder. “I want to kiss you.”

Az ducked his head with a soft laugh and leaned forward so Zach could reach me. I pushed more love at my sweet priest, the soft sips of his kisses precious and wholesome in the midst of our orgy.

“I love you.” My voice choked up as I stroked his cheek, the emotions from everyone, even myself, overwhelming. “All of you. I...I can’t believe it’s really...”

“It is.” Az pressed an achingly sweet kiss to my cheek. “Love has conquered, sweet succubus. Just as it was meant to.”

“Just as you’ve conquered us,” Kais rasped into my ear, caressing my horn.

“Well, I wouldn’t go *that* far,” Az muttered.

“You gonna make her come or not?” Kais growled.

“Fine, fine.”

Stav took that as a cue to resume thrusting into Zach, our sweet priest yelping as Stav stroked deeply into his ass, pushing him into Az, and Az into me.

Kais followed suit, hips crashing into me as his grip tightened on my horn, my body accepting the exquisite drumming inside of me, echoing it through every cell of my body. “Wish I had my cross,” he grunted, the smile clear in his voice.

Pushed together by the priests driving into us, Az and I held on to each other for purchase. I didn’t need much to get there, my body brimmed with coiled up desire eager to release.

“Azariah, please,” I whimpered, my bounces on his and Kais’ cocks assisted by their hands holding me between them, but my clit remained painfully untouched.

“I’ve never seen anything so beautiful,” the angel whispered, his eyes drinking me in and practically glittering with divine, golden light. “A succubus on the edge of release, tasting more love in this moment than she’s ever felt in her lifetime.” His grin quirked. “I could just look at you for millenia.”

“God, I can’t fucking last,” Kais snarled, squeezing around my horn, his cock like iron inside me.

“Fuck, me neither.” The smack of Stav’s hips against Zach’s ass grew desperate and stuttered.

“*Fuuuuck,*” Zach moaned, sandwiched helplessly between the older priest and the angel.

Az let out a resigned sigh, despite his heart pounding like a drum under my hand, his breaths short and muscles tense.

“Good thing we have all of eternity to enjoy you.” With that, he finally pressed his fingertips to my clit, driving his hips to crash into the perfect spot inside me.

“Fuck, yes! Yes, there!” I cried, the pleasure accelerating from my horns to my toes.

“Ohhh, yes. Squeeze that sweet cunt around me...”

“I’m gonna—oh, fuck Daisy, yes!”

“Stav, fuck me harder. Oh yeah, like that! I’m right there...”

“So fucking good. Take it, Zach! Oh fuugh...”

My pleasure exploded to the shouts and pleas of my lovers, setting off a chain reaction of orgasms that made the air so thick and delicious I could drink their love with a straw. Kais bit into my right shoulder and Az into the left one as my body closed around them, pulsing and wringing the release from their cocks until nothing was left.

Stav slumped over Zach, who leaned limply on Az’s back between his wings, feathers cradling my priests affectionately. Deep, gasping breaths filled the air, sated relief settling over us. Nobody pulled away or separated, despite the slickness of sweat, anointing oil, and blood coating us. We all desperately needed a long soak to wash off the battle, water rations be damned.

But it could wait.

A giggle escaped me at that realization as I wearily sank to the floor, my head on someone’s chest while someone else spooned me from behind.

“Whuzzofunny?” Kais mumbled, already more asleep than awake.

“Kimaris is dead. I cut Belial’s dick off.” A full giddy laugh burst out of me. “They’re gone. No one in Hell has a claim on me now.”

A hand tilted my chin upward, Azariah’s hand. I waited for the smart-ass remark that never came, just a genuine smile and a soft kiss. “Welcome to freedom, succubus.”

“You too, angel,” I beamed before lowering my head back down to his chest and closing my eyes.

OUR POST-ORGY NAP WAS SHORT-LIVED. It felt like I had just closed my eyes when I heard the heavy creak of the chapel doors opening.

Everyone reacted at once, rolling to their feet and grabbing for weapons. Healed and powered by the love we just made, I stood ready and glaring at the doors. Pure golden wings edged through the opening, and then a face almost as beautiful as Azariah’s stepped through.

“Another angel?” Zach gaped.

“Malachi,” Az breathed, an air of surprise in his voice. “It’s been a long time.”

“So it has, Azariah.” Malachi’s eyes fell to me, head tilting as crystalline shining eyes examined me. “And even longer since I’ve seen a succubus.”

Zach moved in front of me first, jaw set and determined as he held Joan out in front of him. “You’re *not* sending her back to Hell. She stays with us.”

Malachi's lips twitched in amusement. "I have no intention of sending her anywhere, Zachariah. Rather, I've come to offer aid. Heaven sensed a massive spike in hellion activity here, but it seems..." His eyes moved over us, all stark naked and still bloodied and covered in soot from the battle. "...that it's been taken care of?"

"You're a little late, yes." Az crossed his arms, one hip jutting out to the side.

"Apologies, it's been so difficult to locate the human settlements in need. Everything on the surface just feels like, well, Hell."

Az clicked his tongue. "Bethel is a fucking utopia compared to actual Hell. But in any case, yes, King Belial is dead, as is his underling Kimaris."

Malachi's eyes widened. "*You* killed a demon king?"

"Not me." Az jerked his chin in my direction. "She did."

"It wasn't *just* me." I glared back at my snarky angel, always wanting to embarrass me. "I had you, the priests, the whole town helped."

"This is...unprecedented." Malachi's voice was filled with awe as his gaze returned to me. "All this time you've been fallen, and you never completely succumbed to the corruption?"

"I probably did at some point or another," I said with a shrug. "But I never enjoyed the taste."

The angel smiled widely then, clasping his hands behind his back. "What you've all done is no small feat, to be sure. God knows of it, of course, but the Lord prefers knowledge to unfold naturally for the rest of us." He brought a fist to his mouth and cleared his throat delicately. "I've been told to

deliver the message that Heaven has decided to take a more... wings on approach to the recent situation. Earth's children will not stand alone against the armies of Hell any longer. And our gates are open to you, should you decide to return."

"*Me?!*" Az and I cried at the same time.

"Both of you. All of you, actually," Malachi clarified. "You as well, Fathers."

"Heaven?" Kais repeated, sounding suspicious of the word. "Like, we'd die and then go there?"

"Not die, no. You would simply ascend."

I turn to my priests, unable to keep the grin from splitting my face. "We'll be together forever this way. Down here, your bodies will age and eventually break down. But up there?" I clasped hands with Kais and Stavros. "It'll be just us, our souls bound together in love. Forever."

Zach came up and clasped Stav's other hand, resting his head on the older priest's shoulder.

"Can we uh, have some time first?" Stavros asked. "Or does it have to be right now?"

"Oh no. You may ascend whenever you'd like, Father," Malachi assured.

Stav brushed a kiss along Zach's forehead as he looked at Kais. "The town still needs us. At least for a little bit."

Kais nodded his agreement. "Yeah, we still have work to do."

"Then we're staying too," Azariah said with a glance at me.

“We’ll rebuild Bethel first,” I said, squeezing my men’s hands. “And *then* spend eternity in paradise.”

Malachi dipped his head, turning to Azariah. “You know how to find me, then.” He paused in place, lips parted for a moment in silence. “Brother...you find the humans receptive to group sex?”

Kais choked as I swallowed my laugh, but Az just raised a hand in the air, wobbling it side to side. “Some persuasion is required.” Az grunted as Zach elbowed him in the side.

Malachai nodded. “I will try my luck before my departure.” And with that, he slipped out the door, leaving us to our new beginning.

OceanofPDF.com



OceanofPDF.com

Epilogue

OceanofPDF.com

KAIS

OceanofPDF.com

100 years later

“*Y*ou don’t think we stayed on earth too long?” I trailed the marigold flower over Deyva’s body, her naked skin pebbling under the soft touch of the petals.

“Not at all,” she giggled, rolling off of Azariah’s wing to nestle into my side. “We did so much good down there.”

The angel was dead asleep anyway, deeply sated after our hours-long fuck fest. Zach and Stav were still going at it somewhere—probably out in the grassy meadow, which seemed to be their favorite spot.

“You don’t think I look old?” I pressed, lightly swatting her ass with the flower.

We spent another decade on earth after Deyva killed Belial, restoring Bethel to a thriving coastal town and helping with other settlements too, assuring that Heaven’s legions were keeping an eye on Earth. Stav and I hit our mid-forties by the time we felt ready to ascend, after inheriting all the aches, pains, and gray hairs that went along with our age.

Hell began retreating immediately after the angels appeared, loosening its toxic influence on earth nearly overnight. The population was slowly increasing and there was no shortage of restoration work to be done. But for once, I didn’t want to work myself to death. I had done lifetimes’ worth of work and wanted peace and ease. I wanted to make love to my woman in a grassy field under the sun, and sleep easily with her curled up against me.

“I like the gray hairs. It looks distinguished.” Deyva scooted up to kiss my forehead and run her fingers through my curls. “You don’t *feel* old, do you?”

“I don’t, surprisingly.” I tickled the flower between her legs until she swatted me away.

“You’re in *heaven*,” she snorted. “It can’t be that surprising to feel like you’re in your prime.”

“I’ll never take it for granted, that’s for sure.” I hauled her on top of me, my cock already twitching again at the feeling of her soft breasts on my chest. “Not after so many years of feeling like I was one night away from having a heart attack in my sleep.”

Her eyes flashed with concern before lowering a sweet kiss to me, languid and warm as fresh honey. “I’m just glad you’re not hurting anymore.” A kiss to the tip of my nose. “I love you.”

“Love you.” I slid a hand up to the back of her neck, holding her in place for a deeper kiss. “Forever,” I added, before forcing her lips apart with my tongue.

She threw a leg over me, sliding that sweet body along my skin, feeling like velvet and sunlight, until we heard a throat clearing.

“Um, hello?”

I lifted my head, Deyva already looking over her shoulder at the angel who interrupted us. “Can we help you?”

“I just have news,” he said. “From earth, regarding the priests.”

That got my attention. I sat up, supporting Deyva with an arm around her waist. “What’s the news?”

“It’s from the Vatican, Father Kais,” the angel said. “You, Father Stavros, and Father Zachariah are being venerated as saints in the Catholic church.”

“We...what? *Saints?* Us?”

“Are you sure you have the right priests?” Deyva laughed.

“I’m quite certain, yes. For the work you did in banishing demonkind from earth and restoring humanity.”

“Huh,” I breathed, lowering back to my elbows. “I’ll be damned.”

“Actually it’s the *opposite* of damned, Father—”

“Yes, I know. It’s just an expression.” Messenger angels didn’t spend as much time on earth as Azariah and the other warriors. “Thank you. I’ll uh, let the others know.”

The angel took his leave as Deyva swatted my chest, a huge grin splitting her face. “Look at you, Saint Kais of Bethel.”

“You should be one too,” I realized, too late.

She shrugged. “Eh, it’s a perk for human souls.”

“You think priests in the next apocalypse will name weapons after us?” I asked, my grin matching hers.

“Hopefully there won’t *be* another apocalypse,” she huffed. “But if there is, yes. I hope they do.”

“We should tell the others.” My hands slid to her hips. “But I like you right where you are. What do you think, Daisy?” I stole a peck at her lips. “Tell the news or celebrate first?”

My succubus’, my love’s, eyes darkened to red with hunger as she pushed my shoulders down to lie flat, showing

me exactly what she wanted first.

THE END

OceanofPDF.com

Acknowledgments

Hi, Crystal here! Obviously, this book would not have been possible without my other writing half, Kathryn. I'm beyond grateful you asked *me* to write a book with you, and I'm so stupidly proud of this naughty book baby we've created. Here's to many more!

A special shoutout to Aleera Anaya Ceres, our loving, supportive packmate for cheerleading us and giving guidance on this cowriting journey, something Kathryn and I were both utterly newbish at.

Thank you to Chloe and Janet for beta reading, so that we could make this demonic angel child of a book the best it could be.

Thank you Telisha, for cleaning up this baby with your proofreading skills, even if we did not clean up the aftermath of every sex scene.

And thank *you*, reader, for picking up this book and supporting us! You are what makes these crazy, naughty book ideas

possible.

Kathryn screeches in on her tricycle!

I wanna thank the crust to my pizza, the *smash!!* of the party, and the coach of my life that I listen to when it suits me. Crustal, I love you, and I'm super dooper glad you never blocked me when I came to scream in your messages about all of my Steel Demons feelings. Thanks for putting a ring on it!

I'm seconding all the nice things Crystal already said about all of the amazing people who helped with this book. I'm also adding a shout out to my best bae Lana Kole, and my amazing Moongazers. You guys fuel and inspire me and I'm very lucky to have found my way into so many amazing women's company!

OceanofPDF.com

About Crystal Ash

Crystal Ash is a USA Today Bestselling Author from California. From an early age, she's been obsessed with magic, heart-wrenching love stories, strange animals, and the people who turn into them.

When she's not writing, she's probably in her garden of crazy-looking plants or drinking craft beer with her husband and cat.

She loves interacting with her readers so don't hesitate to reach out!

authorcrystalash@gmail.com

CrystalAshBooks.com



[*OceanofPDF.com*](http://OceanofPDF.com)

Also by Crystal Ash

[Series prequels \(Free! Click to download\)](#)

[Falling for the Wolf](#): A Shifted Mates prequel

[Her 3 Demons](#): An Unholy Trinity prequel

[Raised by Wolves](#): A North West Wolf Pack prequel

[Steel Demons MC](#)

Lawless

Powerless

[Fearless](#)

[Painless](#)

[Helpless](#)

[Shifted Mates Trilogy](#)

[Unholy Trinity: The Complete Series](#)

[Harem of Freaks series](#)

For a complete list of books by Crystal Ash, [visit her Amazon page](#).

[OceanofPDF.com](#)

About Kathryn Moon

Kathryn Moon is a country mouse who started dictating stories to her mother at an early age. The fascination with building new worlds and discovering the lives of the characters who grew in her head never faltered, and she graduated college with a fiction writing degree. She loves writing women who are strong in their vulnerability, romances that are as affectionate as they are challenging, and worlds that a reader sinks into and never wants to leave. When her hands aren't busy typing they're probably knitting sweaters or crimping pie crust in Ohio. She definitely believes in magic.

You can reach her on [Facebook](#) and at ohkathrynmoon@gmail.com or [you can sign up for her newsletter!](#)



OceanofPDF.com

Also by Kathryn Moon

COMPLETE READS

The Librarian's Coven Series

Written - Book 1

Warriors - Book 2

Scrivens - Book 3

Ancients - Book 4

Summerland Series

Welcome to Summerland: A Reverse Harem Romance - Part 1

Secrets of Summerland: A Reverse Harem Romance - Part 2

Leaving Summerland: A Reverse Harem Romance - Part 3

Standalones

Good Deeds

Command The Moon

The Sweetverse

Baby + the Late Night Howlers

Lola & the Millionaires - Part One

Lola & the Millionaires - Part Two

Sol & Lune

Book 1

Book 2

SERIES IN PROGRESS

Inheritance of Hunger Trilogy

The Queen's Line

The Princess's Chosen

[The Kingdom's Crown](#)

Sweet Pea Mysteries

The Baker's Guide To Risky Rituals

[OceanofPDF.com](#)