

# Life vs. Death

Book Three of the Eternal War Series

by

Holly Vane

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## **Also by Holly Vane**

Heaven vs. Hell (The Eternal War Series#1)  
Love vs. Lust (The Eternal War Series#2)  
The Eternal War Box Set (Coming December 2013)

*For Mitch,  
the coolest Yorkie on the planet.*

# 1

The couple stepped out into the cold December night and crossed the street hand in hand. "That was...I don't even have words to describe it." Dominic Prince said.

"The Prince of Hell lost for words?" Holly Adams quipped, squeezing his hand playfully. It was three degrees below and while she was wrapped up in scarf gloves and hat, he wore only jeans and a cashmere sweater, being Immortal had its advantages. "It wasn't that bad." He threw her an incredulous look and Holly couldn't help but grin. "Okay so it pretty much...sucked, but at least it wasn't a chick flick." She admitted. He led her to the parking lot where his Red Harley motorbike sat, glowing under a street light. It was Dom's pride and joy and wherever they went so did it. Holly had been pushing him to get a car, the seat played havoc with her back, but she knew it was like asking him to saw off his arm.

"That's the last time you're picking the movie princess." Holly rolled her eyes as she took the offered helmet and pulled it over her head. The bike roared to life and she cuddled into him as the Harley glided through the notorious New York City traffic. The winds icy fingers played with her dark curls as they plummeted forward with such speed that the world around her blurred. When he pulled over outside her favourite restaurant Holly grudging let go and yanked off the bash hat. She hated wearing the damn thing it made her head sweat but Dom wouldn't have it any other way, she had even tried the sex card but he stuck to his guns.

Placing the helmet on the seat Holly hesitated. She had learned over the past year to trust her instincts and right now they were telling her she was being watched. The hairs on the back of her neck stood on end and a shiver travelled down her spine.

"What is it?"

Holly looked back to see Dominic studying her while holding the door to the restaurant open. She still found it thrilling that they were in sync enough for him to notice the little changes her body made in its language. She took one last glancing sweep of the crowded street and shrugged. "Guess I'm just paranoid." She could tell by his stern expression that he wasn't buying her façade. The waitress showed them to their regular table at the back; it had a perfect unblocked view of the whole restaurant and was close to the kitchen if they needed to make a hasty exit.

"What can I get for you Dom?" The waitress asked, leaning over him with a look of adoration in her brown eyes. Holly still found it hard to deal with the effect Dominic had on the female population, not that she blamed them. Holly had been drawn to him just like they were but he was all hers and encounters like this made jealousy rear

its ugly head.

“Usual.” He replied distractedly, his dark eyes focused on the window. “Please.” He added finally looking at her and Holly actually saw the girl swoon. “My pleasure.” She told him with a beaming smile that showed a full set of pearly whites. “I’ll be right back.”

“Take your time.” Holly saw his eyes follow the waitress as she walked to the kitchen and arched her eyebrows at him. “What?” He asked catching her irritated glare. “I was just being friendly.”

“Whatever.” She mumbled while shrugging out of her coat. The rest of the staff huddled around the till casting flirtatious looks Dominic’s way and Holly suddenly found herself wondering what it was that had made him chose her.

Dominic Prince had gone against his family to protect Holly. He had given up everything for her, but she had never actually asked him why. He would say it was because he had fallen in love with her and Holly believed it. The only part of him that wasn’t hard as stone were his eyes and they couldn’t lie, but Holly had never asked him why he loved her.

When they had met she had been a naïve small town girl, who preferred to sit home and study instead of partying. They were complete opposites and without sounding big headed Holly knew she was pretty, her best friend Jo had told her enough times, but Dominic was a pure God. And she would never be as slender or as beautiful as the girls standing just a few yards away.

“What are you thinking?” He asked her suddenly.

“What?”

“You’ve got that look I can’t read.” Holly was about to tell him what was on her mind when the girl returned with their order. She plonked the big ham and cheese pizza onto the table and scowled at the waitress behind who carried their drinks. “Vodka and Coke for you..” the second slightly older woman said placing Dom’s drink in front of him ceremoniously. “And sparkling water for you.” Holly started a little when her glass was slammed down with such force it made the wooden table shudder. “Can I help with anything else?” Holly and their original waitress exchanged a look of outrage. “I think we can manage.” Dominic replied trying to stifle a laugh. “Well call if you change your mind.” As they backed off Holly heard the girl curse at the older woman. “You’ve started a cat fight.” She told an amused Dominic who placed a slice of pizza onto her plate.

“Best kind.” Holly threw him an exasperated stare. “Do you emit like a pheromone or something?” Dominic gave her a quizzical look then shrugged. “It’s a devil thing.”

“Huh?” She heard him sigh and he slumped back into his chair. “Lucifer has a certain aura about him. I inherited it.” Holly forgot her growling stomach. “You’ve never told me that before.” She hadn’t entertained the idea that her love might not be real.

“That’s precisely why I didn’t.” He replied quickly. “Holly you love me because we’re meant to be, not because you’re under some...effect.” She leaned closer. “So what? It

doesn't work on me?" Dominic picked up his slice of pizza and took a bite. "It so works on you." He replied teasingly. "But it doesn't create what wasn't already there."

"You're a riddle you know that." She took a mouthful of her own food and almost groaned with pleasure. Dominic's sad expression made her freeze. "Something I said?" He looked like his world had just ended. He dropped the pizza back onto the plate and took her hand in his.

"I don't want you to think of me like that princess. I know there's a lot about me you don't know, and I'm not the most forthcoming guy in the world but God I love you Holly. I love your fire, your spirit, your kind heart, plus you're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. I don't want there to be space between us, so ask and I'll answer." Holly felt her heart pick up a gear. Whenever she had tried to get him to open up about his past he changed the subject, so this U-Turn was too good to pass up, even if it was a bit surprising.

Holly glanced at the guy entering the restaurant and her words dissolved. The un-easy feeling hit her full force and she stiffened. "Holly?" Dominic followed her eyes and as soon as he saw the man he tensed up. "You have got to be kidding me." He uttered in frustration.

"Who is he?" Dominic clicked his tongue in annoyance as the man approached. He was slim and tall and walked with a grace Holly wouldn't have thought him capable of; it dawned on her that he moved like Caleb. Flittering through the tables with a gentle ease. "He's an Angel." She groaned with realization as the man came to a stop beside their table.

"Evening." The Angel's voice was light and pleasant but there was a hardness to his grey eyes. "I won't intrude. I just need to deliver this." Dominic recoiled from the small gold envelope in the man's hand.

"Is that what I think it is?" The Angel nodded.

"The coming war concerns us all. The Devine order has been called. You and you're..." Holly saw the Angel force himself to look at her. "Partner." He spat out the word like it was poison in his mouth. "Have been summoned." His cool demeanour didn't bother Holly. After Castillo's betrayal she had no love for Heaven or Angels, and they carried none for her after what she had done to Michael, but Dominic's show of emotion rattled her. She watched as he reluctantly accepted the envelope.

Throwing one last disgusted look her way the Angel left. "Well?" Holly prodded after he had gone. "What's the Devine order?"

Dominic looked ill. His eyes held a haunted glint and when he looked at her Holly had never seen him look so vulnerable.

"Trouble."

# 2

“Li.”

Dominic paced the living area floor with agitation. “Dom, what’s going on?” Holly asked starting to feel very anxious. He had rushed them out the restaurant and had said nothing to her all the way home.

“Nothing.” He muttered absent mindedly then repeated with more vigour. “Li.”

“Don’t give me that crap!” Holly flung at him dis-guarding her winter wear onto the couch. “You’ve been like a bat out of hell since getting that damned thing!” She motioned to the gold envelope in his hand.

“Holly please...Li!”

“You rang.” Legion’s deep silky voice said. He was dressed in his usual black suit with a crisp white unbuttoned shirt underneath that exposed his flawless milky skin. Legion was taller than his younger brother and looked more like his identical twin. They shared the same high cheekbones and ruby red lips, but whereas Dom had dark and stormy eyes Legion had cold detached grey.

“Do you people ever use doors?” Holly asked with slight annoyance at the sudden intrusion. Legion had been glued to them since arriving in New York a few months ago, and he had gotten damn right paternal when Dom and Holly discovered what Legion had been hiding.

“Want to explain this.” Dominic tossed the envelope at him. Legion caught it effortlessly and examined it.

“The Divine Order...”

“Don’t look so surprised.” Dom snapped. “This stunt reeks of you.” Legion looked at him with calculating eyes before replying calmly. “What makes you say that?” He asked cocking his head to the left, the gesture made Holly suspect that Dom was right, and Legion was stalling to see how much his brother really knew.

“Before leaving Oregon you met with Castillo, the only one who has the power to call the Order.” Holly looked at Legion sharply, he seemed impressed by the amount of knowledge Dom possessed.

“How did you know about that?”

“I have my spies.” Legion studied Dominic for a second then let a knowing smirk part his lips.

“Cyrus. The slimy git.”

“Why would you do this? You said you’re helping us, how’s this helping?” Dominic glared at him with eyes as black as midnight. Something changed in Legion, the cocky

smile fell and he swallowed slowly before answering.

“Because Lucifer is coming and if we are to stand a chance against him, then we need Cas and his Angels.” He got to his feet and closed the distance between them. “Brother we can’t just wing this one like we have before. This time we’re simply not enough to protect Holly.”

“What do you mean?” Holly watched Dominic’s composure slip slightly. They all knew that the devil was coming for her, but after spending the last year running from the Archangel Michael who had been intent on her demise, these past few months in New York had been heaven. After watching her round the clock twenty four seven Dominic had to be just as tired, immortal or not it was no way to live. Holly couldn’t go back to that.

“Holly we knew this couldn’t last forever.” Legion told her softly, breaking through her train of thought. “Hell has been gathering all evil to it. Soon they will have amassed an army unlike anything we’ve ever seen. Make no mistake about it this fight concerns every living thing on this planet, mortal or otherwise. We need help and so does Heaven. They can’t hope to face Lucifer’s army by themselves, they are greatly outnumbered. The Divine Order is our last chance. We all must unite in a common cause or we will fall.”

The room suddenly felt colder and Holly hugged herself tightly trying to chase away the icy dread that formed in her stomach. “What exactly is the Order?” They both looked at her but it was Legion who answered. Dominic seemed to be having trouble dissolving what Legion had done.

“It’s a Council made up of the most powerful of Immortals. Good and evil. It’s only called at times of great need.”

“But they can never agree on a thing, there are too many egos.” Dominic added grimly. “It will cause more harm than good. They won’t listen to you Legion, and what’s worse is you’ve handed Holly straight to them.”

“What?” Fear unfurled inside her.

“I asked Cas to keep her out of it, but in his great wisdom he’s decided otherwise.”

Legion said with a touch of sarcasm to his voice. “There’s no way around it now Holly, I’m afraid you will have to attend.”

“She is not going.” Dominic said firmly.

“You know as well as I do that she has no choice. One cannot simply decline a summons Dominic.”

“Why not?” Holly asked simply.

The brothers shared a look. “You tell her. You’re the one that got her into this mess.” Dom told him with barely contained fury.

“That’s not fair.”

“Guys!” Legion took a deep breath.

“The invitation.” He held up the envelope. “Is laced with a very old and powerful incantation. It gives the Council the right to...extinguish...”



“He means Kill.” Dominic clarified. Legion shot daggers at him before continuing. “Any person who does not answer the Order’s call.” Holly crumpled onto the couch with sheer disbelief.

“You have to understand Holly.” Legion implored her. “These rules were put in place to keep the members in line. Some of whom are the worst offenders of genocide, murder and such. They have to be severe.”

“I’m going to go to bed...”

“Holly please...” Legion held her arm but she yanked free.

“I’m tired. I’m going to bed.” She repeated slowly trying to control her flaring temper. He let go and Holly felt his eyes on her until she got to the bedroom.

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“Nice one.” Dominic snorted at his older brother after the bedroom door slammed shut behind her. “What were you thinking?” He added with a sigh. The small apartment was a glow with the soft crisp light of the glass lamp in the corner. And outside on the street car engines filled the uneasy silence that had now fell over the two brothers.

“It’s a risk we have to take.” Legion finally whispered. Dom could almost feel the regret coming from him and his anger died down a little.

“They’ve just been waiting for an excuse to get their claws into her, and you’ve given them the perfect ammunition. I know you didn’t mean for this to happen Li, but quite frankly I’m amazed how you could be so dumb.” Legion’s head snapped up and Dominic saw rage dance in his cold eyes for a moment. “The Order,” Dom carried on.

“Will take the easiest route they can. War with Lucifer is the hard way.”

“What are you getting at?” Legion snapped.

“You really don’t see it do you? They’ll order Holly’s execution rather than face Lucifer on the battlefield. Kill Holly and this whole thing goes away. She’s the last of her kind. Lucifer’s hopes are all pinned on her.”

“But they have sworn to protect her.” Dominic laughed at his reply. “Like it or not they have protected her for eighteen years.”

“Oh really. What about Michael? Castillo? Have you forgotten Cas let a whole town die just to prove a point.”

“And I know he feels remorse for his actions. Cas is on our side. And as far as Michael goes, his vendetta against Holly was not backed by Heaven.”

“They did fuck all to stop him.” Dominic tossed at him. Legion sighed and joined Dominic on the couch.

“You know I would never let any of them touch her. You know why I have invested myself in the girl you love. I would die before I let history repeat itself.” Dominic sank further into despair at the mention of the past. He hadn’t always been the guy Holly had fell in love with; he had kept his past from her because the Prince of Hell was scared of losing her if she found out about it. But he also realized that if they were to

work he would have to come clean eventually.

“It’s about time you let it go.” Legion told him firmly. And Dom knew his face gave him away. “You weren’t to blame for what happened, you didn’t know.”

“It’s about time you stopped blaming Caleb.” Dominic counted getting to his feet. “I was the one who killed her not him, and I’ll tell you this now. If anything happens to Holly because of you...”

“You best hope you never see me again.”

# 3

Holly opened her eyes and sighed as last night's events rolled through her mind. After tossing and turning for hours she had finally managed to fall into a troubled sleep.

"Have you slept at all?" She asked, finally turning her head to look at Dominic. He was lying on his side with his head propped up by a hand. He was still dressed in the jeans and sweater from last night.

"Too busy watching you." Her heart picked up when his eyes swept over her with admiration. He leaned in and brushed his irresistible lips against hers, want and need overwhelmed her and Holly wrapped her arms around his neck taking his mouth passionately.

Not matter how much they made love she still craved more, Dominic made her heart do things no one else could. "Is Legion gone?" She whispered. A wicked smirk broke out on his face and he pulled her on top of him. Straddling his lap Holly slid her hands underneath his sweater and groped his firm hard body.

A commotion outside the door made her freeze. "What was that?" Dominic hesitated then grimaced. Leaning back Holly glared at him through narrow eyes.

"Dom?" He looked away while holding her hips and sat up, before he said anything the bedroom door burst open and Layla Rodriquez and Miles Benson, Holly's friends from St. Heralds, stood in the doorway.

"Surprize!" Holly could only stare at them with her mouth hanging open. She had never expected to see them again. "Sorry." Miles said to Dom who looked a little pissed. "She couldn't wait anymore." He motioned to the Latin goddess standing next to him.

"That's right blame me," Layla said. "I didn't hear you object." She crossed the room and flung herself down on the bed. "Relax Dom. You can bang her anytime." Holly regained her senses and looked down at the comprising position she was in, and thanked her lucky stars she still had her pyjamas on.

"What are you guys doing here?" Layla shrugged like it wasn't a big deal.

"Moral support."

"Huh?"

"Okay." Dominic said moving out from underneath Holly. "I think this will be best left till later, don't you Layla?" Holly saw the two of them exchange looks, and grew even more confused.

"Hungry?" Miles asked moving towards the kitchen where Holly heard even more voices. Grabbing her robe she followed and nearly had a stroke. Everyone she had ever

cared about was sitting round the small kitchen island, gossiping over eggs and bacon. “Holly.” Andrea said warmly making the others look up. Andrea looked flawless as ever with her long blonde hair and stunning features. She was the headmistress of St. Heralds and Holly owed her a lot. Professor Brooks sat next to her with his golden curls and unusual eyes magnified by steel rimmed glasses. It wasn’t hard to believe that he had once been an Angel. Brooks had chosen to fall after Michael had murdered Holly’s biological parents.

“Good morning.” He greeted with a mouth full of tomatoes. Legion sat at the opposite end and smiled nervously at her.

“You didn’t have to slap her...” Holly could have almost cried with joy but the second voice that wafted in from the opening front door made her breath catch.

“She was a second away from suffocating you with her mouth!” Jade Summers came into view and Holly’s joy melted immediately. She caught sight of Holly and the two glared at each other. Caleb’s broad frame filled the space behind her, and Holly tore her eyes away from her arch nemesis to the person that, besides Dominic, meant everything to her.

Caleb Williams closed the door while balancing a huge box of Krispy Kreme donuts in his hands. His sapphire eyes seemed to glow brighter through the dull light of the morning that filtered in through the blinds. Since deciding to stay behind in Oregon with Jade almost three months ago, Holly had missed him more than words could say. He was a part of her and truth be told knew her better than anyone. Jade took the box off him and strolled over to the others, giving Holly a black look as she passed.

“Hey Holly.” Caleb said carefully, they were both aware of the eyes that rested on them. A lump stuck in her throat and without thinking she threw herself into his strong protective arms.

Holly couldn’t begin to express what she was feeling but hoped her body could. Caleb was her ex Guardian Angel and despite the connection that linked them so closely being severed, there was an unspoken understanding that Caleb would always be *her* angel.

Someone cleared their throat and Holly thought it sounded like Jade, Caleb’s new charge, amongst other things. Making herself step away she looked up and basked in Caleb. He was more tanned than she remembered and his golden hair had grown, laying over his forehead. He looked better than ever.

“Can I interrupt this love feast for a second?” Dominic quipped coming up beside her. He tried to make his voice light but she heard a touch of hardness to his tone. Caleb dropped his eyes and joined the others while Dominic guided Holly outside the apartment to the corridor.

“What...? How...?” Holly gasped once the door was closed. Dominic had changed into dark jeans, vest and leather jacket, he adjusted the collar while she leaned against the far wall for support. Never in her wildest dreams had she thought any of this could be possible.

“Legion blinked them all here last night, while you were sleeping. Jade insisted on inviting herself.”

“But why?” Holly was overjoyed that they were here but she knew Legion and Dominic pretty well by now. If they were gathering the troops something was coming. Dom sighed and looked down at the floor.

“The Devine Order is tonight Holly.” She gaped at him in horror.

“What?”

“And there’s so much you have to learn before then, Andrea and the others are here to guide you through it.”

“Guide me through what?” Where are you going?” Holly’s head spun and she hugged the wall. Dominic came closer but stopped shy of touching her.

“The Divine Order is rarely called, I think in the past millennia it’s only been held twice. So it’s something of an event. They make a big deal of it, black suits, ballroom dancing, the works.” The door to the apartment opened and Legion slipped through.

“I can’t do this...” She breathed feeling dizzy, Dom steadied her.

“Listen to me I wouldn’t leave unless I had to. There’s...” Holly saw him hesitate as he looked at his brother. “Stuff that needs to be sorted before tonight. But I swear I’ll be there waiting for you.”

“Tell me everything’s going to be okay.” She had this feeling of complete and utter dread. They hadn’t spent a day apart in a long time, and Holly didn’t know if she could cope with all that she would need to without him. It sounded weak and pathetic but he had become her rock. If he ever left she would fall on her face.

“Do you trust me?” She looked up at him and saw sheer determination in his expression. “You know I do.” He moved closer and their bodies touched.

“Then everything *will* work out. I promise you.” He slipped his arms around her waist and kissed her with such intensity that her legs buckled. As he pulled away he let his left hand hover over her stomach. “I’ll see you tonight.”

She watched him walk away; as they reached the elevator he turned back and flashed Holly his usual devilish smile that would make the biggest iceberg melt in seconds.

“Princess do me a favour and do what they say.” Holly stuck her tongue out at him and she heard him laugh as the lift doors closed.

Taking a deep breath she headed back inside where breakfast had ended and Miles was washing up. “Right Holly,” Andrea chimed. “Why don’t you get dressed and then we’ll get going.”

“Where?” Andrea shot her a mystified look.

“To the shops of course, you have to have something to wear tonight.” Holly swallowed hard as sheer terror settled on her. “Don’t worry. Dom left his credit card.” Without another word she went back to perking up the sofa cushions. It wasn’t money that worried Holly; Dominic had a bottomless piggy bank.

Holly tossed on a baggy jumper and jeans that were way too big for her. She brushed her wild curls into a messy bun and threw on some eyeliner before brushing her teeth.

“Jeez Holly your look like a hobo.” Layla said with disgust when she stepped into the living area.

“Layla.” Andrea snapped, before turning back to Holly. “Ready to go?” She was far from ready but wanting to get this over with Holly nodded and grabbed her coat from beside the door. “Where’s Caleb?”

“He took Jade out.” Miles offered. “She was whining about something or other.” Andrea and Layla ushered Holly out of the apartment while Miles and Brooks stayed behind; claiming clothes shopping with a group of women resembled their worst nightmare.

“This is going to be awesome.” Layla told them in the elevator. “I’ve never been to New York before. Imagine all those shoes...”

“We’re not here for a shopping spree.” Andrea said reproachfully. “Holly has a lot to get through and not a lot of time. We get the dress then leave, understand?” Layla nodded disappointedly.

Holly practically ran out of the lift when the doors opened, she didn’t like keeping things from her nearest and dearest, especially when they had all given up their time to help her.

They scoured boutiques and department stores, Holly in her rush to find a dress without incident insisted on buying the first one they came too, but Andrea had told her it was too dowdy. Holly needed to make an impression. After entering the sixth store that was stocked full of beautiful elegant dresses Holly had to sit down. She felt completely drained.

“What about this one?” Andrea appeared with a mountain of cloth over her arm. She held a green gown that shimmered with diamonds underneath the strobe lighting. “It’s great.” Holly said.

“Nah.” Layla disagreed holding up a rather feisty red one. “This is the one you need if you want to pack a punch.” Andrea frowned at her.

“Let’s see what they look like on, and then we’ll see whose is best.” Layla shot at her. Holly grimaced, but let them guide her to the changing room. Layla waited outside while Andrea helped her into the gowns. Her green one was first and she had a hard time getting it past Holly’s stomach. “We’ll try another size.” Andrea remarked finally giving up a losing battle.

“I need something more...billowy.” Andrea looked at her then smiled. “Just because you gained a...little weight doesn’t mean you have to hide yourself Holly. Your beautiful.”

“No. It’s not...” Holly sighed and slumped down on the chair that was propped in the corner beside the mirror. Her hair had fallen out, her feet ached and she was hot and starving. “Andrea...I’m pregnant.” Pure shock passed over the headmistresses face and it was sometime before she spoke.

“Dominic’s?” Holly gave her an irritated glance. “Who else would it be?” She snapped. “I’m sorry Holly, it’s just...this changes everything.” The dresses fell from Andrea’s

hand and she slumped against the wall.

“Tell me about it.” Holly muttered.

“How far along are you?”

“Four month.” Holly registered Andrea’s look of disbelief.

“You look five.”

“I know that’s why I need to hide it. Legion warned me not to tell anyone.”

“He’s right. If the order found out...” Andrea trailed off, she didn’t need to spell it out Holly already had a pretty good idea what they would do.

“Andrea what is it about this baby that I have to hide?” Holly asked her. She had struggled with this for months; she had all these questions but no one to ask. Dominic had been against keeping it in the first place which made no sense, since Legion had said that Dom had never wanted anything more badly than a family. And after his warning to tell no one Holly knew there was more to this than she was being told. Andrea’s face softened. “I would love nothing more than to tell you Holly. I can’t imagine what you’re going through, both of you. But I don’t think it’s my place and we are running on a tight schedule. Before I leave we’ll sit down and have a chat.” She added after seeing Holly’s dismay. “I’ll go find what we need, you stay here.”

Holly heard Layla’s objections about her red dress not being suitable, then Andrea’s footsteps as they padded away on the plush carpet. Holly found the resulting silence deafening. The last thing she had wanted to do was betray Legion but what he didn’t realize was that Holly needed answers. She let her thoughts travel to her parents and wondered what their views on her being knocked up by the Prince of Hell at the age of eighteen would be.

Shortly Andrea came back carrying three puffed out dresses that would certainly hide Holly’s baby bump. After finding the perfect one they quickly paid and caught the tube back to the apartment.

The smell of roasted chicken filled their nostrils and Holly followed the smell inside.

“Ah just in time.” Brooks said with a warm smile. He carried a rather large roasted chicken to the island and placed it beside a bowl of steaming vegetables, mash potatoes and a jug full of gravy. “I had nothing else to do.” He shrugged at Holly’s look of awe.

After a double helping Holly helped Andrea with the dishes. “After this we will need to get on with waltzing.”

“Waltzing?”

“It is a formal event Holly, there will be dancing, and I’m assuming you’ve never waltzed in your life.”

“Never really had the need to.” Holly joked and got a disapproving glare.

“There’s nothing to it.” Caleb’s voice said as the door opened.

“Caleb’s somewhat of a master at waltzing.” Andrea murmured affectionately. “I’m sure he can show you the basics.”

“I’ll bet.” Jade mumbled sweeping past them and headed for the bathroom. Caleb gave

her a stern look but she had already shut the door.

“Well since my job is done,” Layla said getting up off the couch. “Me and Miles are going to take in New York. See ya.” Miles looked surprised by this and Layla literally had to yank him out the door.

Brooks rummaged around in his duffel bag that was placed beside the couch; he pulled out a disc and popped it into the CD player that was on the second shelf of the bookcase beside the TV. “Pays to come prepared.”

Classical music erupted from the speakers and Caleb pushed the coffee table along the carpet. “May I have this dance?” Holly couldn’t help but laugh as she let him guide her around the floor.

“The trick is to follow.” He said after she had stumbled into him for the seventh time. “Which may be hard for you to do.” He teased. “You have to give control over to your partner. Place yourself in his hands.”

“Yeah, because he would just love that.” Jade almost yelled. Caleb’s body stiffened and he shot Jade a look that could have literally killed.

“Wouldn’t you rather be elsewhere?” He snapped and the harshness of his tone made Holly look up. Jade rose from the couch.

“Why? You two want to be left alone? Last time I checked Caleb it’s me your fucking not her. She doesn’t want you remember?” Holly averted her eyes. It wasn’t her place to interfere, this was between them but biting her tongue was getting almost impossible.

“This isn’t the time Jade.” Caleb practically growled at her.

“You think I’m stupid don’t you?” She continued unaware of how hot Caleb’s blood was running. Holly could practically feel the heat coming off him. “You finish with me days before coming here to see her?” Holly’s head jerked up but Caleb wouldn’t meet her gaze. “I’m your Guardian Angel.” Jade mocked. “I can’t screw and guide you at the same time. What a lot of bullshit. Your just hoping Dominic will mess up and Holly will come running back to you. Well news flash jerk! It’s never going to happen!” The front door slammed loudly behind Jade as she stormed out the apartment.

“I’ll go after her.” Andrea said. “You two just keep practicing.”

An awkward silence prevailed until Brooks cleared his throat. “Well I’ll...em...I’ll take a bath I think, if you wouldn’t mind?” Caleb crossed the room and sat down on the couch.

“Course not.” Holly replied distracted. She waited till the bathroom door had closed before switching off the music.

“Leave it on.” Caleb told her suddenly. She threw him a perplexed look then nodded as it dawned on her. Whatever Caleb wanted to say to her he didn’t want to be overheard. Jade was Nephilim and although her hearing wasn’t as sharp as an Immortals it was good enough to hear them. Holly turned the volume up then jerked her head towards the bedroom.

Caleb shut the door firmly before leaning against it. “You left her, why?” Holly asked



sitting on the feathery mattress. “You seemed...invested in her.”

“Sleeping with Jade was the biggest mistake I’ve ever made.” He eventually allowed.

“She’s messed up enough she doesn’t deserve to be mucked around.”

“I thought you said you cared for her.” This sudden U-turn surprised Holly. He had broken up the band because of her. Caleb had picked Jade over Holly and now all of a sudden it was over?

“I do. But I’ve never loved her. I’m tied to her but staying with her out of duty is making us both suffer. I had to end it, it’s better this way.” Holly got a sinking sensation.

“What do you mean you’re tied? Because she’s your charge?” Caleb sighed and joined her on the bed. He looked so weary and defeated.

“She’s my soul mate Holly. The same as Dominic is yours.” It took a while to digest the news. Caleb had told her all about soul mates. Despite what romantic novels and movies would have you believe, the term soul mate was anything but romantic. It physically bonded you to your other half and when they weren’t around you pined for them like crazy. It took over completely till they were all you thought about. It burned so much it hurt.

“Why didn’t you tell me this?”

“It wasn’t important.”

“How can you say that? Caleb...I just want you to be happy. If that’s with Jade then so be it.” Caleb smiled sadly and his bare arm brushed against the material of her jumper, sending electricity through Holly’s body. Their relationship was foggy now that they were both with different people. Holly still loved him with all her being but it wasn’t the passionate fire she had for Dominic it was more steady, reliable.

“The only time I’ve ever truly been happy was when I was with you.” He said so quietly Holly had to strain to hear it.

“Caleb...that ship sailed a long time ago.”

“I know. I just sometimes wish things between us had worked out differently.”

“Dominic would say you had a lucky escape. Apparently I’m hell to live with.” Holly mused. Caleb let out a laugh.

“Come on let’s back to waltzing, shall we?”

Jade and Andrea came back in to the apartment ten minutes later, and although she still stared holes into Holly she kept her silence. After three hours of waltzing Caleb finally declared her ready. Holly felt dead on her feet and it must have showed because Andrea suggested she take a nap before having to get glammed up.

Holly trekked to her bed and didn’t even bother lifting up the covers, her eyes closed as soon as her head touched the pillow.

# 4

Holly Adams didn't recognise her reflection. The blue gown transformed her completely along with Layla's makeup. A silk collar fastened at her neck and the shimmering fabric parted to form a diamond shape just above her breast bone. Layla had attacked her with boob tape to stop her from spilling out, and after repeatedly asking if the tape would hold all night, Layla informed her to stop being such a bore. The dress billowed out at the waistline masking Holly perfectly while at the same time making her look slimmer. Andrea had told her that a well-tailored dress could perform miracles, but Holly hadn't believed her till now.

She felt better than ever and the girl staring back at her was stunning. Layla had done wonders with her frazzled curls, and they trailed down her back in elegant spirals. The clock on the bedside table struck 7:30 and nerves fluttered in her stomach, but she refused to let them get the best of her. No matter what happened tonight Holly swore she wouldn't let herself panic.

The look on Caleb's face as Holly walked out the bedroom made her worries abate. He was dressed in a traditional tux and looked flawless. Out of them all Caleb was the only other to have received a summons besides her and Dominic. After thanking them all for their help Holly followed Caleb to the lift.

The space felt small and hot and Holly was glad when the doors opened on the ground floor. Caleb hailed a cab and she slid across the backseat ignoring the driver who whistled at her.

"34<sup>th</sup> street please." Caleb said as the taxi pulled away from the curb. Holly looked out the window as the driver and Caleb exchanged small talk. She was dying to see Dominic, one look at him and Holly knew she would feel less anxious. He filled her senses until there was nothing else but him, and she needed that distraction more than ever. Holly thought that he would have called and had carried her cell around all day but he never did, which put her more on edge. He was probably just too busy doing...whatever the hell had been so important. At least that was what she made herself believe.

The taxi finally pulled up in a street full of Victorian style buildings, none of which looked big enough to host an order of Immortals. Caleb paid and they watched it drive off. "What do we do now?" Holly asked after he made no movement. He checked his watch and smiled at her, but it was a tense smile.

"Now we wait. Dominic said he'd met us here, it's not quite eight yet." He added quickly. Holly looked up and down the dark deserted street and let out a deep breath.

“Hey, there’s nothing to worry about, he’s not even late yet.” Caleb’s soothing did little to slow her racing heart. She tried to smile but it was more of a grimace.

“She complaining already?” Holly could have died with relief. She pivoted to see Dominic leaning against the front wall of a house, and the tears came automatically. Holly ran to him and held Dom to her as if her very life depended on it, burying herself into his chest she clutched onto him till her heart started to slow.

“I missed you too.” He whispered holding her. Gathering herself Holly pulled away, cursing herself for being so weak.

“Well...where is this meeting thingy?” She breathed still reeling from the overwhelming relief that filled her every pore. Dominic took her hand and started to lead her down the alley between two of the houses. “This way.”

The further they walked the more uncertain Holly became. “Dom there’s nothing down here...” He stopped and she squinted ahead. There was some sort of building in front of them, it looked fairly small and as a gust of wind breezed over them, Holly heard the squeaking of hinges. Caleb stepped forward and shut the door that was flapping in the wind; it resembled more of a shack than a meeting place for supernatural royalty. Holly glanced at Dom but he was too busy taking in her gown.

“You look...” There was a hunger to his eyes that she knew would be mirrored in her own. “You don’t look too bad yourself.” Holly replied taking in his dark fitted suit and red shirt. He looked so hot it should be a sin.

“Ready?” Caleb asked, turning to them. He gripped the doorknob. Dom hesitated never taking his eyes off Holly. “You go ahead.” He finally replied. “We’ll catch up.” Caleb started to object but Dominic pulled her away from the door and into the shadows.

Holly’s back brushed the wall. “Dom, what are you...” His mouth came down on hers hard and Holly’s body responded instantly. She had been craving this all day and now that he was supplying Holly couldn’t get enough. The alley disappeared till there was just him; her hands raked his black hair that felt like silk pulling his body closer. As Holly went into complete meltdown he pulled away. “We shouldn’t keep them waiting.”

“You’re putting on the brakes now?” She gasped incredulously. He laughed while righting her dress.

“You know I’m worth the wait.”

“And you call me a tease.” She quipped as he took her hand and led her inside.

“How much did they tell you about tonight?” Dominic asked while they walked. The empty hallway was so dark Holly had to rely on his enhanced eyesight. “Just that’s it’s a big deal. And just for the record, I don’t need to impress a bunch of murderers and hypocrites.” Dominic grimaced.

“Can you please just do as you’re told for once? This isn’t my idea of fun either but there are certain rules that have to be obeyed, like no fighting.” Holly rolled her eyes. She was fed up of everyone trying to make out that she was trouble.

Trouble found her.

“Holly I’m serious. Not matter how much your provoked don’t start anything. Promise me.” She glared at him in reply. He pulled on her hand forcing her to a stop. “Hey, I know this is hard for you, seeing Castillo again after what happened...But Holly you have to leave it all at the door, or otherwise we’ve won’t be walking back out.

Understand?”

“Dom I got it. Keep my mouth shut and act invisible.” They started to walk again.

“That wasn’t what I meant.” He told her as they came to a door. Light was creeping out of the space at the bottom, and voices soaked through the wood, casting one last concerned glance her way Dominic opened it and Holly was transported into a world full of magic and danger and grandeur.

They were standing on the threshold of a landing decked with plush royal red carpet that felt like fur when her heels stepped on it, giant cream marble columns touched the carved ceiling. Beautiful women dripped in jewels and crowns hugged men in formal attire, it was surreal and slightly intimidating.

A table lay off to the side with a scroll on top. A bored looking attendant crossed off names as gold Envelopes were handed over. Caleb was slightly ahead of them in the line and she saw him hand over his summons. The man took it and checked the name on the side with the ones on the scroll in front of him. Holly marvelled at the quill that scribbled out his name, it was like something out of a movie.

The curly haired attendant passed the envelope over a metal plate that was engraved in the surface of the table, and she looked on with fascination as a gold rope formed around Caleb’s wrist like a lasso. It grew fainter then went up in smoke. The process was repeated with every person in the queue, and Holly realized it was the magic that blinded them to the Order being removed.

“Dom, I forgot the envelope.” She told him with quiet panic as they came to the front.

“You mean this one?” He asked with a mischievous smirk as he pulled it out of his suit pocket. Holly didn’t bother to hide her grin; at times he was purely astonishing.

Dominic handed it over and the man took it without looking up. He scratched their names of the parchment. “Have a good evening Holly...” He trailed off as the rope round their wrists burned away. He looked up for the first time and stared at her with undisguised wonder. “Adams...” He seemed lost for words and uncertainly Holly glanced around to see everybody staring at her. For a moment it was like time itself had stopped.

“Thank you.” Dominic answered guiding her away from the table and towards Caleb, who stood waiting for them. When she reached him Holly caught him glaring at a dark haired man who watched every step Holly made. Caleb stepped behind her to block his view. Most of the people had torn their eyes away and after handing over their coats made for the staircase.

The man who had irritated Caleb past inches away from her and grinned flirtatiously. She heard Dominic click his tongue in annoyance. “Who is that?” Holly whispered to

Caleb.

“A very dangerous man, stay away from him.” He told her before excusing himself.

“Where’s he going?” Holly asked Dominic. “To beat the wholly crap out of him.” She stared at him with horror until he burst out laughing.

“I’m kidding Holly. Come on.”

“That wasn’t funny.” She told him as he pulled her across the landing. As she fell in step behind him Holly glanced to her left and the breath caught in her throat. A group of young men stood off to the side partly cloaked in the shadow that the huge columns made. Smouldering embers glowed through the black and Holly was completely transfixed by them so much her feet forgot to walk.

The owner of the eyes stepped forward a little and his hair flowed over his shoulders in a cascading dark sheen, he was a sight to behold but his amazing looks didn’t explain the devastating effect he had on her. She felt a tug as Dominic realized she wasn’t following.

The guy held her gaze almost begging her to come to him, and she would have if Dom hadn’t placed a hand in the small of her back and ushered her away. As soon as they broke eye contact the effect started to wear off. “What the hell was that?” She gasped into his ear as they descended the stairs.

“I told Andrea to talk to you about this. The Immortals here are not just Angels and Demons.” He let his words sink in before continuing. “You wanted to know what else was real. Well the answer is just about everything you’ve ever had a nightmare about.” “Great.” She breathed.

“You’ll be fine. Just don’t stray more than an inch from me.” He squeezed her hand reassuringly as they reached the bottom, and Holly had no intention of letting go. The ballroom seemed to go on forever. White panelling and French windows gave an impressive view of the Hudson River; at least that was what she thought it was called. Holly didn’t have the greatest sense of direction.

The wooden floor gleamed underneath the chandeliers that hung from the ceiling, a black flower that looked like a lily was intertwined with the metal links that kept the crystal chandeliers bolted to the ceiling. At the far end there was some kind of staging and she saw a full orchestra setting up. Behind her were tables draped with white linen and topped with buffet food and a punch bowl.

Dominic pulled her through the crowd and Holly ignored the curious eyes that studied her as she passed by. Her grip on his hand started to slip as he weaved in and out with effortless ease. Suddenly a dark form was in front of her and her grip broke completely as she came to a stop. He looked slightly worse for wear; there was a dazed look to his brown eyes. He looked down and kind of leered at her, but Holly was sure that it was supposed to be a smile.

“You...” He held up a finger and she saw the whites of his eyes. “Are the prettiest thing here.” He slurred.

“That’s... nice.” She replied trying to see over his shoulder to locate Dom.

“In fact, I don’t mean to be rude but I...”

“You what?” The guy eyes widened at the sound of Dominic’s voice. He grimaced at her before turning.

“I...Well I meant...What I was saying...” His words came out fuzzy and she could hear the fear in his tone. Dominic had crossed his arms over his chest and regarded him with dangerous eyes.

“Holly.” Legion said coming through the crowd. “You look positively glowing.” He took her hand and kissed the back of it before turning to his brother, who was still staring at the poor guy.

“Dom.” He said quietly but firmly, without looking away Dominic moved closer and whispered into the man’s ear. Holly couldn’t hear what he said so she glanced at Legion who sighed heavily. The man quickly moved away and Dom’s dark eyes followed. “Dick.” He flung after him before he faced her. “What?” He asked defensively when he saw their disapproving glares. He moved away and Holly and Legion shared a look before they followed.

They caught up to him underneath the balcony; the side of the ballroom was littered with tables and expensive looking leather armchairs. Caleb was sat in one drinking what looked like his fourth punch of the night. Holly threw him a puzzled look but he just waved her off, she had never seen Caleb drink alcohol before. A voice came over the microphone and Holly forgot about everything else.

She knew that voice.

Castillo stood on the stage in front of an old fashioned silver standing microphone. Anger and hate rose in her and Legion placed a firm but comforting hand on her shoulder.

“Would the ruling families please take up position on the dance floor.” Holly saw Dominic grab the punch from Caleb and take a mouthful. He kissed her lightly before walking off into the crowd that had taken up the fringe of the wooden floor.

“Stay with Caleb.” Legion told her before following. Music blared into life and through the gaps between heads Holly saw Dominic walk up to a beautiful blonde that waited on the dance floor, wearing a black dress that clung to her like a second skin.

“It’s tradition for the members of the ruling families to have the first dance.” Caleb said coming up behind her. As they started to glide across the floor in elegant swirls Holly felt tears prick her eyes.

“Holly. It doesn’t mean anything.” She shrugged off his arm and slapped away her tears. She knew it meant nothing but the happy smile that was permanently etched on the blonde’s face burned a hole in Holly, and Dominic wasn’t exactly looking bored. All her fears came to life on that dance floor and it was more than she could handle. Breaking away from Caleb she bolted past the stage and through a door that luckily lead outside.

The cold air blasted her and coming to a stop Holly crumpled on to the earth and sobbed uncontrollably.

“Love will do that to you.” The voice came out of nowhere and Holly found herself looking at shiny black loafers. She looked up through water blurred eyes and saw fiery embers gazing back down at her

“Hello Holly.”

# 5

He offered out his hand and Holly contemplated taking it just for a second. She felt so lost and her emotions were swinging all over the place, for a brief second Holly thought about throwing it all away and taking a chance that would probably be her last.

Common sense prevailed however and ignoring him she got to her feet, it took everything she had and Holly felt exhausted and heartsick to the point where she didn't want any of it anymore. She had had enough.

"How do you know my name?" She asked taking a few steps back.

"Everyone knows it." He replied simply. "You have set our world alight." Holly snorted sarcastically, all she wanted was just to disappear. The river was visible from where they stood and bare trees stood sentinel on the bank. Holly hadn't realized how far away she had ran, but the lights of the ballroom glittered through the dark like distant stars.

Holly knew she should be scared, but she wasn't, quite frankly she just didn't possess the energy to be frightened.

He was looking at her in way she couldn't read, it was somewhere between amusement and pity. "Most don't understand the Prince of hell falling for you, but my question is what made *you* fall for him?" Holly shot him a glare of pure anger.

"His big smile." She retorted sarcastically. "Who the hell are you?" His amusement faded and now he just plain stared at her.

"Dominic hasn't told you?" He made an irritated noise. "Doesn't surprise me, I've always been his dirty little secret." A darkness passed over his perfect chiselled face.

"Whatever." She muttered turning away. Holly had come out here to escape, not to listen to cryptic musings from a mysterious stranger, plus the fascination she had with him freaked her out.

"I know about your precious cargo." Holly stopped dead in her tracks. They were well and truly screwed.

"I don't know what you're talking about." She said facing him. He gave her a tsk tsk.

"I can hear its heartbeat." Holly couldn't stop the surprise from breaking out on her features. Immortals had good hearing but it wasn't *that* good.

"How...?" He smirked and the motion lit up his face, she found herself falling under his spell again.

"I'm a Vampire Holly, you'd be surprised how good our hearing is." She gave an unsure laugh.



“Vampires don’t exist.”

“You know better than that. You’re eyes have been opened, don’t be so close minded.”

“Then why aren’t you trying to eat me?” She asked more to buy her brain time to deal with the news, then to know the answer. The whole thing was ridiculous.

“I’d like to think I’m a little bit more civilized than that. And it could have something to do with your heart.” Holly cocked her head at him. “It hasn’t skipped a beat all the time we’ve been talking. Usually hearts speed up just at my presence. You don’t fear me, do you?”

“Should I?” Holly countered.

“Probably not.” He admitted. “It’s Dominic you should be scared of. You see regardless of what you may think Holly. I don’t have a thing on him; Dominic is as cold and heartless as his father. He is Evil itself. And you can try and tell yourself that this will have a happy ending, but since I like you I’m going to tell you this. It won’t. He will be your undoing.” His words left her cold.

“Holly!” Dominic shouting her name distracted them, and they both turned to see him making his way over.

“Remember what I said. He doesn’t love you; he’s not capable of it. Not the way you are.” He came closer and she could feel his breath on her face. “Leave him while you can, or you’ll suffer more than you have to.” Their eyes locked and in that moment Holly believed every word he said, then he took off, walking briskly past Dominic who glanced at him with hard eyes when they passed.

“What the hell are you doing? Running off like that? Are you crazy?” His voice was tight and barely controlled.

“I just needed some air.” She answered still reeling from what the Vampire had told her. Dominic stared at her like she had lost her mind, he followed her eyes that watched the stranger and his hands curled into fists.

“Do you know what he is?”

“Yes.” Holly said simply, starting to move back to the ballroom.

“He could have killed you in a second. I told you not to stray and what do you do as soon as my back’s turned! Are you trying to give me a heart attack?” Holly’s temper flared and she rounded on him.

“You left me!” He rolled his eyes.

“Not this shit again. Holly I had to.”

“Where’ve you been all day?” She saw the tension leave his body and he sighed.

“I told you this morning, I had some things to take care of. You think I like leaving you?”

“I don’t know what to think anymore.” A female voice called out his name and Holly saw the blonde from earlier waiting at the doorway. “Looks like your dance partner wants enough twirl.” She snapped. Dominic let out a heavy breath.

“Holly I don’t want to fight...”

“Tough. I’m sick of being lied to Dominic!” Her anger faded replaced with grief and the

tears slid down her cheeks. "Why don't you want him?" She whispered. He looked away from her.

"Because I don't want to lose you."

"Don't give me that. You don't believe in fate. We make our own destiny remember? You don't believe in The Thrones premonition." The Thrones were Angels gifted with seeing the future, they had foreseen Holly's death during childbirth. That was why Caleb had left her, but the son they had seen had always been Dominic's. "You like making them, but not having them is that it?"

"How can you say that?" He snarled at her. "I've always wanted..." He caught himself before he could finish.

"Then what is it Dom? I have to know!" For a second the moonlight illuminated his face as he turned to her, and she thought she glimpsed tears in his eyes, but they were gone as quickly as they had appeared.

"We should get back inside." And just like that he had walled up again. Feeling frustrated and confused Holly barged past him and trudged back up to the ballroom. Thankfully the blonde had gone from the doorway; Holly wasn't in the mood to deal with love sick puppies.

As she barged through the crowd her eyes locked onto Castillo's, who was busy announcing something over the microphone. Holly really couldn't control the tornado of emotion that stormed inside her and tore her head away. Ahead she saw the relieved faces of Legion and Caleb and debated going over to them, the door banged shut behind her as Dominic returned, his eyes pleaded with her to give in, but she refused to be a doormat anymore. Why couldn't they see how important this was? She caught sight of the Vampire standing on the opposite side of the room, and knowing what she was getting herself into Holly made a bee line for him, she couldn't stomach any of them right now. The look of pleasant surprise on his face when she neared made her smile.

"Care to dance?" His eyes blazed bright and she saw them focus on something behind before taking her hand. He gestured to the stage and the music changed to a faster tempo. He whipped her away from him and for a minute Holly caught sight of Dominic being restrained by Legion, and couldn't help think that it severed him right. The Vamp wheeled her back in and they started to move over the floor.

His footsteps were fast and masterful and she let him lead, His hands moved to the small of her back before he bent her over so low her curls draped the wooden floor.

"You're playing with fire." He told her glancing over to the side where Dominic was tearing away from his brother with a murderous rage in his pitch black eyes.

"I'm used to it." She sighed as he lifted her back to a vertical base. Caleb had only taught her a few steps but in the Vampire's skilful hands Holly was whirled and spun till she was breathless. Their feisty tango caught the attention of just about everyone in the room and for the first time that night she was actually enjoying herself.

When the dance was over he actually bowed to *her* and the sound of applause reached

her embarrassed ears. Another much slower tempo wailed out and couples took to the floor, she was all for skipping this one and collapsing into one of those comfy armchairs but he pulled her to him before she could react.

The Vampire's hands moved like velvet down her body and Holly slapped them away.

"You really are unaffected by me, aren't you?"

"I wouldn't say that." She answered carefully. He mesmerized her but she didn't feel an ounce of attraction towards him, he was more of a sweet irresistible puzzle that she yearned to solve. Her heart was already taken.

He swung her away then back into his chest. "But not enough to ditch the devil on your shoulder."

"Sorry."

He smiled widely. "Shame, you intrigue me."

"May I have your attention please." Castillo's deep voice rose over the microphone again, and Holly involuntary tensed. "Would the Council members retire to chambers. Thank you." Holly heard the Vampire sigh as he reluctantly stepped away from her.

"It has truly been a pleasure Holly Adams, I thought tonight would hold nothing but dull nonsense, thank you for making it otherwise." He kissed the back of her hand.

"Holly if you wouldn't mind attending...?" Castillo asked, the microphone made his booming voice echo around the room and once again every eye turned her way. She felt a tug on her hand and she looked at the Vampire to see him grinning like a loon.

"This way." He said and Holly let him lead her through the crowds of people. She glanced around to see where the others were but she couldn't trace any of them and panic started to descend.

On hearing her heart accelerate he glanced back at her with a questioning look, but she avoided his gaze. Holly focused on her breathing and tried not to think about the council that was meeting to discuss not only mankind's fate, but hers along with it. She had to fight for control as the power in her veins responded to the growing fear that swelled in her chest. Holly had gotten a good grasp of her supernatural powers that she had inherited from her witch ancestor, but when her emotions threatened to overtake her, control got tricky.

They followed the group of men to a carefully hidden door that was completely camouflaged in the white panelling. She traversed the curved staircase that opened up to a long red hallway. The meeting room itself was to the left and consisted of a large log fireplace a huge dark oak table and chairs. The walls were brown stone as was the floor and she had to lean on the Vampire to stop her stupid heels from slipping over the cobbles.

He held out a chair but a firm hand wrapped around her arm and guided her into the next one over. She looked up to see Dominic take the seat in between her and the Vampire. Legion sat on her other side, and he gave her a disapproving but sympathetic glance before turning away. Castillo stood at the head of the table in a white suit that was a sharp contrast to his ebony skin. He waited for everyone to take their seats

before speaking. Dominic's voice in her ear cancelled out Castillo's.

"Enjoy that? Trust me princess you don't want to play this game with me." Holly felt flaming hot unbridled rage fill her. Of course she didn't want this! All she wanted was for him to open up and stop fooling her around.

For a second her control slipped and Castillo's voice trailed off as red flames devoured the potted topiary that stood in the corner.

"Holly!" Legion snapped and she shut her eyes trying to douse the boiling anger inside her.

"Sorry." She said to the room meekly before training her eyes on the wooden surface of the table. The green leaves of the art work were left with black scorch marks and Castillo cleared his throat.

"As I was saying, the order been called because of the imminent threat Lucifer poses..."

"Threat my arse." A fat bald man interrupted. "Kill the girl problem solved." Holly lifted her head enough to glare at him; he totally ignored it and flicked off the ash of his cigar onto the table. His comment was met by faint murmurs of agreement but Legion rising to his feet quelled them.

"That is not an option. The girl is dear to me and mine and I personally will inflict the most gruelling torture ever devised, on any man who tires." Silence reigned and she looked up at him with surprise. It was clear that some of the members were intimidated by him and they refused to meet his cold gaze.

"I second that." Castillo said after a while, and Legion sat back down throwing a reassuring smile her way. "She is under Heaven's wings and no harm will befall her." Hearing his words made her unsure of his intentions. He had no problem letting Michael throw her off Cherry Falls High school roof, or murdering her parents, or even turning a blind eye to him massacring her town, yet all of a sudden she was to be protected?

"What else can we do?" An aging woman spoke. "Heavens numbers have greatly depleted and without Michael..." she trailed off and Holly felt their accusing stares rest on her, "a war with Lucifer is one we cannot win, not this time."

Holly saw Dominic slump against the back of his chair and cast an I-told-you-so-look at his brother.

"I believe we can defeat him." Legion said with conviction. "More than that I believe we can end this war once and for all."

"And how do you propose to do that?" The Vampire that sat next to Dom asked with amusement.

"By killing him." The room erupted into chaos. There were angry shouts and people jumped up from their chairs and started arguing amongst themselves. Holly saw Castillo try to regain order. After ten minutes the ruckus died down reluctantly.

"He is a blasphemer!" The man with the cigar spat at Legion. "Plotting against your own father..."

"He was never that." Legion replied evenly.

“How could you ever hope to kill him?” The old woman asked him. “Not even Michael or Gabriel could do that.” The sudden mention of Holly’s biological father made her breath catch. She hadn’t even met him. Gabriel had died protecting her mother but it was still a touchy subject.

“The girl sitting next to me is much more than Lucifer’s salvation.” He motioned to her and Holly gave him a tense look. What was he doing? “She’s also his end.” Eyes examined her closely and she squirmed uncomfortably.

“We have heard of the things she has done, and defeating Michael is an achievement in itself.” The man with the dark hair who had offended Caleb said for the first time. “She has the power to kill Angels, but Lucifer is a lot more than that. And if she can do what you say then why do you need us?”

“Because not even Holly would stand a chance against Lucifer’s entire army by herself. I have a plan but for it to work we need your help.” The room filled with voices and once again Castillo had to step in. This was the first Holly had heard about any of this and she thought he had gone stark raving mad. She couldn’t beat Lucifer. Caleb stood up from his seat to help Castillo regain order. Holly dared a glance at Dominic to find that he was already looking at her. Their eyes connected and Holly felt the longing for him that permanently lived in her, tug stronger than before.

His eyes were stormier than the roughest sea and he had an agonized look on his face. She knew the space between them was killing him but she wasn’t ready to forgive. She needed to be strong and not give in not matter how much she longed to feel his touch, lips and body on hers. Dominic was holding back and until he gave himself to her completely Holly wasn’t planning on backing down. Half of him wasn’t enough, not anymore.

She forced herself to look away and could almost feel the hurt that radiated off him. Castillo turned his head towards the closed door and seconds later Legion did the same.

“Shut up!” Castillo ordered in a tone that wasn’t messing around. The voices died instantly and it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. That was when the first scream reached Holly’s ears. The music had stopped playing upstairs and terrifying howls of torment replaced it.

“What In the world is going on...” Someone uttered with amazement. Castillo and Legion were already out the door. Dominic wasn’t far behind but when she made to get up Caleb’s firm hand on her shoulder held her back.

“No you don’t Holly.” His grim expression made it clear it wasn’t up for discussion and she slumped back in her seat. The room had emptied and they were the only two left downstairs. The silence was the worst thing, her Nephilim hearing was not as defined as Caleb’s so she watched his face but it was a mask.

The hand on her shoulder stiffened. “Caleb what is it?” The door rocked inwards flying right off its hinges and without hesitation Caleb raced forward. Holly caught sight of a man in the doorway. His face was scarred and half of his cropped dark hair was

missing. He ducked Caleb's fist and threw him backwards like he was nothing more than a ragdoll.

"Caleb!" Holly stumbled over her helm and fought to stay upright. She moved between a clearly stunned Caleb and his attacker.

The man looked at her like a cat looked at a mouse before ripping it to pieces. "Time to go girlie." He sneered withdrawing a blood covered machete from behind his back. Holly stared at it with horror and her show of weakness only fuelled his fire.

Laughing he charged at her.

# 6

Dominic Prince stood in the middle of the ballroom. Blood and body parts covered the floor and walls. Pearls gleamed like bone amongst the debris. No one had survived the attack but the lucky ones had died quick. One guy had died holding onto his severed arm.

Castillo dropped to his knees and the sheer shock on his face was reflected in the others that stammered about looking for their loved ones. "Well this is one hell of a message your father sent." Balion said shakily. Dominic looked at the Vampire that had danced with *his* girl and wished he was amongst the dead. No such luck. His face had paled and his eyes had turned hazy with bloodlust. He had the self-control of a monk but surrounded by all this blood, it was slipping.

"This wasn't..." Dom trailed off, something was off. If Lucifer had wanted to make a statement to the Order then he would have been better severed leaving some survivors to relay who had been responsible. This was messy and frantic.

"Holly..."

"What?" Balion turned to him but Dominic was already half way across the room. He had reached the stairs when a shudder rocked the entire building. He glided down the stairs faster than the speed of sound and saw a dark form get flung out of the meeting room. It hit the wall with a bang that rocked the foundations and crumpled to the floor. Dashing past Dominic ran into the room and his heart stopped.

The table had been broken in half and a bloodied Caleb lay on top at an unnatural angle, he heard Legion enter and barked "Check him." As Legion moved to Caleb Dominic went over to Holly who sat up slowly.

Crouching down he examined her. Holly's face was as white as a ghost and a trickle of crimson ran down the side of her head. "Holly. Are you okay?" She didn't respond and he forced her to look at him. There was a dazed look in her eyes and her pulse was strong but way too fast.

"How Is she?" Legion asked. It bothered Dominic that he didn't know the answer straight away. "Caleb?" He asked, answering his brother's question with a question. "Will be sore for a few days, but he'll live." Legion replied helping Dominic get Holly on her feet. She wobbled and would have fell straight back down if not for their steadying hands.

"Holly?" She smiled thinly and he started to relax.

"I'm fine. I just banged my head." She put a hand to her head and he saw the panic in her blue eyes when it came back red and sticky.

“Hey, it’s just a scratch.” He lied. “Come on we need to get out of here. Can you walk?” She nodded and shuffled forwards. He kept an arm around her waist and guided her to the doorway. Legion followed supporting Caleb. Dominic just wanted to get Holly as far away from here as possible. Upstairs had been nothing but a distraction Holly was what they had really been after. Dominic would have liked to know the identity of the broken form that lay outside, but he was worried about Holly, she still had a rather dazed look about her.

Holly’s cry of pain stopped Dominic dead and she barrelled over in agony. He set her down onto the stone and searched her for wounds.

“Dom.” She grabbed his hand and her beautiful face was distorted with pain.

“Something’s wrong.” She panted before letting out a heart stopping scream. Fear seized him and without a pause he scooped her up and carried her upstairs.

Her screams filled the macabre ballroom and Dominic was slowly descending into madness. He should never have left her alone.

“Get her home.” Legion ordered. “It’s too dangerous to blink her in that state, take the car. Andrea can help. Go!” Dominic was too frantic to argue that Castillo could heal her, catching the keys that Legion tossed he flew out of the room, up the stairs and out into the night.

“Hang on Holly.” He pleaded. Legion’s black BMW was parked a street away and upon reaching it Holly had gone quiet. Her eyes rolled and her arms fell from his neck limply.

“Fuck.”

Dominic lay her flat on the backseat and sped through the streets like a rocket. He just hoped that Andrea was still at the apartment. He didn’t bother with unlocking the front door but kicked it open. Andrea jumped up from the sofa with sleepy confusion.

“What’s going on?”

“The Order was attacked.” She followed him into the bedroom and gasped when she had woken up enough to see Holly lying unconscious over the sheets. Andrea flipped on the light and Dominic’s hands came away red. He looked down at them with horror.

“Andrea...” He held them up to her but she only glanced at them briefly. He followed her eyes and saw the blood staining Holly’s dress just below her waist.

“No...” He whispered crumbling to the floor. The strength had gone from his legs.

“Dominic.” Andrea’s face was inches from his. “Listen to me carefully; I need you to get hot water and clean towels, and any vitamins you can find. We have to act quickly, understand? Dominic!” Her slap revived him and he dragged his eyes away from the bed.

“Go now.” Andrea helped him up and he rushed out the bedroom. Grabbing a hand full of fresh laundered towels from the shelf in the bathroom, Dominic filled the deepest dish he could find full of hot water then raced back to Andrea.

Placing them on the bed he went to raid the cabinet and came back with an arm full of



white bottles. Andrea went through them quietly and grabbed the iron and D12. He had gone overboard on Vitamins after finding out Holly was pregnant, not that she had taken any of them. "Andrea..." Dominic asked in a shaky voice. "Are they going to be okay?"

She looked up and the uncertainty in her green eyes answered him.

"Dom wait outside." She pushed him gently towards the door. "I need to work."

"But..."

"Dominic?" Legion's shrill cry filled the apartment. "Get him out of here." Andrea told Legion when he appeared in the doorway.

"Come on." Dominic felt something snap in him and he collapsed onto his brother.

Legion held onto him while guiding him over to the sofa then flicked on the lamp.

"Andrea knows what she's doing." He told him softly. "I couldn't let Cas heal her because he would find out about the baby and while his on our side now, that would change if he knew, and secondly I don't know if he even can, the baby complicates matters. Andrea's our best hope. She knows more about human biology than anybody." Dominic sat there staring at the floor.

He wished he could take this night back, the Order had been a stupid idea in the first place, and he cursed himself for letting their fight linger on, when all he had to do was tell her what she wanted to know. Instead he put his defences up and kept her out.

This was all on him. All Dominic could do was hope that he got a second chance and if that happened then he swore to tell her everything.

Laughter came from the hallway and Legion ripped open the door to see Layla Miles and Jade giggling in the hallway.

"Where the hell have you lot been?" He snapped.

"Jeez," Layla said rolling her eyes, "didn't know you were my father now..." this sent Jade into another giggling fit. They were dressed for a night out and giving the toxic smell of alcohol coming off them, they had been drinking for a while. Layla moved over the threshold and stopped laughing when she saw Dominic.

"What's wrong?" She asked seriously. "Where's Holly?" Legion dropped his eyes.

"The order was attacked..."

"Well is she okay?" Miles demanded pushing past the girls. "Where is she?" Dominic heard the frightened edge to his tone turn to hysteria.

"She was hurt, Andrea's tending to her." Legion answered, telling him as little as possible. Layla sat down next to Dom and flung her arms around him.

"I'm so sorry..." She whispered but he felt nothing. It was like his heart had been cut out of his chest. It was torture to even breathe.

"Where's Caleb?" Jade asked and Legion threw her an irritated glance. "What is this? Twenty questions!" He snapped. His brothers fidgeting made Dominic look over at him. He saw his own despair echoed in the face of Legion. And it dawned on him suddenly how many lives Holly had touched.

As night gave way to morning no one had moved or spoke, they were all contending

with their own thoughts. Except Jade who insisted on repeatedly ringing Caleb's cell till he answered, which he hadn't. He had looked in pretty bad shape the last time Dom had seen him, and even though he was an Immortal beatings still hurt. The waiting was more than he could bare. Dominic hadn't been this afraid ever, but the thought of losing the only thing that made eternity worth enduring was more than just frightening, in fact there wasn't words that explained the pure pain and agony that afflicted his body with every breath.

Finally at twenty minutes past nine the bedroom door opened and an exhausted Andrea appeared. The rest rose to their feet nervously but Dominic stayed seated, his legs didn't have the strength to support him.

Holly's blood spotted her cream blouse and he braced himself for the worst. "Well?" Miles asked eventually. Andrea looked straight at Dom and he struggled to read what her eyes were telling him.

"I've done all I can." She said. "I think...she'll be okay." Layla let out a relieved sigh but Dominic knew there was something more, he could tell from Andrea's conserved demeanour that bad news was right around the corner.

"Legion...Dominic can I see you outside for a moment?" He knew then that he was right and had to push himself up using the sofa for support.

"Can we see her?" Layla asked.

"Not right now." Andrea replied tiredly. "She still isn't awake."

Legion waited till the door was closed before bombarding her with questions. "She's stable but not out of danger." Andrea said simply after he paused for breath. "I've done everything I can here, but she's lost a lot of blood and needs a transfusion urgently."

"What about the..." Legion glanced at the closed door. "Cargo?" Andrea joined Dominic in leaning against the far wall.

"He's holding on for the time being, but it's a miracle he survived the night. He's hearts beating too fast. We need an ultrasound but our main concern has to be Holly, or we'll lose them both." She said in a whisper. Dominic sensed Legion's eyes on him but it was all he could do to keep upright.

"Okay. I know a place." Legion said after running his hands through his short hair. "It's where we took her the first time. He deals with emergencies of the supernatural kind."

"You can't move her." Andrea interrupted. "She's too weak." Legion cursed out loud.

"Then I'll bring him here."

"The quicker the better. She's in real trouble..." her voice wavered and she trailed off.

Holly wasn't just their friend she was their hope. They had all been born into a war few believed in, and one not of their making, many just wished it to be over. Lucifer's never ending vendetta against Heaven and mankind was hurting business, but most of all it was causing more and more Angels to lose faith in their maker and fall rather than continue. They had placed Holly on a mantle and had made her their savour. If she died now, there dreams of peace went with her.

"I won't be long." Legion said but even his voice was wavering. He disappeared leaving

them alone in the hallway. "This may be a stupid question but how are you doing?" Andrea asked him.

"You don't need to worry about me." He answered quietly.

"Dom," she let out a frustrated sigh. "Let your walls down just this once. You don't have to pretend with me. I can only imagine what this is doing to you...and your brother."

Dominic hadn't wanted the baby precisely for this reason. He was terrified of history repeating itself. He wasn't as strong as his brother; Dominic couldn't endure this as Legion had. He felt tears sting his eyes and knew he had to get a grip; he was of no use like this.

"What are we going to do about them?" Dominic asked motioning to the apartment. Andrea grimaced.

"I don't want them to know how bad things are, they're upset enough. I'll take them back to the hotel..."

"No. You might be needed here. You're more use to Holly than I am right now. I'll take them." Andrea hesitated.

"Are you sure?" He nodded as Legion reappeared with an elderly man dressed in waterproofs. As they all entered the apartment and Dominic waited for Layla to collect her belongings he prayed that he could get through the next few hours.

Holly would be okay, she had to be.

# 7

Caleb readjusted the ice pack to the left side of his face. He felt like he had gone ten rounds with a tank. The last of the bodies were being bagged and tagged and the ballroom had been scrubbed to an inch of its life, erasing any existence of the horror that had happened here only hours ago. Heaven was anything but careless.

Legion descended the stairs and made his way over, he looked exhausted and downtrodden. Caleb braced himself for bad news. "How is she?" Legion sighed and glanced around at the clean-up.

"It's touch and go if she'll pull through. What happened down there?" A sharp pain stabbed at Caleb's heart and he cleared his throat.

"I want to show you something." He lead Legion over to a body bag in the centre of the floor. "They just brought him up. Do you recognise him?" Legion stooped down and examined the cold corpse.

"Unfortunately." He finally admitted. "Is he the one that attacked you?" Caleb noticed he left out Holly's name. The pain was all too near for all of them. He nodded in reply. "She saved my life." His voice broke and Legion stood back up looking uncomfortable. "What happened?" He repeated after a while.

"He took me by surprise. I was ready for anything but him. By the time I'd sensed him it was too late. He carried a weapon of some kind, a blade. It was the last thing I saw before I passed out. I would have been a goner if Holly hadn't intervened. How is he even out?"

"I have reason to believe Lucifer set him free along with Dante."

"Then Lucifer was behind this. They wanted Holly." Legion shook his head.

"If they had they wouldn't have hurt her. Dante may have pledged his allegiance to my father but after being imprisoned by him, he's acting on his own wishes. They went after Holly to get to Dominic."

"Does he know Dante's free?"

"No. And for now that's how it stays. He's got enough to deal with."

"Why would Lucifer unleash him, and why now? It took Dominic and a small army to catch him."

"Dominic should have killed him when he had the chance." Legion spat.

"They were...friends." Caleb countered.

"Dante doesn't have friends. He played Dominic and now his making him suffer for showing mercy. What's the cause of death?" Legion asked motioning to the body on

the floor.

“Broken neck.” Legion nodded, but his mind was elsewhere. “Where’s Castillo?”

“Around. Downstairs I think.” And with that he watched Legion take off. Caleb gingerly bent down and zipped up the bag. Caleb had chosen to stay behind and help Castillo with the aftermath, but he was seriously regretting not being with Holly. She had saved his life by giving hers, and if these hours were her last on this earth, Caleb had to be there.

He contemplated just leaving, but decided it was better he talked to Cas first. He would want to know that the clean-up had just about finished. Hobbling down the stairs he paused outside the chamber room.

“Are you sure?” Castillo’s voice asked, his tone shaky.

“Yes. Cas we need to stop fooling around and go after him before he...” Legion trailed off, and Caleb wondered whom they were discussing.

“The council has denied your request Legion. After last night there are too frightened of Lucifer to oppose him.” Caleb heard something smash.

“It was Dante!” Legion yelled. “We should call another meeting...”

“It will do no good. I’m afraid it’s just us.” Castillo interrupted. Caleb heard him sigh.

“What I’m about to tell you does not leave this room, agreed? As of two hours ago the battle for supremacy started. Heaven is under siege as we speak.” Caleb had to hold in his startled gasp.

It was a while before anyone spoke.

“How long can your defences hold?” Legion asked in a flat voice.

“Honestly...I don’t know. We won’t win, they outnumber us five to one.”

“That’s why he unleashed Dante.” Legion murmured and Caleb had to strain to hear him. “To distract us.”

“After this mess is cleared up, I intend to join my family and fight alongside my brothers. I’m afraid you’re on your own Legion.” Caleb could plainly hear the pity in Castillo’s tone. “What is this plan of yours anyway, I never got the chance to hear it.”

“It doesn’t matter now. If Holly dies he won’t call off the assault, you know that right?”

“Do you really think she will?”

“I don’t know. But it doesn’t look good. Lucifer can’t free himself without her and if he knew what Dante had done, then he wouldn’t have attacked. But once he does find out he’ll show you no mercy Castillo. You’ll feel the brunt of his anger.”

“I know.” Castillo said with a sad tinge. “How did we let it come to this? We have lost the war and the world along with it.” There was a heavy pause then he continued.

“Legion, we will hold them at bay as long as possible, but you do realize once we are gone, you Dominic and Caleb will be the only thing standing in his way. I never thought I’d say this but...you will be this world’s last hope.”

“I promise you, I will find a way to stop him.”

Caleb heard footsteps and took off up the stairs. His side burned with the effort but

sheer will drove him forward.

The battle for Earth had started and without Holly, they didn't stand a chance.

# 8

Holly Adams sat up. Her head felt as big as a watermelon and her mind was as hazy as the sky on a hot summer's day. The blood and dirt on her dress had gone as was the unbearable pain.

"That was a close one." She sighed getting to her feet. Finally looking around Holly frowned in confusion. "Guys?" She stood in a meadow of grass, a faint breeze made the grass shiver, giving it the appearance of being alive.

It took her a while to register that she didn't feel anything, not the cold blow of the wind, even the tips of the grass slipped through her fingertips without any real definition. "Crap." Just when she decided to walk, a sudden heat exploded behind her, Holly turned tentatively. "Mum...?"

Margaret Adams smiled back at her warmly, and all logic went out the window. Wrapping her mother up in bear hug Holly wept till she had no more tears left to cry. Her mother ran fingers through her hair and just held her. Getting a hold of herself Holly asked the question she should have upon first seeing her.

"What...?" Or at least tried to but the words escaped her. Margaret looked more radiant than when she had been alive. Everything about her seemed more slender and beautiful.

"You're in the Elysian Fields Holly. It's where Immortals come when they...pass over." Holly's smile faded.

"You mean die." Margaret nodded. "I'm dead...?" Her stomach heaved and Holly took deep breaths trying to process it. Dominic's image broke through the panicked thoughts in her mind. "I can't...not yet. I can't leave him."

"Holly listen to me, we don't have much time. You're not exactly dead yet, that's why you can't feel anything. You're life is hanging by a thread and only you can chose your fate."

"Meaning?" Holly panted, gasping for breath. The star lit sky seemed to be pressing down on her.

"It means God has given you a choice." Her heart pounded and she wondered just how many revelations one girl could deal with before her body gave out from sheer exhaustion.

"Behind me is a bridge." As soon as Margaret said it the bridge appeared out of nowhere, as did the river that trickled underneath it. "You can take my hand now and cross that bridge. Spend eternity with me and every single loved one you've lost. They're all waiting for you." Holly looked wishfully at the small wooden bridge.

“Or you can chose to go back. The world needs you Holly. *He* needs you but it’s up to you.” Tears burned in her eyes.

“Mum I can’t...” Margaret moved forwards and grasped her daughter’s hand.

“Yes you can. You have grown into a beautiful strong woman Holly, and no matter what you decide, I will always love you.” Holly’s eyesight flooded with salty water and in her heart she knew her decision had already been made. Holly couldn’t leave Dominic.

The tears stopped as soon as she realized it and her mother smiled knowingly. “Give my grandson a big kiss when you meet him.”

“You know...?” Her mother gave her a reproachful look.

“Just because I’m dead doesn’t mean I’m gone Holly. I’ll never truly leave you. And just for the record...I’m happy for you. Just don’t your father I said that.” She added conspiratorially. They laughed and Holly’s heart burned with love.

“I love you mum.” She hugged her one last time then turned and walked back to the world that needed her.

She smiled as she passed her father and Ricky who waved at her from the other side of the stream. And knew she had made the right choice, even though her heart was breaking.

It wasn’t her time, not yet...

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Waking up in her own bed was like stirring from a very good dream. Her body felt stronger than it ever had before, and she looked at everything with a new insight.

The stars in the night sky illuminated Dominic sleeping in the armchair beside the bed. He groaned and thrashed every few seconds.

Peeling back the covers Holly looked down at her snug cotton pyjamas, and crept over to the edge of the mattress, never taking her eyes off of Dominic’s troubled face. He seemed even more gorgeous, if that was possible, than before. Dark tousled hair fell over his burrowed brow and his skin was so flawless it could have been plastic.

Placing hands on the chairs armrests Holly leaned in and placed a kiss on his lips.

“Wake up.” She whispered in his ear then sat back. His eye lids fluttered then flew open. Dominic’s eyes darted around the room before focusing on her.

“Holly...?”

“The one and only.” She replied with amusement. Watching the confusion on his face develop into disbelief was like air to her. “I’m dreaming...” He whispered. She reached out and grasped his hand.

“Does this feel like a dream?” He looked down at their entwined hands and pure unbridled love lit up his dark eyes. Dominic pulled her to him and Holly went willingly. He held her so tight she couldn’t breathe but loved every second of it.

“How...?”

“Does it matter?” His lips on hers told Holly it didn’t and her body wrapped around his



on the chair. The kiss tasted sweeter than a jelly donut and she felt starved of him. She pulled away just enough to tease his sweater over his head.

Dominic shot her an uncertain look. "Holly maybe we should wait till..."

"I won't break." She told him with hungry eyes. In fact she felt so good it should be a crime. Her hot kisses on his neck killed any protest he might have, and Holly's heart raced as he pulled her closer into his firm chest.

Their fingers and lips swept over every inch of skin, as if to reacquaint a part that had been severed. Undressing each other slowly only increased their arousal and by the time Dominic finally gave in and entered her she was on fire. His lips smothered her cries of pleasure, so it didn't wake Legion and Caleb that were sleeping in the living room.

Rivving and panting they came together then moved to the bed. As the first rays of the morning sun penetrated the window Holly curled herself around Dominic and finally fell into a deep sleep.

# 9

The hot water was sinfully pleasant against her skin. Despite only falling asleep an hour ago Holly felt wide awake. She had tip toed past Caleb and Legion on route to the bathroom, they both looked worse for wear and she didn't want to wake them.

Hands brushed her waist and rested on her stomach. She hadn't even heard the door open. She couldn't stop beaming, coming back from the dead had given her a new lease on life, even Dominic's touch felt different.

Holly leaned against him as his fingers went south, a low moan escaped from her throat and she felt him stiffen. Dominic rubbed himself against her bottom and they both couldn't fight the flames of desire any longer.

With masterful authority that turned her on like a tap, Dominic spun her round so that her back pressed against the wet tiled wall of the shower. She let out a yelp of excitement as he parted her thighs while nuzzling her neck.

If there really was a Heaven on earth then this was it. This Immortal was Holly's whole world. The sun rose and set with Dominic as far as she was concerned, there wasn't a cure for what she felt for him and her emotions used to frighten the living daylights out of her. No one should have that much control over someone else, but it felt so right and Holly knew deep down that Dom would never willingly hurt her, despite the Vampire's warning.

She dug her fingernails into his slippery flesh as his teeth sank into the sensitive skin of her neck. "God...fuck me Dominic now..." she panted unable to wait a second longer.

He obeyed thrusting into her with ease. Her whole body screamed for release and Holly begged him to go faster. She held his hazel eyes as he lifted her thigh and stroked into her with barely contained frenzy.

"Aw...that's it..." She flung her head back and welcomed waves of euphoria that rocked her body, like a sailboat in the middle of a storm.

"Come for me Holly." He ordered in a husky voice that sent shivers of pleasure up her spine.

"Christ...I am..." Her pitch rose into a thready cry as Dominic brought her to the edge.

"Dom?" There was a knock at the door and Caleb's strained voice called out his name, with an animal growl Dominic dropped her leg and pinned both of Holly's wrists to the shower wall. Holly's wet opening strained at taking all of him inside but it felt glorious. His hot semen erupted inside of her like lava from a volcano as he called out her name.

“What’s going on in there?” Caleb asked before turning the handle and appearing over Dom’s shoulder. The shower door was tinted glass and Holly was in no hurry to move. Dominic still held her in place and if he wasn’t careful he was going to make her hot for him again. His breathing slowed and that old devilish smile crossed his face.

“I’m pretty certain it’s my name that’s on the lease. So why can’t I still get some privacy?” He muttered. Holly laughed and couldn’t resist the urge to kiss him.

“Dom!” Caleb knocked on the glass. “Is that...?” Dominic pulled away with a frustrated sigh.

“I’m gonna kill him.”

“Behave.” Holly told him. “We couldn’t hide away forever.” She made to move but he refused to let her.

“Holly...” He bowed his head and for a second he wasn’t Dominic. His voice jittered with nerves and he never got nervous.

“Legion!” Caleb yelled racing out the bathroom.

“What?” She asked, ignoring the fact that their private lovemaking was about to have an audience. Dominic seemed torn about something and she silently begged him to let her in, but ultimately it had to be his choice. She couldn’t force him to open up.

“We should get some clothes on.” He said finally leading her out the shower, she tried not to show her disappointment as they dried off and pulled on fresh clothes.

“Are you ready for this?” He asked her before opening the bathroom door. Holly nodded trying not to laugh. When she stepped over the threshold strong arms pulled her into tight bear hugs.

“It’s a miracle!” Caleb’s amazed tone said, as he set her down only for Legion to replace him.

“Welcome back.” He whispered with more emotion to his voice than Holly had ever heard Legion show before.

“Thanks.” Something pulled at her insides and she looked at the window.

“What is it?” Legion asked on noticing her body language change. Holly crossed to the window and gazed upward. Every fibre of her being was pulling her to his window but she didn’t know why. People walked the sidewalks, cars went speeding by, it was just another day.

“How is this even possible?” Holly heard Caleb whisper to Dominic.

“She just woke up. No blood no pain, nothing.”

“Holly?” Legion said again, watching her move across the apartment and out the door. She didn’t know where this feeling was leading her just that she had to follow. Footsteps sounded behind her as she walked down the corridor to the stairs.

“Holly.” Dominic caught her arm. “What is it?”

“I don’t know.” She replied and after searching her face he let her go. As Holly climbed the steps she heard them do the same. At the top a strong gust of wind blew the door to the roof open, as if showing her the way.

Moving onto the roof Holly looked up just in time to see objects falling from the sky.

Dominic followed her gaze and squeezed her hand.

“What in the name of...?” Legion uttered. At first they were so far away that Holly’s limited eyesight couldn’t make them out, but as they continued their fall the outlines became sharper.

It was a body. A body with white wings.

There was a whole host of them plummeting through the sky. “What’s wrong with them? Holly asked. “Why don’t they use their wings?” Caleb bent over and she heard him sobbing.

“Holly,” Dominic said measuredly. “They can’t use their wings because they’re dead.” She gasped and looked up again.

The Heavens were raining down dead Angels.

# 10

“We have to help them.” Miles exclaimed. Layla shot him a disgusted look. “Why? They didn’t help us when Michael wanted to level our town.” Out the corner of her eye Holly caught Caleb shoot them a sharp glare before succumbing to grief.

Legion had ushered them off the roof and back into the apartment. He had called Andrea and she had brought along Brooks, Layla and the others. Upon seeing Holly alive and kicking they all gathered around and squeezed ten bells out of her.

“I have to do something.” Caleb said suddenly getting to his feet. His sapphire eyes had dulled to grey and were rimmed with red. She knew what it felt like to watch your loved ones die and be helpless to stop it.

“Caleb we are.” Dominic told him gently from the kitchen island, which he was sitting on top of.

“Sitting around is not my idea of helping!” Caleb shouted at him. “I have to go...”

“You are doing no such thing!” Jade told him pulling on his hand that she held in a death grip. “You’ll only get yourself killed.” A dull thud boomed above their heads as another Angel hit the roof. Caleb wobbled and fell back into the armchair sobbing like a new born baby.

“Holly?” Legion said, and she could feel their eyes on her. “What do you think?” She let out a sigh and lifted her head.

“Your right Layla. Heaven has done bugger all.” Holly felt Caleb’s accusing stare. “But there is good up there.” She turned and held Caleb’s eyes. “You taught me that. If we don’t help them then Lucifer will have won. It’s about time we stopped running and show Lucifer who we truly are, and that he can’t have our home because it’s ours and we aren’t giving it up without a fight.” She hadn’t meant for it to all spill out like that and held her breath anxiously while they all stared at her with surprise.

“Well said.” Legion mused. Holly returned his smile.

“Of course I don’t actually have any idea of how we’re going to help.” She added sheepishly.

“Leave that to me.” Legion replied with a wink, and Holly had never seen him so happy.

“You have a plan?” Andrea asked.

“He always has a plan.” Dominic reminded her playfully.

“We have to avert Lucifer’s attention from Heaven, and the only way we can do that is by meeting his army head on.”

“You’re mad.” Brooks injected. “They outnumber and outgun us. We’ll be like sitting

ducks.”

“That’s why we need to recruit.” Legion checked his Rolex. “And we have to do it quickly.” Holly could see the gears turning in his head as he stared at them. “Right it’ll be better if we spilt up. Layla Miles.” They hurried to their feet like soldiers caught napping. “Go back to St. Heralds and gather every Nephilim you can.”

“Legion...” Andrea said but he cut her off.

“I know they are your students and you feel responsible for them. But we need everyone one we can get Andrea. And you have some powerful Nephilim at your college.” She nodded warily but looked far from pleased.

“Brooks I want you to go to Shropshire, England. There’s a coven of very powerful witches there that will be more than happy to help us.” Brooks raised his eyebrows.

“How am I supposed to get there? It will take days on a plane.”

“I’ll get to that in a minute.” Legion told him before turning his attention to Andrea. “I need you in Boston, seek out a man named Tibias. You’ll probably find him in the sewers underneath the city, somewhere in the south side area. He’ll find what you need.”

“Got it.” Legion cast a pitiful look at Caleb.

“Can you get word to Castillo?” Caleb wiped at his eyes and sat up.

“Yes.”

“Good. Tell him to hang on, help is on its way.” Caleb stood but Jade refused to release him.

“Jade...?” Legion started then looked at Caleb sceptically.

“She’ll do whatever you ask. You’re part of this world.” Caleb added when Jade started to protest. She shrank back like he had slapped her.

“Where do you want me?” Holly asked merely just to ease the tension that hung over Caleb and Jade like a heavy rain cloud.

“You can take Balion. After the way he was drooling over you the other night, he’ll find you hard to resist and the Vampire will make a strong ally.” Dominic jumped down off the island and crossed over to her.

“Brother I want you...”

“If you think I’m letting her out of my sight then you’re crazy.” He told Legion in a firm voice. Holly saw Layla grin slyly over in the corner. Legion looked back and forth between him and Holly. “Just don’t let him screw it up.” He finally conceded. Dominic shot him an annoyed look and Holly had to hide her smile.

“Okay it’s time we got this show on the road.” He said moving away. “Since we don’t have time to take conventional means of transport. Me and Dominic will blink each of you to your destination, and give you what...? Say three hours to complete your mission. Upon which we’ll blink you all back. Any questions?”

“What if takes longer?” Layla asked.

“It can’t.” He told her simply. “The longer we take, the closer Heaven gets to extinction. Dominic you take Andrea and Brooks then come back for Holly. Layla

Miles and Jade your with me.” As the first group left Caleb moved to leave but Holly wrapped him up in a hug.

“Come back to me In one piece.” She whispered in his ear. Holly was worried what he might be tempted to do. She knew how much Heaven meant to him, what Angels meant to him and she didn’t want him doing something stupid. He gave her a shadow of his former smile then left.

Jade glared at her but Holly just rolled her eyes, they had more important problems to deal with then her jealousy. However Jade didn’t feel the same because she made to get up, thankfully Legion appeared and blinked her before she could open her mouth. Dominic returned a second later and took Brooks to England leaving Holly alone in the apartment. It dawned on her then, the magnitude of what they were attempting. If they couldn’t beat Hell and Lucifer the world as they knew it was over.

“I feel like a bus. I’ve never been rode so much in my life.” Dominic said reappearing. “This coming from the biggest womanizer in history.” She retorted holding out her hand. He clasped it and pulled her to him.

“Miss Adams is that jealousy I hear in your voice.”

“You wish.” His mouth took hers tenderly and Holly felt the floor disappear...literally. She hated blinking. It was a power gifted to demons and apparently devils. They could travel to anywhere on the globe within seconds, that’s why they called it blinking, one minute they were standing in front of the next they were gone. If you were Immortal it didn’t affect you, but with Holly being half mortal it was unpleasant to say the least. Dominic had witnessed what blinking did to her and hoped to make it easier by distracting her with his lips. And it seemed to be working. As the blackness descended there was no head splitting pain just the feel of his lean hard body pressed against hers.

Holly’s feet touched solid ground and she waited for the nausea to rip through her. Dominic took a quick glance around them then turned to face her. Confusion formed on his god like features. “Why aren’t you vomiting?”

Holly was wondering the same thing. The puzzlement switched to her as he started smirking. “What?”

“It’s the baby.” Dominic set off and she was too caught up in him to bother about her surroundings.

“What do you mean?” Holly asked jogging to keep up. He slowed and held her hand.

“He can blink.” She had lost countless nights of sleep worrying over just what their son would be. Dominic was Lucifer’s son and Lucifer was still technically an Angel. Which meant Dom had Angel blood in his veins as well as demon, and Holly was also part Angel as well as a witch. What the hell that meant for their baby was beyond her.

“And since you’re carrying him,” He added on seeing her face. “I guess that makes you immune to the effects of blinking.” Holly pondered this while taking in the small houses that lined either side of the stone road they were walking up. The village had a remote exotic feel about it and the temperature had risen considerably. “Where are

we?”

“Romania.” She gaped at him.

“So all that folklore about Vampires is real?” He let out a chuckle as they turned the corner.

“You have so much to learn about our world. This is their motherland if you like. The people here know what they are and let them drink off them, in return the Vampires protect them.”

“From what?”

“Anything that might hunt them, it doesn’t matter what.” He entered a ramshackle building held up by wooden beams. The place was illuminated by candle light and whereas Dominic could adjust perfectly, Holly banged into numerous objects before her eyesight grew accustomed.

A run down bar was erected on the far wall and as they slipped past, the few patrons the tavern had stared at them with suspicious eyes. “This whole area is Balion’s.”

Dominic told her quietly. “We’re most likely to find him in here though.” Holly didn’t know how he could know that. Balion had hinted the last time they met, about his connection to Dominic but Holly didn’t understand what ‘dirty little secret’ could mean. She was positive that Dom didn’t swing that way, so what had Balion meant? Dominic brushed aside a red drape and led her further into darkness. It was black as coal and Holly had to rely solely on Dom to guide her. He stopped at a wooden round table covered with candles. Ahead Embers burned through the gloom and she heard groans and sighs rise up around her.

“Get the lights.” Balion’s soft voice ordered and Holly had to squint against the sudden brightness. They were in a small stone room. It was circular in shape and wooden benches ran around the perimeter. Girls in various degrees of undress were sprawled all over the place. Some lay in men’s laps or propped up against the stone, others had been left where they had fell. One or two of them looked dead.

“Finally.” Balion whispered staring at her. “I’ve managed to get your heart racing. It’s truly beautiful to hear.” He cocked his head and listened to her frantic beat with a euphoric smile on his face.

“Cut the crap. You know why we’re here Balion.” Dominic told him in a controlled tone.

“Do I?” He mused tearing his eyes from Holly. The two stared at each other until she squirmed uncomfortably.

“Dominic?” One of the girls murmured looking up at him with glassy eyes. “You’re back.” Holly glared at him but he refused to meet her gaze. Balion positively beamed and Holly knew it was due to her heart pounding against her rib cage.

“This way.” He said letting Dom off the hook, and they followed him out into the warm night air. “I suppose this is why you’ve come.” Balion motioned to a body laying a little way off. Its silky white wings were bent beside its body at horrible angles. “And let me guess,” he turned to Holly. “You’re here because they think you have some kind



of hold over me.” She forced her eyes off the dead Angel and stepped away from Dominic.

“I know I don’t. But you’re going to help us.” His eyes widened and he let out a chuckle.

“And why’s that? I have no qualms with Lucifer taking over as boss.”

“You should.” She retorted while sensing Dominic’s eyes on her. “What do you think will happen to your food source if he wins? He hates humans more than he does Angels. You really think he’ll leave a few alive for you?” Balion’s smile faded. “You’re smarter than that. Don’t just sit back and watch your species become like the dodo.” Dominic coughed behind her to hide his laugh. Balion darted him a killer look before turning away.

“We have been on this earth longer than any of you, including Lucifer. We’ve survived wars before and I’m sure we’ll get through this one. Can’t say the same for you though.”

“At least I’ll die with my self-respect intact.” She snorted. “You’re just a coward Balion.” His eyes hardened and something else entered them but she didn’t know him well enough to gauge what it was.

They stared at each other, neither of them backing down until Balion moved closer. The movement was so fast it was a blur. Dominic pulled her away and stepped in between, but Balion’s devouring eyes never left Holly.

“Fine, You win. I’ll help you defeat the devil on one condition.”

“Name it.” She snapped still fuming. Balion smiled slyly.

“I want to taste you.” Holly stepped back involuntary.

“Absolutely not.” Dominic told him quickly.

“Done.” Her voice sounded stronger than she felt and tried not to notice Dominic’s head jerking around. “Are you crazy?”

“Dom...”

“Give us a sec.” He told an amused Balion before dragging her away. “You don’t even know what you’re agreeing to.” He snapped. “When a Vampire feeds off you Holly they see everything. All your memories, your inner most thoughts...everything.” Holly pulled away from him.

“He already knows about the baby Dom. And the rest is a small price to pay for saving the world. You heard your brother, we need him and he knows it.” Dominic looked away with murder in his eyes.

“I forbid you to do it.” Holly stared at him.

“*Forbid?*”

“I don’t know Holly it sounded good...I just don’t want you to do it.”

“You think I do? Believe me it’s far from what I want but we don’t have a choice, and the longer we stand here arguing about it the less time we have to save Heaven.”

Dominic let out a frustrated growl. And he knew she was right.

“You’ll be the death of me, you know that? Just get it over with.” She turned back to

see Balion close to drooling, his eyes watched every move she made as Holly walked to him.

“How do we do this?”

“Give me your hand.” He said glancing back at Dominic who stood with his arms crossed over his chest, making it plain he didn’t agree with what they were doing. Holly did as he said holding her right arm out to him. Balion took her hand in his then flicked her wrist upwards, she gasped as he leaned in.

“In the street? I thought it was the neck you guys love to suck on.” He made himself smile but Holly could see he was losing patience.

“No one thinks twice seeing this here Holly, this is my home. And we only use the neck for feeding, I assure you a taste is completely different.” His mouth closed on the throbbing pulse in her wrist and he let out a throaty moan. Holly’s heart hammered and she looked away as his teeth cut through her delicate skin. It stung like a wasp sting at first, but it quickly subsided and she heard Balion’s heartbeat in her head. It was much slower than a human’s and very faint, Holly’s own beat seemed to slow to match it and she gasped with pure bliss. It was unlike anything she had ever felt before, her being seemed to merge with his until they were one and the same. It was an incredible rush.

Balion was ripped from her wrist and Holly’s heart actually ached from the premature separation. She jerked her head around to stare at Dom accusingly but he looked just as surprised as she was.

Balion’s laughter made them both turn. He got to his feet with difficulty and brushed himself off. “That was worth the risk.” He told her glancing a darting look at Dominic. “I swear I didn’t...”

“I know you didn’t Holly, neither did Dominic. It seems your baby didn’t take too kindly to my actions.” She looked down at her swollen stomach and back at Dominic who was as stunned as her at learning their son could send things flying from the womb.

“Are you okay?” Dom asked rushing over and tore a piece of cloth from his sweater to press against her wrist. Holly nodded and focused on Balion who was stumbling around with a stupid grin on his face. “Woo!” He shouted up at the sky. Dominic gave him an angry glare before walking over to him. They shared words but Holly was too busy reeling from everything that had just happened to eaves drop.

Balion steered away from Dominic and stood over the downed Angel and started to pull on its feathers. He was like a drunkard after chunking out time. Dominic uttered something she couldn’t catch them guided her away.

“We should be getting back.”

“What about him?”

“We should let him come down before bringing him back. Balion’s not in control of himself at the moment, it would be a disaster we don’t need. How’s your wrist?” Holly peeled back the cloth and while the bleeding had slowed it still burned.

"It's fine." Dominic threw her a doubting look, and examined it.

"Isn't his saliva supposed to heal it or something?" She said half joking.

"It's only Vampire's blood that heals." He replied distractedly. "We're lucky he knew what he was doing, or he would have ruptured your artery. Andrea can take care of it you'll probably need stiches, just keep pressure on it."

When they blinked back to the apartment Andrea and Brooks were already back. The room was full of strangers. A group of women sat on the sofa and arm rests drinking what looked like tea, while four men were busy tucking into bacon sandwiches.

Upon seeing Holly the conversation stopped and the men actually bowed to her.

Dominic eyed them wearily before calling for Andrea.

"What happened?" She asked leading Holly into the bathroom.

"Long story." Dom answered quickly. "Can you take care of it? I've got to go get Layla and Jade."

"Legion blinked us back a half hour ago when you didn't show up, I think he's gone to get them but of course. Go." After placing a kiss on Holly's forehead he disappeared. "I swear Holly, does trouble just look for you?" Holly winced as Andrea peeled the cloth off and dumped it in the sink.

"It pretty much knows where I am most the time." She sighed, watching Andrea clean the wound.

"Well I hope you're not squeamish. It needs a few stiches. Hold that while I get needle and thread." Holly obeyed and cursed herself for going through with it, she should have listened to Dom but then again it was the only way Balion would help them.

The wound needed three stiches and Andrea went as gentle and quickly as she could. Afterwards she bandaged it and led Holly back to the living area. Everyone was back and the tiny room was crowded with people.

Dominic appeared by her side and studied her bandaged wrist with dark eyes. "You sure you're okay?" She nodded.

"I'm sorry for not listening to you." His face softened instantly.

"You did what you had to." Dominic pulled her close and Holly clung to him. She didn't know why she was crying. Balion biting her hadn't been that bad but it left her feeling tired and down.

The sun had already started to set when Legion called them to order. He stood in front of the door looking like a commander. His blazer was draped over the back of the couch, his collar was unbuttoned and his shirt sleeves rolled up.

"First off thank you, all of you, for being here. Now my plan is very simple we attack and don't stop until one side is victorious."

"How are we going to get their attention off of Heaven?" A tall slender woman with round almond eyes asked. "Lucifer's army is attacking the Angels as we speak, not even God himself could tear Lucifer's focus away. He has been waiting millennia to reign down vengeance upon them." Legion listened to the woman intently before looking at Holly.

“We have something that means much more to Lucifer than revenge. Salvation.” Every person in the packed apartment turned to her and Dominic’s arm tightened protectively around her waist.

“I’m sorry Holly but you’re the bait.” Dominic glared at his brother but Legion continued like he didn’t notice. “We’ll spilt our forces down the middle. We’ll attack from the front and the rear cutting off their escape. We have to decimate their army to the point of no return. Make no mistake, I mean to take Hell down once and for all. We can’t let them regroup. Our ally is surprise, they don’t know our numbers or our strength and we’ll have the advantage. But we’ll only have one shot at them and we must sweep down on them like bloody vengeance itself.” There was a round of agreement, but Holly wasn’t convinced. The apartment might have been packed but it was only small. They just couldn’t do what Legion wanted with what they had. There were too few of them. It seemed that she wasn’t alone in thinking this because a girl standing in the corner next to Layla voiced her concerns.

“It’s true they outnumber us.” Legion answered honestly. “But where they have quantity we have quality. I’ve been told Heaven won’t last till morning.” He glanced over at Caleb who was pressing into Holly’s side so hard she was having trouble breathing. “So we don’t have as much time as I’d like to prepare, I’ll come round and brief each one of you. We have two hours, I suggest you use the time to eat and rest. Any questions?”

“Just one.” A gruff voice said, and Holly saw a grisly man that resembled a bear move forward. “Why are they here?” He motioned over to where Layla and Miles stood in the corner, Nephilim from St. Heralds were dotted around them, and Holly felt anger burn inside her. They had as much right as anyone else to fight. She was about to say as much when she realized that grizzly Adams was pointing to a particular person. The Nephilim Holly recognized as Sam got to his feet.

“You think we’d sit back and let you mongrels take all the glory.” He growled.

“That’s enough!” Legion ordered stopping the situation from spiralling out of control.

“We’ve got to stick together, not fight amongst ourselves. The wolves are here because we need them.” Holly looked questioningly at Dom but he shook her off. Wolves?

“Holly.” Legion calling her name brought her out her thoughts. “With me.” He pulled open the door and walked out. It took a while for her to reach the apartment door through all the bodies. Legion waited in the corridor.

“I need you to do something, follow me.” They took the lift down to the lobby and stepped out in the freezing night. Holly glanced to her right where a group of people had gathered in the middle of the road. Normally it was busy with traffic but not a car was in sight. She walked towards them and stopped. An Angel was lying across the tarmac, the tips of its grey wings was visible through the gaps between legs. Most just stared down at the thing in awe and shock, while others dropped to their knees and prayed thanking God that they’re faith in him wasn’t in vain. A camera crew stood just off to the side getting a good shot of the Angel and the people that flocked to it.

There was something heart breaking about seeing the beauty of Heaven being paraded on television for all to see.

“There’s nothing you can do for it Holly.” Legion said softly leading her further up the road. They stopped at an intersection and he took out a knife. “Right here is perfect. Roll up your sleeve.” Holly’s wide eyes went back and forth between him and the knife gleaming in his hand. “It’s the only way to get Lucifer’s attention.” He explained. Sighing she did as he asked and bit her lip when the edge of the blade sliced through her flesh like it was butter. Legion let the blood drip down her bandaged wrist and held her arm up so it dripped onto the tarmac. After it was littered with a few drops he apologized and pulled out some gauze. “If there was another way...”

“I know Legion, stop apologizing its okay.” He wrapped her arm up and she pulled down her sleeve. “Why though? I don’t get it.”

“Lucifer can smell your blood once it’s soaked into the earth. It should be enough for him to focus on us. It’ll take him a while to reorganize his army though.”

“But if he thinks it’s just me...”

“He knows Dominic would never leave you alone. My father’s not stupid he’ll know it’s a trap.” Legion’s eyes moved upwards and Holly did the same. The sky was devoid of stars and it was a dull grey instead of black. Above their heads a white whirl that resembled the funnel of a tornado before it touched ground, spawned in the sky.

“What is *that*?” Holly gasped.

“The barriers that keep the different realms from merging are collapsing.” He answered flatly. “Lucifer’s assault upon the Heavens is upsetting the balance. Come on we have to get back inside.” Her mind went in overdrive as he rushed her back to the apartment. If the barriers that separated Heaven from earth and earth from Hell were dissolving, could Lucifer break out?

She crossed the threshold to the apartment as rain streaked the windows. Dominic looked up from his conversation with one of the women, as soon as Holly entered and knew instantly that something was wrong. She didn’t have the words to tell him so instead lead him over to the window.

That was when the first hail stone hit the pane. It was the size of a golf ball and caused a crack to spread across the window. Caleb came over and three shared a look that expressed what everyone was thinking.

They were in deep, deep shit.

# 11

Holly had just changed into a clean hoody, black leggings and boots when there was a knock on the bedroom door. “Yeah?” The door opened and Layla stepped in.

“Hey.” She said closing the door and leaning against it. “How you holding up?” She was dressed in jeans and a white tank, apparently not even the threat of death or catching pneumonia could stop her from exposing as much skin as possible.

“I’m good.” Holly replied sitting down on the bed, trying to keep the nerves from her voice. Death didn’t scare her, over the past year she had died a few times, it was the waiting that ate away at her.

“Really? I’m terrified.” Layla admitted settling down next to her.

“Me too.” Layla looked at her and wrinkled up her nose.

“How long do you think you can keep this a secret?” Holly shot her a perplexed look, and she motioned to her stomach.

“All these baggy clothes, you’re not fooling any one you know. You’ve gained like two hundred pounds in three months. You couldn’t manage that just from food binging, even if you wolfed down twelve packs of Twinkies a day. You’re pregnant aren’t you?” Holly didn’t know what to say, but she should have known that she wouldn’t be able to fool Layla. She saw through everything.

“Yes.”

“Dom’s or Caleb’s?”

“Why does everyone ask me that?” Holly uttered. Layla gave her a wicked grin.

“Well you were with Caleb before Dominic stole you away.”

“Yeah, but me and Caleb didn’t actually...” Holly watched Layla’s mouth drop open.

“Not even once?” Holly realized that she had missed Layla, even if she was sex mad.

“Nope. He’d lose his wings if he did.”

“Man.” She let out a low whistle. “Now that’s self-control. Come on.” Layla grabbed her hand and pulled her to the door. “Let me introduce you to the freaks outside, I’ve been getting the skinny from Jade.” The sudden change of subject mystified Holly, but that was Layla. She was all glamour and energy.

No one bothered glancing their way as they emerged from the bedroom, they were too busy preparing and planning. “Okay, you see them over there?” Layla pointed to the couch where the group of women from earlier, were sitting, a man had joined them and they looked deep in conversation.

“They’re the May family. Witches all of them. Apparently Cassandra and her husband, that’s the one with short brown hair sitting next to the guy, they tried to exorcize a

demon from someone and messed it up. It killed their son before they managed to kick its ass back to hell. The rest are her sisters.” Sympathy filled Holly, she couldn’t imagine anything worse than losing a child.

“Over there.” Layla continued dragging her away from the bedroom. “Is the shape shifters.” Holly’s eyes settled on the four men that had been eating her bacon earlier. “What’s shape shifters?”

“They can turn into animals.” Layla said in a matter of fact tone. “Isn’t he hot.”

“Who?” She was having trouble with Layla’s erratic babbling. “Ray of course.” One of the men turned and shot them a killer smile. “I swear I’m going to ride that before I die.”

“I thought you liked Sam?” Layla waved her question away, like it was an annoying fly.

“I am so over him.” She said it loud and clear and Sam shot her an inquiring look but Layla walked straight past him. The only other time Holly had met Sam was her first shift as a waitress back in Oregon. He hadn’t been very nice to her and had a go at Dominic. The only reason they hadn’t thrown down was because Michael had chosen that precise moment to attack.

“Layla, I thought he was Nephilim?”

“He is.” She replied absently.

“Then why did Legion refer to him as a wolf?” Layla sighed and pulled her down on a stool in the kitchen.

“That’s his power as a Nephilim. Sam’s part wolf.”

“What? What does that have to do with Angels?” Layla rolled her eyes. “Sam’s mother was a demon not an Angel. Every Nephilim power is different. Jade can see the future, Miles can bend metal and I can do this invisible thingy, which hurts like hell so I don’t tend to use it, Sam’s part wolf. It’s common among Demon spawn. The rest of his friends are the same. Which puts them at loggerheads with the shape shifters; it’s a whole grudge thing.” She rolled her eyes in disgust.

“Oh.”

“And those weird looking tree huggers over there, are Elementals. They’re powers are based on the elements you know, earth wind fire water air...and all that. There’s not a lot of them left now.” The people she referred to stayed closed to the door and spoke quietly amongst themselves. They all had tattoo’s that covered most of their exposed skin.

“Well anyway I’m going to go get laid for the last time.” With a wink she got to her feet and Holly watched her strut over to Ray. He was powerless against her charms and Holly couldn’t help but laugh. Trust her to think of sex at a time like this. Layla reminded her so much of Jo, Holly’s best friend. Tears stung her eyes at the thought and she glanced around for something to take her mind off of Jo. Holly spotted Jade sulking past and heading towards the apartment door.

Holly hesitated. She hated Jade with a passion and that would never change. She had been the thing that had spilt her Dominic and Caleb apart, okay so Holly cheating on

him with Dom hadn't helped matters, but when it came to Jade Holly only saw red. It was easier to paint her as the villain than herself.

Jade's suspicious eyes fell on her as soon as Holly stepped out the apartment. "What do you want?" Holly forced her witty retort back down her throat.

"You can see the future right?" The conversation seconds ago with Layla had struck a chord in her memory, and she remembered Caleb saying the same thing back in Oregon.

"Yeah, what of it?" She threw back puffing herself up, trying to look tough. Holly remembered she had a mean right hook, and wanted to avoid it if at all possible.

"Can you see how this ends?" Jade thought about it. "No." She said finally. "It doesn't work like that. I have to have physical contact with the person I'm trying to read, and even then I can only see a few minutes ahead." Holly slumped against the wall. It had been a long shot anyway.

"I don't hate you." Jade muttered after an awkward ten minutes had gone by.

"What?"

"I don't hate you." She repeated louder, staring at the ground. "I envy you."

"Yeah because my life is so great." Holly scoffed. She was standing in a corridor with a girl she couldn't stand, waiting to be murdered. How could anyone envy her position?

"There it is again, the pity me routine." Jade snapped. "I would trade places with you in a second. If I die today nobody will mourn me. Unlike you, when you were dying everyone was moping all over the place, and Dominic looked damn right suicidal."

Tears shone in her eyes and Holly was taken aback by the bitterness in Jade's tone.

"You're a somebody Holly, everyone knows your name. This whole war is about you. I would kill just to have half your fame." Holly realized then that all Jade wanted was someone to love. That's why she shagged anything with legs; Jade longed to be something other than invisible.

"The bond you have with Caleb and Dominic. They would willingly die for you and you for them. You don't know how many people just want that...connection."

"You're wrong." Holly told her. "Caleb cares whether you live or die." Jade snorted her disagreement.

"He cares because it's his job to care."

"If you think that then you don't know him, at all. Jade this bond you speak of, Caleb broke it for you. That should tell you everything you need to know." Holly left her speechless and searched the cramped apartment for Dominic. It had just turned eleven and if the next hour was her last Holly couldn't think of anyone she wanted to spend it with more.

He was still at the window looking up at the sky with nothing short of wonder on his face. Walking to him Holly glanced around and realized one of the shape shifters was staring at her. He was tall, dark and very hot and he didn't avert his gaze when she looked back. He shot her a wink and Holly smiled back then turned away. Happiness swelled in her chest when she caught Dom glaring at him. The shape shifter quickly



tore his eyes away. "I can't leave you alone for a second, can I?" he mused when Holly wrapped her arms around him. Dom returned the gesture and they stood there clinging to each other.

"Where's Legion?" She asked resting her head on his chest. "He went to get Balion." Holly's body tensed at his name and Dominic noticing it hugged her tighter. "He should have sobered up by now." A wind had picked up and whistled through the gaps between the bricks. No one was walking the flooded street outside and the Angel had been let to face the elements alone. Its wings had started to decompose and dark feathers floated on the rain water that ran in rivets to the sewers.

"Dom? Could you take me somewhere real quick? I'll be like two minutes I promise." "Where...?" He trailed off and Holly knew he understood. In a blink she was standing in a dorm room.

It was painted white and plastered with Johnny Depp posters. Sitting in the middle of the room on a single bed was Jo. She was lying in a guy's arms watching the TV on the top of the chest of drawers. Holly's heart brimmed at the sight of her best friend. Her unruly blonde hair was cut short and it brought out amazing cheekbones.

"Don't worry she can't see us." Dominic said, as Jo seemed to look straight at them.

"How did you know she was at Brown?" Holly inquired with raised eyebrows. He smiled at her sheepishly.

"Caleb's been keeping tabs on her, just in case...how did you know?"

"Google."

"You Google stalked your best friend?"

"What was I supposed to do? I can't see her or even talk on the phone for fear of demons coming after her." Dominic's eyes hardened and he knew how hard it had been for Holly to leave Jo behind, they had shared everything. And Jo was the last link to her old normal life.

"Who's the guy?" She asked trying to ignore the lump in her throat.

"Reginald Blake. He's a major in...something or other. They've been dating a while now."

"I don't like him. He's got shifty eyes." Dominic's laugh was infectious and she couldn't help chuckling herself. "What? He has."

"She's happy Holly. I mean she misses you like crazy, but she's safer out of all this."

Reg cracked a joke and Jo's laugh sounded like music to Holly's ears. The tears came like someone had just turned on a tap. She wanted to see Jo one last time but it was making the black void that had been created by her parents death, grow darker.

Dominic pulled her to him and let Holly cry. She barely noticed the change in scenery until he lifted her onto a wooden bench. Holly wiped her eyes on the sleeves of her hoodie and looked at him. They were sitting in her old school yard back in Cherry Falls. The sky was the same grey but it was dry and still here.

"The trip down memory lane wouldn't be complete without this." He mused. The school had been the place where Holly had saw Dominic for the first time. He had

been sent to corrupt her by his father but somehow Dom had actually fallen in love with her instead. It all seemed decades ago when in reality it was only a year.

“Happy birthday.” Dominic told her handing her a small black velvet box.

“What are you talking about? It’s not...” He looked at his watch.

“It’ll be the 31<sup>st</sup> of December in about forty five minutes.” Holly’s mouth dropped open. Somehow Christmas had come and gone and she hadn’t even realized with everything that had been going on.

Holly had made it to her nineteenth birthday.

With shaky hands she opened the box and the school around her vanished. “Holly breathe.” Dom ordered. She exhaled deeply and picked up the ring. Its sliver band gleamed in the moonlight and a dark jewel was encrusted with wings in the hilt. “It’s beautiful...” She gasped.

“I’ve had it for months; I bought it back in Oregon when we went to the mall. I’ve been looking for the right time...”

“Right time for what?” She eyed him suspiciously; his nervous fidgeting was making her heart hammer her rib cage. When he looked at her his normally dark eyes had paled to a bright gold.

“Holly I love you. And no matter what happens tomorrow nothing will ever change that. My mother used to say that it was sinful for Immortals to love humans. She said nothing good could ever come of it, but I can’t stop myself falling for you Holly. You’re a hard habit to break.” He hesitated. “What I’m trying to say is that it would be a honour if you agreed to...Holly marry me.”

“Now? You ask me this now!”

“I know the timing isn’t great...And you don’t even have to answer right this minute...” He ran his hands through his hair. Holly got up and grabbed the collar of his leather jacket.

“I meant you’ve took your damn time about it.” She couldn’t help beaming at him.

“You should already know my answer. Yes Dominic.” His strong arms scooped her up and he kissed her like he never had before. The heat of it melted her insides, and she forgot all about Lucifer, hell and their impending doom.

Right now was all that mattered.

# 12

“Where the hell have you two been?” Legion barked as soon their feet touched the wooden floor of the apartment. Holly righted her hoody and hastily pulled on her boots, while Dominic tried not to laugh at her frantic dressing.

“Nowhere.” She replied as he marched over to them, they had been right in the middle of getting hot and heavy when Dom’s cell rang and Legion’s disapproving voice shouted at them down the line.

Legion glared at them. “Holly a word.” He snapped turning away.

“Why me? It was his fault...” Legion’s hard stare made her trail off before she landed herself in more hot water. She elbowed Dom in the ribs to cut off his laughter before following Legion over to the bedroom.

The door slammed shut behind them and Holly waited for the imminent ear bashing but when he faced her, Legion was all smiles. “Congratulations.” She glared at him incredulously. “He’s my brother Holly, did you really think he wouldn’t tell me what he was planning.”

“Then what was all that?” She asked him, not getting it at all. He shrugged. “I have to keep them in line somehow, cracking the whip occasionally keeps them in order.” Holly snorted with amusement.

“Yeah well next time use Dom as you’re scapegoat.” Legion wasn’t listening however; he had this sad faraway look to his grey eyes.

“Has he told you his reasons for wanting to abort your son?” He asked quietly. Fresh heartache spread over her and eventually Holly shook her head. Dominic had fought them every step of the way, he had relented a little but Holly knew deep down that he didn’t want it, and she only wished he would tell her why.

“It’s because of me.” Legion said tiredly. “Hold on a minute.” He added before she could speak. Opening the bedroom door he shouted commands at Dominic and the apartment started to empty. “I’m telling you this against Dom’s wishes, but I don’t want to be the thing that splits you two up. In many ways my brother still behaves like a petulant child, and this is much my story as it is he’s, and you have a right to know.” “Know what?” Legion sighed.

“I wasn’t always the man I am now. There was a time when I lived for war; I didn’t feel happy unless I was on a battlefield. But then I met her. She was mortal and we were thrown together in an unfortunate series of events, she drove me crazy and many times I dreamed of chopping off her head. But she refused to give up on me and made me all the more better for it. We fell in love and everything was great until...” He

trailed off and Holly didn't press him. It was still news to her that Legion had loved someone, he was always guarded and like his brother never let anyone in.

"She fell pregnant. I knew my father would see the baby as a threat to his throne, and if he found out about us...so I kept quiet and turned to Castillo for help. I couldn't always be there to protect her so Cas agreed to assign a Guardian Angel to her, Caleb." Holly couldn't help her show of surprise when Legion mentioned him.

"But my efforts were all for nought. Lucifer found out about her and...he sent Dominic, my own brother after her." Holly's heart started to sink and suddenly she didn't want Legion to continue.

"Dominic was hell bent on pleasing father back then, there was nothing he wouldn't do to get into Lucifer's good graces, so without hesitation Dominic found her and drove a dagger through her heart." Time stood still and the air around them got oppressive. Holly understood why Dom hadn't wanted to tell her.

"Of course he didn't find out whom she truly was until after he had done the deed. He lost faith in everything after that. Did everything he could to dull the pain of our father's deceit, drugs drink women. I never blamed him though, it's Lucifer who is to blame and maybe Caleb...if he had done a better job in watching over her..." He gritted his teeth as his face clouded with shadows. "I tried to talk to him but Dom wouldn't have it. He didn't want to know us anymore...I kept track of his whereabouts of course but there wasn't much I could do for him, my own grief was still too near."

"You see Holly we may be these turbo supercharged beings but when it comes down to it, we have the same aspirations as you do. Love, security, family, we all want the same things, and I didn't just lose the woman I loved that night, I also lost my brother."

"That's what tore Dom and Caleb apart." Holly murmured. They had hated each other with a passion, and after agreeing to work together to save her, Holly always felt that they behaved more like brothers than enemies.

"Yes." Legion replied. "Despite being on opposing sides, a friendship grew between the two. There was a time when they went everywhere together. But after Minnie's murder Caleb didn't want anything to do with him. Cherry Falls was the first time they had seen each other in hundreds of years." Legion kneeled down in front of her and took her hands in his.

"You brought them back together, and you also gave me my brother back. I could never thank you enough for that Holly." Tears actually formed in Legion's eyes. "But that's why Dominic wants no part in parenthood. He wouldn't survive going through that again. Losing you and the baby would kill him...literally and he knows it."

Suddenly everything made sense, it was like a light had been switched on and Holly understood why Dominic had been acting the way that he had. It had been his survival mechanism kicking in.

Legion got to his feet and looked at the...no rather looked through the closed bedroom door.

“It’s time.”

# 13

Holly Adams looked down at the deserted street. The driving rain and gale force winds had subsided leaving an eerie stillness in its place. Legion had managed to pull together an impressive host of three hundred, mostly comprised of demons that had sworn an oath to Legion instead of his father.

Not every demon was interested in watching the world burn.

He had divided them evenly so the half attacking the rear had as much firepower as the main one. They filled up the road just before the intersection she had bled on, using the buildings around them to channel Hell's army exactly where they wanted them. Except it was two minutes past midnight and there was no sign of an army.

On the way up to the roof Legion had revealed his strategy, and it wasn't an understatement to say that it revolved around her. What he proposed was risky and potentially fatal, if Holly failed then the people she cared about most died. She had produced it before but not to the kind of scale Legion required, and it had her on tenterhooks.

Just when Holly was doubting if hell would make an appearance at all, the concrete beneath her feet began to tremble slightly. Looking up the block New York City had become a ghost town. There was no horns of angry taxi cabs or sirens that constantly flooded the city streets. It was as if its citizens could sense the coming doom. Suddenly the lights started to go out. Block by block, the fluorescent glow from street lamps and buildings faded till they were blanketed by darkness.

Holly froze, the last thing she wanted to do was to go stumbling off the roof and plunge to her death, but fear threatened to overwhelm her. "Get a grip girl!" She told herself sternly just as the lights returned.

It would have been better if they had remained off.

Holly couldn't believe the amount of bodies that had appeared. They covered the sidewalks and roads till she couldn't spot an inch of paving. The sheer number of them was enough to send the bravest Immortal running, but to their credit the small army of Legion's held their ground.

The shape shifters had turned the second the lights had went. Instead of men standing behind Legion and Dominic, a lion roared loud enough to shake the apartment building. Holly stared at it with amazement; it looked like a real lion, mane, claws and teeth. Next to it was a black slim line panther who raked at the tarmac with its claws, eager to pounce. A gigantic grey bear towered up behind them, and a pack of ferocious wolves paced the road beside it, dying to get their teeth into demon skin. It was an

incredible sight to behold.

Holly gazed down at the Nephilim; shape shifters, witches, demons, elementals and Vampires that was the world's last defence and felt pride spread through her.

A man moved forwards and she saw Legion restrain Dominic. She couldn't make out the words that flew between them but by Dom's reaction it wasn't small talk.

She screwed her eyes shut and felt her power bristle just underneath the surface.

Trying to stretch it out like pastry across the battle field she hit a brick wall, something was resisting her. Holly had just felt it push up against her when she was thrown backwards by invisible hands.

"Son of a..." She gingerly got to her feet and the crimson mist descended on her vision.

Any control she might have had disappeared under a river of red hot anger, she felt the barrier that was blocking her and punched a hole through it just in time.

Whatever the man on the ground had said to Dominic, only caused him to break Legion's hold and rush forward, the two ran at each other so fast they blurred. The man was immediately thrown off balance as he tried to hit Dom. His war hammer hit air and recoiled. He gazed at Dom with wide eyes as a blue thin shield appeared around him, and the rest of Holly's comrades.

The protective shield Holly had first conjured back in Oregon was Legion's secret weapon. It evened out the odds; it was hard to kill an opponent you couldn't touch.

But she had never tried to shield this many people.

The sudden appearance of their protective bubbles seemed only to fuel their fire, and were already running before Legion gave them the signal. The two armies clashed with a rousing clatter that was actually tangible. Claws cut through flesh, jaws tore at throats and it wasn't long before the screaming started.

Legion's army cut through the bigger host with ease thanks to their bulletproof status, no one could hurt them. They cut and hacked their way through, while Caleb led the second battalion that attacked from the rear.

The foreign force that had attacked Holly pressed up against her but this time she was ready for it. Legion had warned that hell had its own share of powerful witches, and that they would try to disable her quickly. Closing her eyes she forced herself to focus on the shield, but the power that tugged at her own was strong, way too strong for it to belong to just one witch.

Gritting her teeth Holly felt confident that they wouldn't break her, and tried to probe their power for weak spots she could capitalize on.

"Bring her down Sophia!" Holly heard a voice that rose above all the other's shout.

"She's killing us!" And the opposing power hit back against Holly harder than before.

She instantly braced for it protecting the shield, and fired her own shot at them, which they quickly dealt with.

It was a battle of wills and Holly had too much to lose if she let them defeat her.

Legion's army met in the middle and they turned around, coming back for another sweep. They had a strong chance of winning if the shield kept up.

The witch's shots at her annoyed more than hurt but it frustrated Holly that she hadn't finished them by now. If she wasn't using half of her energy maintaining the shield she could have given them her full attention, but as it was Holly had to play defence rather than attack.

Murderous snarls rang out behind her and Holly knew it was Ray, the shape shifter Legion had assigned to watch the entrance to the roof. His growls of rage bellowed in the stairwell and she hated to be the demon that had to attack that.

More groups of demons broke from the main body and flooded her apartment building. Legion in his bloodlust, had surged ahead too quickly and the army had been surrounded by Hell's; they had realized their mistake too late and fought even harder to get out of it, when Ray's growls turned into whimpers.

His cries filled the sky and his fellow shape shifters called to him with angry snarls. Legion and Ray had both told her not to open the door that led to the stairs, at any cost, but Ray's whines cut through her. Telling herself she could maintain the shield and rescue the shape shifter Holly moved to the door.

Legion had locked it and only he had the key, being a bit over zealous in her hurry to get to Ray, Holly used her power and the door ripped away from its hinges. She was greeted by a barrage of demons.

"Crap." Holly dodged a sword that missed her by inches and lodged itself in the brick wall. Remembering everything Dominic had taught her over the year; Holly ducked a fist and grabbed it, twisting the arm until she heard it pop. The demon dropped to his knees and hurled obscenities at her.

Holly was already moving on. She didn't dare to use her power anymore, maintaining the shield was draining her, but Holly had to hold on till Legion rectified his mistake, until then they needed it more than ever. A fist caught Holly off guard and it connected with her left cheek. Before she could shake it off a hand closed around her hair.

"Stop fighting slut!" A gruff voice hissed in her ear. "Someone wants to have a word with you, and you'll go without a fuss." Another Demon stepped in front of her and Holly contemplated using her power to get her out of this precarious situation. But she caught a flash of white racing towards them and smiled with relief.

Ray hurled himself at the demon in front and Holly elbowed the second in the gut. He lost his grip on her hair and she kicked him in the face. The momentum sent him stumbling back over the roof, and he tried to grab hold of air as gravity pulled him down to the sidewalk.

Ray ripped he's demon's throat out and turned to growl at her, Holly could almost hear the chiding in his tone. "You're welcome." She retorted. Ray's shape shifting form was the most mesmerizing. The white Bengal tiger in front of her was simply majestic. Dried blood had matted in his fur but he didn't look that badly injured. He nudged her hand with his head in response, and Holly knew he was thanking her.

The moment was interrupted by an earth quake that was off the scale. Holly clung to



Ray who dug his claws into the concrete of the roof as the building shuddered violently. It was over quickly and picking herself up Holly ran to the edge of the roof. The battle had suspended as big bits of tarmac flew through the air. Everyone on the ground had been knocked off their feet. And the massive hole that had been created in the middle of the road poured out thick black smoke.

As she stared Holly saw a form take shape in the middle of that smoke and swallowed hard. She knew who it was without seeing anymore; she had been dreading this for a whole year.

As bright red eyes blazed up at her Holly lost all focus, her shield shimmered then died completely as Holly stared back at her destruction. Her fate.

Lucifer.

# 14

Dominic Prince shook away the cobwebs and got to his feet. "Father?" He looked past Lucifer to Legion who's face mirrored the same astounding look. The battle had been temporary put on hold.

Everyone was in total awe of the imposing figure of The Devil.

His jet black hair was slicked back and his suit was impeccable. He always had style, even for a crazed paranoid Angel who craved nothing but revenge. Dominic glanced around him to see every single demon bow to their master. How could he even be free? Lucifer needed Holly's blood to break the lock of his prison, so how was he here? Dominic didn't back down when his father's black eyes fell on him, he returned it as steadily as he could, but Lucifer's sudden appearance had thrown him more than he liked.

"Dominic." Lucifer's deep sensual voice said in greeting. "It's good to see you again, even in these circumstances."

"How..." He swallowed and tried again. "How are you even here?" Dom asked trying to keep his eyes off of the roof where he hoped Holly still was. Had they took her without him noticing? Dominic didn't want to give away her position so he forced himself to look at his father.

Lucifer regarded him with an amused smirk. "The barriers have collapsed." He said dancing around the question.

"You're not." Legion interrupted and Dominic saw his father's face darken. There was a lot of bad blood between them. Legion chuckled. "Your body is still down there, what we're seeing is pure illusion, not flesh and bone." Without a second thought Lucifer grabbed Legion by the throat.

"Traitor." He hissed before throwing him away like a piece of garbage. Dominic watched his brother crash into a shop front window. The glass gave and Legion disappeared from view. "Is that real enough for you." Lucifer tossed after him.

He smacked his hands together then faced Dominic again. "You were always my favourite, at least you betrayed me for a reason."

"You can't have her." Dom heard himself say quietly. His father's face transformed to a pained look but Dom knew it was all show. Lucifer didn't care who he hurt just as long as he got what he wanted. "There's plenty more fish in the sea son," he said putting a hand on his shoulder. "You can have your pick. Just give up the girl and stand beside me once again. Together we'll rule this crappy little planet."

“No.” Dominic shrugged off his father’s hand. “If you want her then you’ll have to go through me.”

“Don’t do this.” Lucifer pleaded. “You know what I will do, do you really want more blood on your hands?”

“Go to hell father.” Legion snapped lunging forwards, but Lucifer blocked his fist easily.

“After you.” Lucifer snapped. Dominic grabbed his father’s fist before he could use it and Legion kicked his way free while their father was distracted by Dominic. As if on cue the fighting started up again. Only this time there was no protective shield. Lucifer roared with fury as he wrestled with his children. Yanking free he flung them clear across the battle ground, they skidded across the surface knocking down anyone who didn’t get out of the way like bowling pins.

Dominic grimaced as he slowed, the friction had shredded his sweater and ripped the skin from his back. Legion hadn’t fared much better. He was bleeding profusely from multiple wounds. Looking over at him Legion’s face filled with concern. Dominic looked up to see a Dante towering over him, war hammer in hand.

“I’m going to enjoy this.” He spat before bringing the weapon down. Dom reacted too slowly and knew he couldn’t avoid the blow. Bracing himself for the worst he prayed Holly would forgive him.

A white Bengal tiger appeared from nowhere, like a ghost. He clenched Dante’s neck in his jaws and they flew in a ball over Dom. “You gonna sit there all day?” He looked up at Holly who held out her hand. He should have known she wouldn’t have let him leave her easily. Grabbing her hand Holly helped him to his feet.

The tiger had made short work of Dante who was lying sprawled with his face and throat missing. “Thanks Ray.” Holly called as the white ghost moved to its next target. With a quickness that amazed even him, Holly grabbed the dagger that Dom always carried in the waistband of his jeans and stabbed the demon that had tried to creep up on Legion.

“What are you doing?” He yelled at her.

“Saving your ass.” She shouted back. Dominic grabbed her and they ducked as bodies flew over their heads. Lucifer was ploughing people down all over the place. “We need to put him down.” Legion told them.

“How?” Holly asked him.

“Me and Dom will distract him, just make sure you get that through his heart, understand?”

“I’ll do it.” Dom said reaching for the dagger.

“No Dom. She’s the only one that can take him down.” Legion said starting to move up the road. Dominic didn’t like putting Holly in the firing line but before he could say it she pulled him into a clench, and her lips locked on his with a death grip. “Don’t get dead.” She told him pushing him away.

There was so much he wanted to tell her, things he should have told her a long time

ago but Legion shouted of him when three demons wrestled him to the ground. Moving to help him Dominic prayed that he would live to tell Holly how much he really did want their son.

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Holly let out a heavy breath and rushed over to Layla. Making short work of three demons she fell to the blood soaked ground beside her friend's body. Layla's eyes stared up at the sky with horror, and the part of her chest that should have housed her heart was nothing more than a gaping hole, a few feet away Miles lay.

This was all Holly's fault if she had kept up the shield then Layla and Miles would still be breathing. Lucifer had sapped her strength and upon losing the shield Holly had tried to resurrect it but it just wouldn't comply.

She felt motion beside her and grabbed for the dagger she had dropped when reaching Layla. A brown wolf lowered its head and sniffed Layla. It whimpered and looked at Holly through sad eyes.

"Sam?" He was bleeding from hundreds of cuts and he limped badly. "I'm so sorry." Holly cried, feeling the tears well up in her eyes. Sam threw his head back and let out a heart wrenching howl.

"*You need to get to Lucifer.*" His flat voice sounded in her head. She looked down the street and tried not to let her despair overwhelm her. Dominic and Legion was nowhere to be seen, and at least a hundred demons stood between her and Lucifer.

There was no way Holly would make it. Her magic was all but spent from the shield.

"*You have to end this quickly, or there'll be no one left.*" He let out an angry snarl and the rest of his battered pack along with Ray joined them.

"*Don't let Layla's death be for nothing. We'll get you to him just make sure you tear his fucking head off.*" Holly caught Sam's meaning and shook her head. She wouldn't let them use themselves as battering rams.

"*Get up!*" He snarled at her and she slowly got to her feet. The pack fanned out in front of her and despite their wounds they looked mean and lean.

"*Move!*" Sam gave the command and the wolves took off, clearing the way. Ray kept pace with her and tackled anyone that got through the wolves. Sam was ahead and ran like the wind, when they reached a knot of demons the wolves slowed and pressed closer to her, using their bodies to shield her.

The demons stuck together and the wolves were finding it hard to separate them.

Holly slowed when she heard a yelp looking back she saw a demon grab Sam and snap his back with his bare hands. The rest of the pack were too busy fighting for their lives to acknowledge the death of their leader.

The demon tossed Sam's broken body away and grinned at Holly. Beside her she sensed Ray coiling to spring but stepped in front. She didn't want him suffering a similar fate. Hate surged through her and she felt something slither lose inside her.

The demon lost his grin and gasped for breath, as did the others around him. Their

sudden weakness made it easier for few surviving wolves to get the upper hand. The demon stretched out his hands to her just before he collapsed, face first onto the tarmac.

Only three wolves were left standing, and they staggered to Sam's lifeless body. Holly surged ahead and ordered Ray away. They had done what they had promised. Lucifer was within reach. It was time to end this once and for all.

Dominic and Legion had decided the best way to distract Lucifer was by letting him pummel them into dust. When she got to them, Legion was barely standing and Dominic was bleeding heavily.

When they saw her approach, they flung themselves at Lucifer trying to keep his focus on them. Swallowing hard and with thoughts of Sam Layla and Miles in her head Holly charged.

Lucifer swatted Legion away and was tussling with Dom when she got within touching distance. He cocked his head and threw out an arm but Holly ducked under it. Lucifer however had a lifetime of war under his belt and wasn't stupid. On sensing his precarious position he drew Dominic to him, keeping him hostage over his heart.

Diverting her flow mid step Holly drove the dagger into Lucifer's thigh instead.

He let out a war cry and hurled Dominic at her, he collided into her with such momentum they rolled over the ground. Dominic landed heavily on his back, and Holly would have fell on her stomach if Caleb hadn't slid, like a base baller heading for second base, underneath her, easing her landing.

She lay on top of him trying to catch her breath as Lucifer bellowed behind them. "You okay?" He asked staring into her with his piercing sapphire eyes. "I think so."

"Then get back up and send that piece of shit back to hell." He held out a sword and Holly smiled before Dominic pulled her up.

Legion was dodging his father's blows when they got to their feet. They had lost the surprise element and now had to rely on their fighting ability to penetrate Lucifer's defences.

While Dominic and Caleb raced to help a tired Legion. Holly circled looking for a way in. She needed to be back in the place where she had been in Oregon when those nutters had surrounded her and Miles in the mall parking lot. Everyone told her that her power had no equal, yet so far it was proving useless. If only she could get past angry and hit damn right frightening.

Holly made herself think of Michael. Made her mind focus on her mother's pale scared face as she lay dying in Holly's arms. The strange chanting filled her head, she had had heard it before and knew what it meant.

Holly was forcing herself into a dangerous state, but if she didn't they were going to lose. The voices rose in pitch till the red mist covered her vision. Dropping the sword she smiled when the ground started to tremble.

Lucifer's head snapped round and stared at her with pure venom. "You can't contend with me."

“You sound like Michael.” She replied in a voice not entirely her own. “Look how he ended up.” The wind picked up and the thunder struck the ground. Lucifer hurled Caleb at her but his grin faded when Caleb slowed. He looked down at them while floating in the air. Slowly Holly lowered him to the ground.

“Okay little girl.” Lucifer told her. “Let’s play.”

# 15

Dominic pulled himself up for the hundredth time that night, and lost his breath when he saw Holly throw down with his father. She had a wild look on her face and her black curls had turned fiery red.

Her eyes pulsed with excitement and Dominic knew she had gone to a place they couldn't follow, just like Oregon when Caleb had had to talk her down after she completely lost it.

"What is she doing?" He muttered.

"She's starting to believe." Legion whispered limping up to him. Lucifer hurled a fireball at her and they watched Holly bat it away effortlessly. Nearby trees swayed as mother nature reacted to two primal forces clashing.

Even Lucifer failed to hide his appreciation; they danced each other's blows waiting for their opponent to trip up.

Holly needed to hurry. Dawn was breaking and nearly all the brave souls that had joined their suicidal mission to stop Lucifer taking over was dead or dying. Two battle scarred wolves were all that remained of Sam's pack. They kept together and attacked as a unit but both were bleeding heavily and looked exhausted.

Cassandra May was kneeling over her husband and dead sisters. Dominic felt loss stab at him, the youngest May had been disembowelled and her entrails had been dumped a few yards away.

The Elementals tricks had proved no match for demons and they had been slaughtered some time ago. The Black Panther's head rested a few yards away completely severed from its body.

Balion and his crowd were still standing but even they were starting to show fatigue.

Ray was busy trying to fend off the demons that were attacking the downed lion.

Dominic had been in battles before but never with comrades that he cared for. It hurt to see the ground soaked in their blood. They had given it a good go, but they had lost the battle.

Their only hope was Holly. If she could somehow cut the serpent's head off, the body would flounder. Demons weren't known for their loyalty, if their master died they would turn tail and flee. It was the only way any of them was walking away from this, but as a surge of demons turned their attention to them, Dominic knew it was a long shot.

Something happened then that none of them, including Lucifer could have seen coming. A golden hazy light broke through the dark grey clouds, and even Legion

stopped fighting the group of demons that surrounded him. The light radiated warmth and hope. Castillo stepped out from it like it was a door. His presence threw Lucifer off his game and provided Holly with the opportunity she had been waiting for.

Showing no mercy Dominic saw her thrust the sword in her hands at him. It hurtled through the air and Dom watched it with breathless anticipation. Hands grabbed him and the sword stopped abruptly, it just hung there in the air inches away from Dominic's heart.

Lucifer had recovered and did the only thing that would make Holly halt in her tracks. Instead of using his power and taking a 50/50 chance of surviving, he grabbed Dom who thanks to the demons he had been fighting, was stupidly within reach.

Everyone froze and even Holly lost her certainty. Dominic stared at the sword and inwardly grimaced. He knew what was going to have to happen; he also knew Holly wouldn't do it.

"Let him go." She snapped. Lucifer held him firmly in position.

"Not a chance. You want me you'll have to kill your precious Dominic." His laugh was cold and heartless.

"Brother." Castillo stepped forward. "End this madness. Do the right thing, your son doesn't need to die." Cas only enraged Lucifer further and he spat at him.

"Scum! Shame you didn't show that much concern when Michael kicked me out of Heaven."

"He had to Luc. You were wrong."

"Wrong! These abominations are flawed. They murder, steal, rape and mutilate each other! They blame me but do you want to know something, I don't even have to nudge them. Human beings are the worst thing father ever created. They are evil, not me!" Castillo sighed.

"Think of Eva Luc. She wouldn't want you to hurt your own child."

"She didn't want a lot of things to happen but they have!" He turned to Holly. "You haven't got what it takes girl. You won't kill the only thing you live for, so put the sword down!"

"Holly..." Legion said. Dominic saw him shake his head slightly. Tears formed in her eyes and the red disappeared from her hair. She looked like herself again and Dominic knew it was or never.

"Holly listen to me." He said slowly, fighting the pain that filled him with every breath. This wasn't how things were supposed to go, but he would rather die than her and their son. "It's okay princess." Wetness ran down his face and it was then Dom realized he was crying, which only set Holly off worse.

"Shut up!" Lucifer snapped at him.

"I love you."

"Dom I can't..." She fell to her knees and Caleb went to her.

"Of course you can. You can do anything you set your mind to. You're going you be an amazing mother." He enunciated the last word so she would understand what he was



trying to tell her.

“What?” Lucifer and Cas gasped at the same time. Legion glared at him but Dominic knew he got it, as did Holly.

Something changed in her, the tears still flowed but a resolve had set on her grim face.

Getting to her feet she whispered. “I love you...forgive me.”

“Already have.” He whispered back keeping his eyes trained on hers as the sword rushed forward and pierced his heart.

# 16

*One year later...*

Caleb Williams perched on the chimney pot and watched. Snowflakes fell from the Heavens covering Cherry Falls in a white dusting. He loved this time of year. Christmas brought out the best in humans and it made up for the complete jerks some of them were for the rest of the year.

Caleb came here whenever his duties would allow it. It was proven hard indeed to keep Jade on the straight and narrow, but she was learning to trust people again. Caleb had chosen to resume his job as Guardian Angel and Heaven had drastically changed under the new and improved outlook Castillo had developed. They were finally doing what God, their father wanted. Guiding people, protected innocents. It was satisfying work.

He came to this sleepy town to watch Holly Adams, and to visit Dominic's grave. His death had been hard to bare for all of them, but there was so much that had been left unsaid and Caleb wished he had said them when he had had the chance.

It was Holly who wanted Dom to rest in Cherry Falls, it was a way of keeping of him close and she went to talk to him almost every day.

The door of Jo's parents' house opened and Jo ran out all wrapped up from the cold, and threw a snowball at her fiancé Reg. Holly held onto a small hand as she crossed the threshold.

Colt Jeffery Prince had been born on May 1<sup>st</sup>, he had Dominic's eyes and pale skin. He had been the only reason Holly sacrificed Dominic and why she struggled with a life she didn't want.

Caleb had practically had to pry her fingers from Dom's headstone the day of the funeral. And never wanted to leave her, but Legion had assured him that it would only be harder on her if they stuck around. Legion visited his nephew every Sunday and they often went for a walk after Holly's Sunday dinners.

Upon Lucifer's death he had taken over as boss of hell, and had immediately came to a truce with Castillo.

The eternal war was finally over.

Hell had a purpose and Heaven could never get rid of it completely, and there was still the odd run ins between Angels and demons but nobody ever died.

The world kept spinning on its axis and everything was better thanks to Dominic Prince's sacrifice.

Holly had returned to the family home in Cherry Falls and had been going to school over in Greenfields, she had never graduated thanks to Michael and despite Dominic leaving her everything he owed, properties, cars and a never ending bank account, she worked part time at the local pet store.

Caleb felt Jade call and hated leaving so quick, especially when Holly brought out Colt's new plastic battery operated race car. Jo and Reg watched with wishful eyes as Holly placed him in it and kept hold as the car whirled to life.

Colt giggled as the car bumped over the pavement. Caleb took off grudgingly so he didn't see Colt's temper tantrum at being took in for Christmas dinner. Over Holly's shoulder his red piercing eyes burned...

*The end.*

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