Rockabye

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Rockabye

by TheLiveshipParagon
Summary

One minute you're on top of the world and the next, John Constantine turns it to hell.

Notes

Based on a merger of the comics and some parts of the tv show. I'll be updating a bit irregularly compared to my other work but I'll keep it going!
You felt the roar of the crowd and saw them surge towards the stage, screaming into the wind.

You walked out on stage with your bass slung low around your waist and waited in your spot. The lights flared on and the smoke machine whirred into action. Your lead guitarist hammered the first long chord of your song and the crowd drank it in.

Your lead singer danced to the front of the stage and grabbed the microphone violently, “Manchester, are you ready to rock?!”

The crowd shrieked in unison and began clapping their hands together.

And you were lost, lost in the music you guys had worked so hard to create. You didn't even see the crowd any more the lights were that blinding. There was only you and your bass and the vibrations of the melody.

The first song ended and you snapped back into the moment. Before you were men and women, pushing forward against the barrier and dancing, whooping and even...eww, you didn't need to see that...

You turned away from the guy who was groping his girlfriend's tits and grinding against her on the barrier and scanned out to the back.

Someone caught your eye. He was the only one who didn't appear to be into groove, so to speak. He was the only still port in a sea of storming rebellion. A blond man in a beige trenchcoat, shirt and red tie. He took a drag on his cigarette, looking intensely at the band.

You were pretty sure he wasn't supposed to be smoking here, what with the ban and all but nobody appeared to be calling him out on it.

The burning embers of the cigarette lit up his eyes and they had a certain predatory look to them. You would be kinda freaked if he were looking directly at you but he seemed to be concentrating heavily on your lead guitarist, Phoenix. Oh well, you thought, getting ready to strike out the next song. She can handle herself if the creep comes near her later.

~**~**~**~**~**~**~**~**~

The set finished and you left to roaring applause. You felt good, you felt energised. The stage was where you belonged.

“Fuck yeah!” screamed Roxy, your singer. “That was well ace!”

You all huddled in a pile, hugging each other and laughing loudly. The comedown was always a fun part after the gig and you heaped into the backstage area grabbing drinks.

Amidst the chants of “down it!” and “just have one more!” you brave the question, “Hey did anyone see the mega creeper at the back?”

“Who do you mean?” Valentine, your drummer asked, setting his bottle down on the counter.
“Some guy at the back near the bar in a trenchcoat and full suit practically. He was really staring hard.”

“Oh hun,” Roxy said, shaking the glittery hair extensions out of her head. “Lots of guys stare.”

“No I'm serious! He was totally still and just staring, not even moving to the beat.”

“Ah yeah,” Phoenix said, dragging a make up wipe down one half of her face. “I think I saw who you mean? Red tie?”

“That's him!” you say.

“Yeah he gave out proper weirdo vibes. Looked a bit old to be going to a punk gig as well. I wouldn't worry though, chick, if he hangs around the bouncers will throw him out.”

You laugh, not fully though because you still can't shake the intensity of that look he gave. You tried to put it out of your mind and enjoy the aftershow party. You grabbed a fistful of Malteasers and stuffed them in your mouth, chewing earnestly, trying to keep your energy going with a cheap sugar high.

Night set in and you were quite tipsy by now. You knew when you'd reached your limit though so you declined Valentine trying to get you to neck some mystery shot that was more likely to be paint stripper than anything tasty.

You checked your phone, two am. Man, you were ready for a good sleep by now.

“I'm heading out!” you call to the group.

They rush over and give you a flurry of sloppy hugs and drunken kisses on the cheek before letting you go, you're pretty sure Phoenix grabbed your arse as well.

“Love you babes!” they shouted.

You laughed at their obviously wasted state and walked to the rear exit, pushing the bar and feeling the cold air hit you. It was wonderfully refreshing.

You stepped out into the light rain. Ah fuck, well, it was Manchester after all. You should really learn to carry an umbrella with you.

A voice next to you made you jump.

“Got a light, love? Me lighter's just packed in.”

You whirl around and see him. The trenchcoat guy. You stare at him agape. Why was he still here?!

“Catching flies, lass?” he asked again, smirking. He was obviously a Scouser by the accent. Just what you needed. Scousers weren't famed for their gentle nature,

You shake yourself, “I don't smoke, sorry.”

“Probably a good thing. Everyone's on a health kick these days so I should probably cut down.”

“Why are you here?”

“Came to watch the gig,” he retorted slyly.
“You know what I mean, don't be a prick.”

“Ooo,” he says, pursing his lips. “Mouthy bird, I like it. Alright alright, fair. I'm waiting for your guitarist.”

“She's a lesbian, she won't be interested.” you state bluntly.

“I'm not after shagging her, Jesus Christ!” he protested.

“Why do you want to see her?” you ask, warily.

“Need to have a chat, she knows me.”

“Funny,” you say, with a raised eyebrow. “She acted like she's never seen you before when I pointed you out.”

You see the cogs turning in his brain as he grasps for how to get out of the lie.

“You've got one minute to explain yourself before I call security out here,” you growl.

“Alright, no need to get your knickers in a twist!” he cries, holding his hands up. “Your mate stole something from me about a month ago and I want it back.”

“What did she steal?” you ask, still not quite believing him. “Maybe I've seen it around.”

“Maybe you have,” he said and stepped closer to you.

You could see him more clearly now he'd come into the security spotlight. He sported some rough stubble and seemed to always wear a default expression you'd term as 'arrogant little shit'.

“It looks like a wooden box, pretty plain, save for the fact on the top it's got a carved face on it.”

“Sounds pretty generic?” you scoff.

“Trust me, love, you'd remember it if you'd seen it.”

“Well she's not coming out any time soon so why don't you try arranging a chat through the band manager rather than hanging around like a creepy stalker fan.”

He gave you a raised eyebrow like he was mortally offended, “Creepy stalker fan?! Listen here, love, I don't give ten shits for your shite music. It's not even punk. It's just a crap parody. I just want what your mate has taken from me. Nothing more.”

“Woah woah!” you say, pointing your finger at him. “No need to get fucking nasty okay? You don't see me insulting your day job! And besides, do you really think staring her out during the gig and then hanging around in a dark alley is the best way to go about that?”

Annoyance flashes across his face. Annoyance that you're right.

“Fine, you wanna do this by the book with your manager and stuff, I'll leave you my card. You can get him to call me but do it urgently. I don't have much time.”

He hands you a small white square of card and you take it without even looking, fully intending to drop it in the gutter the second he leaves.

“Don't even think about throwing it away,” he says, catching your look.
He looks down to button his coat up further and you take the opportunity to stick your tongue out at him. It's childish for sure but it makes you feel good.

“Unless you're suggesting we do some tongue aerobics together I would put that back in your mouth,” he chides, not even looking up at you.

You're kinda speechless. Firstly, you have no idea how he saw that and secondly...tongue aerobics? Did he mean kissing you?

He finishes with his coat and takes in your startled look and winks, flashing a cheeky smile.

“Remember, love, get that card to your manager ASAP.”

He turns to walk down the alley.

You look at the card in your hand.

\textit{John Constantine
Exorcist, Demonologist and Master of the Dark Arts.}

“Master of the Dark Arts?!” You call after him, bewildered.

He turns around to you and chuckles. “I really must get those redone. Call it more, a petty dabbler.”

And with that he turns back and then out of sight down a side street.

You stare at the card again.

Exorcist? What the fuck?! Was he some creepy cult guy?

\textit{Oh Phoenix, you think to yourself. What the fuck have you let yourself in for?}
After your strange meeting last night something unexpected occurs

You wake up in your flat, completely groggy, your mouth tasting like fluff and regret. Ahh why did you drink? You know it just steals happiness from the next day.

You blindly reach out to the bedside cabinet, hoping your tipsy self was nice enough to leave you a drink. You hand closed on the glass and you brought it your lips, downing the contents...

Well fuck, you sputtered. Your tipsy self was an arsehole. You had just drunk more rum.

You groan and roll yourself out of the bed, falling onto your hands and knees and half crawling to the kitchen before grabbing onto the counter and dragging yourself up. You put your head under the tap in the sink and let cold water fall on your face, drinking some down. It felt so fucking good. You stay there for some minutes, just sipping down the sweet elixir, feeling your senses come back to normal slightly.

You hear a crunch behind you and you tense up. You daren't look around and your eyes shift to the knife block. In one fluid action, you grab a bread knife and spin around, the movement making you wobble off balance slightly.

What...the...fuck....

John Constantine is sat in your kitchen, eating a bacon sandwich, coat off like he lives here. He stops mid chew, eyes wide at you pointing the knife in his direction. He swallows hard and places the sandwich down.

"Alright, love, no need for that, put it down."

"You broke into my house?!" you say, arms wobbling with the effort of keeping yourself balanced.

"To be fair, lass, you left the keys in the front door," he holds up your flat keys and jingles them slightly. "I thought, better me than some Manc bellend or you'd have no TV left by now or some pervert in your knicker drawer."

You steady yourself against the kitchen unit. Did you lock the front door last night? You can't even remember. You remember walking home, getting in and passing out on the bed but not much more than that.

He looks at you, as if guessing what you're thinking. "You can go check the door if you don't
believe me. You won't find tool marks."

"So what," you say, defensively. "You just came into my house and made yourself breakfast?"

"To be fair, I made you some too. You look like you need it," he says, looking pointedly at your
dishevelled state.

"Oh piss off," you say angrily and walk up to him, grabbing the remainder of the sandwich out of
his hands and taking a large bite.

"Oi!" he says, getting up to take it back but you hold out a finger, warning him back.

The grease and butter runs down your throat and you groan slightly, "Oh fuck, I needed this."

Constantine moves to the kitchen hob and makes himself another sandwich with the bacon still left
in the pan. "Christ, love, if I'd have known you were gonna be that grateful I would've left a trail of
bacon sarnies to the bed." He chuckles darkly.

You finish the food and look at him, "As if, Scouse boy. Now tell me why exactly you came here.
I've not exactly had a chance to give Phe your message."

"Ah I'm just making sure you remember. Booze, tricky thing, sometimes it wipes memories."

"How could I forget the guy that hands me a card that says Master of the Dark Arts on it?" you say,
raising an eyebrow.

He has the good grace to look embarrassed at least and ran a hand through his short hair. "Ahhh, I
told you, petty dabbler and I take it by that look you think I'm just a bloody nutter."

"It's always the pretty ones that are crazy," you say, going to the living room and grabbing a hair
brush, trying to tame your wild frizzy hair from the night before.

"You think I'm pretty?" he calls out after you, his ego obviously stroked.

"I think you're fucking nuts," you call back, pulling your hair into a long plait before wiping away
the dredges of your makeup which had travelled all over your face. Jesus you looked a mess. You
grabbed your make up and put on your daily face. You still had dark circles under your eyes but fuck
it, those weren't going away any time soon.

You hear John enter the room, "So that's a yes then?" You can hear the smug look on that face.

You turn around, arms folded.

He responds by tucking his hands into his trouser pockets and cocking one side of his mouth up,
"Mm, not so bad yourself, love. Much better than the drunken catastrophe look."

"Just go, Constantine," you say, pointing to the door. "I'll ring Phe and arrange a time."

He comes up to you, a slight smell of whiskey and cigarettes rolling off him and stands with his hip
out. "See, I get the impression you're just gonna call the police the second I'm out so I'd rather not if
it's all the same with you, love. I'll stay here until you make that call."

"What are you? Some kind of serial killer?" you ask angrily. "You hang around like a creep, purport
to be some demonologist shite thingy and then break into my house and refuse to leave?"

"I'm not gonna hurt you if that's what you're thinking."
"No but you clearly wanna fuck me from the way you're carrying on."

"I wouldn't say no," he smirks and takes a pack of Silk Cut cigs from his pocket before lighting one up.

"And I didn't say you could smoke in here!" you shout.

"Stop me then," he winks and takes a long drag before blowing the smoke out into your face.

"You're such an arrogant bellend!" you say, coughing through the noxious cloud.

"Been told that many times, love, but I stand by what I say. I'm not a nutter, I'm not a killer and I'm not gonna do anything unless you ask me to."

You stand there, fists balled. Just who the fuck was this guy?! And yet...you didn't get the impression that he was gonna slice and dice you or that he had the element of a psycho. His eyes just weren't giving that crazy vibe off.

He stands there, taking more drags and lets his eyes wander over you whilst he waits for you to say something. The ash drops on the carpet. That pisses you off too, like use a fucking bowl or something! You angrily grab a cup from your desk and thrust it at him.

"You're a cute bird when you're angry," he chuckles, flicking the ash into the cup now instead.

You sigh and place one hand to your temple. "Let me get this straight, if I set up this meeting now, you'll leave me the hell alone?"

"Scouts honour," he says, throwing a scout salute up with his hand.

"Like fuck were you in the scouts," you say harshly, looking him over pointedly.

"Aye I was lass, but I got out of it before I was old enough to get me arse had," he winks. "Scout leaders, can't trust 'em as far as you can throw 'em."

You roll your eyes and grab your phone from your pocket, calling Phe. Much to your surprise at this time, she picks up.

"Hey babe," she says lazily. "Am I late for rehearsal or something?"

"Nah, just got something to ask you-" you pause slightly, hearing a low moan in the background. "Oh Jesus Christ Phe, I've told you about doing that whilst I'm on the phone!"

"Sorry chick," she giggles. "If you will call whilst I'm busy then expect some consequences. Besides, I can multitask. See? I got one hand on the phone and one hand in-"

"Phe!" you say more strongly, only to be met with the sound of both girls laughing on the other end. "Listen to me, it's important!"

You hear some rustling and Phoenix seems a little sharper when talking now. "What's going on? Is everything alright?"

"You remember that creeper in the trenchcoat from the show?"

Out of the corner of your eye you see Constantine give you a mock wounded look and you flick the V's at him.
"Red tie? Yeah? What happened? Did he do something?"

"Well he said you'd stolen something of his? A wooden box or something with a face on it and he really needs it back. That's why he was hanging around. He wants to come over and collect it."

"Wooden box?" she says puzzled. "I have one like that sure but I didn't steal it. Keith gave it to me for doing overtime in the recording studio. I can give it to you later to pass onto him?"

"Well he's here with me now."

You hear a gasp. "Did you take him home?!"

"Of course not, don't be stupid."

"You did!" she squeals. "You shagged him didn't you?! Always knew you liked the older guys!"

"Phe! I did not shag him! Now I'm giving you an hour's warning and then I'm coming over. I just want this done!" You hang up before she has a chance to protest.

You don't wanna look up at Constantine's face. You just know what the expression is going to be. Eventually you meet his gaze and see that's he doubled over laughing.

"What's so funny?!" you say.

"Even your mate is tryna get us in bed. Must be a sign."

"This is the mate that just called you old."

"Oh well...that's just rude. I'm not a day over sixty four."

"SIXTY FOUR?!" you cry, open mouthed. "You've got to be fucking lying to me. You don't look any older than thirty!"

He smiles wryly and fetches his trenchcoat before pulling out a battered passport and throwing it towards you. You catch it and open it to the picture page.

No. fucking. way.

John Constantine. Date of Birth: 10/05/1953. Birthplace: Liverpool, United Kingdom

You just stare at the page, wondering if the words will somehow change and look back to the man in front of you with his youthful cheeky face. Sure there were a few crows feet at the corner of his eyes and his cheekbones were razoring out but sixty four?!

"If I told you it were to do with my job would you believe me?" he smiles,

"You mean this cult bullshit? What, did you sell your soul for eternal youth or do you just have some real good Nivea face cream?"

"Unless that face cream has demon blood as an ingredient I doubt it love," he says, running a hand
along the stubble on his chin. He seems to know this is really spinning your head and he's enjoying every minute of it.

"So you tell me not to fear you and then you announce you have demon's blood?"

He comes up close to you and places his hands on your shoulders, "Look, I know it's difficult to take in when you've not seen anything first hand but have you never had a supernatural experience you can't explain?"

"I believe in ghosts for sure, I'm pretty sure my dad hangs around sometimes and knocks my ornaments over, but demons is a bit of a step too far."

"Why though? If you can stretch your belief to that then surely you gotta think there's more out there?"

"Because I'd have to accept that evil exists in the world behind humans and that fucking scares me."

He takes your face in his hands and pulls your chin up to look at him squarely, "This is why I keep the demons away so people like you can live in your cosy world of ignorance." You hear the slight edge of darkness to his voice. Wow, this guy really believed he was some kind of magic exorcist...the sooner you got rid of him the better.

You pull his hands off your cheeks and brush past him, knocking his shoulder back slightly, earning an "Oi, bloody rude!".

"Stay there, I'm gonna change my clothes," you say and go back into your bedroom, pulling off your stage clothes that you'd passed out in the night before and getting your favourite rockabilly day dress on and swiping some lipstick across your mouth. Not that you were trying to impress him or anything, you just felt like trying to pep your shit mood up by wearing something nice.

You flounced back out in the living room and Constantine whistled.

"Woah, sweetheart, I'm the only one who's from the fifties."

"Yeah, but I make it look good," you say, twirling and letting the dress fly out before sticking the V's up again.

He passes his thumb across his lip in a lustful gesture and snakes over across the room to you. He rests on hand on the wall and the other on his hip and takes you in. It wasn't making you feel uncomfortable any more. In fact, you were slightly enjoying teasing the shit out of him. As the bassist, you kinda got overlooked when it came to male attention. You weren't as flashy as Phoenix or as wild as Roxy so you'd take the attention where you could get it, even if it came from this complete screwjob, admittedly a roguish one.

"So, Mr Constantine-" you start. He puts a finger on your lips to hush you before removing it.

"Call me John, darlin'."

"So...John..."you make a point of emphasising it. "Let's get you to Phe and out of my life."

"Ooo, bit harsh," he says, inhaling through his teeth. "I thought we were bonding."

"You've got a big ego you know that?" you say smirking. "And before you say it," you interrupt him as he goes to speak, knowing exactly what he'd say, "No cock references ok?"
He laughs and sheepishly runs his hand through his hair, "That obvious yeah?"

"Extremely," you nod.

"Guess we'd best go."

You grab your coat and keys and get ready by the doorway. John whirls his trenchcoat around and back onto his shoulders before joining you.

"So...errr," he says. "Wait, I don't even know your bloody name."

"And you're not getting it either," you say pointedly.

"Not very fair, lass. I told you mine. I even showed you me date of birth too." He pouts, flashing his big brown eyes at you for maximum guilt effect. You wish you weren't such a sucker for brown eyes...

"Fine, but I'm not telling you my real name. You can use my band name."

"Which is?" he asks curiously.

"Star."

He smiles warmly, "I like it. Star it is. Lead the way, Star."

With that you walk out of the apartment and back onto the dreary streets of Manchester.
The Price of Fame

Chapter Summary

You take a taxi ride with John to see Phoenix. Time to get some answers

Chapter Notes

Another update for you guys! Happy Halloween!

You step outside and John jumps in front of you, frantically waving at something in the street. A taxi drives down and stops nearby.

"This is us, love," he says going up to the car and opening the door for you, ushering you in. You get comfy in the back and put your seat belt on. You note John doesn't bother with his. Typical.

"Where to?" John asks. "I've not gotta clue where your mate is."

"Broadway please," you say, more to the driver than anything. "Near the MediaCity buildings."

"You got that, Chas?" John questions.

Wait a minute, Chas?!

"Do you know each other?" you ask, incredulously.

The driver in the front begins to laugh almost sheepishly, "Guessing this dick didn't tell you hardly anything as per usual?"

"I'm beginning to think that's the case," you mumble angrily.

"Ah fine," John sighs and points his finger to each of you in turn. "Chas, Star, Star, Chas. Chas is me best mate and Star is the bird helping me find the box. Happy?"

"Not really-" you start but Chas cuts in, "It's ok, he does this a lot. I ferry him round when he's on cases, not that I don't have my own work to do."

"Chas, look, if you're gonna moan-" John interrupts.

Chas responds by flipping him the bird and revving the engine. He types the address in his sat nav and begins to drive.

"How much does she know, John?"

"Enough," comes the answer, a slight edge of warning in it.

"No I don't know enough, I know barely anything. Do you know he broke into my house this morning?"
Chas raises an eyebrow, looking at you in the wing mirror, "Did he now?"

"She left the keys in the front door. I hardly call it breaking in!" John protests, dismissing Chas' withering gaze.

"John, we discussed this, I told you to stop doing illegal shit. I'm not breaking you out of police custody again!"

You listen intently as the two men bicker. You weren't thrilled to learn your new associate was a criminal although you supposed you should have guessed from this morning's rude awakening.

You also learned that Chas had a family that he was intent on staying with and not going to prison; the small photobooth picture hanging from his wing mirror was actually his granddaughter. You were frankly still trying to get your head around the fact that both men were around the same age.

The shiny new media buildings popped into view and you interrupt their lover's tiff by saying 'It's just here.'

Chas slows and Constantine gives him a warm pat on the shoulder before disappearing out of the car.

"How much was the journey?" you ask.

"Don't worry about it. John's got a running tab," Chas smiles wryly.

"Don't be stupid," you huff. "That freeloader? You'll have great grandchildren by the time he pays you something."

Chas laughs and you can see John looking into the car with confusion across his face.

You throw him a twenty pound note and he thanks you gracially before saying, "I can see why he likes you."

"Likes me? He's only known me all of twenty four hours."

"Nah, I can tell. John's an open book to me, known him many years. He's definitely into you, already."

You become a little awkward at this and go back to thanking him for the ride before quickly getting out and onto the pavement.

"What was all that about?" John asks, lighting up a fresh ciggie.

"Just paying off some of your tab," you smirk before walking on to Phe's house.

"Look, whatever that shithead said, it's not true."

"Just shut up, John and let me do the talking."

You reach Phe's flat and buzz the intercom. A static voice booms from the speaker. "Hellooooooo, who is it?"

"It's me, told you I'd be here."

"Shit, didn't expect you here so quickly! Gimme a sec."
The door buzzes and you pull it open, you and John climbing the stairs to her place. You stand outside, fidgeting, hoping she'll come out soon.

The door bursts open and Phe leaps at you with arms outstretched, "Babe!" She kisses you on the cheek and you get her bubblegum pink hair flying all over your face. She's clearly not been bothered to move much since your call as she's only dressed in a silk robe but Phe, as always, is unphased. At least she kicked her latest conquest out before you got there.

She turns to John and gives him a quick, 'hi', before pulling you into her apartment. Frankly, it looks like a bomb hit the place. There's spirit bottles, pizza boxes and discarded underwear everywhere.

"Fuck me, Phe, did you have an orgy or some shit last night?!" you say, counting about four different lingerie sets in various sizes.

"No, babe, I just had some friends round and we played Truth or Dare...there was a lot of dares," she giggles conspiratorially. "Now, the box, right? With the freaky face on it?"

John looks at you for permission to speak, one eyebrow cocked...sarcastic prick, you think. You nod and he turns on the charm to maximum.

"Aye, that's the one. Was taken from me possession a little while ago and I tracked it here. Quite important to me, family heirloom." The lies just roll easily off his tongue.

"Really?" Phe asked. "Honestly, it creeps me out. No offence to your whole mystery vibe."

"None taken, love. Now, do you remember where you got it from?"

"Oh sure!" Phe says laughing and twirling a strand of hair around her fingers. "Our band manager Keith gave it to me. I did some extra riffs for the album and stayed late so it was like, a gift."

"And this...Keith, he didn't say where he got it?"

"No, just handed me it. I've been keeping my...uh..." she gets quiet, almost like a naughty girl who was close to revealing secrets.

You sigh and fold your arms, "You've been keeping your drug stash in it, haven't you?"

She holds up her hands as if to say 'busted'. "Thought since they're my inner demons I'd put them in the box with the freaky demon face."

Constantine's gone completely rigid next to you, the colour draining out of his already ashen face, "You did what?"

"What's going on?" you ask, a little concerned.

"Does good ol' Keith know you partake in these vices?"

"Well, sure," Phe says, beginning to get a little anxious. "He gives me a supply sometimes."

"Shit," Constantine mutters. "I need the box now."

Phe looks at you imploringly, slightly worried and you usher her on to get the box. She disappears into her bedroom.

"What's going on?" you ask a little more strongly.
John puts one hand in his hair and tugs at the strands slightly, "You gonna believe me a bit before I say?"

"Depends what you're gonna say," you answer truthfully.

John comes up close to you, holding intense eye contact. "That box is known as The Asphodine Contract. It's something crossroads demons use for pettier deals or outsourcing."

"Wait, crossroads as in Robert Johnson, blues crossroads kinda demons?" you ask incredulously.

"You're getting it. A demon or a person chosen by a demon gives this box to someone in exchange for a wish fulfilled, usually like talent, fame, all that kinda shite but whatever they put first in that box is the vice that'll kill them and then their souls belong to Hell."

"So you mean, she's going to die from something drug related?" you whisper. Holy shit, were you actually believing this right now?

"I'm like ninety-nine percent certain this Keith is gonna be an outsourcer, giving your friend rockstar fame, classic sold my soul to the devil. Thought it means a demon got into my locker stash which I'm not thrilled about."

"Do you mind?!" you squeak. "That's my friend you're talking about!"

John looks towards the direction of the bedroom, "Your friend's been taking an awfully long time, love."

Panic starts to rise in your chest. You're not even sure why. She only went to get a box and it's not likely that John's story is true...is it?

You move on autopilot into the next room and the scene before you comes into view. Phe's sprawled out on the floor like a broken doll, needles jabbed into every crook of her limbs and foam spilling out of her mouth. Her glassy eyes just stare listlessly at the ceiling and her hair is mired in a pool of vomit, dulling the vibrant colour.

Bile rises in your throat and you dry heave slightly. "John!" you manage to cry.

He rushes in and swears, "Bollocks."

"But why?!" you ask, tears running down your face.

"I don't know, I don't know!" he hisses. "It's not supposed to be this bloody soon, she should have ten years left at least!"

"Maybe you shouldn't have poked your nose in where it doesn't belong, Constantine, and she might still have life," a deep voice rumbles from behind you.

You both whirl around and your band manager is there. Just there. Out of fucking nowhere. What?!

"Alright, fair, it was the one percent," Constantine says. "Crossroads demon itself."

"Keith?" you ask, gingerly.

Half of his face seems to fall away, leaving only tendons glistening with wetness and a hollow socket for his eye. He smiles and you see the ragged teeth studding his now lipless mouth.

You can't scream. You're just too horrified by what you see. Shit, it's real. It's all real. He wasn't
lying to me.

"Not Keith, darling, but I can be Keith if you want me to be," the demon purrs.

John steps in front of you, defensively, "Leave 'er out of it."

"I was going to, until you showed your face. Poor little Star...nobody ever notices the bass player do they?" The demon hissed and black flecks of spittle dripped down its chin as it hungrily took you in. "Well now we all notice you. Now you're marked, thanks to him."

"I said leave 'er out of it!" John roars. "She ain't got nothing to do with me."

"Hit a nerve, Johnny boy?" the demon grins. "I'll make sure you're around to watch when I flay her flesh from the bone."

The demon springs towards you and John flicks his lighter open sending a plume of fire blazing at it. The demon shrieks and retreats backwards.

You have no idea what to do. You're just standing there watching this all play out and hoping John's claims of exorcism speciality will save you. You look around wildly for a weapon and spot the baseball bat Phe used for her Harley Quinn cosplay, grabbing it and readying yourself for any sign of attack.

John begins chanting rapidly in a language you have no understanding of. The demon is letting out ear piercing howls as it fights to stay on the earthly plane, tendrils of smoke billowing off its body. It abandons its pursuit of you and charges full pelt towards John, desperately trying to reach him before whatever spell could be finished.

You run forward, adrenalin surging and swing the bat, knocking it skittering backwards. Thank fuck you didn't miss. John's eyes are practically white now as his chanting picks up even more speed.

A clawed hand rakes at your side and you cry out. *Shit, don't get distracted again,* you think as you stab down with the bat onto the demon's arm before taking another swing. You're acutely aware of blood oozing down your waist but you don't exactly have time to check how bad the damage is.

The lights begin to flicker and the demon gives one last cry before a vortex sucks it down through the floor and out of sight, the rolling black tendrils eking out into nothing.

John stops chanting and his eyes roll back to brown. He looks at you, bloodied and armed and gives an impressed half smile.

"Not bad, lass. Saved me bacon there. Crossroads exorcisms tend to take a little more time than usual, I really need to remember to watch me back in future."

You're hearing him as if you're underwater and your arms drop the bat, suddenly seeming to weigh a ton. Your legs are swaying you back and forth and your breathing gets laboured.

"Oh bollocks," you hear John saying, rushing towards you as you drop like a stone to the floor, unconscious.
Chapter Summary

The reality of the day hits you hard.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

_That glistening mouth is bared widely at you, black spittle coating the jagged teeth._

_“You're marked now.”_

_Eyes in the gloom peer menacingly at you and you catch the reflection of hungry grins. Claws start to extend out to you, grabbing and tearing at your clothes._

_You try to scream but nothing comes out, only a small whimper._

_“We will find you. Constantine will sufferrrrrrrrrrr,” they hiss, rending your flesh and sending waves of pain shooting through you. “Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead.”_

You fly awake, lashing out with your fist and clock Constantine square in the jaw as he was hovering over you.

_“Bloody fucking hell, lass!”_ he curses, reeling backwards and clutching his face.

Your brain snaps back into the here and now, the demon’s fading from your memory. _“Oh shit, I'm sorry!”_

He holds out a hand as if to say, ‘it's fine’ and rubs his face. _“You pack quite a wallop for a girl.”_

_“No offence taken,”_ you say.

You're on your sofa at home, your duvet pulled up over you. Looking around you spot pillows and blankets on the floor. Constantine must have slept there. He must have kept watch on you all night.

But...how did you get back here? Was it all a dream? Did any of this really happen?

You make to get up and a sharp pain pulls your breath from you. You whimper loudly.

_“No no no, love, don't move. You're still badly hurt,”_ Constantine says, slightly panicking and coming back to kneel at your side.

You lift the duvet up and see your side is swathed in gauze and bandages, a small red stain starting to seep through the stark white.

_“Oh fuck,”_ you choke, tears threatening to fall. _“It all really happened, didn't it?”_

Constantine just looks sadly at you before pulling his bag over and retrieving medical supplies. _“Sit_
up, love. I need to redress your wound. Think you may have popped me stitches.”

Your throat is burning from the effort of keeping your sobs back.

Phe...oh god, Phe. She's dead.

A traitorous tear spills from your eye and travels down your cheek. Constantine wipes it away.

“You can cry if you want to, Star. I'm not gonna judge ya. I cry every time I lose one a' me friends too, though that stays between us.”

You look at him and see the heavy sorrow lain deep in his brow and the hollowness in his eyes.

“How many,” you whisper.

“Hmm?” he replies, undoing the bandage and chucking it in the kitchen bin.

“How many friends.”

He pauses and sighs heavily, “Too many. Friends, lovers...anyone who gets too close to me seems to end up dead. Chas is the only one who's managed to stick around.”

He takes off the gauze and you look at the mess that used to be your waist. There are three long divets that have been stitched up. It looks raw and angry and there is red pus eking from the wound.

“It's gonna scar,” he says, using a medical wipe to clean it up. “No doubt about that, but you don't appear to have ripped anything and you still got all your organs so that's a plus.”

When the wipe hits a particularly open area you hiss sharply through your teeth and grab Constantine's shoulder, tears flowing freely now.

“Bear with me, love,” he says soothingly. “I'm nearly done and then you can rest.”

The tears don't stop as he continues to patch you up again.

I was only on the stage yesterday. I was with the band. I was with Phe. All of that is gone. Gone forever. Is she still there in her house, sprawled out like a common junkie? Am I going to be a murder suspect? I surely must have bled everywhere. There must be DNA Evidence. Oh fuck.

“Did we just leave her there?” you ask, quietly.

Constantine finishes off the last wrap of the bandage and looks firmly at you. “Yes, we had to. I know what you're thinking, love but if we'da stayed we'd both be in a police cell by now. I got someone on the inside that owes me a favour, like. They've cleared the place up, destroyed any evidence that we were ever there.”

“So everyone is going to think she died of an overdose?” you breath sharply. The sobs are trying to wrack your chest as you say it.

“Aye.”

“But that's not her. That's not fair!” you protest. “She doesn't deserve to be remembered that way!”

“I know, love, I know,” Constantine says sadly. “If you wanna blame me, feel free to. I know how it goes.”
You look at him as if he were mad. “Blame you, why?”

“She woulda had more years left if I hadn't tried to get the box back.”

“Are you fucked in the head?” you say, eyes wide.

Constantine looks bewildered. “What?!”

“If you hadn’t of sent that demon back to wherever it came from it would’ve gone for the rest of us. I know Keith wasn't a man per say but he had that shark salesman thing going on. He got really close to Phe before he gave her that box and after that he was starting to get really close to Valentine. He woulda just picked us off one by one and gotten our posthumous royalties as a bonus.”

Constantine is looking down at the floor unable to process the fact you weren't shouting at him. You cup his face and bring his chin up to look at you.

“You saved me, so how about you stop blaming yourself for a change,” you say imploringly.

He sets one hand over yours on his cheek, “Aye, lass but for how long. You heard them, they’ve already marked you. That means they're never going to stop coming until they drag you to hell. I've ruined your life simply by saying hello.”

He smiles sadly and pushes your hands away.

“You saved me, so how about you stop blaming yourself for a change,” you say imploringly.

He sets one hand over yours on his cheek, “Aye, lass but for how long. You heard them, they’ve already marked you. That means they're never going to stop coming until they drag you to hell. I've ruined your life simply by saying hello.”

He smiles sadly and pushes your hands away.

“Make it up to me then,” you say, laughing weakly.

“How?”

“Get me the strongest drink you find in my cabinet. I need to dull this pain somehow.”

He laughs, “Alright, bit, stay put.”

You watch him go to the kitchen and wipe the tears from your face. You probably look a fucking mess right now but you don't give a shit any more. You basically seem to have a death sentence hanging over your head so why bother?

You hear the clink of bottles and see John carrying a bunch of spirits and setting them down next to you.

“I thought my drinking was bad,” he laughs, the cheeky smirk somewhat coming back.

“I'm not an alcoholic, John,” you say pointedly. “People just keep giving me bottles as gifts and I barely drink any of them.”

“What do you wanna start with first?” he asks, picking some up and looking at the labels.

“Bourbon, definitely.”

He hands you the bottle and a glass and much to his confusion, you set the glass down beside you and take a large swig straight from the container. It rages as it seeps down your throat and heat starts spreading in your lungs.

“Woah there, take it easy. I'm not taking you to A&E with alcohol poisoning,” John says.

“Just shut up and drink with me,” you cough, the aftertaste burning slightly.
"You're right bossy, aren't you?" he smirks, eyebrow cocked. He takes a bottle of whiskey and pours himself a glass, necking it neatly. "Ahhh that feels good."

Your muscles are relaxing now, the more liquid you drink, the sharp throbbing in your side now reduced to a dull ache.

“Look, I'm sorry,” Constantine begins. “I truly am. I didn't think this would happen. I didn't think I'd be putting you in danger.”

“Don't tell me you're one of those sad type of drunks,” you joke, trying to lighten the mood. You don't really want to think about anything from earlier. “Tell me something funny you've done in all this demon hunting.”

“I once tricked the First, Second and Third of the Fallen into curing me lung cancer rather than taking my soul. That was a pretty funny day,” he grins.

“First of the Fallen as in Lucifer?” you ask, impressed.

“Nah, Lucifer and the First are entirely different. The First was the first being to fall to Hell. Lucifer just took over when he was cast out. He's not a bad bloke actually, Lucifer. Heard he's running a nightclub somewhere in America now.”

“You know, if I hadn't of seen what I saw earlier, I would say you were talking bullshit right now,” you laugh, taking another swig of bourbon. “Wonder if the nightclub's any good.”

“From what I gather it's quite successful, if not a little debauched but what do you expect really?”

“I'd expect it'd be like a swingers club or some BDSM torture garden,” John laughs and leans over to ruffle your hair. “Naughty.”

You wink at him. Just because you didn't have wild naked parties or tons of groupies like the rest of your friends didn't mean you were some innocent prude.

Your movements were becoming laboured now, the alcohol seeping into your system. Your balance was also going slightly off kilter. Good job you were sat down.

John lights a cigarette in between necking another glass of whiskey but has the good grace this time to not drop the ash on your carpet. You reach over and grab it from his mouth, taking a long drag yourself before returning it to him.

“Oi!” he exclaims. “These aren't cheap you know!”

“No but I've made it one less drag to getting lung cancer again.”

You see the twinkle in his eye as the cigarette burns and he cocks his head, looking at you curiously.

“What?” you say defensively.

“Gotta say, love, of all the people who've come into my world you're taking this really well.”

“Really well?” you scoff and take an extra long gulp of bourbon. “I'm a fucking wreck Constantine. I lost my best friend and discovered that evil really does exist and not only that but I have a fucking target on my back for the rest of however short my life may be. I'm self medicating with booze and all I want to do is curl up and mope for weeks. Just because I'm not a hysterical mess doesn't mean I'm not hurting on the inside.”
John winces, “Sorry. I'm not very good at reading you birds.”

“Clearly,” you say sarcastically. “Now are you gonna get on my level of drinking or are you gonna leave a girl cold?”

“No sure this is very healthy, love.”

“Ahh chicken it is then,” you saying provokingly.

“Now hang on,” John protests. “That's just cheap.”

“Chicken, cheap,” you giggle to yourself at the bad pun. You calm down and look back to John but the laughter bubbles back up again and you can't stop yourself. What a time to get a giggle fit. Even John can't help himself but join in, the contagious laughter ringing throughout the flat.

You finally compose yourself and wipe the tears from your eyes. John has that crooked smile on his face and that cheeky glint to his eye. You know what you're doing is bad before you even do it.

You reach over and grab his tie, yanking him towards yourself. He's not prepared so comes fumbling down against the sofa, one hand thrust out to stop him from falling on top of you.

“What are you—” he starts but never finishes the sentence. You pull on the tie, bringing his face down to yours and kiss him. He's shocked at first, unsure what to do before he starts to kiss you back, the emotions of the day driving you both to push deeper. You can taste the smoke in his mouth and the tinge of alcohol, feel his stubble brushing against your face. His free hand snakes into your hair, pulling you firmly up to him. Damn he's a good kisser.

He pulls away and you feel the loss of the emotional connection.

“Are you sure you want me, love? I'm old enough to be your grandad.” He searches your eyes for consent. Funny, you think, he really is old fashioned.

“I'm sure,” you say, panting heavily, emboldened by the alcohol.

He nods, smiling and ducks back down searching for your lips. You crane up to meet his and whatever was holding him back seems to have disappeared. He's hungry for you, tongue exploring your mouth whilst his hand explores your neck and collarbone. You fall back into the cushions of the sofa, pulling him with you, hands roughly pulling in his hair. He groans in your mouth. Guess he likes it. His lips pull from yours and trail devouring kisses along your neck, nipping at the soft spots. You arch up and a moan escapes you. He growls, hands snaking up your good side but stopping short of your bra. What a tease, you think.

He pulls away again, hair ruffled and eyes wide, “Think we need a change of scenery, love.”

He scoops you up and takes you through to the bedroom. You nip playfully at his throat and he laughs with a soft rumble, “You keep doing that, I'm gonna get distracted and drop ya.”

He takes you to the bed and lays you down gently before half ripping his tie off and crawling onto the mattress next to you with predatory movements.

“Hope you know what you've gotten yourself in for, love,” he says breathily.

“Likewise, pretty boy,” you retort.

He's on you again, urgently kissing you. You feel the familiar throbbing between your legs, your
hips moving involuntarily. God you need this. His hand is travelling up your thigh with deliciousness slowness. You get the feeling he's mapping out every inch of you. He accidentally hits a ticklish spot and you spasm slightly sending fresh pain from your wound shooting up your body.

“Ah fuck!” you cry out.

“Bloody hell, love, I'm sorry,” Constantine exclaims, moving off you quickly. “Probably shouldn't be working you over this hard when you're not a hundred percent.”

“No no, it's my fault,” you say, sighing heavily. “Thought I could escape reality for a little bit there.”

“Glad I could be a bit of a distraction,” Constantine says knowingly. You think he might be offended for a second but the smile he has is genuine.

“It was a nice distraction though, never been with someone who knew their way around a girl so well.”

“Benefit of experience,” he winks. “Me age has gotta count for something. Anyways, it's late, I'll bring your duvet back in and you can get some sleep.”

He moves away before you have a chance to protest and returns carrying the fluffy covers. He settles them down over you and makes to move back into the living room but you grab his arm. He looks surprised.

“Stay with me,” you ask, quietly. “Please.”

He looks at you for a time as if deciding what to do but eventually moves to lie next to you in the bed.

“Are you gonna sleep in your shirt?” you say, amused.

“Tryna get me naked still?” he grins. “I'll be alright, I'll swing by base tomorrow and clean up.”

You both lie there, staring at the ceiling, just delighted to have some human company. You reach a hand out to John and he takes it, squeezing it gently.

Eventually exhaustion catches up with you and you drift off into peaceful sleep.

Chapter End Notes

So maybe brief smut here ;).
Sorry for the irregular updates but life is a bit hectic!
Running from your Demons

Chapter Summary

Expect the unexpected around John Constantine

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

You wake up cocooned in a bunch of covers and stretch out lazily. You feel like something is off but you can't quite put your finger on it. But hey, it's warm and soft in the bed right? No reason to move out just yet.

Gradually you come to your senses and make to sit up but the dull pain in your side brings you back down to reality with harsh efficiency. You grope blindly next to you but are only met with empty sheets.

Constantine is gone.

For some reason you feel a little panicked by that. You step out of the bed and pad down to the living room, checking the other rooms on your way there. He's nowhere to be seen.

You spot a little note with 'Star' scrawled on the front of it and pick it up, slightly dreading what you're about to read.

Star, I can't stay. I'm just going to get you in more danger. I've already ruined your life and I'm not going to be responsible for getting you killed if I hang around. You're a bright girl, you need to forget this ever happened and move on.

- John.

P.S. I won't forget you though, or that kiss.

"Fucking arsehole," you mutter and throw the note as far away as you can. It sails in the air before floating gently down.

How did he think this was keeping you safe? You were marked by Hell. You didn't have the first clue on how to avoid that. Was he just scared by intimacy? Did you come on too strong? How the fuck were you going to protect yourself from demons now?

You throw yourself down on the sofa and grab the remnants of the alcohol, trying to stave off your approaching hangover. You couldn't believe he'd do this. You felt abandoned.

You spent the rest of that day moping in an undignified manner, ordering yourself pizza before watching god-awful daytime television. You were thankful you no longer worked, the band having been given an advance on the album that'd tide you over for a year or so. You couldn't imagine how you'd even begin to explain this to a potential boss.
You fetch his card from your coat and stare at the crisp paper. His number was on the back. You could call him. Would he even pick up though? Was doing that a bit...needy?

You sit there, fiddling with the corners of the card whilst some family was having a shouting match on a host talk show. You find your phone and punch the number in, your finger hovering over the call button. Your heart is racing. You feel like a teenager harbouring a crush, it's ridiculous. You put the phone on your side table and sigh. You're just not brave enough to take that leap.

More time passes and you're onto the cooking shows, trying to find tips on how to make the perfect lemon cake when the flat buzzer shrilly echoes in the room making you jump.

You go over to the console.

"Who is it?"

"Pizza," comes the reply, from a gruff voice.

The guy sounded a little miffed but you let him off with it and just buzz him in. You open the door in anticipation.

A delivery driver rounds up the stairs before coming to stop in front of you. You hold your hands expectantly out for the pizza box but he doesn't hand it over.

"Um, can I take that?" you ask, a little confused.

The man looks up into your eyes from under his baseball cap, glaring hatefully, irises fully dilated. You're taken aback at the ferocity of his gaze and you're not quite sure what to do with yourself. Guess they sent a really moody driver today.

"Mate?" you ask again, a little shakily this time.

The man opens his mouth and hisses, letting flecks of black spittle fall down his chin, "We found you."

Your heart drops and your legs spring into action before you have a chance to fully process, blasting you back into the flat and slamming the door in his face before he could grab you. You lock it quickly.

"Lover of Constantine, your soul is ours!" he shrieks through the door and a loud bang sends you skittering back.

He's trying to kick the door in, powerful blows raining on the wood. You run to your phone, unlocking it and call John's number.

"Pick up, pick up you fucker!" you murmur desperately.

It rings out to a standard voicemail. You cancel and hit redial immediately.

The door is nearly bent in now and you can hear the unearthly sounds of the delivery man snaking through the cracks in the door. The only thing preventing him from getting in is the deadbolt lock which is only barely holding.

Again, you reach voicemail. You sent a quick text.
You don't have time to call him again. You needed to find something to defend yourself with. You run to the knife block and get the filleting knife ready before pushing the sofa in front of the door to buy yourself some time.

You were on the third floor of the building so jumping outside was not an option. You were trapped.

You hear your neighbour from down the hall shout, "What the hell are you doing? I'm gonna call the police!"

_No_, you think. _Please, go back into your flat!_

The pounding stops and you strain your ears listening for any sound.

You hear the neighbour scream and a door slamming shut.

_Silence._

You didn't think the quiet could be so terrifying. You were pretty sure your neighbour was safe at the very least.

The kicking resumes and the lock starts splintering, the screws trying to hold on but to no avail as the door finally gives way.

You grip your knife intently and train your eyes on the figure in the doorway. He makes short work of pushing the sofa away and lightly hops over it as if it were no mere obstacle at all.

"Come here, pretty little thing," the man purrs, lightly beckoning to you.

"Fat chance," you snarl, bringing the knife to a ready position.

What you see next you can't quite believe. The delivery driver seems to split his head width-ways, pulling the useless scalp and hair off in clumps of pale flesh until it splatters on the carpet with a sick thump. There's no eyes, only a nose and a growling mouth. It sniffs the air, scenting you, locating where you are. It'd almost be comical if you weren't shaking in fear. _A demon, in a pizza chain uniform and it wants to kill me._

It lunges at you, squealing horribly and you slash down across its outstretched arms. The cry it makes goes straight to your back teeth, setting them on edge. You practically leap at it, swinging madly, ignoring the yowling pain of your old wound. It dodges, swiping at your back and pushes you with unnatural force across the room. You hit the wall and slide down in a tangled heap, dazed by the impact. It's on you immediately, pinning you to the floor.

You look to the room and see your knife, too far away to reach and see your phone glowing and vibrating violently.

You try and buck the demon off but it extends its nails to sharp points and rams them down into the carpet around your wrists, binding you to the floor. Its tongue snakes out as it lowers its head to yours.

"No useeee, little girl. I'm going to enjoy youuuuu."
It licks the side of your face and you recoil as it ghosts hot sulphurous breath on your skin. You can feel the trail of hot saliva slightly burning. You wildly kick at any part of it you can and slam your head into the demon's nose. It yelps, letting go of you temporarily and you scramble towards the door.

A hand shoots out and grabs your ankle, pulling your feet from under you and you careen towards the carpet once more, hands clawing along to pull yourself from its grasp.

It crawls up your body and flips you over, hands clutching your throat hard. You can't breathe, you're scrabbling wildly at its hands, trying to force it to let go.

"Enough funnnnn, now it's time to collect," it jeers, putting more pressure on your neck.

You see lights and your vision starts tunnelling in. Your head feels like it's about to pop. A tremendous burst of energy surges up your body and you make one last effort to throw the demon of you but it's steadfast in its work and before long your arms fall limply to your sides. Your world goes black.

"Shit, shit, SHIT!"

You hear a voice leisurely making its way through your haze.

"Fuck, Chas, we're too late! She's not movin'!"

"John! Listen to me! Step aside, lemme check her!"

"It's all me fuckin' fault! I should never have left her!"

"Shut up, John!"

There's hands on you but you can't react. Your body feels like there's lead weights attached. The hand feels for your neck and rests there. You feel the tenderness, the bruise that's bound to be forming as the fingers press down.

"There's a pulse! She's alive!"

"Bloody fucking hell, she's tough!"

"Help me move her!"

More hands descend on you, one touch is rough and practical, the other holds you like you're made of glass. You're lain down on something soft and someone opens your mouth before pressing on your chest, forcing the air to whoosh out of your lungs. You feel starved again until someone forces air back into you, their mouth on yours.

Oh, you think casually. They're doing CPR.

You wonder briefly which man is doing what part. The feeling is returning to your limbs and you wiggle your fingers experimentally.
"Chas, look!"

You lazily open your eyes and see John's worried face hovering over you, blocking the light out from your bedroom lamp. He forces a smile on his face.

"Thought we'd lost you there, love."

You can't really speak, the words stuck in your ravaged throat, so you wink at him and he laughs gently.

Chas comes into view with a small light.

"Follow the pen, gotta check you're not brain damaged."

You dutifully obey, scanning the pen as it moves in front of you.

"She's good," Chas sighs in relief and tips his baseball cap down over his furrowed brow. "This was not what I was expecting on a Monday morning."

"Cornflakes, traffic, demon killing," you rasp.

Chas chuckles, "Well they didn't kill your sense of humour did they?"

He looks pointedly at John who seems to be trying to motion for him to do something, "Oh right, I'll leave you two to it whilst I do clean up."

Chas leaves the bedroom, flashing a knowing look.

John's stroking your hair, savaging his bottom lip with anxiousness. "Listen lass, I'm a fuckin' idiot. I should never have left. I thought you'd be safer if they thought you were nothin' to do with me, like a one night stand or summat. I didn't think they'd go after you then." He pauses, taking a deep breath to steady himself. "But I was wrong. I nearly cost you your life, Star. I shouldn't be makin' basic mistakes like this."

"I thought you were just being shy," you joke, coughing slightly.

"No no, don't do that. Don't try and make meself feel better about it. I know what I did," he says, hanging his head, ashamed.

You reach up and take his face in one hand, trying to soothe him, "You came back for me. That's what counts. I'm not demon chow."

John smiles sadly. "We're gonna have to take you with us, love. It's not safe for you here any more."

"Take me where?"

"Base camp, I call it. Not as fancy as this place but at least they can't get you there."

You look around your room. You're not going to miss it. It was just a temporary place, a place for you to be independent from your family after your big fall out.

"Let's go then," you sigh. "I don't wanna spend another second here if I can help it."

"I understand, bit. Lemme pack some things for you and we'll go."

He pulls the suitcase down from the top of your wardrobe and starts cramming as many clothes as
he can into it, stuffing it until the seams strain. He briefly disappears into the bathroom and grabs your toiletries before those go into a rucksack you had hanging on the back of the door.

"All ready, Chas," John calls.

"Gimme a minute, demon blood is a fucker to get out of cream carpets," comes the laboured reply.

John wheels the case into the living room and comes back for you, scooping you up in his arms and carrying you through.

You see clearly for the first time the mess that happened. Chas is scrubbing intently at an ash stain where the demon must have vanished into and a corona of thick soupy black blood surrounding it. It's mostly gone but you can still see the shadow it's left behind.

John puts you down on the sofa and raids your fridge, freezer and pantry of any food to take and throws it into plastic bags.

"Can I help?" you ask Chas.

"Sweet of you but no, I got this down to a fine art form now," he smiles.

Some time later he's done and you're heading out of your flat for what might be the last time. You see outside the pizza box, slices lying strewn all over the hallway. They didn't even get your order right it seems. What a kicker to an awful day!

You're all piled into Chas' cab, your belongings strewn around you. John opts to be in the backseat with you and he holds your hand as you drive down side streets and narrow roads, to the outskirts of Manchester.

You watch road signs zip by, quietly wondering how your life is going to be from now on. You go down a back alley to an old warehouse and Chas stops.

"It's not much but here's home for you guys," he says, gesturing ahead.

You get out of the car and the men bring your bags to the door. You feel a gentle hum vibrating around the building and watch as John waves his hand and unlocks the door.

"I know right?" Chas whispers. "Freaks people out when they come here."

You smile at him and walk in behind John.

The warehouse is not what you expected. What was the main factory area is a giant living room with a wall of shelves on one side containing countless books and the other containing countless objects and bottles. In the centre is a huge dilapidated corner sofa framing a flatscreen TV. Good to know they had their priorities settled, you think. Branching off from that, you can see bedrooms, bathrooms and a side door leading into the kitchen area.

"You'll be safe here," John says, watching you take it in. "See them markings on the walls? They're wards, sigils, they stop any demon from getting in or even seeing this place. Stops some angels too."

"Angels?" you ask, bewildered.

"Yeah, some of them are right bastards," he smirks.

"Only because you keep pissing them off," Chas chimes in.
"That was one time!" John protests.

"I'm counting several, John. Anyway, I'm needed at home. I have my phone on if you need me."

"Cheers mate," John says, nodding in his direction.

You go to Chas and hug him, "Thank you for saving me."

"No problem," Chas smiles. "Makes a change from saving him."

"I heard that," John says.

You both laugh and Chas leaves.

John goes and puts your food away before ushering you to follow him, taking your suitcase along too.

"This is your room, probably not to your tastes but it'll do."

The room contained a long industrial railing that held many hangers with a shoe rack underneath them. In the other corner, a king sized bed with cheap discount shop bedding lay.

"There's a bathroom through that door there too," John points out. "Hope it's not too disappointing."

"It's safe," you say, turning to face him. "That's all I really care about. I've seen enough demons for one week."

John scratches the back of his head nervously, "Like I said, love, I'm sorry."

"It's fine," you smile.

You look awkwardly at each other, not sure what to say next, both of you fidgeting.

John breaks the silence after a time, "I'll erm...just be outside if you need me."

He turns to leave and walks towards the door.

"John?" you ask.

He pauses in the doorway, "Yes, love?"

You hesitate, unsure whether you're actually going to say what's on your mind but you've been through too much lately to care about being embarrassed any more. "I missed you when I woke up. Hope that doesn't sound too weird."

He flashes you a genuine smile, "Not at all, love, and I meant what I said in me letter. I wouldn't forget you." He draws a cigarette from his shirt pocket and lights it, taking a long drag whilst pondering something intently. He lets the smoke fly out in a wispy trail from his mouth. "You make too much of an impression." He winks and goes out into the living area, closing the door gently behind him.

You look around to your new home and sigh. Things are certainly going to be different now.

Chapter End Notes
Bit of a longer chapter here! Sorry for the irregular updates, got a lot going on at the moment!
You explore your new life in the warehouse.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Smut ahead

Sorry for the long delay, trying to get into a more regular pattern of writing. Apologies if there is spelling or grammar errors, sometime I miss them!

You take barely any time at all getting your stuff sorted out neatly onto various hangers and into various boxes. You gaze around at the bare room that still seemed minimal even with your clothes displayed. You'd get used to it, you thought. It was only like being a student again, right?

A knock at the door makes you jump slightly and swear loudly, “Fuck!”

John's at the door looking a little startled at your reaction, “Sorry, love! Didn't mean to frighten ya! Was just about to go out and get some food and wondering if you wanted summat?”

You think about the pizza splayed over the hallway that you never got to eat and your stomach growls loudly.

John laughs, “I'm taking that as a yes. What do you want?”

“Well since they didn't even send me the right pizza, I could really go for what I actually ordered about now. I feel like I need the energy!” you reply, sheepishly trying to shush your impatient stomach.

“Nearly dying will have that effect,” John smirks.

You tell him your favourite topping and he rushes off out of the warehouse.

Now you're alone, you feel both a little paranoid and on edge. You really hope they meant what they said about this place being demon proof. You fiddle with your belongings for a time, unsure of what to do with yourself. You're used to having your computer and games console to hand.

You wander out into the 'living room' and start exploring a little. You examine the rows and rows of books, some with spines faded to the point where you couldn't read the title and some that didn't even look like they were made with paper. You picked one up and felt the cover. It was smooth but not textured like leather and was kind of tan in colour. Maybe...you drop the book in disgust as you realise what it is. Human skin. Eww. You gingerly pick it back up and fling it haphazardly onto the shelf. Trust an occultist to have shit like this!

You involuntarily wipe your hands over your clothes, trying to rid yourself of it. Maybe it'd be safer
if you just didn't touch anything.

You walk to the kitchen area and see it is furnished with the most basic items. The microwave looks well used. Figures. You didn't reckon Constantine had much time for cooking.

You open up the fridge and see it is only stocked with mostly the stuff from your flat. Only some questionable cheese and milk seem to be actually his. You open up the freezer and have to stifle a scream.

Two shelves have been ripped out to make room for what appears to be a head. The head doesn't appear to be human though. You bend down, slightly horrified and morbidly curious. The head has pointed ears and small antennae. What on earth was this? You couldn't really tell what skin colour it used to have as the freezer had given it an icy blue sheen. If you weren't so sure John was a good guy you'd have some pretty solid evidence he might be a serial killer with this kind of stuff.

You hear the door open and John calls out to you, “Star? I'm back!”

“I'm in the kitchen,” you call back. “What the fuck do you have in your freezer?!”

John comes jogging in, pizza boxes crooked in one arm and a shopping bag hooked onto the other.

“Oh I see you've found her.”

“Her?”

“Yeah, love, it's a faerie. Particularly nasty one. Gave me the run around a few months back. Some professor bod wants to study it so I'm tryna keep it preserved.”

“It's a....”

“Faerie, bit, like I said. They're not the cute little Hallmark things in the slightest. They'd quite happily torture humans for sport. In fact, I'd say being in Faerie was worse than being in Hell.”

You blink, looking at him dumbfounded. “You know, I know this is all real but I'm still having trouble processing this.” You close the freezer door, shivering slightly.

John smiles, “It takes time, love, don't worry. Just basically think of it like all the things that go bump in the night and every tall tale your gran has ever told you is all likely true.”

“Oh I don't know, my gran talked a lot of shite,” you joke.

John laughs and ushers you to come back into the living room. He sets the pizza boxes on a table and begins pulling alcohol and chocolate out the bag.

“Chocolate?” you ask, turning over a Dairy Milk bar.

“Yeah...thought birds liked chocolate when they're stressed?” he asks, a little unsure of himself.

You let him sweat a little before smiling and saying, “Good choice.”

He gives you a playful nudge and opens his box, hungrily devouring a slice. You do the same. You realise the second it hits your mouth how terribly starving you really are. You can feel the dough sticking in your throat as you try to wolf it down.

“Woah there, love,” John says, alarmed. “Don't choke on it. I've already done CPR once today.”
“Tired of giving me mouth to mouth?” you say with a sly grin.

John sense the challenge you've thrown him and he leans towards you, face inches away and then stops, one side of his mouth curled up in an arrogant smirk, “Never.”

You look at each other for a time, daring the other to make a move until your phone rings and you're brought out of the moment.

You look at the screen and see it is Valentine. You feel a small pang of remorse that you've so easily forgotten about your normal life and you swipe accept on the call.

“Star! Star, what the fuck?! Where are you?!” his panicked voice rings in your ear.

“Val! I'm fine, what's going on?”

“Phe's dead, she overdosed and I went to come find you but the fucking door's been torn off your flat and your neighbour said some guy was trying to bust in? I got scared.”

“I'm fine Val, a friend came to help but I can't go back to my flat for a while until things die down. You'd just gonna have to trust I'm ok.”

“How can I? Everyone's turning up dead or going missing. I can't get a hold of Keith now either.”

“Is Roxy safe?” you ask.

“She's with me. She's crying her eyes out right now. Just tell me you're not involved with some shady shit, please. We don't wanna lose you.”

You're about to answer when John grabs the phone from you, “Alright mate, this is John. I'm with Star now, she's staying with me for a while. She's safe, I promise you that.”

You hear a lot of expletives on the line as Valentine is obviously trying to grill him and John handles it deftly, calming him down until he clicks the hang up button.

“What did he say?” you ask.

“Was just basically worried about you, wanted to know you were alright and that you weren't going to end up like your friend....oh and he asked if we were together.”

You cough as you inhale some pizza. “Jesus, why does everybody keep asking that?! Even that demon said something similar.”

“Must mean we're made for each other, love,” he chuckles and hands your phone back. “That should keep him off your back for a while whilst the heat dies down anyways...oh! I almost forgot, I swung by your flat earlier to pick up a few more of your things.”

He hops off the sofa and comes back with your bass guitar. He fondles the fretboard slightly seeming to reminisce.

“This takes me back,” he murmurs.

“You play?” you ask.

“Nah love, I used to be in a band, before all this occult shit took off. Punk band we were.”

“Ah,” you say. “Makes sense now.”
“What does?” he asks, puzzled.

“When you first met me you said our band was a crap parody of punk. That's because you were part of the original movement, weren't you?”

You swear he blushed a little. “Er..yeah. Thanks for reminding me of me age.”

You giggle. “So tell me all about this showstopping band you were in.”

John looks down at the floor and laughs, “We were called Mucous Membrane. Me and me mate Gary set it up. I used to sing. We had a music video as well.”

“Oh I'm definitely finding that on Youtube later,” you smirk.

“Piss off,” he playfully lobbs a cushion from the sofa at you and you fend it off. “We were shite but we had fun with it...until Newcastle.” He trails off and begins to stare into space, the smile dropping from his face.

“Newcastle?”

John winces slightly and shakes his hand, “Not something I wanna go into love. Would rather talk about something happier.”

“Ok, then what was your first single?”

“Venus of the Hardsell it were called. Maybe I'll sing it to you sometime when I've had a few.”

“I'll hold you to that,” you wink.

“There's something else you can hold to me if you like;” John grins.

“You don't ever stop with the flirting do you?” you say amused.

“Well...you keep encouraging me. I didn't easily forget being led by the tie.”

Now it's your turn to blush. “I...I...” You stammer. You're annoyed he can make you this flustered. You usually pride yourself on being unflappable.

“Listen, Star,” he begins, “I may flirt like a teenage boy who's never seen tits before but don't feel like you have to do anything. I told you from the beginning, I ain't gonna do anything unless you want me to. Don't worry. And I completely understand the last time was under different circumstances. There doesn't need to be any awkwardness.”

You process his words. You really couldn't deny there was a lot of sexual tension between the two of you and you were starting to become really attracted to him. I mean it was crazy though. He is a hell of a lot older than you despite not looking anywhere near it but something was really compelling you to want to know him more, in a personal sense and a carnal sense.

“I'm not very good with this sort of thing,” you finally say. “I'm kind of the recluse of the band, never really did the whole groupie thing or hooking up with rival band members or whatever.”

“It's alright,” John smiles, taking your hand and squeezing it gently. “Just know that I like you Star, you're a fiery lass and you've held your own against the forces of Hell, which I have to say is a little bit of a turn on.” He laughs at your bemused expression. “But like I say, I'll take your lead. You want this to be something more, great, you want this to be just as is, that's great too, after all, we're gonna be around each other a lot now. Whatever you decide I'm happy to go along with.”
He leans back and grabs his smokes, lighting up a cigarette and regarding you curiously, waiting to see what you do. You watch the tendrils of smokes curl up from his lips and the embers lighting his eyes in a mischievous way.

“You know something?” you say, coming to a conclusion.

He blows a smoke ring up into the air and cocks his head, “What?”

“Fuck it.”

You lean over and take his cigarette, stubbing it out in the ashtray. John's hand comes up to meet your face as you turn back to him. “Was hoping you'd say that, lass”

You press your lips to his and he gives you his full attention, pulling you into the kiss. You move to properly straddle him and he lets a soft moan be stifled by your urgent mouth. His hands come up to meet your waist and he pulls you close to him, hands exploring the crook of your back with light fingers.

Emboldened by your burst of confidence, you pull away and stand up completely, holding out your hand to John. He takes it and you pull him up to a standing position. You're about to ask a question when he presses you against him, one arm wrapped around you and the other curled in your hair and he finds your lips once more. It takes some time before you're able to break away, his kisses still heavy all over your face.

“Which bedroom?” you say, panting slightly.

“Yours,” he growls. “Bigger bed.”

He takes you by the waist and picks you up. You wrap your legs around him, arms tight around his neck as he walks you to the room and lays you on the bed.

Your deja vu is kicking in heavily now but you shake that off, certain that nothing is going to interrupt you this time.

You grab John and pull him down onto the bed, knocking him off balance. He lands with a small 'oof' and you roll on top of him, making quick work of yanking his tie off and starting to unbutton his shirt.

“Oh, eager for Johnny are we?” he chuckles, running his hands along your thighs which are framing his torso.

You shush him and pull his shirt off of his shoulders. His chest and stomach has a litany of scars criss crossing everywhere. You see the slight self consciousness in his face but this disappears when you start kissing a line down them. It makes for a fun pattern and soon he's wrapped his fingers in your head whilst you trail down his body.

“Let's make this a little more fair,” he says, pushing you slightly backwards and sitting up, tugging at your t-shirt. It comes over your head and is thrown into some corner of the room. John kisses the soft skin of your stomach, making you shiver slightly before he unhooks your bra with practised ease, letting your breasts spill free. There's barely a second between him tossing the bra somewhere and him running his tongue over your newly exposed skin. A soft moan escapes your lips and he smirks before taking one nipple into his mouth and making little circles with his tongue.

Your head lolls back and you writhe in his lap at the sensation. His hands press you close to him as he works your body. He definitely knows what he's doing, you think.
Before you can fully realise what is happening, you're flipped onto the bed and he's now hovering over you. Those predatory movements are coming back into play as he playfully nips at parts of your torso, slowly trailing down.

“Let's get these off,” he says, tugging at the waistband of your jeans.

You can't even form words at this point, you just nod and lift your hips up as he pulls the denim down over your legs as well as your underwear. You're a little shy as it's been a while since you've been with anyone but the way John looks back at your naked body makes you feel like the most desirable thing in the world.

He slowly crawls up towards you and gently bites your bottom lip. You get brave and hungrily steal a passionate kiss.

“Mmm, cheeky girl,” John smirks.

You mischievously let your hand wander over the strain in his trousers and he lets out a low rumble.

“You have no idea,” you rasp in a husky voice.

He chuckles darkly and yanks at the top of your thighs, pulling you flatly against the bed.

“I can't wait to find out how you're gonna sing,” he says, letting his hand wander lightly between your legs. You shiver involuntarily.

“Are you so sure that's going to happen?” you say, provocatively.

He dips down with fluid motions and his tongue hits that sweet spot, making you arch and cry out with a small moan. He looks up at you with one eyebrow raised as if to say, 'I win'.

“Smug bastard,” you pant, a lazy smile across your face.

“I take my time to know what a woman likes, love and you clearly liked that.”

You nod and he dips back down. You can feel his hot breath sending tingles throughout your body and his stubble tickling you a pleasant way. His tongue swirls on you, lightly at first and then harder, making your stomach jerk with the sensation. He licks lower and lets himself taste you properly before grabbing underneath your legs and pulling you flush to him as he teases you with languid strokes. One of your hand slides into his hair, urging him onwards. He draws back one of his hands and slips a finger into you. Fuck. That feels good. His finger starts to move in a curling motion, slow to start with and then he senses your urgency and begins to move quicker, tongue lapping rapidly at your clit. You feel the familiar pressure start to build deep in your abdomen.

He takes his tongue off of you for a brief moment to say, “Sing for me, love,” before catching his teeth around you slightly.

Your orgasm hits you heavily and you don't hold back in your moans. You grip the bedsheets as you ride the crest of the wave, spasming slightly, your muscles tensed up. Finally you relax, panting for breath and feeling the sheen of sweat start prickling along your body.

“Pretty little songbird,” John purrs, coming up to lie over you, stroking your hair with one hand and supporting his weight on the other.

You take a moment to catch your breath before your hand comes up to stroke his cheek, “Off.”
“What?” he says, confused.

You pull on the pocket of his trousers to make your point.

“Oh right! You recover bloody quickly!” he laughs. He stands up off the bed and yanks his trousers and boxer shorts off quickly, hopping slightly as he tries to keep balance.

Your eyes close as you try and regain some energy, your orgasm having drained a lot out of you. You open them again when you feel John's weight make the bed bow slightly.

“Sure you want this, love?” he says, pulling a condom out of his wallet. “Last chance to back out if you don't want to.”

“I want to,” you say breathily. You will admit you're slightly panicked by how wide he seems, as he rolls the condom down over himself.

He sees the apprehension in your eyes as he lowers himself down over you, “Don’t worry, lass. You set the pace.”

You nod and he positions himself ready before sliding gently into you. You gasp as he fills you to the brim. He stops for a while to let you adjust and your hands slide up his muscled arms to his rest behind his shoulders. You tug gently, motioning that he can continue and he moves his hips slowly. You let your fingers dig into his back and he picks up the pace, resting on his forearms now and playfully biting at your earlobe. Your legs curl around him, giving him easier access and he obliges by slamming into you harder. You cry out and you can hear him growl in your ear.

“That's it, love, sing some more for Johnny.”

You're usually so reserved in your noises, afraid someone in your flat block would hear but you realise there's no one around for miles and you fully let loose, moaning as loudly as you want to. You hear that rumble again from John and he fucks you even harder. Your fingers are practically lodged in his skin and you drag them down his back. He lets out a gutteral moan.

“Let yourself go love, let go completely.’

Your carnal instinct takes over and you bring your mouth to his neck, hungrily kissing there and biting at the skin. He brings one of his hands down between you, making circles on your clit, fingers flying with practised speed.

You soon feel the build of your second orgasm and you rasp out, “Don't stop.”

The wave hits again and you clamp your legs around him firmly, grasping him to you, spasming around him. You feel his rhythm get sloppy as he stiffens and shouts, “Fuck!” You can feel him twitching inside you you.

You flop limply on the bed as your vision swims. John rolls off you and tosses the condom in the bedside bin.

You both lie there for a time, panting and glistening with sweat.

“Well I think that solves the sexual tension,” you joke.

John laughs. “For a girl who calls herself a recluse, you're a pretty wild shag you know that?”

“It's always the ones you least expect,” you smily slyly.
You close your eyes and revel in the sensation of being truly relaxed. You could swear you only rest your eyes for a moment but when you open them again, there's a blanket thrown over you and John is sleeping next to you. You smile to yourself. He stayed with you this time.

You stare at the ceiling, thinking over the day. You don't think many people could say they nearly died and then had rampant sex later on.

You hear a soft whimper and look round to see John's brow furrowed. He must be having a nightmare. He flinches at something unseen and rapidly turns over. He reaches out his hand and you pull his arm over you, crooking your other one over his head to stroke his hair. He grips you tightly for a time but relaxes the longer you pet his head and he cuddles into you. You didn't really take him for the cuddling type but it seems to calm him.

You lay like that for a time until sleep comes back to claim you again.
You wake up and it takes you a few seconds to realise where you are. The ceiling is unfamiliar to you, covered in criss crossing pipes and that grimy industrial kind of chic. You try to move but are tangled up in John's body, his leg crooked over your torso and his arm lying heavily across your chest. He's breathing gently, the usual lines of worry and tension gone from his face. It makes him look even younger.

You lay there, just content to be. It's been a long time since you've been this relaxed, even with the threat of death hanging over you. For just those brief few minutes before John begins to stir, you can forget the last few days ever happened.

You feel John nuzzling at your neck and he sighs contently. You turn to him, he's still not opened his eyes yet but you know he's coming up from his deep sleep. You press your forehead against his and he squeezes you to him tightly. With a lazy smile he opens his eyes and meets yours.

“Morning, love.”

“Morning,” you reply.

“Gotta say that's the best nights kip I've had in a long time.”

“Me too,” you laugh. “I think I'll keep you around.”

He raises his eyebrows, “Oh, so I'm a sleeping pill now?” He smirks.

“Best sleeping pill I've ever had,” you giggle, kissing his nose lightly.

“Come 'ere you, cheeky lass,” he says, his eyes glinting with mischief. He starts tickling your side and you squeak, trying to squirm away from him. “That'll teach you to gimme lip!”

As you're wrestling with each other, the door to the warehouse opens and closes. You hear the metallic thud but you can't tell John as he's making it hard to breath with the tickling.

“John?” you hear Chas call.

John stops tickling you and gives you bottom lip a quick bite before winking, “In here, mate.”

You barely have time to whip the covers over your naked body before Chas walks in.
“Oh Jesus fucking Christ, John,” he swears, as he catches sight of the two of you and he puts his hand up to shield his eyes from the picture before him, “Would you warn me before I walk into this shit?”

John makes no effort to cover himself but merely stretches back languidly and holds his hands out, shrugging. “Nothing you ain't seen before.”

“Not through choice, put some fucking boxers on, I can't talk to you when that's on display.”

John turns to you and smirks, “He's just jealous, love.”

You throw the duvet over John and turn back to Chas, “It's safe now.”

“Thank you,” Chas says sardonically.

“Does he do this often?” you ask.

“Never in here but he was a dog when he was younger,” Chas says, lowering his hand and folding his arms.

“I was not a dog,” John says. “I just had natural charm. Now, what's up that you needed to interrupt us?”

“Well excuse me for cockblocking you-” Chas hisses.

“Chas....mate, just get on with it. What's up?”

“Poltergeist has set up in the old converted church. You know the one that's flats now? It's been terrorising an old couple.”

“Isn't that a bit bog standard?” John asks, running two hands over his face, trying to rub the last remnants of sleep away.

“Well this one is nasty. From records on it, it's already killed three former residents. One ruled accidental death from falling down stairs and two where it possessed the tenant and made them kill or commit suicide. These people came to me because it's trying to drive them mad by appearing as their dead daughter. It seems really strong, John. I don't think I can take this on alone.”

“Alright, alright mate. Let's kick this ghostie back to where it belongs.” John turns to you, “Sorry love, we'll have to continue this later.” He pulls you in for a long kiss and you hear Chas groan, “Oh for fuck's sake, put her down.”

John smirks and climbs out of the bed before going into his own room. Chas stands awkwardly in the doorway, not really knowing what to do. You feel the flush of embarrassment creep across your face. You must look really easy considering it's only been one day since you've been here and you've already slept with John. Chas shuffles, stealing quick glances at you, trying to formulate what he's going to say.

“You know,” he begins, clearing his throat. “As much as it horrifies me seeing John bollock naked, he seems happy. I know it mustn't sound great me saying about his past conquests but he's very...relaxed around you. I think you'll do him some good. Not that there's any pressure or-”

You laugh at his ramblings and he turns to you surprised. You motion for him to come closer and he reluctantly does, desperately trying not to seem like he's looking at you whilst you hide your body under the covers.
“Can you keep a secret?” you ask. He nods and you continue, “I think he’ll actually do me a lot of good. I feel...like I can be myself, if that makes any sense? He’s got no expectations of what I should be or how I should act from the looks of it.”

Chas nods, “I get you. I suppose being with guys your own age is a ballache because they either want one thing or a whole relationship.”

“Exactly,” you nod. “And being in the band didn’t really help me in that sense. I couldn't really tell who was being genuine when they approached me.”

Chas seems to be fighting with himself in his own head and he frowns.

“What?” you ask.

Chas takes his cap off and runs a hand through his hair before replacing it back on his head, “I will just say one thing, if you're going to be with him now, you've gotta realise there's a lot of baggage that comes with it. He's been through hell, quite literally, and he's pretty messed up still. There'll be times when he loses it, when he runs away because he can't handle things and when he breaks down. I've picked up his pieces for many years now, he's a difficult person to be close to.”

“I understand,” you nod. “It must be a thankless task doing all this and I can't imagine what trauma it leaves.”

Chas' eyes darken slightly, the ghost of tragic events flitting across them briefly. “Yeah, there's been a lot of loss. I suppose I gotta do the best friend thing as well and say if you hurt him, you'll be out on your arse yadda yadda but I think he can take care of himself.”

You smile warmly, “I have no intentions of fucking him about. I think we're just seeing where this goes together. I mean, I don't normally jump in bed with someone who I've never been on a date with, unless killing demons counts as a date.”

Chas laughs, “Not usually but I get your point.”

John comes back, dressed in his signature suit and red tie, his trenchcoat thrown over his shoulder. He notices Chas is closer to the bed and shouts, “Oi, step back from me bird, mate.”

“You're bird?” you say incredulously.

“Well I've left a few marks on you,” he winks, tongue darting out quickly and licking his lips. You turn bright red and pull the covers up to you more tightly.

“Oh god, would you just shut up and flirt elsewhere,” Chas moans. “You're gonna make me throw up breakfast.”

John comes over and pats Chas on the shoulder warmly. “I'll meet you out in the car, mate. Just gotta run through some things with Star first.”

“Just as long as you don't run her through with your thing,” Chas says, heavy on the innuendo. “I'm not waiting.”

John smirks, hands in his pockets like a naughty school boy, “I'll try and keep me hands to meself.”

Chas gives you a small wave and leaves the warehouse.

John comes over to you and sits on the bed, leaning over you and kissing you gently. “Work calls,
love. You've got me number if you need me. I shouldn't be more than twenty four hours max. Don't answer the door to anyone, the warding won't work if you invite somebody in.”

You nod, “Stay safe.”

“Definitely will try to. It's becoming hard to tear meself away from you.”

You hit him with a pillow and he play acts being wounded.

“Just go,” you chuckle. “Save some more lives, John Constantine.”

“Aye aye, lass.”

He gives you a deep, languid kiss and pulls away groaning, “I'll be back for you later.”

“Bye,” you say, smiling.

He leaves the warehouse and you sigh, flopping back onto the bed. You feel like it's crazy but you've already settled into a pseduo-relationship with John. It feels kinda natural, natural and safe. The old you would have never done anything like this, you were a traditional kind of girl, despite how you dressed sometimes. I suppose nearly dying changes someone's priorities.

You lay there for a while, not wanting to get out of the warm bed. Your phone buzzes next to you and you see you've got a text from John.

John: Arrived, time to ghost bust

Star: Don't cross the streams

John: Nerd ;)

Star: Be safe

John: Always am. Text you when it's done.

You finally drag yourself out of bed and dress, going into the living room. You while away the hours watching TV on John's Netflix account. After some hours, you begin to get a prickly sensation. Something was not right.

You look at your phone and see it's been about twelve hours since John last texted. You fire off a quick message.

Star: Everything ok?
You try and distract yourself with more TV, trying not to seem to oppressive. More hours pass and you're actively fidgeting now.

You try and call John but the number doesn't even connect. Your gut drops. You know something’s gone wrong. If John's phone is not working that could mean...

You wrestle with yourself on what to do. You know where the church flats are that Chas mentioned, you used to pass them on your way to your old job. Do you go there and see what's happening? Do you trust that everything's ok and you're just being paranoid?

Your knuckles are white from where they're digging into the sofa. You don't even have Chas' number to see what's going on.

You let another hour pass and try John's phone again, hearing the automated message saying, “It has not been possible to connect your call.”

You jump up, going to your bedroom to pull on some boots. You grab a bunch of talisman necklaces that you used to wear as part of your stage get up, hoping they may actually be of some use and start pulling on your coat.

Your phone buzzes and you practically dive for it.

*Unknown: Star, this is Chas. Lock the door.*

Shit, you think. It's gone wrong. You barely glance back as you barrel out of the warehouse. You're going to save John Constantine.
You burst out of the warehouse door, looking around wildly. You find a small car park behind the building with a couple of cars. You pray they are open and to your surprise, one of them is. You clamber into the driver’s seat, scanning around for the keys.

Surely it's not going to be in a cliché place is it?

You open the sun visor and a small bunch of keys falls into your lap. Were you not in a hurry you would roll your eyes. John obviously watches too many movies.

You start the car and peel out of the lot, desperately trying not to speed. You feel like you hit every red light possible on the way there. Your foot is tapping impatiently and your leg bounces as you try to keep yourself calm and not draw attention to yourself.

The church looms into view, the spire standing proudly. There's a brief flash that illuminates the stained glass windows before it's suddenly gone. Shit.

You squeal into the car park, not caring about being neat in between the designated lines and jump out.

The church archway stands grimly before you and you use all your weight, pushing the double doors open. The hallway snakes out to four flats, but which one do you choose?

You hear crashing coming from the top left room. There!

You thunder up the stairs and use your shoulder to barge open the door. You're not prepared for what you see.

Chas is slumped in the entrance way corner, blood seeping from a wound in his head and his limbs splayed out in every direction, some at unnatural angles. You stifle a scream and go to him, checking his pulse. You can't find any. You feel the blood draining from your face. He's holding a phone and you see the screen. He was in the middle of texting you.

Chas: It's gone bad. Don't look for us, stay p-
Oh god. You can feel your stomach growling and the beginnings of nausea gripping you tightly. A scream rends through the flat, echoing off the walls.

It's John.

You find the strength in your legs and stumble into the living room.

There's a whirling purple vortex swirling and raging, centred on John. He's levitating in the air, arms and legs being pulled in either direction and he's crying out in agony. A low rumble sounds behind you and the sound of laughter fills your head. You whirl around but nobody is there. You make the decision to run for John. You grab him by the torso and start dragging him, pulling him downwards and out of the nucleus. It takes all your strength but you manage to yank him in one final pull and you both crash to the ground.

John coughs, gulping air into his lungs. He turns to you and his eyes blow wide in fear.

“Star?! What the fuck are you doing?! Get out!”

“No! I'm not leaving!” you shout stubbornly. You look up briefly and duck just in time as a table is propelled towards your head and smashes into the opposite wall, raining splinters down upon you.

“It's too dangerous! Go!” John practically screams in your face, pushing you towards the door.

A vase comes sailing towards you both and you block John's body with yours, feeling the ceramic crack across your back.

“Star!” John loses it and picks you up bodily, throwing you down the hallway towards Chas' body before slamming the door shut.

You desperately try to get back into the room but John has blocked the door. You pound on it, calling for John before giving up and pacing back and forth.

From behind you you hear a sickening crack and you whirl around. What...the...fuck...

Chas' limbs are snapping back into place, the bones sewing back together and righting themselves. The wound on his head is slowly knitting together. You approach him, kneeling down to inspect better and he jerks, gasping for breath which scares the shit out of you.

“Chas?!” you call, placing a hand on his shoulder.

He looks around, getting a better sense of his surroundings before spotting you, “Oh Christ, you're just like John, you never do what you're told.”

“We have to help him!” you say, pulling him to his feet.

“You have to go,” Chas says, gripping your arms and trying to push you out of the door. “It's not safe.”

“Oh because that's working out so fucking well for you both right now,” you hiss.

“I can't die and John has some idea of what he's doing. You're just going to get yourself killed and you'll be another stain on our conscience. So FUCKING GO.”

The doorway to the living room explodes and John comes flying into both of you, flattening you against the wall. You all scramble to your feet, hearing the low malicious rumble bouncing around your heads. John steals a glance at you and is about to protest some more when you feel something
wrap around your legs and you're pulled from your feet. You smack onto the carpet before you're dragged back into the main room. You try and grab the door frame to steady yourself but you're not strong enough. You flail wildly, trying to hold anything you can. Both men rush towards you, shouting.

You feel a creeping sensation nudging its way into your body, tendrils wrapping around your mind and your very essence is pushed down, down into your core. It's like you're being locked away, unable to control yourself, unable to call for help. You try to claw your way back but it's like you're being suffocated. You watch through your own eyes as you right yourself and your mouth speaks but it's not your words that follow.

“I now own this vessel. You cannot harm me without killing her.”

John looks angrier than you've ever seen him, the veins popping out in his neck and his jaw clenched like he's about to break his teeth.

“Let her go,” he spits.

Your body laughs and the octave changes, the voice deepening. “No.” You watch as your arm shoots out and punches Chas square in the chest, throwing him backwards.

You scream internally, desperately fighting to regain control. The force pushes harder upon you, squashing you down.

Your other arm snakes out and grabs John around the throat, gripping hard. He starts chanting quickly, his eyes rolling back in his head. The force squeezes harder, trying to choke the words before he can speak them.

You feel a rush of rage and you push back with all of your might, throwing the force out a little. The hand that's strangling John relaxes and his eyes snap back, understanding what's going on.

“That's it, love, fight it! Drive it out!”

He returns to chanting and you strain as hard as you can, expelling the force from your body as slowly as you can. *You will not own me!* With one last cry you launch the entity out and you see the swirling mass take form as a shrivelled man with rat like features before it dissipates back to its gaseous shape.

You let go of John and sink to your knees, shaking with the exertion. Chas rushes to you and bundles you up, pulling you to the side. “Finish it!” he shouts to John.

The smoke is weakened, the swirl is not consistent but it makes a last beeline for yourself. John sparks his lighter and sets some herbs on fire before the last sentence of Latin leaves his mouth and he pitches it towards the cloud. It hits it true and the form writhes, expanding and contracting before returning to the male form. It gives one last hateful glare at John, hissing before the fire spreads across it and it falls into flecks of ghostly ash which vanish in blackened trails.

You all stand there, breathing hard, staring at the spot where the poltergeist vanished.

“Chas,” John says quietly. “Give us a minute.”

The calmness of his voice scares you and it seems even Chas is reluctant to leave but he gives you a sad little glance and walks out of the flat saying, “I'll meet you in the car.”

You hear the door close and the sound of his footsteps as they fade further away. Silence falls
between you and you feel your heart hammering, wondering what's going to happen.

John grips his face and runs his hand across it, breathing in hard before walking purposefully towards you. He gets close and puts his hands on your shoulders, shoving you back and pinning you against the wall. He looks incredibly furious.

“Do you have any idea how bloody stupid that was?!” he shouts.

You're afraid but you're also highly defensive and you steel yourself, not letting him treat you like a little girl, “As far as I can see I just saved your little operation. Wasn't going too well before I showed up.”

John's nostrils flare and he curls his hands up into fists, restraining himself.

“You could have gotten yourself killed! How do you think I would've felt if that happened?” he roars.

You push him backwards forcefully, adrenalin coursing through you, “And how would I have felt if you had died?! Besides, without you around I probably would be killed anyway! I'm marked remember and if I'm so bloody stupid I wouldn't have lasted long!”

You see the hurt flare in his eyes and his anger subsides slightly. He cups your face in his hands and you see his pleading brown eyes trying to make you understand, “You could have died.”

“But I didn't,” you say. “That's what counts right? Don't I get bonus points for expelling a poltergeist from myself?”

John smiles sadly and pulls you to him, wrapping his arms around you and hugging him tightly. “Yes, yes you do. You're bloody stupid but you're bloody brilliant.”

You relax in his arms, feeling the tension leave you and lean your head against him. He rests his chin on top of your hair.

“You've really gotten under my skin, love. Gotta admit, it scares me.”

“It scares me too,” you admit. “It's intense. You've completely flipped my life around, John Constantine.”

“I hope there's some good that's come of that,” he whispers.

“There is,” you murmur. You move your head away and place your hand on the back of his neck, pulling him down into a kiss. He eagerly reciprocates, snaking his tongue in to find yours. There's a sudden sense of urgency, an urgency that only comes after such trauma. His hands wander down you, squeezing your bum and he growls into your mouth. You rake your hands down the front of his chest and nip at his bottom lip.

“Your choice, bit, I'm either gonna take you against this wall or on that coffee table,” he rumbles, eyes dark with lust.

“Dealer's choice,” you rasp and let your hand wander over the growing bulge in his suit pants.

He growls again and pins you against the wall again, his mouth hungry on yours. Your hands both claw at each other, mauling the flesh and roughly eking pleasure from the pain. John steps back and yanks your jeans and underwear down, discarding them close by. You kick off your shoes also. One of his hands cups both your wrists and holds them against the wall whilst the other dives between
your legs, rubbing ruggedly against your soft folds. You twitch and moan but he swallows the sound with his lips. His fingers dip further down and he chuckles darkly as they glide through with ease and into your body.

“Mmmm, looks like you're all ready for me.”

“John,” you breathe, and he notices the impatience in your voice.

Still holding your arms above your head, he unzips his jeans and shuffles his boxers down his thighs. His cock springs up, alert and ready. He releases your hands and hooks his fingers under your legs, digging into the soft flesh. He hikes you up and you wrap your legs around him. It takes a bit of adjusting but you finally sink yourself down, taking all of him in and you gasp, clinging onto his muscled shoulders.

He pushes you against the wall for better leverage before starting to thrust rapidly into you. There's nothing pretty or romantic about it, you're just fucking out of a need, a need to feel alive. Your nails dig into his body, leaving small crescents in their wake and he rumbles with arousal, slamming into you harder.

“That's it, love,” he grunts. “You know I like to hear you sing.”

His head dips and he bites your neck. You feel the shock of the pain travel down your body, making you clench around his cock and you cry out.

“More,” you gasp and his teeth grip harder.

Your orgasm barrels across your body and you clutch John as hard as you can as the waves rush through you.

“I can't hold back much longer, love,” John says through gritted teeth and through your haze you vaguely remember you have no protection.

“Put me down,” you say, breathily and he obliges. You drop to your knees and take him in your mouth, tasting yourself upon him. You start hollowing your cheeks, bobbing your head up and down his length and it doesn't take long before you feel him spill himself in your mouth, the warm liquid running down your throat and his cock twitching in your lips.

“Fuuuuck,” he groans, trying to compose himself.

You lap the last of his cum and pull away, looking up at him.

He smiles lazily down at you and strokes your hair, “God you look bloody gorgeous like that.”

“Come on, Casanova,” you smile. “I think we've kept Chas waiting long enough.”

“Aye, he probably thinks I've punched a few holes in the wall by now.”

You redress, a little wobbly on your feet but John supports you whilst you pull your jeans back on and grab the shoes you kicked off earlier. You try to smooth yourself out to not give anything away but you're pretty sure Chas is going to guess from the state of John's ruffled hair which he doesn't seem to be particularly bothered about.

You whisper your name, your real name and he looks up at you in surprise.

“What?” he asks, bewildered.
“That's my real name. Felt like it was the right time to tell you.”

He smiles warmly, “Think I'm still gonna use Star if that's alright, lass. Thank you for trusting me with it though.”

You nod, smiling.

He pulls a cigarette from his trenchcoat pocket and lights it up, taking a deep long drag to steady himself and then he ushers you out of the flat and down the stairs.

Chas is in the taxi, impatiently tapping the steering wheel and spots the two of you walking towards him. He seems relieved that you don't seem to be fighting.

You get into the backseat, John getting into the passenger seat.

“All good?” Chas asks.

“Yeah, mate. We had a talk.”

Chas raises an eyebrow knowingly but doesn't comment.

“Guess I found someone as equally stubborn as meself,” John chuckles.

Chas turns to face you in the backseat, “So stubborn she ejected a poltergeist with no training. I think you need to start teaching her John because she's clearly not going to stay when we tell her too.”

“I'm sitting right here,” you say sarcastically.

John chuckles, “Fine, love, fine. I'll bloody train you. Better to know what you're walking into since I'm guessing you're not going to let me deal with the next thing alone.”

You smile widely and Chas smiles also. “Correct,” you say.

“God, woman, you're going to drive me crazy before the end,” John laughs and sits back properly into his seat.

“Come on, guys, let's get back,” Chas says and starts the engine. “We'll pick the other car up some other time.”

The taxi pulls away from the parking lot and you take one last glance at the foreboding church before you're driving along the busy streets of Manchester.

“Chas, you're gonna have to tell me how you did that thing back there,” you say.

Chas looks in the rear view mirror at you coyly, “It's a long story. Maybe I'll tell you sometime.”

You chuckle and look out of the window, watching the world go by, still marvelling at how much your life has changed. Despite everything that's gone on today, you feel peaceful and you close your eyes, feeling the vibrations from the car running through you and listening to Chas and John tease each other. It felt like you belonged.
Chapter Summary

You accompany John on your first job together

Chapter Notes

I really really didn't intend for this to be as long as it is! Ooops!

- Smut warning -

“Bloody fucking hell!” Constantine cried as the brickwork exploded next to him. “Concentrate lass!”
“Sorry!” you seem to say for the fiftieth time.

John had been teaching you magic for the past two weeks after your little dalliance with the poltergeist. It was hard. You don't know how this came so easy to some people. You felt that you had to pour every ounce of energy and focus into spellcasting or else it would go wildly out of control. Case in point, whilst trying to cast an offensive spell, you'd seen Constantine's tongue dart from his mouth in readiness and remembered where it had been recently and then..... Shit, you'd better start pulling it together.

“Let's take a break before you blow me arm off,” John sighs.

“I'm trying,” you say huffily.

“I know, love, I know. I'm pushing you hard for a reason. Chas has a job lined up and I want you to be prepared.”

“Maybe I do need a minute,” you say, your head swimming slightly.

John notices your unsteadiness and comes to you quickly, wrapping one arm around your waist and one around your shoulders. “Woah there, we need to get you sat down.”

He walks you into the warehouse and sits you down on the sofa. You feel like you're drunk. Your balance keeps going off and your eyes seem to be taking ages to catch up to where you're actually looking. You half fall into John's lap as he sits with you and he strokes your hair gently, trying to soothe you.

“Am I making any progress at all or am I hopeless, because I can't tell right now,” you mutter.

“You're doing fine, bit. It's not a simple thing. You just need to remember not to let your mind wander,” he bends down and plants a kiss on top of your head.

“Well if you're gonna distract me like that it's going to be a lot more difficult,” you say, poking him playfully in the knee.
“Oh? Shall I wear a zombie mask and a bin bag, would that help you?” he smirks.

“Smartarse twat,” you grin.

“Only for you, love,” he chuckles.

A few more days go by and you finally manage to get a grip of the spell, sending a shockwave of energy towards John which blasts him off his feet and through the air. You're momentarily torn between concern for John and celebrating that you finally cracked it.

“Bloody brilliant!” John cheers, picking himself up off the floor and shaking the dirt out of his clothes. “Gold star to you.”

“Surely I get something more than a gold star?” you say, pouting.

John comes up close to you, breath hot on your face before pulling away, “When you've earned it.”

“Don't play that game with me, you won't like where it leads,” you wink.

“Maybe I would like it,” he says, snaking an arm around you and pulling you forcefully towards him into a bruising kiss.

Before you get a chance to jump on him, John's phone rings. He backs away and swears before grabbing the mobile out of his pocket and answering it.

“Yeah?.....Alright mate? .....Another one?......we're on it, she's ready....meet you in an hour.”

“Chas?” you ask.

“Yeah, we've gotta be on our way now. Pack yourself a few bits, we're going to Bath.”

“Bath?” you ask. “You mean the place with the Roman-”

“Baths, yeah, kinda in the name lass,” he quips.

“You are so lucky we only have an hour or you'd be in for it,” you say, pointing a finger at him,

“You can show me when we get there,” he smirks.

You go back inside and grab your rucksack, pulling essential items and some clothes into it. You decide to also take a few of the tomes John had leant you for further reading. It was always good to do a bit of research.

You were quite nervous in a way. Your first proper job with John. Were you fully ready for it? The idea of something unknown to face was quite exciting and terrifying at the same time.

It wasn't long until you heard the beep of Chas' car horn sounding.

“Star?” John called.

“Coming!” you say, pulling the rucksack on and heading out.

You both get in the car and you hug Chas from the backseat.

“Oi!” John cries. “Stop giving him attention! It'll go to his head!”
“Not my fault,” Chas says, “She obviously can't keep her hands off me.”

The two men embrace across the seats smiling widely before settling in. Chas starts the car and you’re off on your journey.

“So, mate, you wanna tell Star what's going on?” John asked.

Chas catches your eye in the rear view mirror, “There's been a string of deaths around the actual Roman Baths site. Some have been drownings, some have been murdered and some have been crushed by bits of the ruins. Not so strange in of itself but the frequency of the deaths and the fact they all occurred in the museum complex are a little bit odd.”

“So, love, what do you reckon?” John says, turning round in his seat to face you.

“I would need more info,” you say honestly. “How did the ones who were murdered die?”

Chas smirks and winks at John, “She's a clever one. The people all had their throats slit.”

You mull it over for a little bit, “Sounds like ritual sacrifice.”

“Bingo,” shouts John, tapping the dashboard in a mini drum roll. “Sacrifice it is which means....”

“A god must be involved?” you ask. You'd heard John talking about a few minor gods he'd encountered over the years as well as the big G, although he couldn't be one hundred percent sure of that last one.

“Correct,” John confirms. “Now when we get there we'll do a bit of research into what god it is because unless we know that we can't stop it.”

“Gods get their power from belief mainly”, Chas interjects. “Cut the belief and they usually fade out but some are a little trickier than that.”

You spend the rest of the journey reading your books, scouring them for any mention of gods. There's only scant detail. You remember some bits from your school days about Norse gods, Greek gods, Egyptian gods and Roman gods and wonder how much truth there actually were to those legends.

“I remember studying Latin,” you say when you were just passing Bristol. Both men look at you weirdly. “I went to a posh high school ok?”

“Ooo fancy bird,” John jokes. “I'd better up me date game when we get back. I don't think Netflix and a pizza is going to be sophisticated enough!”

“Shut up,” you hiss, tapping him on the nose. “They said people used to hide curses in the walls of the baths and a god would enact them.”

“How do you remember that?” John asks curiously.

“Mainly because some of them were funny,” you shrug. “Like, 'Oh gods, Titus has cheated on me so I pray that his cock will fall off'. You gotta remember this was hysterical stuff to a thirteen year old.”

“Huh,” Chas says from the front. “Maybe it isn't sacrifice, could just be curses at work.”

“I hope not,” John sighs. “Makes it a lot harder to find who's behind it if they hide the curses around.”
You reach Bath and Chas parks up at a hotel. You all get out and go into the reception. The clerk behind the desk gives you all a look like you're dirt on his shoe but processes you through anyway. John opts to share with you and Chas gets his own room on a floor that's different to yours for 'his sanity'. You part ways by the elevator stating you'll meet up tomorrow as it's getting late.

As soon as your bag hits the floor in the room John is on you, mouth hungry against yours. You push him back slightly, bewildered.

“Hmm?” is all you can manage in your confused state.

“Been fucking restless in that car, love. Got a lot of energy and you're wearing that dress.”

It's a simple retro dress that flares out from the waist but it clings to you perfectly and has a deep neckline. You'd of thought the ditsy print wouldn't have inspired a lot of lust but John loved it. He seemed to get his rocks off on the idea that it made you look prim and proper but you were completely wild underneath.

“Now?” you laugh.

He moves one hand to grip your thigh, panting slightly, “Now.”

He grabs your hair, using it to pull your head towards him, tongue exploring your mouth greedily. He pulls you towards the vanity table in the corner before spinning you round. His mouth is on your neck now, nipping slightly at the sensitive skin. You let out a small moan and you can feel him grinning against you.

Quick as anything, he steps back and yanks your underwear down to your ankles, bending you forward over the table. Your face rests close to the mirror and you try not to chuckle. You guess John wants to see you as he fucks you.

His hands fall upon you, grabbing, groping, squeezing. You arch your back, swaying your hips, trying to move into his touch. The sound of his belt buckle clanking makes you shiver in anticipation and you hear the telltale signs of a wrapper being opened but nothing happens.

Without warning you feel a movement and John's dropped to his knees, holding one thigh tight with his hand whilst stroking himself with the other, condom lodged between two fingers. His tongue finds your folds and you're glad you're leant on something otherwise you would have tipped forward.

You can feel his breath spreading warmth throughout you and his tongue laps lazily, teasingly. Once he's satisfied that you're practically panting with readiness, he stops and you let out a small whimper in frustration.

“Mmm you taste divine, love,” he murmurs, rolling the condom on and standing back up. “Gonna get a little rough if you don't mind? You don't like anything, you let me know.”

You nod, excited.

He positions himself and you feel the tip of his cock slide into you but he doesn't push any further. He grabs a fistful of your hair, forcefully but gently and pulls your head back, creating a deep arch and he slams his full length into you. You cry out, fingers raking the wood of the desk. He goes slow, painfully slow after that and you find yourself trying to push back onto him.

His free hand comes down hard on your arse, making you clench around him and you hear him groan. God you love that sound.
“Fuck, I love it when you do that,” he hisses and tugs your hair back further.

You feel like you're back's about to snap but you don't care. It lets him push deeper into you and right now that's all you care about. His rhythm picks up and you lose yourself in the sensation.

“Open your eyes, love,” John orders and you do so, looking straight into the mirror in front of you. You can see John's face, intense and focused and he bites his lip when he makes eye contact. “That's it, let Johnny see you.”

He starts fucking harder and you let all sorts of profanities tumble from your lips. He just growls as he watches your reflection.

He smacks your arse again and you cry out in pleasure. His free hand now snakes around your body and finds your clit, rubbing rapidly. It's not long before you can feel the pressure building up inside you.

“Come on, girl,” John encourages, nipping at your back. “I wanna see you cum for me.”

Your legs buckle as the wave crests and your orgasm rides through your body. It's not long before John tenses and you can feel him spasm inside you.

You're about to slip onto the floor but John pulls his hand from between your legs and grabs your waist, holding you to him.

“God, Star, you drive me crazy sometimes,” he pants, hugging you from behind as you gather yourself.

“Good to know,” you giggle.

He picks you up and puts you on the bed, climbing in next to you and lifting his arm so you can nestle into his side. You fall into a comfortable silence, you just listening to his heartbeat. He still seems tense for some reason.

“Are you ok?” you ask.

He looks down at you puzzled, “Yeah fine, love, why?”

“You seem on edge.”

“Nah, I'm alright.”

You can see in his face that he's lying but you don't push the issue. You think he's almost a little nervous, probably because you were now tagging along.

After a while, you extract yourselves from each other and get ready for bed, falling into a deep sleep.

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Morning comes and you wake up on the smallest sliver of bed. You have to hold out your hand to stop yourself from falling off. John appears to have starfished in his sleep. Guess he got really comfy. You watch his sleeping form and feel a rush of warmth. This felt right. It felt good. You loved waking up to John in the mornings.
You wake him gently with a series of kisses and he stirs, well that's not the only thing that stirs but you don't let him pull you close.

“Come on, John, no time for that, Chas'll be waiting.”

“Ah come on, lass, bit of fun won't hurt,” he protests, a sleepy smile across his face as he tries to sort out his ruffled hair.

“Honestly,” you sigh, smirking and get up, dressing for the day in something practical.

You meet Chas downstairs in the breakfast room and he seems stone faced as he bites viciously into some toast.

“What's up mate?” John asks.

“They put me on another floor alright but it was directly below your room. Just what I was trying to avoid but no...I get another rendition of John and Star's live show.”

You flush deeply but John doesn't even seem fazed, “Better than some of the shit porn they have on the TVs here.”

“For Christ's sake John, is nothing sacred?” Chas exclaims.

Both men stare each other out for a while before dissolving into fits of giggles.

“Anyway,” Chas continues. “Let's eat and start rolling, they found another one yesterday whilst we drove down.”

You all wolf down some breakfast before making your way to the Roman Baths museum. Some actors were outside in togas reenacting Roman life and you paused for a while, watching them, until John grabbed your hand and pulled you inside.

You were immediately faced on the foyer wall with a stone sculpture of a face that seemed to both simultaneously snarl and smile. It was a little unsettling.

“Alright,” John began. “We'll look around for an idea of what we're up against and then regroup.”

“Or...” you say, picking up a leaflet, “We could just read this.”

John seems a little miffed that you stole his thunder and pouts. You roll your eyes and begin reading the pamphlet.

Romans would make offerings to the goddess Sulis Minerva, a hybrid of Celtic and Roman deities. Sulis Minerva was both a nourishment goddess and an enactor of curses.

“I guess we're up against Sulis Minerva then,” Chas nods. “Let's do a scout of the complex so we know our exit strategy and then we'll come back tonight.”

You all start to walk around the building. You're pretty sure Chas and John are just taking stock of hiding places, vantage points and exits but you're fascinated by the sculptures, mosaics and ornaments. You reach the actual baths and take a breath as you realise how much warmth it is giving off. The water is a deep green, murky but pleasant. You walk around it, imagining how many others
must have done the same throughout history. Another performer is stood on the lip of the baths, giving a show for the audience, talking of the healing properties of the thermal spring. He seems very into the role. You hear John behind you mocking the man and suppress a smile. You see the man catches John's look and he seems annoyed but soon returns to his script. You walk further on and see the sheets of lead that Romans used to write on with the curses inscribed into them and you have great fun reading some of them aloud to John and Chas.

You finish the lap of the building and come outside again.

“Plan?” you ask.

“Come back here after lock up time, search around for any new curses, see if we can't stop a god,” John says succinctly.

“Oh is that all?” you mock.

Night time falls and Chas is taking out the CCTV cameras with some sort of gadget that provides interference. John is lockpicking the front door and it swings open. You highly expect some sort of alarm to go off but it doesn't. You all step into the building and turn on torches as Chas closes the door behind you all.

“Split up,” Chas says.


“I'm with the lass on this one,” John says. “Safer to be together when we don't really know what Sulis Minerva can do.”

You all traipse to the open area with the baths and begin searching through the pillars, the walls and the rocks. You feel every crack and crevice, trying to find anything out of place.

A 'bloop' noise sounds next to you and you whirl your torch around towards it. Ripples flare from the springs and spread.

“John,” you whisper. “I think there's something in the water.”

“I'll keep an eye on it, don't stop looking,” he whispers back, motioning Chas to come over.

You continue your search, hands skipping over the stone in haste.

More noises come from the spring but you keep pressing on. You're nearly four fifths around the baths and haven't found anything. You're starting to panic a little.

You chance a look back at the boys and see two eyes luminous and yellow flare behind John.

“There!” you cry and the men spin around before John is flung backwards into the water. He surfaces and begins floundering as some unseen force pulls him down.

“John!” you shout, making to dive in after him but Chas shouts, “Keep looking! I got this!”

Chas jumps into the water and holds John's head above the surface, arms straining with the effort.
You turn back, head flustered and shine your torch rapidly over the wall, “There's nothing here!”

“There has to be!” John says as he flails wildly trying to cling onto Chas.

You hear a growl next to you and your eyes snap to the right, landing on the figure looming above you. It's neither distinctly male or female but is abnormally tall and has glowing eyes that are burning a hole into your very being. In fear, you cast the offensive spell you've learned with John but you're so perturbed that it ricochets and blasts chunks off of a nearby pillar, raining them down on the goddess.

It gives you a look that you think means for sure that you'll die now before it flings you backwards as well. You sail into the corner of the baths, back thumping heavily on the stonework. All the breath is knocked out of you.

Sulis Minerva turns the attention back to John, raising a hand out and pulling it down sharply. John's body vanishes under the water along with Chas' and the water churns as they pull themselves back up above the water, both men kicking wildly.

You scramble to a sitting position and see it. A tiny roll of lead tucked into the crevice between two stones on the lip of the bath. You yank it out and unravel it.

Alexander was laughed at by the man in the tan trenchcoat and asks that this man be given to Sulis Minerva in offering so he may know the value of rudeness.

Wait....it couldn't be....the Roman performer in the toga?!?

“Put that down!” you hear a squeaky voice shout.

You look up to see the man, in normal clothes, pointing at you and shaking violently having just come out of the foyer area.

“Why?” you ask. “Why are you doing this?”

“I said put it down!” he cries, stepping hesitantly towards you.

It clicks in your head, “Oh, you were bullied weren't you? You were getting revenge except now you feel like you can sacrifice anybody who you even looks at you funny, right?”

“It's not so easy to be the tough guy when you're facing down a god,” Alexander snorts.

You're aware that John and Chas are losing the struggle. John only has his mouth above the water level now and Sulis Minerva is dragging him further down. You don't have hardly any time. You know what you have to do but can you do it?

“Star!” John calls before the water rushes into his mouth and all you hear is burbling.

You take out a pocketknife and slam the lead sheet on the floor, scratching the words out. Alexander screams at you and launches himself upon you. You punch him squarely in the nose, busting it and spilling blood down his face. He reels backwards and you're able to scratch out the last word.

John and Chas shoot up from the water, gasping for air and flailing for purchase.
“NO!” Alexander cries and rushes you. You dodge out of the way and shove him forcefully so he lands in the water also.

You’ve made the decision. This man is not going to stop his power trip unless you stop him. Permanently.

John and Chas are climbing out of the spring and John sees the expression on your face. His eyes go wide and he runs towards you, “No love! Don't do it!”

“He needs to be stopped!” you say, flipping the sheet over to show the smooth side.

John reaches you and wrestles the penknife away, “I'm not letting you do this. I'm not letting you stain your soul.”

“What's going on?” Chas asks, casually kicking Alexander back into the water as he tried to escape it.

“Star was going to use the lead to make a new curse but now I'm going to do it,” John says grimly.

“And why is it any better to stain your soul and not mine?” you protest.

“I've already been bound for hell many times, love. One more ticket won't hurt.”

He starts etching the words into the lead.

**John was almost murdered by the actor in the toga and requests Sulis Minerva take him as an offering and that she can enact no further curses from this point forward.**

He rolls the sheet up and returns it to its hiding place.

“What have you done?!” Alexander screams, thrashing wildly in the springs.

“Put an end to your little murder spree,” John says flatly.

You see the yellow gleam of the goddess' eyes deep in the water and Alexander is yanked downwards. You all watch as he struggles, trying to kick to the surface but eventually he succumbs and all you see is his last breath floating up as bubbles.

John shivers next to you and you see his jaw set. You take one of his hands and squeeze it gently, trying to provide some comfort.

“And that is one way to defeat a god,” Chas murmurs. “Come on, let's go before someone comes to investigate all the racket we've been making. Besides, I need a change of clothes.”

You all exit the museum and walk back to the hotel. The boys sneak in the back way, not wanting to show up dripping wet in reception. You meet John back in the room and he strips off, throwing his clothes in the sink before sighing heavily. You can see the weariness in his face and the tenseness in his muscles.

Silently, you walk to the bath and begin to fill it with water, pouring the little bottle of bubble bath in because why the heck not. You shuck your clothes off and then tug gently on John's arm. He turns to you with an unreadable expression but follows you.
You sit in the bath first and motion for him to sit between your legs. It's a tight squeeze and it's by no means ideal but you hug him to you, content to wash him with the soap. You feel him start to relax a little.

“Why did you do that?” you ask quietly.

“I couldn't have you be damned,” he answers.

“If I'm marked by demons, does it really matter?”

“Yes it matters,” John says, his back muscles rippling as he flexes his shoulders. You place your hands on him and start to massage instinctively.

“I don't understand,” you say.

“I can't have you get a definite ride to hell by committing murder ok? I won't allow that. I'd rather take that hit for you.”

You scoff slightly, “Never had a guy who'd do that for me before.”

“Yeah well none of them pricks probably loved you like I do,” he hisses.

You freeze, bar of soap hovering over his skin. He seems to realise what he's said and faces the wall, not daring to look at you, hands worrying at each other.

“I...uh....shit, I've probably scared you off,” he mumbles.

“You love me?” you ask.

He scoots forward and turns around slightly to look at you, still not making full eye contact. You can see he's anxious. “Uh....yeah....god help me but I love you. You give me a peace I've never found before.”

Warmth radiates through your chest and you smile.

He looks at you expectantly, breath hitched, waiting for what you were going to say. You know in that instant exactly how you feel.

“Can I say something completely bonkers?” you ask.

“Sure, love.”

“I really shouldn't feel this way but I've fallen for you, John Constantine.”

He sighs in relief and a grin spreads up his face. He twists round and cups your face in his hands, giving you a long, meaningful kiss, “I'll always protect you Star, no matter what. Even if it means going to Hell and back.”

“Don't tempt fate,” you chide.

He chuckles and turns back around, leaning into you again and you hold him tight as he holds your arms in turn. You stay that way for an age, just revelling in the sensation.

You were in love with John Constantine.
Chapter Summary

You thought this would be the start of a new beginning but John's acting really strangely.

Chapter Notes

Heavy angst in this chapter! Apologies!
Thanks to all my regular readers for sticking with me!
-TLP x

Something’s different. Something feels off.

When you wake in the morning, John's not there. In fact, all of his luggage is gone out of the room. Did he ditch you?

You make your way downstairs after shoving everything into your rucksack and see John and Chas eating breakfast. Chas waves you over but John doesn't even look in your direction.

Okay then....

You sit down but the conversation is short and stilted. Frankly, Chas looks embarrassed to be there.

The whole journey back to Manchester, it's just awkward silence.

The knot in your stomach is twisting harder and harder. Did you do something wrong? Was he just messing you around last night? You torture yourself with these questions, unable to stop your brain from overthinking.

When you finally hit the warehouse car park, you're itching to get out, hoping to have a private word with John but he just sits there in the front seat before turning round and saying matter of factly, “Give us a private minute.”

No loves, no darlings, no pets, no bits. Nothing. Just a straightforward order. Well fuck you too, John Constantine. You just glare at your seat belt as you wrench it off and grab your bag before storming into the building.

**

Chas turns to John, completely bewildered, “Wanna tell me what's going on?”
John sighs before letting himself slip further down into the seat, “I can’t.”

“Can’t what?”

“I can’t do this.”

Chas gives him a dirty look, “What the fuck are you talking about? Did something happen?”

“Yeah summat happened,” John says, kneading his fists into his temples. “I opened me gob and said the 'L' word last night when I didn’t mean to. It just sorta came out.”

“Well that's a good thing right?” Chas says encouragingly. “It's been a long time for you.”

“No it's not a good thing. There's a reason why I'm alone, Chas and you should know it better than anyone.”

Chas slaps his dashboard, annoyed, “Ah for fuck’s sake John you can't keep running away when you start feeling too much. She's a great girl and -”

“For starters,” John interrupts. “She's young enough to be me granddaughter. What about that sentence screams long term romance to you rather than creepy paedo? Second, she's a stubborn bird which means she'll get herself killed. Third, well...it's me she seems to want and I'm no good for anyone.”

“So you're just going to fuck her, tell her you love her and then ditch her huh?” Chas hisses. “Fucking classy, John, fucking classy.”

“You don't understand, mate,” John says imploringly. “She said it back. She's gotten too attached. I wasn't expecting this. I don't know what to do.”

“How about asking her to be your girlfriend? That's how this normally goes?”

“I just...I can't. It's too much.”

Chas grabs John by his coat lapels and shakes him, “You listen here, John Constantine. You're a fucking commitmentphobe. If you don't march in those doors and tell her exactly how you feel I'm going to knock you into next week.”

“Just drop it Chas!” John shouts, pushing him away.

“No!” Chas shouts back, equally angry. “You're just scared of getting too close to her because you don't want to bear the thought of being happy for once! You're too wrapped up in your own shit show of self loathing and 'what ifs' that you're not enjoying life. Who cares about the age difference?! Who cares that she'll do some rookie shit?! Clearly she's happy with you and you are with her and I'll be damned if you spoil that by being a coward!”

The air crackles with electricity as the two men glare at each other, chests heaving with the rush of adrenalin.

“Get the fuck out of my taxi and go be with her,” Chas spits.

John's shoulders droop as he lets his head fall into his hands and lets a shaky breath rattle his body, “If she dies, I'll never forgive meself.”

Chas softens slightly and draws his friend into a hug across the seats, “But will you ever forgive yourself if you let her go and she finds someone else, knowing that she loved you?”
“It's all just way too fast,” John says in barely a whisper. “I feel like I'm drowning in it.”

“Welcome to love, John. It creeps up on you faster than you know it. Now shoo.”

The two men release each other and John gets out of the taxi, pulling his dufflebag out and stands there as Chas gives him a pointed look and drives off.

John walks towards the door, hand outstretched ready to open it but stops. He stands there for the longest time, battling with himself before his cowardice takes over and he heads for the spare car, getting in and driving away, not daring himself to look back.

*She'll be safer without me. She deserves better.*

**

You wait for about thirty minutes before going outside to investigate what's going on. Chas' car seems to have been long gone but John is nowhere to be seen. You walk around the building and see the spare car is not there.

You're really confused now. John was definitely avoiding you. You try calling his mobile a few times but he doesn't answer so you send him a text.

**Star: If I've done something wrong, can you please tell me?**

You hit send and immediately regret what you wrote. That sounded way too needy. You probably just pushed him further away.

You hover over trying to send a text to Chas but decide against it. It's not like he could force John to do anything and you don't want him to. It's your drama not his.

You go back inside and just sit on the sofa, staring at your reflection in the black mirror of the TV screen. You look tired.

Hours go by and you've not moved an inch. The sun's set and you're sitting in the dark, replaying the last few days over and over in your head. You don't understand it. *He*’s the one who said it to you. Why was he giving you the cold shoulder now? He seemed so happy when you said it back. Was he just toying with you? Did he actually mean it or were you just a warm body to him?

You'd cried yourself out, tear tracks dry on your face. God you felt like a stupid teenager going through a break up. All you needed was a pint of ice cream and your cliché tableau was complete.

You fell asleep sometime around the early morning, limbs splayed out over the sofa and hair every which way. You hoped it had been some kind of horrible dream but you woke and he still wasn't here. He usually hung his trenchcoat on a hook by the door but it mocked you with its emptiness.

You looked at your phone.
Nothing.

Well done, you tell yourself. You really do have fine taste in men.

You're not going to call or text him any more. If he wants to come back, he'll come back.

You throw yourself in the shower, trying to perk yourself up. It helps for a time, the water warm and soothing.

Eventually you dress and make yourself something to eat but you barely manage two bites of it.

There's a knock at the door and your heart starts hammering. Was he back?

You practically skip towards to it, mentally preparing yourself for what you might say. You fling the catch off and open the door.

It's not him.

It's a burly man with huge muscles and a face that would scare a soldier.

Oh fuck.

You try to slam the door back but his forearm blocks it, yanking it back fully open whilst his other hand shoots out and grabs you around the throat. You flail wildly, knocking the shoe stand over, spilling footwear across the threshold.

“Who are you?!” you shout, “Let me go!”

“Lover of Constantine, we've found you again,” the man rumbles in the scariest voice you've ever heard.

Your face pales as the blood drains out of it. Demons. You'd thought they'd given up on you but the man snarling in your face made your stomach drop through the floor.

Rule fucking one of the warehouse: Don't open the door to anyone.

You'd just broke it and now you were going to die for that mistake. Well if you were wondering how it could get any worse, here it was.

You twist in the demon's grip as the flesh of its body starts turning a mottled puce colour. You drag your mobile out of your pocket and hit John's speeddial. It goes straight to voicemail and feel a flash of panic.

The demon mauls your hand until you drop the phone and he stamps on it until it lies in pieces on the floor before drawing back the hand not gripping your neck and punching you square in the temple.

You barely register the pain. You fade to black instantly.

Oh, John.
John's phone buzzes in his pocket and he looks down at it. He's got it on flight mode so no one can disturb him.

Your name flashes on the screen as having left a voicemail and a text. He's been ignoring it up until now.

John's in some grotty pub somewhere in Salford, knocking back his second lager. He spent the night in a cheap hotel, trying desperately to figure out what he was going to do.

He plays with the screen of his phone. He's curious to know what you wrote but he's torturing himself by not opening the text.

“Women troubles?” the bartender says, a knowing look.

“Oh you have no idea, mate,” John mutters grimly.

“I usually find it works best if you're honest,” the man continues, flinging a small towel over his shoulder. “Even if the outcome is not what you want, don't ever lie to yourself. That kind of shit causes a cancer to build up.”

John just nods and the bartender shrugs before going to serve another customer. John worries his lip, finger tapping anxiously on the bar.

I've fallen for you, John Constantine.

He can still remember the beautiful smile you gave him as you said it, the way you held him close, the smell of the perfumed bubble bath on your soft skin.

God he was a fucking idiot. Chas was right. He was just relying on 'what ifs' to avoid opening up.

He opens your text and his heart pains as he reads it.

She thinks it's her fault. I'm a fucking scumbag.

He makes up his mind then and there to go back.

**

The second he comes down the drive to the warehouse he notices the door is wide open. He's
practically scrambling out of the car as he runs to the entrance.

There’s been a struggle, the shoe rack is knocked over and there’s something that looks like blood drops on the threshold. A little further in, your phone has been smashed to pieces.

No....no this couldn't be happening now. He should have been here. Fuck, Star, why did you open the door?! 

He calls Chas immediately and his tired voice came on the line, “Yeah?”

“Star's been taken.”

“What?!”

“I chickened out when you left, I went to a hotel. I just needed some time to think and when I've got back she's gone. There's blood here, Chas and sulfur.”

“Demons?! I'm coming over right now. Don't do anything stupid!”

Chas hangs up.

John feels the rage bubble up inside him and he slams his fist into the door, over and over again until the pain finally makes him stop, the knuckles dusted and ripped.

*I'll find you, Star. I promise you, I'm going to find you and I'm going to get my chance to tell you everything.*
You awoke with a rattle as your chest strived to breathe in oxygen. Every inhale of your chest sent burning air scratching down into your lungs. You make to move but your hands hit something solid, in fact your hands hit something solid all around you.

Oh god.

You opened your eyes but there was only the oppressing darkness. Claustrophobia started kicking in heavily and you fought with yourself not to freak out, not to panic. You pushed against whatever was in front of you and felt it budge slightly. A sliver of light cracked through into your face. You pushed harder, straining your arms and legs against the object before it fell with a loud thud onto the floor.

Your eyes squint as you adjust to the light and see that you're in a room made out of dusty red stone. You turn back and see that you were basically stuffed into a sarcophagus. No wonder you felt so trapped.

You look around. There was something underneath the heavy lid you'd just pushed off. One gnarled hand was sticking out and the ground beneath it was staining with dark liquid. You'd killed a demon by the looks of it, probably one that was meant to be guarding you. Well lucky you.

It was warm...no...it was unbearably hot. You felt the sweat trickle down your brow and a wet dampness in the crook of your back. You half stumble to the rudimentary wooden door and shove it open before gasping.

Red hot wind swirled before you, carrying the screams and cries of pain and torment to your ears. You saw the sky above you, angry and flashing and the ground below you, dead and barren. Across the distance, demons prowled, dragging people behind them in their wake.

This was Hell. You were in Hell.
You inwardly prayed hard.

*Find me John. Please find me.*

**

“Oh, it's bloody fucking useless!” John cries, slamming the crystal down on the map and squeezing it until it started digging into his skin. “She's not anywhere!”

“John, think about it,” Chas says sternly. “If she's not showing up on a standard map, that means she's not on this plain. There's only two more places she could be. Heaven or-”

“Hell,” John finishes growling. “I'm willing to bet it's the latter.”

“So what are we going to do?” Chas asks.

“I'm going to summon every fucking demon I know until they give up her location.”

“John, that's stupid, like next level stupid. You can't do that many rituals and live.”

“Then I'm gonna go straight for the big boss,” John snarls.

“You've officially lost it!” Chas exclaims. “There's no way I'm letting you summon the First of the Fallen!”

“No!” John says, his eyes wide, almost on the brink of madness. “Don't you see, Chas?! It's perfect! He wants any excuse to get his hands on me so now I'm gonna give him that. My soul for hers. Straight deal.”

“It's not worth it, John! You know what they'll do to you down there!”

“I don't care, I don't fucking care,” John hisses, ruffling his hair with anxious strokes. “They made this personal.”

“John!” Chas starts to protest but John punches him in the temple, knocking him out cold.

“Sorry mate,” John mutters. “Gotta do this alone.”

**

You silently creep along the confines of the wall, trying to stay out of sight. You know someone will be looking for you soon. You're sure you were in that coffin for a reason.

God it was so hard to breathe. You desperately try to keep yourself from choking as you press on, hoping to see something, anything to help you get out.

Your eyes fall on a spiralling tower that pierces the thundering clouds. It looks ominous and foreboding but it's the only thing you can see that seems to lead up.
You make to move forward but your foot nudges something. Oh god, was that a body? The thin fingers are stuck clawing in the dirt and the mouth is twisted open in an eternal scream. You almost didn't see it because the robe that covered it matched the colour of the ground.

That might be useful.

You swallow your revulsion and tug the robe off of the corpse, wincing as the bones snapped under the movement. You threw it over yourself. Well that should hopefully provide a bit of camouflage.

You start walking towards the tower, still keeping yourself low to the dirt. You didn't want to attract any unnecessary attention. All around you you still saw the vague shapes of monstrous forms shuffling and contorting.

*Keep moving. Just keep moving.*

The door to the tower was coming into view now. It's ornate carving sent shivers down your spine. The mural showed the souls of the damned being tortured and with the flickering of the storm above you, it looked as if the sculpted faces were alive.

A shriek pierces through the air, carrying across the expanse.

“Find her!”

Oh no. Time was up. They'd discovered you'd gotten loose.

You make a bolt for the door but a hand shoots from the ground, catching your ankle and sending you flying forward. More hands break free of the dirt and claw at your body. This was just like your nightmare. You freeze for a second, terrified as that memory floods back to you before your hand shoots out and you cast the spell that John had taught you. The hands retreat, curling and spasming in pain and you take the opportunity to run, run faster than you'd ever gone before.

You throw yourself at the wooden frame, tugging violently on the huge door knocker and pulling it open. You look back as you slide inside and see a mass of writhing, angry demons racing towards you. You slam the door closed and pull the heavy bolt down to lock it before you hear a great impact and the whole structure rattles.

The door holds.

You're safe, for now.

**

John sets up the intricate pattern on the floor, spray painting the runes and lines before setting out the necessary ingredients. Was he really doing this? He supposed he'd risked his soul for less, why not for the love of a woman? Seemed as good a reason as any for eternal damnation.

He rolled his sleeves up and began chanting.

*Come on you bastard, come out,* he thought.

He strained harder as he felt the resistance building up. The First of the Fallen rarely came up to this plain without a fight.
Come on, come on

And then...nothing. It was like a balloon had just deflated. There was no fanfare, no grandiose backfiring, just nothing.

John balled his fists up. If the First wanted to be a prick about it then fine.

“You that bored of me, huh?” he called out. “Don't even wanna answer when I set me soul on the line?”

Silence.

“Guess I've truly beaten your arse if you don't even wanna try any more,” John spat, lighting a cigarette to smooth his frustration.

“Your attempt at bravado is pitiable, Constantine,” a voice rumbles.

John looked up. There he was. He stood taller than a normal man, with a wide jaw, discoloured and mottled skin and long dank black hair. The remnants of a cape were tied around him with two points either side of his neck. The First of the Fallen.

“Long time no see,” John says, cigarette dangling from his mouth.

“Trying to get lung cancer again are we?” The First says, pointing at John. “I'd be more than happy to make it aggressive for you, make it a speedy end.”

“Not why I'm here, mate,” John says firmly, folding his arms. “You've got something of mine.”

“No, Constantine, I've got someone of yours,” The First grins, showing off his razored teeth.

“And you're gonna free her,” John snarls. “She doesn't belong in Hell.”

“No, but you do.”

“Exactly. Enough of the small talk, release her and you can take me in her stead.”


“Yeah well, I'm gettin' old. Can't do this forever,” John mutters.

“How noble,” the First spits in disgust. “To save the life of one insignificant girl.”

“Don't you dare talk about her like that.”

“Maybe I'll keep her. Seems much more fun to cause you pain this way,” the First chuckles and stretches out a clawed hand to test the barriers of the summoning circle.

“What's it gonna be mate?” John says, holding out his hands. “Me soul, going once, going twice-“

“Enough!” The First roars. “You think you can curry favour with your diseased soul, Constantine?”

“Diseased is it? Well you certainly wanted it for the last thirty odd years,” John smirks.

“If only to tear it atom by atom from existence,” The First growls.

“So...what? You don't want it now?”
John studies the demon before him. Normally The First would be jumping at the chance, almost gleeful, gloating that he could make a straight deal. Something was wrong. If The First was stalling that could only mean that...

“You've lost her haven't you?” John says quietly. “She escaped.”

The First rumbles, the second echoing heavy through the room, “Be silent!”

John laughs, almost mirthfully, “Big scary demon overlord and you've lost a little rockstar in Hell. Jesus, you get more pathetic every time I summon you.”

The First comes right up the edge of the circle, banging his fists against it and growling, “Know this, John Constantine. The second I find your latest dalliance, I'm going to flay the skin from her bones and then, I'll be right back up here to deliver it to you personally.”

“Not if I find her first,” John counters before holding out his hands and shouting, “Abi! Descide!”

There was a tremendous heat, a whirl of dust and the roar of anger as the First was dismissed from the circle, leaving only John in the room.

She'd escaped. Good girl. He hoped she had enough sense to try and reach the Tower of Souls. If she could make it there and ascend the steps, she could climb out of Hell. Only problem was, it was never an exact science as to where it would spit you out. The last time John had made that journey he'd ended up in an Iraqi warzone.

If he could get a message to her, it may help.

He had to call a psychic. He had to call Mercury.

**

You stand there behind the door, hearing the heavy thuds rolling across it. Jesus, you'd trapped yourself. What were you going to do now?

You looked behind you and saw the dizzying spiral staircase leading up into darkness. Well, guess there was no going back now.

You set one foot on the beginning step and felt a rush as a tide of magic swept over you. What the hell was that?! You check yourself, worried that it may have affected you in some way but you don't appear to be hurt. You place your foot on the next step and see that the landing behind you appears walled off by a shimmering curtain of light. Perhaps you'd crossed some kind of barrier?

You look up once more into the inky ceiling, your resolve wavering for a second until you hear a series of feral hisses from the door once more and you start walking up.

**

“Yeah?” the bored voice of Mercury piped up as John sat down across from her in the cafe.
“You got me message, I take it?” John says, stirring sugar into a cup of tea.

“Some garbled shit about your girlfriend being trapped in Hell? Yeah I got that,” she says disdainfully. “What exactly do you want me to do?”

“I need you to send her a message, tell her to reach the Tower of Souls-”

“You think I'm just gonna help you out?” Mercury laughs. “The last time I did that you almost wiped out London.”

“I know,” John says, staring at the table. “I know and I'm sorry about that. I really am, but Star is trapped down there and it's my fault. I need to get her out.”

“Star? Are you fucking serious? What kind of a name is that? Is there some 80s revival I don't know about?”

“Mercury, please,” John says pleadingly.

She pauses, hand tapping on the table and teeth biting at her lip. “You really like this one, huh?”

“Yeah, yeah I do,” John sighs.

“You gonna treat her better than you did my mother? Better than you did with me?” she says through clenched teeth.

“Mercury, I've said I'm sorry til I'm blue in the face about that. Please, please just help me here.”

“Huh,” Mercury says, tilting her head back slightly. “You love her.”

John flushes but he doesn't say anything.

“I'm gonna help you. Not for your sake but for hers because whoever this girl is does not deserve your kind of love. Your kind of love gets people killed.”

“Thank you,” John says gratefully.

“Now what exactly do you need me to say?”

**

You push on until you're almost at the first landing and stop once you get there, your thighs aching with the acidic build up.

This was a long climb.

You struck by an overwhelming urge to sit down, to lie down. You must be really exhausted. How long had you been down here? In the corner of the landing was a bed. God that looked soft. Fluffy pillows, silken sheets, thick mattress. Maybe you could lie down for a bit? Save your energy before you climbed up further? You walked towards it and then felt something in your gut twist. Why are you so tired exactly? You felt fine coming up the stairs, energised even after your little sprint. The bed was so inviting though...
You whirl around but no one is there. “Hello?” you call out.

**Star. My name is Mercury. I'm with John.**

John! You feel a rush of hope.

**He says to find the Tower of Souls.**

“I'm already in it!” you call back.

**He says each level is a test. Don't give into it. Keep walking up. He's waiting for you. Don't give up.**

A test? You look back towards the bed and feel that overwhelming tiredness again. A test! A test for you to give up, to go to sleep.

You wrench yourself away, walking with determination to the next set of steps. Your body is screaming for you to turn around but you ignore it and put your foot on the first step. Instantly the sensation vanishes and you look around to see a completely empty space.

You shudder and press onto the next floor. You're very much on edge the second your foot hits the flat stone, wondering what's next.

The smell of cakes hit your nostrils and your taste buds begin salivating. Your stomach growls in protest. It had been a while since you'd eaten anything. It smelled really good, almost homely. You see a long display of sweets, cakes, ice cream bowls, cookies and fresh bread. Another test?

You realised exactly what was going on. The bed, the cakes.....Sloth and Gluttony. You'd have to resist the seven deadly sins to escape.

You tear your eyes away and move to the staircase but with every step forward, you felt your strength withering away, almost like your flesh was being eaten from within. You could just have one bite. It wouldn't hurt...

No!

You fling yourself onto the stairs and the sensation vanishes once more. You practically hare up the next flight, eager to get this over with. You were not sure how much more you could stand.
The next landing gave way to piles and piles of jewels, gold, trinkets and stacks of crisp notes in every currency. Avarice. This was a little easier for you. You'd never been particularly drawn towards material things.

One floor up and you stumbled across a jumble of people. You balked as you saw they were all someone you'd known in your life. The teacher who first taught you how to play bass, the tech guy who constantly praised your skills with music software, even the guy who'd offered you a modelling contract when you'd first got into the band. They all crowded around you, fussing over you.

"You played great, you know that?"

"Oh wow, did anyone ever tell you you have great bone structure?"

"Man you can work some sick beats!"

They all spilled compliments and praises on you. You felt torn between feeling elated and trying to pull away. This was clearly Pride. This level wanted you to give into your own ego. Well fuck that, not happening. You'd always had low self esteem so nice try.

You push them away from you, running to the steps, almost reaching them before they catch up to you and try to pull you back.

"Where are you going beautiful?"

"Come on, you gotta show me how to do this! You're the best at this!"

"I can't let you overwork those magic fingers running around like that!"

You squirm out of their grip and jump onto the staircase. Poof. They're gone. That was a close one.

Just three more left. Wrath, Envy and Lust. You didn't like the sound of any of those particularly.

You reach the next landing. Oh no. No this was not happening. Keith was standing over Phe, jamming needle after needle into her as she cried on the floor.

"Stop it!" you yell.

Keith turns round and flashes you a wicked grin before stabbing another syringe deep into her throat.

"I said stop it!" you scream, running towards him and pulling him off. He doesn't try to fight you, he's single minded in his pursuit. He just wants to keep injecting her.

Come on, your brain whispers. Kill him. Do it. That's the only way to stop him.

Your hands are balling into fists, the muscles coiling.

Wait! This was Wrath!

You shake yourself, stumbling backwards, away from the macabre scene and towards the stairs. You're about to set a foot on it when you hear Phe's tortured scream ringing out. You thrust your hands over your ears, blocking the sound out before setting your foot down.

Silence.

You stand there, panting for a while. This was getting worse. You'd almost succumbed to that one. Envy and Lust next. You're not sure what exactly Envy would contain but you were really worried
about Lust.

You walk upwards, hand on the stonework supporting you as you climbed.

John.

John was standing there flanked by multiple women. One had black hair with white streaks, one had a magician's coat and a top hat, one had curly sandy blonde hair, another had long flowing black hair, and...was that a man? All of them pawed at John, groping him, running their hands all over.

“Sorry, love,” John shrugs, letting his head lull back. “Couldn't help meself. Why stick to one when you can have many eh?”

“What's going on?” you say in a small voice.

The woman with the white streaks pipes up after licking a long line from John's neck to his ear, “We're his lovers darling, or we used to be. He's found us again after all this time. Look at the things he does to us.”

Before your eyes, all of the women's and men's clothes bar John's disappear as they writhe against him.

Envy. This was definitely envy. Jesus you didn't know he'd been with this many people. You couldn't let yourself give into this. This was just a false visage. The second you let that spark of jealousy flare in your chest this game was over.

You turn to the staircase and walk purposefully towards it. You're so close to reaching the top. The moans behind you get louder but you just block it out, imagining it's just some cheap porn.

The moaning stops as you fly up the next set of steps. Almost home free.

It's John again, only this John has his shirt half open and his tie undone loosely around his neck. This was the level you'd been afraid of. Lust.

“Hello, love,” he smiles with that arrogant grin. “Missed you.”

John swoops on you, arm around your waist and pulling you into a deep longing kiss. The scent of him is so familiar, the taste of him is the same, that old concoction of smoke and alcohol. You wanted so badly just to think this really was John. Everything about your senses screamed this was real. John's hand starts travelling from your waist down to in between your legs and you jerk back in horror.

“No!”

“Come on, bit, I know you love it when I do that,” he says huskily.

You fight as hard as you can to stop your body reacting, digging your nails into the palm of your hands so hard that it starts to bleed.

You make a run for it, feet pounding on the stonework. You're nearly at the step when John appears right in front of you and twirls you into the wall at the side of the staircase.

“Now come on, love. You can't tell me you don't want this.” He falls upon your neck, giving you soft kisses and small nibbles. Oh that felt good.

For god's sake woman, control yourself!
You lash your foot out to the side, touching the step with your toe and at once he's gone. You can still feel the ghost of his touch upon you and you shiver thickly.

Done.

You'd passed through all the deadly sin trials. You wondered how many times John had had to do this in his various times in Hell.

You stagger up the stairs, your legs almost giving out from the immense amount of exertion you'd just undertaken until you reach a door. The door is simple, wood and a gilded plaque.

**A second chance awaits.**

You push it open.

There's a flash of blinding light and you shield your eyes as it invades every core of your being. You feel your very cells vibrate with the energy until finally you feel a tug behind your navel and you're pulled forward, flung through all existing plains until you land in a heap on a cold stone floor.

Had you escaped? Were you still in the tower?

You hear footsteps coming and scramble to your feet wildly, looking for any sign of danger. You're in a room with two sofas, an expensive piano and...was that a bar? Luxurious bottles lined the shelves.

A dark haired well dressed man in a crisp suit walked into the room and his eyes widened when he saw you.

“Oh hello! Wasn't expecting the help to arrive so soon, the bed clothing is in there but don't mind any of the stains, they're not suspicious,” he winks. He's got a British accent it seems.

“Help?” you stammer.

“Yes, you're not the-” he starts to say but he stops and walks close to you. You back away slightly, a little nervous.

“You look like you've been to Hell and back,” he says, eyes becoming serious.

“You could say that,” you smile weakly.

He sniffs around you and stands back, amazed, “I'd know that scent anywhere. You really have been in Hell. Well bravo for escaping. Did you finally work out all you had to do was open the door?”

“All I had to do?!” you say, your voice rising. “I wouldn't call seven fucking trials and a lot of stairs 'all I had to do'.”

“Stairs? Trials? What on earth are you talking about?” the man says, concern coming over his face. “The cells of Hell should be simple to escape from. You relive your biggest regret behind those doors but all you have to do is leave.”

“So no fire, brimstone, dust, demons or a really big fucking tower?” you ask.

He looks at you confused for a second before a realisation seems to hit. “The First. I knew that bastard would try something as soon as I left. He was always niggling away at me to go for a more traditional look.”
“What do you mean niggling away at you?” you ask, bewildered. “Just who exactly are you?”

“Lucifer Morningstar, darling, I'm the devil,” he grins.
“I'm sorry, what?” you ask bewildered.

“The devil,” he repeats, grinning unnervingly.

“Wait, don't you own a nightclub?” you ask, remembering what John had told you way back in your old apartment.

“Ooohhh,” he purrs. “So you've heard of me? Yes well, you're actually above my nightclub. This is the penthouse.” He gestures around himself.

“So....I'm in America?” you ask, a little dazed.

“Oh you poor thing, you must be very confused. Here, sit on there and I'll fetch you something strong. You probably need it after climbing out of Hell.”

He helps you onto the sofa before going to pour some unmarked spirit into a glass and pouring himself one too. He comes back and sits next to you, handing you the tumbler.

“Cheers,” he says chirpily, clinking the glasses together and taking an elegant sip.

You look down at your own glass before downing the entire contents in one go. Oh that really was not the right choice. Your mouth was cracked from the arid landscape of Hell and the alcohol found every single crevice sending a burning sensation down your body. You cough and Lucifer looks a little perturbed before getting up and fetching you some plain water instead. You gratefully gulp that down, feeling the liquid refreshing you and bringing moisture to your skin.

“Now tell me, how long have you been off this earthly plain?” he asks, crooking one leg over the other and leaning back.

“I have no idea,” you say truthfully. “I got taken by demons on a Tuesday and I don't know what day of the week it is now.”
“Seems you've not been there very long,” Lucifer says filling in the blanks. “It's Monday today.”

“Six days?!” you cry. “I was down there for six days?!”

“Yes, well, time moves very differently in Hell you see,” he says matter of factly.

“Oh fuck,” you mutter.

“Feisty,” Lucifer chuckles. “Now, I insist on giving you a makeover because this whole 'Escapee from Hell' vibe is really not working for you.”

You want to ask if you can use his phone but you don't even know any numbers to call. You certainly don't have John's business card on you.

“Come on,” Lucifer says cheerily, pulling you up. “I'll show the bathroom and you can get yourself cleaned up and I'll give you some clothes to wear. I think I've got your size narrowed down.”

You just run with it. I mean, the devil is going to give you a wardrobe change, that's not the weirdest thing that's happened to you in the last week.

His shower is enormous and contains several jets on all sides. Who needs this much water?! The second you turn it on though you know you're ruined for life. It feels so good being able to strip the ash and dust from your skin and you lather up your hair, detangling the knots and feeling the suds running down you. Eventually you're clean and you wrap yourself in a robe that was hanging by the side of the door.

“Oh much better!” Lucifer purrs. “I can actually see you under all that grime now!”

He gestures to the bed where he's laid out a long sleeved dress and underwear. You walk over and pick up the bra noting it's your exact size.

“How did you-?” You start.

“It's a gift,” he says grinning. “There's a hairdryer over there if you wish to partake and I'll meet you in the main room when you're ready. I'm very curious to get to know you.”

He winks at you and leaves.

As you set the hairdryer on your clean locks, you muse to yourself. John was right, he doesn't seem like a bad guy at all. You wonder how he managed to get such a bad reputation in the first place. You feel a pang in your heart as your brain conjures up the image of John talking to you whilst you lay on the sofa. You still didn't know how things were with him. He'd left you in such a state before you were taken but he got that message to you in Hell. Just where exactly did you stand?

Finally your hair was dry and you got dressed in the clothes Lucifer had picked for you as well as using the brand new cosmetics that were on the vanity table. Damn, he did have a gift. All of the items fitted perfectly. Why did he even have these things lying around?

You walk out and Lucifer wolf whistles at you, “Good gracious, you look divine! Much better than your Hell attire.”

You blush, not used to the compliments he was raining down on you.

“Come, my dear, come sit down,” he pats the sofa and you sit once again, feeling a little more confident now you're not basically dressed in rags. “What's your name?”
“Everyone just calls me Star,” you say simply.

“Star! Wonderful, I like it!” he laughs. “Sort of 80s rockstar vibe, yes?”

“Well I was in a punk band,” you tell him.

“Oh even better!” he muses. “So tell me Star, now you're out of Hell, what do you truly desire?”

He looks deep into your eyes and you feel the power emanating from them. It was like the answer just bubbled up from your chest and into your mouth because before you knew it you said, “I want to find John.”

“And who's John?” he asks, still pressing his power.

“My uh...I don't really know what we are,” you admit.

“If you're saying that, I'm going to guess lovers,” Lucifer chuckles. “Unfinished business?”

“You could say that,” you smile.

“So what's stopping you?” Lucifer asks, taking another sip from his drink.

“I don't know anyone's numbers,” you say. “My phone got smashed up before I got dragged to Hell.”

“Oh no, that's terrible!” he cries. It wasn't in a mocking way, he did seem genuinely mortified. “Oh that simply won't do. Tell me his name and I'll see what I can do. I've got contacts simply everywhere.”

“Um, he's called John Constantine.”

Lucifer almost chokes on his drink and turns to you wide eyed, “Did you say John Constantine?”

“Yeah,” you say, a little apprehensive.

“Oh you're not involved with that petty magician are you?” he asks, sounding a little disappointed. “You're much better than that.”

“Yeah well,” you sigh. “That's how it is.”

“And he's the source of your strife I take it?”

You nod.

“Well,” Lucifer huffs. “Constantine has never been one to be pinned down. Trust me, I should know.” He chuckles to himself.

You're not entirely sure of the meaning behind that and it must have shown in your face because he answers your unspoken question, “John is the only man who has ever refused to sleep with me when I know that swings that way as well.”

“I'm sorry, are you trying to tell me you tried to fuck John?” you ask bewildered.

“He does have sort of a roguish charm,” Lucifer grins. “Certainly worked for you, didn't it?”

You blush and he just laughs.
"I think I still have one of his silly business cards lying around, I'll give him a call," Lucifer smirks.

"Thank you!" you say gratefully.

Lucifer gets up and goes into a side room. You hear a lot of riffling before an 'Aha!' rings out and he comes rushing back. The card he's holding is very old and yellowed. Lucifer whips out his phone and calls the number before you can even ask for the card.

"Johnny!" Lucifer exclaims loudly as John picks up. "Long time no chat! It's Lucifer. Yes...yes...well, I something you might be interested in...no John, this is not a booty call......honestly, you have a filthy mind sometimes......uh huh....yes...well I have your paramour here.....uh huh...goes by the name of Star.....she's in my club, Lux right now, this is where the Hell mouth sent her.....uh huh....and let me just say she is way out of your league....yes, I'll get the champagne ready for when you arrive....ta ta for now!"

He hangs up and you're mildly annoyed he didn't let you talk to John.

"He says he's catching the next flight over," Lucifer smiles. "Well this is certainly an unexpected day!"

He leaps over the sofa and sits down again, leaning across to you, "Now darling, are you sure I can't tempt you to have some fun to pass the time? John will take a while to get here."

"Fun?" you squeak, not knowing exactly what he means.

Lucifer lets his hand rest on your knee but doesn't move it anywhere, "Yes, fun. The kind that's carnal."

"Uh..." you say, your brain melting. "I'm ok, thanks."

"Oh...well," Lucifer muses, withdrawing his hand. "You do have it bad for ol' Johnny boy, don't you?"

"I guess I do," you murmur.

"What a shame to the rest of mankind," he says, taking your hand and kissing it lightly. "Constantine really isn't worthy of you."

"That's for me to decide," you say, finding your voice.

"Fiery," Lucifer chuckles. "I like it. Well if you're really not up for anything, let me show you around my club."

"Sure," you say, just wondering how you manage to get yourself into these situations.

He holds out his arm to you, crooked and you take it as he leads you out of the penthouse.

**

"Chas!" John cries as he bursts into the Chandler household.

Chas comes slowly around the corner, the bruise on his eye still visible. He crosses his arms and
sighs heavily.

“What?” comes the very unimpressed reply.

“I've found her!”

Chas immediately lets his arms drop, “Shit, really? Your little harebrained First scheme worked?!”

“No exactly,” John says, shuffling his foot and ruffling his hair. “All I got from the First was that he'd lost her somewhere in Hell. I went to Mercury and asked her to get a message across.”

“And she's managed to climb out?” Chas asks, walking closer.

“Yeah mate, and you'll never bloody guess where she came out,” John laughed.

“Huh,” Chas mutters before punching John in the gut. John swears horrendously, doubling over and clutching his stomach. “Sorry, just had to get that outta the way.”

“No hard feelings, yeah?” John wheezes.

“You're a shitty friend sometimes, John,” Chas hisses. “Renee wonders why the fuck I still hang around with you.”

“Because we've been through a lot of shit and had each other's backs,” John says, straightening up. “You're my best friend Chas and I know that I give you more trouble than I'm worth but just know I didn't want to put you in harm's way. For a start, Renee would chop me balls off.”

“You're goddamn right she would,” Chas laughs. “Fine...so where is Star now?”

“She's turned up at a club called Lux in Los Angeles. I got a call not long ago from Lucifer Morningstar.”

“That Lucifer?!” Chas cries.

“Yeah,” John sighs. “Which means I've gotta get on a plane for bloody ages and when I get there, he's gonna try and get me pants off again. I mean he may already be trying to get into Star's. Hardly a romantic reunion, eh?”

“Jesus, does anything ever go smoothly with you around?” Chas exclaims.

“I'm bloody cursed, mate,” John sighs. “So I'm just letting you know that I'm gonna be out of the country for a little bit. You'll have to hold the frontline.”

“Yeah,” Chas mutters, rubbing his face. “Yeah I can do that. Are you gonna actually tell Star what's going on because I'm sure she's pretty certain you abandoned her right now?”

John's face goes very serious, “I'm gonna tell her, Chas. I'm not gonna run away this time.”

Chas claps a hand on John's shoulder, “Go get her, buddy. Tell her hi from me.”

**
Wow this club was gorgeous! Everything was so decadent and the floor was immaculately polished. You were used to UK clubs and their sticky, grungy tiling. Chandeliers hung down from the ceiling and there were pristine leather booths dotted around.

“Oh, you like it!” Lucifer says, studying your expression.

“This is beautiful,” you murmur.

“Well, beautiful places need beautiful people and you fit right in darling,” he chuckles, leading you to the bar.

There’s a woman sat there, dressed in leather clothing with a deep scowl as she knocks back shots in rapid succession.

“This is Maze, she's a demon,” Lucifer says flippantly.

You tense up immediately and step back, readying yourself for a fight.

“Oh no, no, no!” Lucifer exclaims, waving his arms about. “She's fine, she's not like what you’ve probably been used to.”

Maze pulls a curved knife out of her waistband and stabs the bar with it, turning to give you a fierceome glower.

“Yeah, she looks friendly,” you mutter sarcastically.

“Who the hell is this?” Maze hisses.

“This is Star,” Lucifer starts but he's interrupted by her derisive snort. “Star is going to be a temporary guest. She's just climbed out of the pits of Hell so be nice. We're just waiting for Constantine to arrive to pick her up.”

“Constantine?” Maze says, her demeanour completely changing and she honest to god starts twirling her hair around her finger. “He's coming?”

“Oh for goodness sake, Maze!” Lucifer sighs. “Stop lusting after him!”

“He's hot,” Maze says simply, shrugging her shoulders.

“Well you're in the presence of his lover, so less of that please.”

Oh well that starts a whole new level of scowling at you.

“This is his lover?” she says, in a disgusted tone. “He picked that?”

“Yeah he picked that,” you spit, pissed off that she was dismissing you and a little jealous she was openly being lecherous about John. “You got a problem?”

“I could rip this little shrimp into twenty pieces,” Maze growls, looking at Lucifer. “Wouldn't be much of a love rival then.”

Your hand flies up before you even think about it and you mutter the blasting spell John taught you. Maze is launched across the club and smacks into the decorative wall art. She twists her legs around and jumps back up before bursting into throaty laughter.

“Changed my mind, I like her,” she chuckles.
“Bravo!” Lucifer cries, clapping his hands. “That was excellent entertainment! I see he has taught you something useful.”

You feel like you should apologise, the polite side of you trying to rise to the surface but on the other hand, Maze totally deserved that and it seems to have won you favour points. You just shrug and walk to the bar brazenly.

“Think I'm ready for more of the hard stuff,” you say, sitting on the stool.

“I like her even more,” Maze smirks. She pours some green liquid into a bunch of shot glasses and lines them up. “Get that down you.”

You take the shot glass and drain it in one fluid motion. Oh fuck, that was strong. What the hell was that?! You instantly feel the slight tipsiness hit but you manage to keep yourself composed. Maze just nods, impressed and downs one herself. Lucifer comes to your right and joins you.

Well here you are, taking shots with the Devil and a demon. Just another day in your life right?

**

John steps off the plane, rummaging in his satchel for his false passport. Certainly couldn't show them the one with his true birth date on. Nobody ever believed it. God he really disliked the heat here. Instantly his shirt was stuck to his skin and there was no chance of wearing his trenchcoat unless he wanted to pass out.

He walked through border control and out of the airport and blinked as he saw a sign bearing his name.

“Allright mate? That has my last name on it,” he says, lighting up a cigarette.

“Yes of course, sir,” the chauffeur nods and takes John's suitcase before taking him to a limo.

“In there?!” John exclaims.

“Yes, courtesy of Mr Morningstar. You may continue smoking if you wish,” the man says nonchalantly.

John looks bewildered but climbs in anyway and takes a large drag of his cigarette as the limo engine starts.

**

You were pretty sure you were drunk. The club had filled and ebbed with L.A’s elite and wealthy and you seemed to be the popular flavour of the day. Guys couldn't seem to get enough of the accent and Lucifer laughed every time some hapless man tried to buy you a drink.

“I told you you were worth more than Constantine,” he chuckles.
“You know,” you say, slightly slurring. “You can shush. I really like this guy ok?”

“Oh I'm sure darling,” Lucifer smirks, rolling his eyes and passing you another shot. “Well he must be a bloody good shag to keep you interested.”

“Yeah, actually,” you say, the words spilling from your lips before you could stop yourself. “He is.”

“Oooohhhh,” Lucifer smiles, intrigued. “Come on, tell me all the dirty details! I want to hear everything.”

“I am not telling you that!” you say indignantly. “That's private!”

Lucifer loops his arm around your waist and pulls you in conspiratorially, “I won't tell anyone, I promise.”

“Oi mate!” you hear from behind you.

That cocky semi Scouse accent. John.

“You wanna get your hands off me bird?” he says, arms rigidly folded.

“Johnny! Sweetheart! Don't be like that, I haven't touched her!” Lucifer says, withdrawing his hand and holding it up in mock surrender.

“And it stays that way,” John growls before dropping his suitcase and satchel to the ground and coming straight up to you. He picks you up off the bar stool and pulls you into a fiercely intense hug. As much as you want to be angry with him for what he did, you just melt into his arms. You instantly felt safe again.

“I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, love,” John keeps whispering against you, stroking your hair and squeezing you tightly. He pulls back and presses his forehead to yours.

In your drunken state, all you want to do is feel that closeness again and you pull his head towards you, finding his mouth with yours and kissing you languidly. You've missed that taste, the taste of cigarettes, the rough stubble brushing against your skin. He draws back from you, eyes searching yours and you see the anguish deep in his face.

“Well I don't think you have anything to worry about, darling,” Lucifer laughs, watching the two of you embrace. “He's clearly smitten with you.”

“You can bloody shut up,” John hisses.

“Don't be rude,” you chide, playfully smacking John on the chest.

“Yes, listen to your paramour, John,” Lucifer says, holding out a whisky tumbler to him.

John takes it and drains it quickly, wincing slightly at the burn, “Got anywhere private in 'ere where I can chat to Star?”

“Oh yes! Of course!” Lucifer says, standing up and showing you both to the stairs. “You can take my penthouse. I am sure it has everything you need. I keep protection in the right hand cabinet and any toys or restraints in the left hand cabinet. Everything is regularly disinfected. Should you need my assistance or a third party, just ring the cord at the side of the bed.”

You blush horribly and Lucifer just winks at you.
John leads you up the stairs and you get into the penthouse. He closes the door and rounds on you, pulling you into a searing kiss.

“God, Star, I've been so fucking stupid. I should never have left.”

“Why did you?” you ask, in a small voice. The alcohol was giving you the courage to ask the questions you normally wouldn't.

“Because I got scared,” he admits. “Any time I've ever admitted love for someone they've ended up dead. I thought if I distanced myself that wouldn't happen but it just made it bloody worse. I don't deserve you. You're stonkingly gorgeous, brave, funny and the wildest shag I've had in a couple of decades.”

You laugh but he shushes you with a finger over your lips.

“I'm not finished, love. I didn't want you to fall into my world, I really didn't. I came back, you know. I came back the next morning and you weren't there and I saw your phone and-”

He starts choking up and you can see him fighting the tears back. If you had any doubts that John Constantine felt anything for you they were completely erased in this moment.

You pull him into a tight hug, trying to calm him down. His muscles are extremely tense as he tries to restrain himself from breaking down in front of you.

“It's ok, John,” you say soothingly. “I was pissed at you. I was so fucking pissed and hurt and alone when you left but that message you got to me in Hell, I knew you would never abandon me.”

“You are bloody perfect, love,” John sighs against you. “I'm no fucking good for you.”

“Those trials,” you whisper, almost afraid to admit it. “The deadly sin ones. The worst ones were when I saw you.”

“I was in them?” he asks, pulling back and gripping your face intently. “Which ones?”

“Envy,” you admit. “And lust.”

“Lust, I get,” he says, that cheeky smirk drifting back across his face. “But envy?”

“Yeah, that one was rough,” you laugh. “That was you surrounded by everyone you'd ever had sex with and you were practically having an orgy.”

His eyes widen, “And how did you feel?” He's almost nervous to ask.

“It was really hard not to be jealous,” you say simply. “Don't you get it yet? You keep saying you're not worthy of me or you don't deserve me but I'm obviously deeply in love with you John because here you are, showing up in my darkest fears. So if you want to protect me, then please don't break my heart, ok?”

“Oh, love,” he whispers, dropping his head and steadying his chest. “I'm really sorry.”

“Just shut up,” you hiss, pulling him into another kiss. You didn't want to listen to him torturing himself any more.

His hands draw up your waist and you arch into the feeling. He leans back, a little apprehensive, as if he wants to say something more.
“Do you love me, John?” you ask bluntly, the alcohol completely taking over now.

“Yes, yes I do,” he breathes heavily.

“That's all that matters then,” you smile. “Now are you going to just stand there and mope or what because I've been pretty starved of human contact for the last six days and the Lust circle definitely left some lasting memories.”

That set him off. The confident swagger swept over his body once more and his eyes sparkled with mischievous intent.

“Well how can I say no to that, hmmm?” he grins. “Especially in that tight little number.” He gestures to your dress.

“Oh you like this?” you smirk, twirling around so he can appreciate it more.

“I'd like it better around your ankles,” he growls, grabbing you and squeezing your arse hard. “I've missed you, bit.”

“Show me,” you say tauntingly.

That's all the encouragement he needs as he unzips your dress, yanking it to the floor and almost purrs at the sight of you in lingerie. He spins you around, kissing your neck as his hands wander over your body, cupping, kneading, groping.

“Where d'ya wanna do this?” he rumbles in your ear.

“Not the bed,” you giggle. “God knows what's happened there.”

“Pretty sure Lucifer's fucked someone's in every inch of this place,” John chuckles, letting his hand run down over your underwear and in between your legs.

“Hmmmm, piano?” you smirk.

“I like your thinking, love.”

He spins you back round and picks you up. You wrap your legs around him as he carries you to towards the piano, placing you on top of it and lying his trenchcoat down next to you. You grab onto his tie, pulling him down towards you into a kiss and you feel his tongue slip into your mouth. You involuntarily writhe against him, moaning slightly. You can feel him getting hard, his suit trousers straining. You quickly pull the tie off and throw it to the ground and start unbuttoning his shirt, kissing at his chest as you expose more and more of it. You don't pull it off completely and let it hang there, open, just enough to get that glimpse of the muscle.

“Enjoying the view, bit?” he chuckles.

“I've missed it,” you smile before biting softly at the skin. He groans slightly before pushing you back and hooking his fingers into your underwear before pulling them down and off.

“And I've missed this,” he growls before dropping down and gripping your thighs.

His tongue laps at you hungrily and you let your head roll back. God he was really good at that. You can tell he's slightly rushing, afraid to get caught but you really don't mind the harsh pace he's setting. His teeth rake slightly over your clit and you loudly gasp. You can feel him smirking as he rolls his tongue around and down, tasting you. You shudder, your arms giving out and you lay flat across the
top of the piano.

“God I love hearing you moan for me,” he says huskily and gives you one last long lick before standing back up.

You get back up and he just pushes you back down before unbuckling his belt and dropping his trousers. He leaves the shirt on as he climbs up onto the piano on top of you. His mouth finds yours and you taste the slight tang of yourself mingled with the alcohol. He positions himself so the tip of his cock is just resting outside your entrance and he draws back. Impatiently, you roll your hips forward so he slides slightly into you. He hisses.

“Fuck, Star, I'm trying hard not to just take you bareback here.”

You feel yourself clench at the thought of him fucking you like that and he grunts heavily.

“Star...” he says in a warning voice.

“Couldn't help it,” you smirk.

“You're a right wild one, aren't you?” he pants, struggling to keep himself still. “You just love the thought of ol' Johnny filling you up, huh?”

You clench again and he growls fiercely before slamming his full length into you. You moan loudly and draw your legs up around his back, giving him easier access.

“God, Star, I can't wait. I need to have you.”

You run your hands down his chest and reach up to bite his neck sharply. “Fuck me, John,” you whisper against him.

He doesn't need any more permission than that and grabs your thighs, pulling them tightly around himself as he thrusts into you. He looks down, watching his cock disappear into you and you hear the rumble of arousal in his chest.

“You're fucking gorgeous, love,” he says, face furrowed in lust.

You pull him back down towards you, kissing him messily and moaning into his mouth. His hand dips down in between you and finds your clit, palming it roughly and you loll your head back, twitching slightly at the harsh sensation. His fingers move so quickly against you as he never breaks his relentless rhythm and you start to feel the stirrings in your core.

“You gonna cum for Johnny, love?” he pants, noticing you're tensing up.

“Uh huh,” you say breathlessly.

“Fuck everyone in this nightclub, you scream for me,” he hisses, working you even faster.

Oh shit! You orgasm hard, bucking on the piano and scrabbling wildly for something to hold onto. You're vaguely away that you're shouting John's name. Your thighs clamp around his waist, trying to ride out the sensations and he grabs your cheek urgently.

“Star, you want me to pull out, you gotta let me go,” he growls.

“No,” you say, spasming lightly. “I don't want you too. I'll deal with the consequences later, I just wanna feel you.”
“As the lady wishes,” he pants and his rhythm becomes brutally punishing before he tenses, driving deep into you and you feel the warmth of his cum filling you up.

“Fuck!” he cries, before falling onto his elbows and kissing the top of your forehead. “I love you.”

“I love you too,” you whisper.

You both lay there, trying to regain your breath. Neither one of you moves away, content to feel close to one another. John peppers your face with small kisses before finding your lips and giving you a long affectionate one.

The door bursts open and you half scream. John rapidly throws his trenchcoat over you trying to preserve your modesty.

“Oh no!” Lucifer cries, looking at the both of you. “I've missed the fun it seems!”


“It seems I grossly underestimated your stamina, Johnny boy. Thought you would've been done by now,” he chuckles before walking to the bedroom. “Don't mind me, just need to pick up something for the detective.”

John hurriedly pulls out of you and you throw the trenchcoat around yourself buckling it tightly. John pulls his trousers up, hastily fighting with the belt before Lucifer walks back out. He throws a small packet at you and you look down to see some Plan B.

“Always carry some in case of emergencies,” he smirks. “Your voice does carry somewhat.”

You're pretty sure you're beetroot red all the way down to your chest.

“Oh and, oddly, that trenchcoat,” he says twirling back round to face you. “Really works for you. Gives you that sultry femme fatale vibe. I'd strongly suggest you steal it from him.”

“Morningstar,” John rumbles in warning.

“Oh hush, John. You know I'm only teasing,” Lucifer smirks before he goes to the elevator and opens the doors. “By the way, fantastic display you two. That'll be in memory for quite a while.”

The doors close on his grinning face.

“Is he always like that?” you ask.

“Pretty much,” John grimaces. “He's completely without boundaries. He'll try to fuck anything that moves practically.”

You snort and stand up, feeling John's cum trickling down your thigh. “I think I need to clean up.”

“Sure, love,” he says, smiling warmly, the corners of his eyes creasing. He pulls you close and kisses the top of your head. “Annoyingly, Lucifer's right, you do look stunning in my coat.”

You laugh, taking it off and throwing it over his face before gathering your underwear and dress and going to the bathroom. You take the tablets with you too. You clean yourself up and swallow one of the pills before smoothing the dress back down over you and trying to tame the wild sex hair you had going on.

You come back out and John is re-dressed, tab already in his mouth and the smoke curling up into the ceiling. Same as ever. He sees you and opens his arms out to you wide and you happily nestle
against him as he strokes your hair.

“You gonna stop worrying so much now?” you say chidingly.

He takes a long drag, dropping the ash into a tray he'd found and kisses your head, “Yeah, yeah I am. No more commitment scares, I'm here to stay you bloody beautiful stubborn woman.”

You laugh kissing the underside of his jaw until you hear the ding of the elevator again. A blonde woman with a severe ponytail and an impeccable suit marches in, in fervent conversation with Lucifer.

“I mean, two deaths where the person burned up from the inside? I need you on this, Lucifer, this is just your kind of weird.”

She stops when she sees the both of you and you see some wheels turning in her head. She whirls around back to Lucifer, “I'm sorry, did I interrupt a threesome you had going on?!”

“God no!” you cry before John can say anything. “We're just visiting.”

“More Brits?” she says, eyebrow raised.

“Old friends,” Lucifer grins. “This is John Constantine and his partner Star.”

You see her roll her eyes at your stage name. She's probably imagining you're a stripper.

“John is something of a consultant himself on all things weird,” Lucifer continues.

“And Star?” she says derisively.

“I'm a musician,” you say curtly. “Signed with Geffen's UK branch recently.”

“Huh,” she says, in a slightly more friendly tone.

You figure she was quite similar to Maze, that kind of initial standoffish vibe. You walk over and hold your hand out in a greeting, “Nice to meet you...”

“Chloe Decker, LAPD,” she says shaking your hand.

“Wonderful!” Lucifer cries. “Hey, they should join us on this!”

“Oh...oh no, that's-” Chloe starts but Lucifer cuts her off.

“Oh come on, Detective, you said yourself this thing was weird, well John specialises in the weird. What do you say? It's perfect!”

Chloe looks flustered, like she doesn't really have a say in the situation and you look to John who seems completely bewildered, bewildered to the point his cigarette is practically a stub but he hasn't noticed.

“Ok, fine,” Chloe concedes, holding her hands up. “You can help right? You're not just going to get in my way?”

“Wouldn't dream of it,” John says, before taking the tab out of his mouth and dropping it into the ashtray. “Now what's this about combusting people?”

Lucifer looks at you and gives you a comedic wink and grins maniacally.
So much for going back home, you think.
Detective Decker leaves after announcing that you'll begin the investigation in the morning. As much as John tries to keep her talking, she finally states she really needs to get home. The two of you are left with Lucifer who just rocks on the balls of his feet frantically.

“Well, isn't this exciting!” Lucifer exclaims, digging his hands into his pockets. “Partnering on a case, who would've ever thought that would happen?”

“You,” you say bluntly. “You're the one who suggested it.”

“Silly me,” he says with an excited schoolboy air. “Well I've heard so much about dear Johnny's mystical prowess, I couldn't help but be intrigued to see it.”

“Me name's John mate, not Johnny,” Constantine says flatly. “I 'aven't gone by Johnny in a long time.”

You know that to be a lie. He definitely likes using it when you're having sex but you don't fight him on the point.

“Not since your punk band days, yes, I remember,” Lucifer laughs, licking his lips. “You always did wear a pair of leather trousers well.”

“For god's sake,” John mutters, rolling his eyes.

“Alright, no need to take Dad's name,” Lucifer says huffily. “I don't quite understand you sometimes, John, I saw you with many many men in those days and yet-”

“Mate, you're the bloody Devil,” John says squarely. “Not about to add that to me bedpost.”

Lucifer looks as if he's digesting that before he nods, “I suppose that's fair, I mean we were supposed to be mortal enemies at one point. Still, you're more in my league than hers.” He points to you.
“Maybe,” John shrugs. “But that's up to her and without being an egotistical prick, I would say she's already made that choice.”

“I am right here,” you say, holding your hands out. “Stop discussing me like I'm miles away.”

John chuckles and comes close, throwing his arm over your shoulder before gently headbutting your forehead, “Sorry, love.”

“Yes, apologies,” Lucifer says, although you don't think he actually means it.

“You can make it up to me,” you say. “I've not eaten in a long time.”

“Oh well!” Lucifer begins, clapping his hands and whipping his phone out of his pocket. “I can certainly help that.”

He begins talking to someone rapidly on the other end of the line, fawning and chuckling as he does so. You look to John, a little thrown and he seems to be just as puzzled.

“I've booked you a reservation at the Hammond, all expenses paid for by myself of course. Although you're going to need something a bit more glitzy.”

He hurries off into his bedroom before returning with a long evening gown of green satin, “I think this will suit very nicely. John, I'm sure you have another five copies of the outfit you always wear...”

“If it works, mate, don't fix it,” John huffs.

“Quite, but it simply won't do for this establishment,” Lucifer continues.

“Just roll with it,” you whisper. “It'll get us out of here quicker.”

“Fine,” he grumbles. “You got another outfit in mind I take it?”

Lucifer spends a little longer searching before he finally comes back with a tailored black suit with a crisp black shirt and a satin red tie, “See, you even get to keep some of your old colour scheme. Now, this is one of mine so it won't be perfectly fitted but I did sleep with this master tailor once and he taught me quite a few tricks so I'll help you with it.”

You try to stop yourself from giggling at John's horrified face before ducking out from under his arm, grabbing the clothes and mirthfully shouting, “Good luck!” before disappearing into the bathroom.

You take off the cocktail dress and zip yourself into the evening gown. Damn. You looked good. You looked better than good, you looked fucking amazing. As much as Lucifer was extremely disconcerting and completely hedonistic, he had very good taste. You fix your hair, taming it into loose curls before touching up the make up that John had smeared whilst you were going at it. After exiting the bathroom you see that Lucifer has set some heels and jewellery out for you. You slightly balk at the necklace, holding it up to the light and seeing the glittering emeralds and diamonds. Oh shit, this was probably worth your entire advance from the band's album.

Delicately you put it on and the matching earrings. Good to go. You walk out into the main room. John's got his back to you but even at this angle you can tell the suit fits him really well.....really really well. You try to stop yourself from being lecherous.

“Good gracious!” Lucifer exclaims upon seeing you. “You look stunning, darling! You remind me
of old Hollywood sirens!"

John spins around and he can't quite seem to shut his mouth as he openly gapes at you.

“Johnny boy, you're staring,” Lucifer chides. “Say something nice about your paramour.”

John shakes himself out of his trance, “Bloody fucking hell, love. I don't know what to say! Wow!”

You can't help but let a big grin spill over your face, “You clean up pretty good yourself.”

You really can't deny that John looks extremely handsome. The black and red combo makes him look even more roguish. Your mind drifts to all the things you'd like to do to him in that suit....

“Do I need to leave you two for a while to go it again?” Lucifer chuckles, watching the two of you exchange appreciative glances.

“As much as I'd love to, I wouldn't have the energy without some food,” you say. You're struck by your own frankness. Maybe this was a side effect of hanging around someone who literally said whatever they felt like.

“Gotta keep me bird well fed,” John chuckles, holding his hand out for you. You take it and Lucifer escorts you downstairs to a limo outside.

“Don't do anything I wouldn't do,” Lucifer smirks. “Well, I suppose that does leave a lot of room for experimentation. I'll leave you two my spare key for the penthouse, feel free to use the bed when you get tired. I'll be out all night.” He winks, handing John a key before closing the limo door.

The engine starts and John turns to you, “God you're bloody gorgeous, bit.”

“Shut up,” you hiss blushing madly.

He leans over and lightly kisses from your neck down to your collarbone, “Never. I'm a lucky bastard.”

You playfully kiss his nose, “Guess you're finally taking me on that sophisticated date.”

John laughs warmly, “Looks like it, I hope it's not too poncy.”

“Me too,” you giggle, wrinkling your nose. “I can't do the whole caviar thing.”

“Our pizza nights in did me just fine,” John says reminiscing.

“But if we did that, you would have never have got to see me in this dress,” you pout.

“Good point, love,” John says, slinking his arm around your waist and his hands slide against the satin. He leans close to your ear, “I'm trying very hard not to take you right now on this seat.”

“Later,” you smirk and he lets out a small frustrated groan.

The limo pulls up at the restaurant and you're ushered in. This place was unlike anything you'd ever been in before. You could almost see the collective wealth gathered as they ate their impeccably plated dinners.

“Oh!” The maitre d' says. “Mr Morningstar told us to expect you. It's the Constantine's isn't it?”

John nods politely but you catch the slight smile, almost like he's amused at the reservation name.
You're seated at the table and there's a plethora of waiters ready to ply you with wine tasters and menu suggestions. Frankly it's overwhelming. There's too much choice and you feel like a moron trying to keep up with it. You even catch yourself making your accent more stereotypically English and posh. Guess you wanted to keep up appearances, right?

“Guess it's official, love,” John says, swirling the extremely expensive scotch around his glass. “We're an item.”

“The Constantine's huh?” you joke. “Maybe I'll make a sign and put that on the front door of the warehouse.”

“Oooo, you're such a romantic,” John laughs. “I bet that would confuse the shit out of the postman.”

You settle into good nature teasing. It's surprising how quickly you both slip in normalcy, especially given the events of the last week. One thing you always loved about being with John was how he never shied away from being affectionate. Most men you'd dated seemed to have a problem with it or found it not 'manly' enough but he openly held your hand across the table, stroking your fingers lightly and squeezing them every time he caught your eye.

You get through the starter and main meal without making too much of an idiot of yourself and you finally come to dessert. You look at the menu in bewilderment.

“But I want everything!” you say, scanning the pages. “It all looks so good!”

John bursts into laughter, earning a few glares from the diners nearby, “I'm pretty sure you probably could get everything since Lucifer is paying n' all but I doubt you'd finish them.”

“Help me,” you say in your best innocent voice.

“Mmm, how can I say no to a lady in distress?” John purrs. He leans over and strokes your cheek fondly. “Close your eyes, bit, let your fingers wander over the page and when I kiss you, that's what you're 'aving.”

You follow his instructions, letting your hand lazily zip up and down the menu until you feel the table shift and John placing a soft kiss on your lips. He pulls back slightly but you can still feel his mouth against yours in the barest contact.

“That one,” he says, lips tickling your skin.

Something with chocolate, well that was fine by you.

After the meal you both head back to the limo and John pulls your legs across his lap, arm around your body and pulling you into a cuddle.

“That was different,” he said, smiling into your hair.

“I don't think I could get used to it,” you joke. “Too fancy for me.”

“Honestly, you can take the girl out of Manchester..” John starts but you thump him in the chest.

“Don't even start that Scouse boy. They're lucky you didn't nick the silverware.”

John feigns a look of mock hurt, “You wound me, love.”

“Oh well I think I have a cure for that,” you say, taking his cheek in your hand and drawing his face down to yours. You both languidly kiss each other for a time, not in a carnal sense but just in a
When you arrive back at Lux, the last dregs of the partygoers are finishing up their final orders. Maze is behind the bar, looking bored witless but she gives you a nod, looking you up and down and then giving you a lascivious wink. You wink back. Fuck it, you look good.

Upstairs, John seems to be itching to get out of Lucifer's suit and he yanks the tie off, throwing it disdainfully on the piano, “Smells like him.”

“You two have a big history, huh?” you say, amused, as he strips out of the clothing.

“Morningstar was a pain in the arse,” he mutters. “Followed me when I was in Mucous Membrane, showed up at Ravenscar and popped up in New York after that. Every single time he's tried it on or managed to get in me way about a job.”

“Even at Ravenscar?!” you say, mortified. John had told you about the Newcastle incident and how it had led to his mental hospital stay.

“Yeah,” John sighed. “You can imagine how that fucking sounded to the orderlies. ‘Oh help me, the Devil's trying to fuck me!’ I keep him at arm's length. He's not a bad bloke but his appetites are insatiable. He does seem to have calmed down since I last saw him. Maybe this consultant work is doing him some good.”

“You mean the fact he's very obviously in love with the Detective?” you snort.

“Well there is that,” John laughs. “Anyway, enough about him. Let's get into bed. I want to hold you.”

“I'm not going to say no to that,” you smile.

You both go to the bedroom to see a small note on top of the pillows.

Fresh sheets, I promise. L x

“Thank god,” you laugh.

John unzips your dress and kisses you across your back as he peels the material away. It pools in a silky stream around your feet. He undoes your bra but keeps your underwear on before sitting on the edge of the bed and pulling you down onto the mattress. He throws the covers over you and you lean onto his chest, his arm crooked under your neck.

“Missed you being here,” he murmurs, tapping his torso.

You gently kiss his chest before laying your head back down, “I'm reclaiming this spot.”

“Fine by me, love,” he rumbles, nuzzling into the top of your head. “I'm all yours.”

“All mine?” you ask, a little sleepily.

“Always, bit.”

You feel the lulls of your dreams pulling you into slumber. You started to breathe slowly and your
eyes closed involuntarily.

“Love you,” John whispered along with your true name, thinking you couldn't hear him before you felt the familiar rhythm of his sleeping chest moving lightly.

**

You wake feeling encased in John's arm. You must have fallen asleep whilst still on his chest. You sigh contented before...wait.....there was a third pressure on you, a third arm. You snap your eyes awake and look down. That was definitely another hand thrown over both you and John. As silently as you can, you shake John. His eyes fling open immediately and you place a finger over his mouth shushing him. He looks to you, your eyes extremely wide and then looks past you. His eyes go wide as well.

“Bloody fucking hell, Morningstar! What the fuck are you doing?” he cries.

You felt a stirring behind you and the maybe not so accidental brush of a hand against your back.

“This is my bed, John,” comes the drawling reply. “I do like to sprawl out when I'm asleep.”

“This is not sprawling, this is a mass cuddle,” you say, moving away from him and rolling over John's body to be on the other side of the bed.

“Don't be so surprised!” He says fervently. “The Devil likes a good snuggle as much as any one! You're both very comfy by the way. Did you know he kisses your head whilst you're asleep?”

You don't think you've ever seen John blush before but there it was, the colour reaching all the way into his blond hair.

"Mate, I'm gonna kick your fucking arse in a second if you don't shut up,” he growls.

“Humans, so deliciously easy to tease,” Lucifer chuckles. He gets up and...well of course he has silk boxers. You'd expect nothing less. What does surprise you is that when he stretches, two giant wings pop up out of nowhere.

“Oh for goodness' sake!” Lucifer cries. “Dad's really getting on my nerves with these now!”

You stare, openly admiring how beautiful they are. The feathers are almost opalescent, shimmering in the morning sunlight.

“So that's not like an angel form of morning wood?” you can't help but ask. You feel John crease up next to you, trying hard not to snort.

Lucifer whirls round and stares at you bewildered before looking to his wings, “You know, I never thought of it that way. They do tend to pop out around that sort of time and during sex lately. I mean who would be an angel really? It's such a lot of goody two shoes nonsense.” He rolls his shoulders and the wings fold down and disappear out of sight. You see two faint scars where they would have met his back. Lucifer throws on a silk robe before climbing back onto the bed, hands laced behind his head.

“So....are we excited for today?” he grins. “I know I am. Combustible humans, what a quirky case!
Do you have any initial thoughts, Johnny boy?"

“Might be an ifrit, could be a fire demon, could be a curse. Won't know 'til I get a closer look.”

Ifrit, you remembered that from your research. Fire spirits, a relative of Djinns. Guess that could make sense.

“Ooo, excellent,” Lucifer muses, crossing his legs. “I love the intrigue! Anyway, we'd best get on to the Precinct now. Detective Decker doesn't like tardiness. John, you'll be fine in your forties film noir get up but Star, you'll need something appropriate to wear. I'll be right back.”

He leaves into his walk in wardrobe.

John pulls you close and kisses your forehead, “Morning, love. Not got a chance to say that with him running his gob over there.”

You laugh and rub your cheek against his stubbled one, “Morning.” You let your hands slide over his torso and down across his boxers. Instantly you feel him growing hard. He lets out a soft growl.

“Oooo you're a naughty bird, aren't you?” he rumbles. “He'll be back in a second.”

“I know, just wanted to see your face,” you smirk.

John leans over and nips your neck, “I'm gonna get you back for that, love, you bloody tease.”

“Can't wait,” you wink.

Lucifer walks back in and hesitates upon seeing the looks you and John are giving each other, “Honestly, you two are insatiable! I love it!”

He lays down a business suit for you along with fresh underwear before grabbing his own clothes and walking out into the main room.

You make to grab the bra that's left out but as you lean over, John squeezes your arse and you can't help but laugh.

“Couldn't resist, bit,” John laughs. “It was just there.”

“Yeah yeah,” you sigh, rolling your eyes before pulling on the clothes. You walk into the bathroom and brush your teeth with the spare toothbrush Lucifer has given you and style your hair into something more presentable for the police force. You try to emulate Chloe's severe ponytail but honestly, it makes you look younger for some reason. Oh well, she already doesn't take you seriously as it is.

You walk back out and see that John is still lounging under the sheets in his boxers.

“You look like a kid going to a job interview,” John snorts.

“Oh piss off,” you hiss.

Lucifer pops his head round the corner, “Yes, I see what you mean. It's not womanly enough. The pencil skirt doesn't show your assets off well. I'll fix that.” Sure enough, he comes back with matching trousers and a silk blouse with a pussy bow collar.

“It worries me that you have this much stuff lying around,” you say, taking the items.
“Well it’s come in useful,” Lucifer chuckles.

You shuck the blazer off and decide, fuck it, you were just half naked in bed with both of these men, you’ve got no shame left. You unbutton the cotton shirt you have and throw it on the bed before pulling the blouse on. Finally you drop your skirt, wiggling out of it before pulling the trousers on and tucking the shirt into it. You look up to see two hungry pairs of eyes on you. You turn around to the mirror, trying not to smile at their obvious faces. You let your hair fall out of the ponytail and braid strands of hair together, pinning them at the back of your hair. Much better. You felt more comfortable now. You turn back and both men nod their appreciation.

“Oh that is definitely working for you more,” Lucifer muses. “Professional rock star. It’s a new style. I love it! I might suggest that one to Versace, I can see it being all the rage in Milan!”

He walks back out into the main room and John watches him leave before quickly flashing you what he’s been hiding under the covers. You see his boxers straining and he gives you that shit eating smirk he always does.

“The things you do to me, love,” he whispers.

“Get dressed, you bohemian,” you laugh.

“Bring me suitcase in, I’m not getting up like this whilst he’s about,” he says, nodding towards the main room.

“What did your last slave die of?” you say mockingly.

“Backchat,” John laughs.

You poke your tongue out and walk into the main room, grabbing the suitcase and wheeling it back in, throwing it on the bed next to John. He opens it and...surprise surprise, there’s about three white shirts, the same dress pants and a couple of red ties. Talk about predictable, John. No wait, there was a t-shirt in there with some band logo on and jogging pants. Ok, that surprised you.

He takes out what he needs and he also rummages about until he finds something. He hands a phone over to you.

“I got you a new one,” he says. “Chas managed to save your SIM and memory card so all your contacts should still be there and pictures and whatnot. Thought you might wanna have it.”

You smile warmly, taking the phone and turning it on, “Thank you.”

Shit. Your phone didn’t stop buzzing for about ten minutes as all the messages descended. Some were from Valentine, some were from Roxy, some from your mother and then there was one from John...

**John: I'm a fucking idiot. I'm coming home. I'm so sorry.**

He must have sent that when you were carted off by the demon.

“Yeah you're a fucking idiot,” you laugh, looking at the screen.

“Oh bollocks, I'd forgotten I'd sent that,” John says groaning as he slips into his trousers.
Another chime. This one from Chas.

**Chas:** I'm really glad you escaped. I know you won't read this until John's with you but just know that we both missed you and can't wait to have you back on the home turf. Also I hope John has told you how he feels otherwise I'm gonna punch him again.

“Chas punched you?” you ask.

“Long story, love,” John sighed. “Let's just say it was deserved.”

You text Chas back:

**Star:** Missed you too. He's told me and gotten a sufficient bollocking. Thank you for everything. I really mean that.

“Oi, you sexting my best mate?” John asks, teasingly.


“I'm mad jealous,” John laughs finishing off the buttons on his shirt before pulling his tie on.

“How are we doing in here?” Lucifer asks, coming in, rubbing his hands excitedly. “Ready to go?”

“Yeah, let's get this show on the road,” John sighs, trying to straighten out his bed hair.

Lucifer drives you in one of his many sports car doing flashy stunts and engine revs along the streets of Los Angeles. Frankly you just want to get there in one piece. You don't give a shit how fancy the car is.

You reach the precinct and it seems like everybody knows Lucifer, even more than that, that they love him. There's so many smiles and fawning waves and people handing him coffee and baked pastries. You and John get practically ignored until you reach Detective Decker's desk where she sits, frowning at some paperwork.

“Good morning, Detective,” Lucifer smiles. “We're here as promised!”

A man is stood next to Chloe rolling his eyes. Clearly he's not part of the Lucifer fan club.

“And...Dan,” Lucifer says curtly.

“No Detective Douche today?” Dan says tartly.

“Not in front of the guests,” Lucifer purrs, indicating you two.

“What's going on?” Dan says, squaring his shoulders up a little.

“They're friends of Lucifer's,” Chloe replies monotonously. “He says they can help and that one of them is a UK detective.”
“Oh yeah?” Dan says, coming round the desk and getting in John's face.

“Yeah,” John says matter of factly. “Sounds like you're not doing too well by yourself, mate.”

“Doing just fine,” Dan mutters.

“Does there need to be a dick measuring contest in every country?” you roll your eyes.

You think you see Chloe smirk and Lucifer certainly starts chuckling. Both men look to you in surprise before backing away from the other and looking at the floor.

“Now play nice and introduce yourselves,” you chide.

“Dan Espinoza,” Dan says, begrudgingly holding out his hand.

"John Constantine,” John replies, taking the hand and shaking it. “This is Star Constantine.”

You blink. Did you just hear that right?

“Nice to meet you,” Dan says, shaking your hand also.

“Lovely,” Lucifer drawls. “Now we're all friends. Let's get on with this case, shall we?”

You're still looking at John and he just bends down and whispers in your ear, “Can't go calling you by one name, love. You're not bloody Madonna.”

“But yours?” you ask quietly.

“You're the one that wanted a sign on the warehouse, bit,” he smirked. “I think it suits you.”

You're interrupted by Chloe who stands up from her desk with a tired expression.

“Ok. Here's the basic circs. Both of the victims are men. Both were found in their houses with their internal organs liquefied like they'd been boiled. Both men lived alone. There's no reason either of them should have died like that.”

“We've found no medication, drugs, whatever that could do something like this,” Dan continued.

“Show me the victims,” Lucifer says, clicking his fingers impatiently.

Dan scowls before passing photos of the men over.

“I've seen one of them before,” Lucifer muses. “Came in Lux once. Dreadfully out of place. Tried chatting me up, the poor thing.”

“Why am I not surprised,” Chloe says, rolling her eyes.

“I know, I just exude natural charm,” Lucifer grins.

“How does that help us?” Dan says, puzzled.

“Well you know that he was gay or bisexual now,” you say pointing out the obvious.

Dan scoffs at you and you see John's fist tightening. These two really didn't get on. “Hardly going to crack the case is it?”

“No she's right,” Chloe says, sifting through financial records. “If this guy is going to clubs to hit on
men but seems out of place, maybe there'll be something in......look!

She shows Dan several transactions and he looks at you bemused, as if astonished you had some intelligence.

“There's several transactions in various clubs across Los Angeles but one club in particular.....and see this! The other guy went there too.”

“And what's the name of this club?” Lucifer asks.

“Erm.....” Chloe says embarrassed.

“Oh no, Detective, you have to tell me now!” Lucifer smirks.

“Leather Rainbows,” she says blushing slightly.

“Quirky,” Lucifer chuckles. “Seems more of an S&M kind of establishment.”

“Guess we should check it out,” Chloe says, scooping her coat up. “Come on, I'll drive you all.”

You pry John away from his stare out with Dan and pile into Chloe's unmarked car. The ride there is awkward. Lucifer keeps chatting inanely but Chloe barely responds. You wonder if she's like this with everyone.

You pull up to the club and just as Lucifer guessed, it's definitely a whips and chains kind of place. You can instantly see the posters advertising fetish nights. You walk into the building and wow it was dark. The walls were covered with velvet and leather panel inserts, all in deep rich colours and there was restraints nailed into the wall. Some of the stuff you had no idea what it was.

The manager comes over and Chloe flashes her badge, “Can I ask you a few questions please?”

“Ah, sure,” the manager says warily.

“Have you seen either of these two men?” she says, holding up the photos.

“Yeah, they come in fairly regularly,” the manager says, studying the pictures.

“Is there anyone they usually talk to whilst they're here?” Chloe asks.

“Well there’s Clio, she manages the dungeon rooms. I couldn't say if they use a particular person more frequently than the rest, that's something you'll have to ask her.”

“So they use these....dungeon rooms every time?” Chloe asks, swallowing hard as if she can't quite believe what she's saying.

“Oh yeah, it's the main reason people come here,” the manager says smiling. “Did something happen to these two guys? Is there some trouble I should be expecting?”

“Oh no, nothing like that, it's just general questions relating to a suspicious death case,” Chloe replies reassuringly.

“Actually,” Lucifer interjects. “Perhaps, with your permission of course, we can conduct some undercover work?”

“Uh, I don't think that'd be good for the patrons,” the man stammers but Lucifer is rounding on him with that disarming smile.
“Oh nonsense, we won't make a scene. It'll really help the investigation.”

“Uh...sure,” the guy says eventually.

“Much obliged,” Lucifer says, giving a curt nod of the head. “We'll be back tonight.”

With that, he strides out of the club leaving you, John and Chloe just looking bewildered. Eventually you all follow him out to the car.

“What the hell was that?” Chloe asks, angrily.

“Calm down Detective, sometimes the best way to get information is to extract it first hand,” Lucifer purrs. “Both men used those rooms frequently so maybe the manner of their death will become clearer that way.”

You watch as they bicker for a while and turn to John. He seems to be deep in thought.

“Got any further ideas?” you ask him.

“I'm wondering now if it might be two things going on,” John mutters. “Can't say for sure yet, though. The liquefying organs is definitely narrowing it down to only a few things.”

“Ifrit, curse and god?” you venture.

He smiles warmly at you, the corners of his eyes creasing, “You're learning, bit. I'm leaning more towards god at this stage. Probably a hedonistic one.”

“Guess we'll see,” you murmur.

“Fine!” Chloe's voice cuts into your conversation. “We'll do your stupid plan.”

“Wonderful!” Lucifer chuckles.

“So a couple of us go into these dungeons to see what they're like?” she asks, seeming to regret the question as it passes her lips.

“In a sense. We'll have to pretend to be couples, seeking a good time. It's safer that way, just in case these deaths are very suspect. The other person will provide backup.”

“Alright, so you and I and John and Star-” she begins.

“Oh no no no, Detective!” Lucifer cries, a cheeky twinkle in his eye. “This is a gay and lesbian establishment. It'll be you and Star and me and John.”

“Oh you can fuck right off,” John hisses. “That's all this is, isn't it? A bloody elaborate scheme to get me kecks off.”

“For goodness sake John, stop being so melodramatic!” Lucifer sighs. “This is for the investigation! If you can't act professional then by all means, you can leave for your dreary country again.”

Chloe just looks completely lost as she stares at Lucifer and then John, sensing the tension. You just can't help but silently crease up in laughter.

“Nice to see you have my corner, love,” John says a little haughtily, noticing your shaking chest.

“Oh come on, it's only for a couple of hours,” you say. “You're not going to get in there otherwise to
find out what's going on.”

John huffs, battling with himself internally. You lean over and whisper in his ear, “Plus I'm going to have to pretend to be in a relationship with Chloe, so who's got the harder job here?”

He snorts, rubbing his chin before finally letting out a long sigh, “Fine but if you come near me arse, Morningstar, I'll be filing sexual assault charges.”

“Scouts honour, I won't touch you,” Lucifer grins.

“Ok,” Chloe says, trying to wrestle back control of the situation. “So we'll come back here, pretend to be in two relationships, go to the dungeons and ask for the same person as the victims. I can't believe I'm going along with this but fine. Let's meet back here at seven p.m.”

She drives you back and then Lucifer drives you back to Lux. He disappears up to the penthouse leaving you and John in the bar area.

“Jesus, why do I get meself in these situations?” John decries, ruffling his hair.

“To be fair, you didn't have much of a choice,” you point out.

“The second this case is over, we're going back to Manchester and I'm going to fuck you senseless for a week to get this out of me head,” he says.

“Is that a promise?” you ask teasingly.

He grabs you by your waistband and pulls you over to him, hand running through your hair, “Oh definitely, love.”

“I'll hold you to that,” you smile.

“I'm gonna take you in every room in that warehouse,” John murmurs against your ear, slowly nipping at it. “And I'm gonna hear you scream my name until you burn your throat out.”

You shiver at his words, feeling the heat stir between your legs. This was not the right time or place for that and you desperately try to get that image out of your head.

“My turn to tease for once,” he smirks, kissing your neck languidly.

“Not fair,” you huff, feeling your body involuntarily press up against his more.

“I never play fair,” he chuckles.

You hear footsteps and pull away from John slightly.

Oh my fucking god......

Lucifer is standing at the top of the steps holding out an array of fetish outfits for the both of you, that maniacal grin plastered across his face.

You turn to John and he turns to you, equally as shocked.
This was going to be a long night.
Leather and Ink

Chapter Summary

You've got some prep work to do before the investigation begins and John asks something important of you.

Chapter Notes

Another quickie chapter (and by quickie I mean this is slightly shorter than some of the most recent ones haha).
I promise we'll start the investigation next time, but here is some fluffy John to tide you over in the mean time.
Enjoy!

- TLP x

“Morningstar, you're out of your bloody mind,” John says, blinking wildly. “I'm not gonna wear any of that and neither is Star.”

Lucifer sighs in frustration, “Honestly John, you've become quite boring as the decades have gone on.”

“Domesticated life, mate,” John smirks, stealing a quick glance at you.

“Fine, fine,” Lucifer says, throwing the garments over the bannister. He takes out his wallet and throws it towards John who catches it deftly. “Feel free to use the credit card, PIN should be in there. Remember, get something appropriate for the type of establishment.”

“You're trusting us with your bank cards?” you say bewildered.

Lucifer gestures around himself, “I'm not exactly hard up for money, darling. Go have fun with your domesticated magician.”

“Warlock,” John says pointedly.

“Yes, you'd like to think so,” Lucifer drawls before disappearing back into the penthouse.

“Let's bloody rinse his account,” John hisses.

“Play nice,” you say chidingly. “He could've kicked me out at any time and I would've been on the streets.”

“Never woulda happened, love,” John says shaking his head.

“Oh?” you ask.
“Put it this way, within the first twelve hours of meeting you, did he try to come on to you?”

“Um...yeah,” you say.

“There's my point. You're too attractive for him to have considered kicking you out.”

“I'm too attractive huh?” you smile playfully.

“Don't play games with me, love,” John laughs. “You know what you do to me.”

“Apparently I made you break into my home a few hours after meeting me,” you wink.

“Oh come on, bit,” John says pouting. “I already explained that.”

“Come on,” you giggle. “We have some unfortunate shopping to do.”

You make to turn around but he grabs your arm and pulls you back to him, his face suddenly serious.

“Star, I'm not comfortable with you going solo with the Detective on this,” he says. “I'm not gonna be in the same room to protect you.”

“So you want me to sit this out?” you ask, a little hurt.

“No, no, love,” he says quickly. “I'm not asking you to do that. I just...ahh I'm going to be asking a lot here.” He tails off, doing his nervous hair ruffle.

“Spit it out, pretty boy,” you say, slightly apprehensive.

“I don't know exactly what this thing is and if you're going to be apart from me for a while, I want to make sure you're protected,” he says. He rolls up his sleeves and presents his tattooed arms to you. “These give me some degree of defence against various things that go bump in the night.” He points out specific runes, “Spirits, lesser demons, petty elementals, low level Incubi and Succubi.”

“So what are you asking?” you say, wondering why he's showing you them when you've seen them many times over, when you've traced all the lines with your fingers.

“I want you to get the same,” he says, not looking directly at you but stealing quick glances up at your face.

“You want me to get tattooed?” you ask.

“I know, I know,” he says hastily. “It's a big ask, I mean it'll be permanent but I just want you to be ready for whatever's coming. I'd understand if you said no. Feels like I'm asking you to have me bloody name branded on you.”

“John,” you say softly, taking his forearms and running your hands over them lightly. “It's ok. I'll do it. I mean it'll make me more of a rockstar right?”

He laughs, all of his nervous tension leaving his body, “I suppose it will, love. Occult tattoos, staple of any rock musician.”

“But I'm making mine prettier,” you say pointedly.

“Pretty ink for a pretty girl,” John smiles before taking your hand and kissing it lightly. “Come on.”
You reach the tattoo parlour and John describes the various symbols to the artist. The guy looks at him strangely but just shrugs before sketching out some designs.

Whilst the artist is busy, John looks to you, “So where do you want them?”

“Not on my arms,” you say. “I feel like that's a bit of a giveaway if I go in with it on display so to speak.”

“Smart bird,” John muses. “It'll take a little while to heal as well so it'll have to be wrapped up.”

“Torso it is then,” you say. “Easiest place to hide it under clothing.”

John untucks your blouse, pulling the material up and studying your abdomen. He lets his fingers trail down the line of your waist. “How about here? Just in a long line.”

You shiver slightly and you see that slight cocky grin spread across his face, “You're a tease, you know that?”

“You love it,” he winks.

The artist comes back and shows you the design he's made. It's a sprawling vertical pattern of Celtic knot vines with the runes in flowered circles dotted through it. You're actually surprised how beautiful it is.

“The missus seems to love it,” John says, looking at your expression. “We'll take it.”

You get in the chair and he preps you. John sits at the side of you, holding your hand. You wonder why he's being so touchy feely until the needle starts buzzing and you feel it on your skin. You tense up, gripping his hand. Fuck, that was why. It was an unpleasant dull pain.

John leans over to you, his head pressing to yours, “Don't think about it, love. I'm right here.”

You hiss as the needle traces over a particularly sensitive part of your stomach. John just squeezes your hand, pulls his chair so he's sitting slightly behind you and starts singing softly in your ear.

“Love, adventure death and glory
The short goodbye
The whispered story
One last glance at the chameleon dance
And into the dark across the park

I ain't no mark for the Venus of the Hardsell.”

You can't help but smile and you laugh softly. He abruptly stops and out of your peripheral vision you see him blush. He's embarrassed and shy.

“Why did you stop?” you ask.

“Thought maybe I was making the pain worse for you with me terrible singing,” he mutters. “It's
been a long time.”

“You promised me a song, John. I want to hear it. I like your voice,” you say, relaxing back further into the chair.

“As the lady wishes,” he smiles, kissing your cheek lightly before continuing to sing to you.

“Saints and sinners, new beginners
Lipstick traces and TV dinners
Cigarsmoke bars and expensive new cars
The acapulco dive and the media jive

They all survive for the Venus of the Hardsell”

You barely feel the needle any more, you're just content to sit there, listening to him. He's got a raspy low singing voice, almost like he's swallowed sandpaper. You find it oddly soothing. You keep encouraging him by stroking his hand.

A few hours go by and John has gone through his whole first album that he made when he was part of Mucous Membrane. He stops after the last song and you turn your head, kissing him softly.

“Thank you,” you whisper, resting your cheek against his. “I really loved that.”

“I'm glad, bit. Hope it helped you.”

“Sure did,” you say smiling.

The tattoo artists wipes away the last of the splatter and some droplets of blood before wrapping your stomach in cling film and handing you some balm. John charges it to Lucifer's credit card and you see him smirking heavily upon doing so.

You both leave and John takes you into a side street before dipping into an alcove. He lifts your blouse and places his hand on the tattoo gingerly before muttering something you don't understand.

You feel the tenderness leave you and the itchy feeling disappear.

“Thought I’d speed up the healing a little bit,” John says, unwrapping you and stroking the lines of ink. “How does it feel, love?”

“Feels great, actually,” you say, looking down and seeing the tattoo has settled, the colour no longer shiny. “I didn't know you could do that. Why haven't you ever used it on yourself when you've been hurt.”

“Takes a lot out of me to do that,” John admits and you study his face. He does seem a little weary.

“In essence, I give you some of my energy to heal you so I'm likely to need a small nap before we go out later.”

“You didn't have to,” you say, stroking the deep set wrinkles on his face. “I could've coped.”

“I know, love, you're a tough bird. It's one of the many things I love about you but I'm not going to have you being anything but your best later,” he says firmly.

You sense the conversation is closed and you don't push it. You crook your arm through his, giving
him some support as you walk to a row of shops. You both stare at them for the longest time, wondering which one you should go in.

“They all look the same,” you say, scanning the line. “None of this particularly screams S&M club to me.”

“Nor me,” John murmurs.

You spot a craft store and an idea comes to you, “Hey, you ever make your own punk gear back in the day? Like safety pins and patches and stuff?”

“Back in the day?” John cries. “I'm not a bloody dinosaur, love!”

“You know what I mean,” you sigh, rolling your eyes.

“Yeah I do, you cheeky mare,” John laughs. “I've made a few things when I was much younger. Why? Got a plan?”

“How about we find some basic clothes in the normal shops and then go to the craft shop and make them more us?”

“Not a bad plan at all,” John smiles, kissing the top of your head. “I assume Morningstar's going to wear his suits as always so I'm going to have to pretend to be his bit of rough. This might be exactly how to do that.”

“His bit of rough? I'm already raging with jealousy,” you joke.

“Only got eyes for you, bit,” John winks and smacks your arse.

You both go into separate places. You pick up some skinny black jeans and a basic long sleeve black top. You sigh heavily, knowing that tonight was going to be extremely hard work. You didn't think the detective had the brass to pull this off and you imagined you'd be doing all the talking. You pay up and meet John who seems perplexed as he holds his carrier bag.

“Are you ok?” you ask.

“Since when did leather trousers become mainstream?” John sighs. “Bloody hell, I'm really getting old.”

“Oh yeah, the whole pseudo-goth style is in fashion right now,” you laugh. “Guess it goes full circle.”

You both go into the craft shop, picking up scissors, sewing kits, safety pins, netting, tulle and trim. You were actually quite excited to tell the truth. It was rare moments like this that you could almost feel domestic with John. Lucifer may be...well Lucifer, but he'd facilitated a lot of good memories for you whilst you'd been here.

You both make it back to Lux and Lucifer is playing the piano, humming softly to himself. You swear you recognise the song....

“Is that Pink Floyd?” you ask.

Lucifer doesn't break the rhythm in the slightest as he looks up at you and smiles widely, “Why yes it is! I gave Roger the idea for this song when he flew with me first class. Money indeed.”

“I'm sorry, you met Roger Waters?” you ask.
“Don't be so surprised,” he chuckles. “I've been around a fair while.”

He finishes the song and stands up, coming over to the both of you and scanning the bags.

“We're going to get creative with the clothing,” you say.

“Marvellous,” Lucifer purrs. “I love the effort you're putting in. So what was the tattoo parlour all about?”

You and John both look at each other. Lucifer just grins.

“Oh you think I don't know? How adorable. I'm up on technology. I get alerts to my phone.”

Well you didn't expect that. The devil was in the digital age.

“Got some runes tattooed on her for protection,” John says. “Don't quite know what we're up against yet so best to be safe.”

Lucifer stands there as if waiting for more before sighing dramatically, “Well come on then, I'd like to see it! Please don't tell me it's as amateurish as Johnny boy's here.”

“Oh!” John cries but you place a hand on his shoulder, squeezing it.

“Not that yours don't have a certain bad boy charm,” Lucifer continues. “But they won't do for this ravishing lady.”

You pull your blouse up, showing him and Lucifer makes a noise of appreciation, “Oh that's much more beautiful.” He comes up to you and he traces the lines on your skin. You feel John tense up next to you. “Very skilful work. I approve.” He notices John next to you who looks as if he's ready to punch him. “Are you alright there, John? You seem a bit on edge.”

“Fine,” John says flatly.

“He just needs rest before tonight,” you say, trying to defuse the situation. “Are we ok to use the penthouse?”

“Well of course,” Lucifer smiles. “I'll see you back down here at six thirty sharp.”

You hurry John up into the elevator and it's an awkward ride up to the room. You get him into the bedroom and dump the bags down.

“Calm down,” you say.

John takes your shoulders before pushing you backwards into the wall, fire in his eyes, “I don't like him touching you.” He drops to his knees, pulling your blouse up and fervently kissing all across your stomach. “You're not his.”

“And I'm yours?” you ask, slightly amused at his blatant jealousy.

His hands undo your trousers and he yanks them down along with your underwear before pushing your legs open slightly and burying his mouth upon you. You gasp, feeling his warm tongue slide against you and just like that it's gone again. John chuckles, pulling backwards.

“You're definitely mine, love.”

The way he said that made the heat pool in your abdomen and you have to fight with yourself.
“You need rest, John. Not to expend even more energy,” you say pointedly.

John replaces your clothing, “I know, bit. Just wanted a taste.” He shucks out of his shirt and suit trousers, discarding his shoes nearby and lays on top of the bed, stretching out languidly. He yawns quietly before turning to you. “You gonna join me, love or start on the arts n’ crafts?”

“I’ll join you for a little bit,” you smile and he holds his arms out wide for you. You climb onto the bed and he brings you onto his chest sighing contentedly.

“Think I'm gonna sleep some,” he mumbles, slightly slurring. You see now exactly how tired he was. He must have put a lot of energy into healing you. Stupid loveable idiot.

You stay with him for a time, feeling the rise and fall of his chest until you decide you should probably get on with the task at hand. You extract yourself as gently as you can from his arms before setting to work on your clothing. For starters, you rip holes into the jeans. That was pretty much your staple in the band. Second, you cut the sleeves at the elbow of the shirt and use safety pins to put them back together again. You slice a deep slash into the chest area, followed by another, covering one of the holes with the mesh you’d bought and stitching that down. It was starting to look more familiar to you, like one of your stage outfits. You reckoned it would probably do. Finally, you rake the scissors along the neckline of the shirt, fraying it and making it rough and uneven. Done. You briefly wonder what Chloe is going to dress in. Probably a business suit knowing her. You'd have to really sell the opposites attract vibe.

You look back to John who's sleeping soundly. He looks incredibly peaceful. You briefly wonder if you should help him with his clothing but you decide against it. You don't want to make him uncomfortable considering he's already going to be that way this evening.

You clear up the mess, depositing it in the bin before folding the clothes neatly on top of the bar unit. You go back to John and climb back in the bed, nuzzling into his side, throwing your leg over his. He moans softly, unconsciously acknowledging your presence. You kiss his cheek as gently as you could, not wanting to wake him yet. Captured by his dreams, he stirs, rolling onto his side and you spoon into the back of him. He murmurs your true name and a big smile creeps across your face. It was nice to know he still thought of you even when he was asleep.

After a time, he begins to move, wakefulness grasping hold and he runs his hand up the arm that you have slung over him.

“I could stay like this forever,” he sighs.

“You could, but not right now,” you say. “You've got to get ready, it's almost time.”

John grunts, uttering a few very explicit words before turning over to look at you. “Did you stay with me the whole time, love?”

“No I've already had time to make my outfit and come back,” you laugh. “You were out for a long while.”

“Christ,” John mutters, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. “Guess I poured more energy into you than I thought.”

“I'll get you something to drink,” you smile before going to the bar area and pouring some of the mineral water Lucifer kept in the fridge. You go back to John with it and he drains the glass like he's been out in the desert for aeons.

“Thanks, love. Really needed that,” he says before getting up and stretching out. You can't help but
watch as his muscles ripple throughout his body. “Oi, you, stop perving.”

“No,” you say defiantly, sticking your tongue out. “I can look where I want.”

“Oh I'm gonna make use of that tongue later,” John growls and you giggle.

He walks into the other room and sits down, pulling the clothing out of the bag and setting to work. You join him and take the opportunity to look at your phone.

**Chas: No problem. Wanna come by sometime when you're back? Renee wants to meet you. Could do dinner**

You look at John who's deep in concentration, tongue poked out to the side of his mouth.

**Star: Would love to. Sounds amazingly normal.**

You're sure John would've said no if you'd of asked him so you just simply gave him no choice. You were pretty curious to meet Renee. Chas talked about her quite a lot and you imagined she'd had to deal with a lot of shit over the years with Chas and John. From the sounds of it they were always pulling each other's arses out of the fire.

You skim through more messages. Valentine was updating you on how the album was selling, Roxy had met some black metal guy that she was now dating and then you came across the text from your mum.

**Mum: Hi sweetie, it's been a long time and I haven't seen you. Can you tell me if you're ok? I'm worried about you. I heard about your friend x x**

You'd completely forgotten to update her. The whole demons and being thrown into Hell had really thrown you for a loop. You hesitate for a long time, unsure of how much to say before you settle on:

**Star: Hey, I'm really sorry I've been quiet. Just trying to deal with stuff. I'm ok. I've actually met someone and he's looking after me at the moment. I love you x**

You sigh, feeling incredibly guilty. It had seemed easy at the time to cut your ties with the real world to go live with John but you still had responsibilities and you still had a family.

Your phone chimes and John looks up at you, his reverie broken.

“Popular, aren't we?” he says, smirking.
“It's just my mum,” you reply.

His face falls incredibly quickly and he looks pained, “Ah...shit. I never...I never even asked if you had anyone when I brought you back. Is...is everything ok?”

“Yeah,” you say. “She was just worried because she hadn't heard from me in a while.”

John looks extremely guilty, “I'm sorry, love. I-”

You cut him off, “Oh no, none of that self loathing shit again, John Constantine. One day you'll realise I made my own choices that got me here.”

You look down at your phone.

**Mum: You've met someone? I'd like to meet him sometime. Sound like he's doing you the world of good taking care of you. Be safe. Love you too x x**

You laugh and John looks at you curiously.

“She wants to meet you sometime,” you say, smirking.

“You told her about me?” John asks bewildered.

“Well sure, why wouldn't I?” you say.

“Never had someone's mum want to meet me before,” he mumbles. “Shit, she's probably young enough to be me daughter as well.”

“John, for the last fucking time, you don't look your age in the slightest,” you say, throwing a scrap of fabric at his face. “Does that scare you? That my mum wants to meet you?”

“Course it does, love,” he says, leaning back. “I've never really had a normal relationship going on, have I? I don't know how it actually goes. She'll probably take one look at me and say I'm no good for her precious little girl.”

“Actually I told her you were helping me about Phe's death and she said you sounded like a good man,” you laugh.

“She did?” John says, eyebrows raised. “Never been called that before.”

“You're sweet sometimes,” you say smiling.

John winks at you, “Always am, love. And yeah, this whole thing kinda scares me still. It's probably the longest and most traditional relationship I've ever had. I didn't really reckon I'd find that at age sixty four. Makes me feel more like I'm fourteen and just discovering women for the first time.”

“I'll hold your hand, don't worry,” you laugh. “Now, get on with what you were doing.”

John snorts, “You're right bossy sometimes.”

“You like it,” you smirk.

“Certainly do, darlin',” he chuckles before returning to shredding his t-shirt.
He finally finishes and you glance at the clock on the wall. You’d have to really hurry it up. You tell John you’re going to get ready and he nods. You gather up the clothes, pulling them on as well as the combat boots you’d bought. It felt so much better to wear them than the heels Lucifer kept picking out for you. You loved flat shoes a whole lot better.

You grab some bits of makeup, bobby pins and a hairbrush and make your way into the bathroom. You tease your hair into a fauxhawk with a ponytail running down the back and go full on vamp eyes and dark lipstick. It just felt like getting ready for another gig. You hear a suspicious amount of spraying outside and you’re wondering what on earth John is doing.

You come outside and your mouth gapes open. Well holy shit....

John had tight leather pants on and Jesus did you have to admit Lucifer was right. He did wear them extremely well. Along with the razored t-shirt and the tattooed arms, he’d look completely at home on the stage with you. As he turns around, you know why there was the sound of spraying. His hair was spiked up to high heaven and he had heavy smudges of eyeliner. Wow was he really rocking the Billy Idol look.

“Is this what you used to dress like?” you ask, amazed.

“Summat like that,” he says, seemingly a little self conscious.

“Fuck,” you say in appreciation. “I can see why Lucifer wanted to shag you so badly.”

John puts his hip out as the cocky swagger returns. You see the shadow of his younger self in that move. He must have been such a tearaway and a heartbreaker.

“I did alright,” he chuckles. “Not so bad yourself, love. You remind me a little of Siouxsie Sioux.”

“She can sing better than I can,” you joke.

He laughs and comes over to you, tugging at your waistband so you press up against him, “Wish we didn't have to do this.” He presses his lips against your forehead. “Just imagine if we were two people, going out to a concert, having a dance, having a drink, having a laugh, walking home, falling into bed together and fucking until the dawn came. That’s what I would rather do.”

“Me too,” you whisper. “But we've got responsibilities to help people, John.”

“We?” he asks, pulling back and looking into your eyes.

“Yes, we. I'm part of the team now in case you hadn't noticed. I've got the logo and everything,” you say, pointing to your stomach.

He chuckles softly, “You are too good, bit. Definitely too good for me. Maybe God's giving me a win for a change.”

“Not like you haven't earned it,” you say, stroking his cheek.

The elevator door dings open and Lucifer strides out, impatiently, “Are we quite ready yet, we're going to be....”

He catches sight of the both of you and he just stares, “My my my.”

“Yeah, we're ready Morningstar,” John says, throwing his arm over your shoulder.

“Johnny boy, it's like looking back across the years. You've barely changed,” Lucifer purrs. “I do so
prefer you in that to your usual attire.”

“Apparently so do she,” John says, letting his eyes flick to you.

“I like your normal clothes too, you know,” you smirk. “The tie is especially useful.”

“And Star, darling,” Lucifer says, clasping his hands together. “Divine as always. Black really is your colour and that lipstick...well...I'm just sorry it'll be completely lost on the Detective. Good luck with that one.”

“I think I'm going to need it,” you sigh.

Lucifer leads the way, ushering everyone into one of his fancy cars and you go to pick up Chloe from her house. Lucifer calls her from the car, not bothering to knock on the door. She comes out and you're completely surprised.

“Oh I think she's borrowed one of Maze's outfits,” Lucifer says in wonderment.

Chloe's wearing skin tight wet look leggings and a tight basque. Her hair is down in waves around her shoulders. Ok, you'd give her this one, she actually made an effort. Maybe this wasn't going to be so difficult after all.

You pull up to the club and Lucifer parks up.

“Everyone clear on the plan?” Chloe asks.

“Crystal,” John confirms. “Stay safe, yeah? You get into trouble, Star will help you out.”

You secretly smile, flattered that he thought of you that highly. Chloe looks to you and sees the determination in your eyes before nodding. “Yeah, let's do this.”

You all exit the car and stand in your respective pairs. You're a little apprehensive about being touchy feely with the detective but she goes beyond your expectations when her hand links with yours and she starts walking with you towards the door. You look back and see John's surprised face until Lucifer puts his arm around John's shoulders and the expression changes to discomfort.

You all reach the door.

Time to investigate.
You walk in the club and you're immediately struck with the sheer heat emanating from the room. There were a lot of people in here. Most were just chatting normally, getting a drink but a few on the edges of the room were experimenting with some of the wall restraints. To be honest, you weren't that shocked. More explicit things tended to happen at English house parties when everyone got ratarsed on cheap booze.

Chloe directs you to the bar and you both sit down on the stools, “What can I get you, sweetie?”

Sweetie?!

“Surprise me,” you say winking. Well if she was going to get into this then so were you.

“You heard the lady,” Chloe says to the bartender. “Surprise us.”

The bartender laughs to herself before going to get luminous cocktails and placing them in front of you.

“Cheers,” Chloe says cheerfully before drinking from the glass. You follow suit.

Jesus, that was bitterly sweet...it was everything you imagined an American cocktail to be. Overly sugary. Well done L.A for being a stereotype.

“Um, excuse me,” Chloe asks the bartender, catching her attention whilst she is still close. “We're kinda new here so how do we...” She nods towards the dungeon area.

“Ah no need to be nervous,” the woman smiles. “You just go ask for Clio at the entrance and she'll run through some things with you to see what you're after. Don't worry if you have no idea, she always manages to find something.”

“Thank you,” Chloe smiles before turning her back to the bartender and closing the gap between the two of you. “Let's tell Lucifer and John before we go in.”
You nod and you go and find the two of them in a fervent discussion in one of the booths.

“You guys ok?” you ask, looking from one man to the other.

“Peachy,” Lucifer grins.

John just huffs loudly, “So how are we gonna do this?”

“We need to go ask for Clio if we want to get into the dungeon rooms,” Chloe informs them. “We'll go in first and then you follow. If we all go in at once it's a little suspicious.”

“Nonsense,” Lucifer snorts. “We could just say we're a polyamorous group.”

“Poly-what?” Chloe stammers.

“That we're all in one big relationship,” Lucifer sighs. “It does happen you know.”

“I think we'll just stick to the plan,” Chloe says firmly before grabbing your arm. You just shrug at John who mouths 'be careful' after you.

You and Chloe walk down the little hallway until you reach a small desk where a pretty woman is set. You think maybe she looks a little Grecian.

“Hello darlings!” she squeals in excitement. “You're new, aren't you? I'm Clio!”

“Yeah,” Chloe fake laughs nervously. “My baby wanted to try this but she's too shy to ask.”

Baby?!

“Stop it, you're embarrassing me,” you say, shoving her playfully.

“Awww, you two are adorable!” Clio exclaims. “So what kind of thing were you after?”

“We don't really know,” Chloe says, shrugging. “We're pretty green to this.”

“Oh well I guess we'll have to try you with everything!” Clio says, clapping her hands together. “Now don't worry, nothing goes on here that is illegal, nothing goes on here that you won't be comfortable with. We run through a list before you go in of definite yes', no's and maybes. If you feel uneasy or you're not enjoying anything at any time, we operate on a traffic light system of red, amber and green. Red if you hate it, amber if you like but want something new and green for yes please!”

“Got it,” Chloe smiles.

“Fabulous!” Clio grins. “Now, let's get you started first, sweetheart. I'll take you in the office and we can go through the list and then I'll do the same with your lady.”

You look to Chloe, a little apprehensive. Splitting up was not really part of the plan. She gives your hand a squeeze as if to say 'it's ok' before turning round and saying “I'll see you in a little bit, don't go anywhere.”

“Wouldn't dream of it,” you smirk.

The second Chloe is gone you instantly feel a little on edge. Should you have let her go? Maybe you should have insisted on staying with her.

You hear a slight cough behind you and whirl around to see a handsome dark haired man stood
there. Wow he must have been quiet. You hadn't noticed him approaching you.

“Hi there,” he says, holding out his hand and smiling warmly.

“Hi,” you say, shaking it.

“Oh, British!” he remarks.

“Uh, yeah, where are you originally from? Your accent is hard to place,” you ask, hoping that wasn't a rude question.

He chuckles slightly, “Don't worry, a lot of people can't guess. I'm originally from Damascus.”

“Syrian, right?” you probe.

“Correct,” he smiles. “I'm surprised somebody knew. So what brings you to this part of the club?”

“Ah my girlfriend is doing some sort of list with Clio?” you say, pointing towards the door.

“Quite, perhaps you'd like to do your list with me? Speed up the process? Clio is quite a talker. She'll have your girlfriend there forever,” the man laughs.

You're not getting any weird vibes off of this guy and he seems genuine and polite so you accept.

You briefly wonder where Lucifer and John are. They were supposed to be a few minutes behind you but you push it out of your mind.

“I'm Ahikar but most people call me Ahi.”

“I'm Star,” you say smiling.

“Come with me, Star,” Ahi motions and you follow him into a room.

The walls are decorated with soft leather padding all around, chains hang down from the ceiling and there's shelves on the far wall filled with implements.

“Let's start shall we?” Ahi asks, walking over to the shelves and waiting for you to come over. “Do you like pain?”

“Some kinds,” you admit. “I'm not a fan of sharp pains.”

“Ah, excellent, it's good to find someone who has an idea of what they like,” Ahi grins. “How about restraints? Is there anything you don't like there?”

“Not that I haven't come across?” you say, thinking the question over.

“Not that I haven't come across?” you say, thinking the question over.

“Alright, and in terms of sensory deprivation? Sight, sound, touch?”

“Only sight,” you answer.

“I think I know what you would enjoy in that case,” Ahi nods. “You strike me as a person who prefers a solo adventure, am I correct?”

“Well my girlfriend...” you start but you feel the blush creep into your cheeks.

“It's alright to admit it,” Ahi laughs. “There's no judgement here. I also get the sense you're fluid in your gender preferences, yes?”
“You're really good at that, you know?” you stammer out, a little surprised.

“It's my line of work, dear,” Ahi smiles. “Would you prefer a female to administer what you want or a male?”

“I'm not sure,” you say.

“If you will permit me, I can walk you through some things to try out,” Ahi says, placing his hand on his chest.

Well shit, you were finding out absolutely nothing and you were getting dragged deeper down this rabbit hole. Would you have to keep up this charade much longer? Surely you wouldn't actually have to go through with this? If there was nothing obvious jumping out then maybe this clue was a dead end.

“Helloooooo,” you hear the sing song voice of Lucifer from outside in the hallway. “Anyone around?”

“Ah, excuse me,” Ahi says, going outside.

You follow him outside and see both Lucifer and John in the corridor. Lucifer has his arm thrown around John's waist and John looks incredibly awkward.

“Gentlemen,” Ahi smiles. “Welcome. I'm just speaking to this lady first and then I'll be right with you. Clio is currently dealing with another client also.”

“Star!” Lucifer cries and you internally cringe. Jesus he was terrible at this kind of cover. “Exploring your proclivities are we?”

“Do you know each other?” Ahi asks, an eyebrow raised.

“Yeah,” you say quickly, thinking on the spot. “We're all old university friends.”

“Say,” Lucifer purrs. “Why don't we all team up? Nothing we didn't use to do back in the old days, right?”

“Good idea, Lucy,” John agrees and you know he's only saying that to keep an eye on you.

“I can accommodate that,” Ahi nods. “We have a segmented room just through here that would be perfect.”

Lucifer leads the way and you hang back to speak to John briefly, “Chloe's all alone with Clio.”

“Got a feeling Clio's not the problem,” John whispers. “I don't trust this one. There's something about him.”

“Coming?” Ahi calls.

You all walk into the new room. There's four partition walls each with its own speciality item.

“Now Star has already specified what she enjoys,” Ahi starts which earns a raised eyebrow from John. “How about you two gentlemen?”

“Oh I'm game for anything,” Lucifer grins. “It's Johnny boy here that's the shy one.”

“I'm just fine, watching,” John says gruffly.
“Why don't you two gentlemen come in this part?” Ahi says, directing them to a bed area with various restraints around. “Star, come with me.”

He takes you into a separate partition that houses a bar with cuffs from the ceiling.

“Is that alright for you?” he asks and you nod, unsure of what to do.

He locks your wrists into the restraints and you stand there nervously. You got the feeling this was a really bad idea. If something happened you would be unable to help.

“Let me attend to your friends and then I'll be back,” Ahi smiles warmly.

You strain your ears, trying to hear what's going on. Wait...was that moaning?! What exactly was going on?! 

Ahi comes back and sees your confused face, “Don't worry, they're enjoying themselves. They opted for a duo adventure.”

Duo...man you were going to slap the shit out of Lucifer when you got out of here.

“This means I can concentrate on you,” Ahi says, coming up close to you.

You feel something, a sense of power hidden behind his eyes. You're not quite sure what it is. The second Ahi touches your waist, his fingers prying through the rips in your shirt, you feel it. It's like an overwhelming wave of lust that washes through your entire being. You shudder in your bonds and you see the smile curve on Ahi's mouth.

You faintly register one of your runes on the tattoo burning. Shit, which one was that? You desperately tried to remember as you fought against the sudden onslaught of arousal. Second from the bottom. That meant...

“Incubus,” you breathe out loud.

Ahi laughs but the sound is no longer sweet. It's almost predatory.

“Correct. I knew there was something about you. You seemed too inquisitive. Plus, you should've hid your wardings better.” He makes a point of pressing on the symbol on your bare skin and you hiss slightly at the stinging sensation.

“Not that they matter,” Ahi carries on. “You said I was Syrian, well the truth is I have been around since ancient Assyrian times. I'm far too old for petty symbols to work any more.”

Fuck. What the hell should you do?! You were completely at the Incubus' mercy and god knows what he had done to John and Lucifer. You could still hear the sound of rustling coming from their direction.

“Now, I promise this will be enjoyable for you,” Ahi says, tracing a line on your stomach. “You won't even care that you're dying.”

From the touch of his finger you feel that intense wave of heat and you have to clamp your mouth shut to stop yourself from gasping. You pushed back against the sensation, angling your hands in the cuffs and start muttering a defensive spell. Ahi grabs you forcefully, meeting his lips to yours and you almost felt your legs crumble beneath you with sheer lust. He poured his energy into you, completely obliterating your brain's rational thought. All you could think about was him, how much you wanted him.
Ahi pulls away, noting the heavy panting and the rise and fall of your chest, “Much better. There's no need for violence. Just let go of your resistance. Enjoy this. I've had many years of practice.”

His mouth finds yours again and his hands explore over your body. Fuck that feels good, but you can't shake the feeling in the back of your head that this was wrong on so many levels.

“Oh Johnny!” you hear Lucifer exclaim and you break yourself out of your sexual daze.

Ahi looks to the other partition for a moment and you take the opportunity to jump up, grabbing onto the bar and bringing your knees up, booting the incubus as hard as you could in the chest. He goes flying backwards into the wall. You hook your leg over the bar, keeping your body close to your wrists. In this position you're unable to bring your hands together to unlock them but you're close enough to use your teeth and you viciously tear at the restraints, freeing one hand.

Ahi is already getting back up, anger flashing across his features. You drop to the floor and untie your other hand quickly before backing up, giving you ample time to grab one of the wooden paddles from the rack.

“That was not polite,” Ahi growls.

“Neither was trying to kill me,” you hiss back, waiting for him to draw close before clocking him in the head with the paddle. He staggers to the side, falling down and you dart past towards John and Lucifer.

As you duck round the partition...well...you really weren't expecting that.

Both John and Lucifer were shirtless, hungrily kissing on the bed. You try to pull John off but he just grabs your wrist and pulls you down onto the bed also.

“Want to join, bit?” John asks huskily.

“We've definitely got room,” Lucifer grins.

“Snap out of it!” you yell before John swallows your words with a greedy kiss. You shove him backwards, slapping him hard across the face. “It's an incubus, you fucking idiot! Stop it!”

John seems to blink wildly for a second, shaking his head, “A what?”

“Apparently it's an incubus,” Lucifer drawls, and pulls you back down as you attempt to get back up, his hands roaming over you.

“Bloody fucking hell,” John swears before Ahi comes crashing round the corner, eyes ablaze.

“Surely not, John Constantine?” Ahi laughs mirthfully. “How embarrassingly easy to flood your mind.”

“Maybe, mate but how embarrassing for you. You're standing in the line of fire,” John retorts, reaching into his pocket and sparking his lighter, sending a blast of hellfire towards the stunned Incubus.

He screeches terribly clawing at his burning skin. John jumps off of the bed, grabbing a chair and smashing it against the wall, picking up one jagged leg. The incubus makes a last ditch attempt at a charge and John dodges, letting Ahi smack into the wall before thrusting the improvised stake into
his back, chanting ancient words. The incubus dissolves into a pile of ash onto the ground.

John drops the chair leg, staggering slightly, still in his daze.

“Jesus, fuck,” he whispers. “That was a schoolboy error.”

He looks back to you on the bed and freezes, seeing Lucifer's arms draped all over you, “Oi, get off her, Morningstar.”

“Honestly, John, you didn't protest so much five minutes ago,” Lucifer snorts. “In fact, I remembering you asking her to join us.”

“Now,” John growls.

“Fine,” Lucifer sighs, releasing you and you scramble away into John's embrace. “You were right Star, I can imagine he'd be a very good shag based on that performance.”

You were mortified and John was tenser than you'd ever felt him.

“But alas,” Lucifer says, standing up and redressing. “One time only thing, right, Johnny boy?”

John grunts.

“I suppose I'd best find the Detective. She's probably wondering where we are,” Lucifer says, smoothing himself out.

“How exactly are you going to explain this?” you ask.

“Oh I'll think of something,” Lucifer says with a cheeky wink. “Can't very well tell her an Incubus is responsible. She already laughs enough at me when I tell her I'm the Devil.”

You're not very convinced. You're sure Chloe is just going to think this was a giant waste of time. Lucifer gives you both a cordial nod before exiting the room.

John lets out a string of expletives before going to the door and locking it.

“What are you doing?” you ask, a little nervous.

John marches towards you, picking you up at the waist and throwing you backwards onto the bed. He crawls on top of you, pushing you back down when you try to sit up and his lips find yours in a bruising, fervent kiss.

He pulls away slightly, undoing the button of your jeans, “I need to wipe the memory of the last ten minutes out of my mind completely.” He tugs your jeans down, hooking your underwear along with it and discards it on the floor. “I need to have you, love.”

He runs his finger across your arousal soaked folds and you whimper slightly.

He chuckles darkly, “From the looks of it, you need me as well.”

He was right. As much as he wanted to wipe the memory of Lucifer, you wanted to do the same with Ahi. You wanted John's familiarness.

“John,” you say, tugging at his belt and yanking his trousers down. He helps you get them off and leans back over you. “No foreplay, just fuck me.”
“Not gonna argue, bit,” John says, sharply biting at your neck as he thrusts into you with ease.

You hiss, clawing at his back as he rolls his hips, pushing deep into you. It's messy, it's carnal. You're both all teeth and hands as he fucks you with sheer ferociousness. You hook your legs up around his waist and he hits even deeper causing you to cry out.

“That's it, love,” John growls. “You know I love to hear ya.”

You lose all abandon. I mean, fuck it, there were probably several people all around you doing the same thing. You moan as loudly as you like and that spurs John on to pound even harder against you, his pelvis grinding against your sweet spot. You still felt the residual energy from the Incubus and every nerve ending felt like it was screaming in your body. It wasn't long before you felt your orgasm knock you sideways and you clenched around John, letting his name fall from your lips over and over. He quickly pulled out, letting his cum fall over your abdomen and grunting heavily.

He collapsed to the side of you, regaining his breath. You just lay there, trying to recover the sensation in your limbs.

“I'm sorry, Star,” John says quietly. “I made such a rookie mistake. I should've trusted my gut instinct and not let him near me. I mean, I didn't even factor in an Incubus of that level. No one's seen one for a good hundred years.”

“So if he'd of got his way I would've burned up from the inside?” you ask. “Is that what happens when Incubi get older? I thought they just drained your lifeforce?”

“Yeah, normally spontaneous human combustion is just a wayward older Succubus. Like I say, Incubi on that level are rare,” John says grimly, wiping the sheen of sweat from his forehead. “Bollocks. I'm really losing my edge.”

“You never had one to begin with,” you joke and despite himself, John laughs.

“Seriously, love, I'm making so many mistakes lately. I feel like I'm going to get you killed or die meself.”

“Probably the latter considering I mostly fought my way out of this one,” you say, trying to keep the mood light. You knew John liked to dwell a lot on 'what ifs'

“You did, didn't you?” John smiled. “You were bloody brilliant. It takes a lot of willpower to resist an Incubus that old.” He rolls onto his side, eyes searching your face, “He didn't hurt you did he?”

“No,” you say. “I got all of the hits in.”

“Did he...” John trails off.

You know what he wants to ask, “Touch me? Yes.”

You see John's fist curl and he fights to keep himself composed, “If I'da known that I would've made it a slow end.”

“I'm glad you didn't,” you say and he looks at you in surprise. “Would've given Lucifer more of an excuse.”

John snorts and you reach across, ruffling his hair playfully. He gets up, fetching a small towel placed nearby and cleans you up before lightly tickling your sides. You squirm a little, jerking upright and he catches you in his waiting arms, placing kisses across your head.
“Still love me?” he asks.

“Christ you're insecure for a sixty odd year old,” you laugh.

“Insecure eh?” he says smirking before digging his fingers into your waist and tickling hard.

“Stop!” you cry, half losing your ability to breathe as you endlessly laugh.

“Only if you answer me question,” he chuckles, releasing you.

You press your forehead to his, “Of course I still love you, you idiot.”

“Thought so,” John says with a cocky grin.

You push him off, smiling and redress yourself as well before you both exit the room, walking towards the club area again.

Lucifer and Chloe are nowhere to be found so you walk outside and see them in deep discussion on the street.

“Oh! There you are!” Lucifer cries. “Was wondering when you two would show.” He gives you both a knowing wink.

“So you agree with all this?” Chloe asks.

Shit, you wonder exactly what Lucifer had told her but you couldn’t let her suspect that you weren’t a united front. “Yeah we do.”

“I went through all of those awkward questions just for an underground weight loss pill ring?!”

“Yeah,” Lucifer says quickly, flashing you both a firm look. “DNP or Dinitrophenal. Too many pills causes the body to internally cook from the inside.”

Huh...he was smarter than you gave him credit for. Lucifer holds out a small baggie with some brightly coloured tablets. Chloe sighs heavily before putting them in an evidence bag.

“Hardly seems worth all this effort,” she grumbles. “I'll pass it to Vice. I'm sure they'll deal with it.”

“Sorry for the disappointment Detective,” John chips in. “Sometimes things are a little more normal than they first appear.”

“Yeah,” she mutters. “Thanks for your help.” She sounds incredibly pissed off and she whirls on her feet, flagging down a taxi, not even bothering to wait for Lucifer to drive her home.

Lucifer turns to you and flashes you a big shit eating grin, “Told you I'd take care of it.”

“Do you just carry illegal drugs around you at all times?” you ask.

“Only when I needed a back up plan. I knew this had more of a flair of the supernatural and I don't believe the Detective is quite ready for that,” Lucifer says a little more seriously.

“Not bad, Morningstar,” John says.

“Oooo high praise indeed, John, coming from you,” Lucifer smiles. “Shall we return?”

“Yeah, we need to book a flight back home,” John says, taking your hand and pulling you towards
“So soon?” Lucifer asks, starting the car.

“I'm a little homesick if I'm honest,” you venture, trying to help John out.

“Poor darling,” Lucifer purrs. “I understand. England needs it's trenchcoated magician to save it and you don't want to be away too long.”

“For the last time, Morningstar...warlock,” John hisses.

“You're so easy to tease, Johnny boy,” Lucifer laughs.

John just rumbles in frustration before looping his arm around you in the backseat and pulling you close. The whole ride back he just gently hums in your ear, stroking your arm lightly.

When you pull up to Lux, you're incredibly worn out and you just want to change into something comfortable. You disappear upstairs, digging through Lucifer's secondary closet until you find some jeans and a jumper that fit you. You take off all your makeup bar a little bit, let your hair fall back down and finally sigh in relief. Much better.

You come back down into the club area and Lucifer and John are talking whilst John is zipping his suitcase back up. He seems to have changed back into his usual attire.

“Quite the transformation,” Lucifer smiles warmly. “Girl next door look, I like it.”

“All good?” John asks and you nod. “Time to get to the airport and book a flight.”

“No need,” Lucifer says, pouring himself a drink. “I've already gone ahead and done that for you. LA to Manchester, first class. It leaves in two hours.”

“Really?!” you say, your voice becoming shrill. “Why?”

“You gave me some good entertainment the last few days,” Lucifer says enigmatically. “Honestly, I've been bored for a while and now I have some good memories to take with me into the future. So consider this a thank you.”

“Thank you so much,” you say, bewildered by his generosity.

Lucifer just shushes you with a hand and drains his glass, “On the condition that if I'm ever in England, you'll say hello.”

You look to John who has gone a little pale and smirk to yourself, “I think we can manage that.”

“Excellent,” Lucifer purrs. “I'll get Darius to give you a ride to the airport.”

“Wait,” you say. “Do I even have a passport to get home?”

John reaches into his coat and pulls out your passport, wiggling it in front of your face, “Sometimes I can be clever.”

Lucifer plucks the document from John's hand, opening it and he let's out a small, 'Ooooo'

“What?” you say, defensively.

“Would never have guessed that was your real name,” Lucifer chuckles, closing the passport and
throwing it towards you. “I think you suit Star better. Matches your spunky personality.”

“Everyone seems to say that,” you sigh.

“Time to say goodbye then, Morningstar,” John says, putting his case upright.

Lucifer moves over, pulling John into a tight hug and John just awkwardly pats him on the back before moving away. Lucifer walks over to you and takes your hand, kissing the back of it lightly, “It's been a pleasure, darling.”

“Goodbye, Lucifer,” you smile and he bends down, kissing your cheek chastely before ushering you outside.

You get into the limo, driving away and John instantly relaxes. You can see the exhaustion all over his face.

“Feels good to be going home,” he says.

“Wait until we're on a twelve hour plane journey,” you snort.

“Better than spending another minute in Lux,” John counters.

When you reach the airport, you're relieved that Lucifer was true to his word. You're ushered into the first class area and are offered champagne, expensive chocolates and a comfortable chair. You've never felt so pampered as you have been in the last few days.

Eventually you get on the plane and both you and John settle yourself, turning the chairs into beds. You may be in separate cots, but he holds his hand out across the gap, wanting to still be close to you. You curl up, looking across the divide and seeing John's sleepy smile as he looks at you. Finally, maybe you'd have a bit of normality for a change.

You drift off, still holding John's hand, just content under your soft little duvet...

Boom!

The entire plane jerks upwards and you're thrown slightly in the air. You sit upwards, looking around wildly and John does the same.

“What the bloody hell was that?!” he asks.

“Was that turbulence?” you say, looking out of the plane window but you can't see anything.

The captain comes over the tannoy, “Apologies, ladies and gents, just a technical hitch. Nothing to worry about.”

“My left bollock it's a hitch,” John swears. “That was definitely not normal.”

All of the cabin lights flicker before shutting off completely. The eerie glow of the underfloor lighting casts a greenish yellow glow onto the walls.
“Definitely not normal,” you agree. “Do you think something followed us?”

“No idea, love. Bloody hell, I hate planes,” John hisses.

You feel the panic rise in your chest and you try to bury it. You weren't afraid of flying but this was getting weird and if this plane went down, well there was no way you'd be getting out alive.

The cabin suddenly lurches forward, almost in a nose dive and you're slammed against the seat in front of you. Your breath leaves your body in one big whoosh and you're absolutely shitting yourself now. Gradually the plane levels out again and you feel intensely sick with the g-force.

“John, we need to find out what's going on,” you say through gritted teeth, trying to stop yourself from vomiting.

“Ladies and gents,” the captain announces and you hear the edge of terror in his voice. “Please buckle your seatbelts, we are in emergency mode.”

“I don't know what it is,” John hisses. “Could be any bloody thing.”

You hear a dark chuckle from the seat in front of you that you just hit, “Always amuses me how you've survived so long on such little knowledge, Constantine.”

“I know that voice,” John says, his face falling.

A black man in a sharp white suit gets up from the chair, turning around and leaning over the seat, “Been a long time.”

“Midnite,” John growls.

Chapter End Notes

So that's the last of the Lucifer arc in this story :) time to get on with more traditional Hellblazer material!
Chapter Summary

You don't have long to figure out what's happening to the plane. Can you, John and Papa Midnite save everyone before you crash?

Chapter Notes

Ok so maybe I had mild writer's block over Christmas so...sorry for the delay!

Anticipate some action, some smut and some typical John fluff (and maybe some more jealous John)

Hope you all had a lovely Christmas!

- TLP x

(Apologies for any spelling/grammar errors. It's 2am and I'm the worst proofreader when I'm tired!)

“Why is it whenever trouble brews, you're not far behind Constantine?” Midnite asks, with a casual raise of his eyebrow.

“This ain't my doing,” John shakes his head. “I just wanted a bloody quiet flight.”

“I'm sure,” Midnite says dryly before his eyes fall on you. “Brave of you to take a new lover considering your past history.”

“Leave her out of it,” John hisses.

“Does this one have a name or is that a futile question considering she'll be dead soon?” Midnite chuckles.

“This one is going to smack you in the face in a minute,” you growl, clenching your fists.

“Oh so she speaks!” Midnite chuckles.

“She does,” you spit. “And she is called Star and she has already climbed out of Hell so why don't you keep your rude opinions to yourself?”

Midnite’s eyes widen and he stands up, towering over you as you're sat on the bed before he inhales deeply. He seems to process something for a time before his eyes snap open with alarming intensity.

“You have been to Hell. I'd know that unwavering stench anywhere,” he muses.

You're about ready to punch this guy and John notices, his hand quickly covering your balled fist.
and squeezing gently.

“Not the time, mate,” John says urgently. “No need to wind the missus up when there's more pressing things to be getting on with.”

“Shame,” Midnite laughs and the rumble echoes in his broad chest. “I was enjoying myself.”

The cabin judders and you cling onto the sides of the chair. The hatch above you pops open and the oxygen masks drop down, splaying in all directions. A rogue mask catches John in the face and he swears loudly.

“So, are you going to just sit there, Master of the Dark Arts?” Midnite sneers, his voice dripping with contempt.

“I don't see you doing anything, Voodoo Priest,” John retorts, getting to his feet and dodging another errant mask.

“Why should I?” Midnite shrugs. “You have a pattern, Constantine. You make the situation worse and then I have to save you. It's not yet my time to step in.”

“You know, I shoulda let Star punch you right in the gob,” John growls. “Come on, love. We need to speak to the pilot.”

He holds out his hand and you take it, rising to your feet. Even stood up, Papa Midnite looms over you to a frightening degree. He seems to catch your awed expression and gives you a curt nod and a sly smile.

“Off you go, little one,” he rumbles. “Run along with your Master warlock.”

“Hey,” John snarls. “None of that.” He pulls you out into the aisles and starts to walk with you to the cockpit. You both brace yourself on the chairs with each step, apprehensive in case the plane lurches again.

“Sir, Ma'am, I'm going to have to ask you to sit down,” a stewardess says, trying to conceal her obvious fear with a fake cheerful voice.

“Nah,” John says simply before pushing past her.

“Sir!” the woman calls, reaching out towards him but John places his hand quickly on her head, muttering something you might have caught as 'Dormi'. She blinks her eyes before yawning widely, stumbling backwards and onto an empty seat before her eyes close and she slumps against the headrest.

“You're definitely teaching me that,” you laugh and he gives you a cocky smirk, proud that he's impressed you.

A loud boom from outside quickly brings you both back to the situation at hand.

“What was that?” you ask.

“No idea, love, don't care to find out just yet. Come on,” John says urgently.

You reach the cockpit and he hammers on the door. Nobody answers. He tries again and a tinny voice crackles through the speakers.

“Who are you?” it asks.
“The man that just might save this bloody plane,” John announces. “Let me guess, your controls are working fine but your radio's gone south and you can't work out why it's nosediving?”

“How...how could you possibly know that?” the voice asks, a little scared.

“Told you, I'm here to help,” John says. “Let us in.”

The door opens a tiny crack and you see a timid skinny man, peeping around.

“I could lose my job for this,” he squeaks.

“Better than losing your life,” you counter.

That seems to settle it for him and he opens the door, allowing you in. The first thing you see is the crisp night sky filling the windows with the distant twinkling of stars. The second thing you see is the presumed pilot sprawled unnaturally in his chair.

“What happened?!” you ask.

“He just tried to manually override the steering mechanism,” the man says shrilly. “And he just collapsed.”

“You the co-pilot?” John asks, walking over to examine the body.

“Yes, I am, but I can't make contact with any one and I don't know what's wrong. All the diagnostics say this plane should be working perfectly.”

You try to look around, making observations as you go. The pilot couldn't just collapse for no reason. You suspected this was definitely something supernatural at work but what exactly...you were not quite sure yet. You'd ruled out most corporeal monsters already but the entities, the spirits, the gods and the elementals...well that was a different story. You even vaguely remember John telling you about The Endless but if those forces were at work here, there was absolutely nothing you could do. You shivered slightly. You hoped it wasn't that.

“He's braindead,” John says, causing you to look round in surprise. “Pulse is there but nothing registering upstairs.”

“Oh god,” the co-pilot breathes. “I feel sick.”

“No puking on the controls,” John says nonchalantly. “Star, found anything?”

“Nothing,” you say. “Don't even feel any residual energy.”

“Bollocks,” John mutters.

“Energy? What the hell?” the co-pilot asks bewildered. “Are you two nutjobs?”

“Been called worse,” John laughs before standing up. “Don't think we're gonna find anything here, love. We might need to start asking the passengers some questions.”

“You first then,” you say, gesturing to the door. “Head nutjob at the front of the line.”

“Oooo I'm so gonna spank you later,” John purrs before striding out.

You give the co-pilot a sad smile before saying, “Don't touch the controls. You don't want to end up like him.”
He gives you a terrified look as you walk back out in the First Class section. You have to make your way back past Papa Midnite who's reading a newspaper, seemingly without a care in the world.

“What a surprise, Constantine. Empty handed,” he chuckles. “I'll give you another ten minutes before I save the day.”

“Can it, Midnite,” John growls, wrenching the curtain open that separates the First Class from the Business Class.

You're about to follow him when you see something curious on the bulkhead wall. You stop for a moment and peer closer. There's a brightly coloured spider, in stark contrast to the sheer white of the wall. You normally hate the damned things but there was something about this one. The patterns on its body were frankly beautiful, a swirling dance of cobalt blue and scarlet red. Even its legs appeared fine and delicate. Maybe it's vividness was a warning that you shouldn't get too close. It seemed exotic and possibly that meant deadly.

“I see Constantine has found a lover with intelligence,” Midnite muses, catching your gaze and you jump slightly, your reverie broken.

The towering man laughs slightly, before moving next to you and peering at the spider himself, “It did not take me long to notice this arachnid but I was curious to know how long it would take him. Seems you're truly his better half in many ways.”

“How did it get here?” you ask and the spider twitches two of its legs together in a lazy rub.

“I would venture it came from the hatch,” Midnite shrugs. His voice seems a little closer to your ear somehow but you're too distracted looking at the spider.

“Oi Star, where did you go?” John's voice floats back through the curtain and he pokes his head back in to see Midnite almost boxing your body into the wall. John immediately barrels back into the First Class section, slipping in between you and the Voodoo priest in a clear show of ownership.

“Still as petty as ever, Constantine,” Midnite says, quirking an eyebrow up.

“I'm only gonna say this once, Midnite,” John growls. “Back off.”

“If I wanted your woman, I would have your woman. Make no mistake, John,” Midnite rumbles in a dark low voice. “I was merely impressed by her observation skills. She's found something that you would have just glossed over as per usual.”

“What do you mean, you would 'have me'?” you ask, a little shrilly and he just laughs, not answering the question. You get the distinct feeling that Midnite was not above using magic to force his own goals. Your stomach turns a little as you digest the implications of that.

John places a hand around your waist, stroking your side soothingly, “What have you found, love?”

“This spider,” you say pointing. “Doesn't seem like it should belong here.”

John peers closer and the spider scuttles further up the wall away from him. He gives it a strange look, “Doesn't appear to like me very much.”

“Who does?” Midnite chips in from behind.

“I do,” you say firmly.
You hear the man muttering to himself, only picking up the word 'wasted'. You roll your eyes heavily.

You get an idea, one that you would've never thought you would've attempted in your old life. You stretch your hand up and place it flat against the bulkhead.

“Star, what are you doing?” John asks, concerned. “That thing could bite you.”

“I don't think it's going to,” you say, quite certain of that statement.

The spider pauses its ascent before turning round and daintily climbing onto the back of your hand where it stays dutifully. You pull your hand down, levelling it off and it sits there quite content.


There’s something that you can’t quite explain. It almost seems as if you can hear a whisper of music. You look around yourself but none of the other passengers seem to be awake enough to be playing music. You assumed Midnite has something to do with that.

“You hear something, don't you?” Midnite says, peering at you curiously.

“Almost like...drums,” you venture.

“Drums?” John asks. “You definitely heard drums?”

“Yeah,” you nod before the spider starts running to the other side of your hand and spinning a thread to dangle from your palm. “Drums and singing but it's only faint.”

John turns to Midnite and they both give each other the same look.

“What?” you ask, a little puzzled.

“Drums...and spiders...and singing,” John lists. “That's no spider, love.”

You look down but there's nothing on your hand any more. You turn it over this way and that, checking your arm to see if it has crawled up further but you feel a bony hand on your shoulder that massages it gently.

“Guess you caught me,” a voice like liquid satin purrs in your ear.

“Hardly conspicuous,” Midnite says, folding his arms.

“Well...I guess I favour the old classics,” the man behind you laughs and it's a laugh of pure mischief. His hand doesn't leave your shoulder and you see John's face screw up with annoyance.

“Anansi,” John hisses.

“I go by Mr Nancy now if you don't mind,” Anansi nods. “Oh and...I almost forgot.”

He raises his free hand and flicks it up in the air. The plane violently lurches upwards and your stomach drops with the g-force as your feet briefly leave the ground. You fall into Anansi's arms before scrambling back up to a standing position and whirling around.

The man behind you is impeccably dressed in a pinstripe suit of blood red and duck egg blue, he even has an ebony cravat which he appears to be smoothing down. He stands just a little smaller than Papa Midnite but his slenderness only seems to elongate his body. You think you still seem some
remnant of the spider's glassy gaze in his eyes.

“What are you doing here?” John asks.

“You're gonna have to be a little more polite,” Anansi says with a wicked twinkle in his eye. “In case you've not noticed, I hold your fate in my hands.”

“Polite?” Midnite scoffs. “You left me to die the last time we crossed paths, Anansi.”

“Oh, that was such a fun afternoon,” Anansi laughs warmly. “The look on your face.”

“They burned me at the stake!” Midnite roars, his biceps bulging with the effort to control himself.

“You didn't die though, right?” Anansi purrs, looking the imposing man up and down with disinterested nonchalance. “So stop complaining.”

You felt Midnite was about three seconds away from exploding so you try and deflect the conversation, “Why are you trying to crash the plane?”

Anansi whirls to you with elegant grace, “What an excellent question, my dear! One I shall be happy to answer when you give me the pleasure of your name.”

“No bloody chance,” John growls behind you. “Don't tell him anything, love. He'll only use it against you.”

“I don't remember asking your opinion, John Constantine,” Anansi says sharply, his irises widening until there was only inky blackness.

John grabs you by the arm roughly, putting his lips to your ear and whispering urgently, “He's a trickster god. Be careful what you say and be careful how much trust you put in him.”

You nod. Shit. Normal gods you'd proved you could handle but gods that specialise in mischief and deceit? You didn't think you were ready for this.

“Star,” you say, holding out your hand. Anansi takes it, kissing the back warmly.

“Star. A unique name,” he muses. “I could tell you a story about the time I stole a star from the heavens.”

“Anansi-” you begin but he cuts you off with a raised finger.

“Mr Nancy, please,” he interjects.

“Uh...ok, Mr Nancy, will you answer my question now?” you ask.

“If I told you it was for nothing more than fun, would you believe me?” he purrs with a raised eyebrow. “That I just couldn't resist tormenting ol' Midnite here?”

“Ha!” John cries, turning to Midnite. “See, it's not always my bloody fault. This one's on you.”

“Quiet, Constantine!” Midnite hisses with barely concealed rage.

“Actually I wouldn't believe it,” you say, noticing the curious quirk of Anansi's mouth. “Crashing a plane with you still on it, no matter if you're immortal or not has to be inconvenient.”

Anansi's eyes go wide and he straightens up, adjusting the trilby on his head. He seems a little
perturbed, like you've ruffled his proverbial feathers, “Quite inconvenient, yes.”

“So...is someone asking you to crash it?” you ask.


“I don't think so,” Anansi grins, showing rows of needle point teeth. “There's nothing to gain from telling you anything. It's much more fun to watch you squirm.”

“Tell us!” John roars and Anansi responds with another flick of his wrist sending the plane pitching to one side. Midnite and John go flying into the cabin's middle seats but Anansi's arm snakes out, holding you in place.

“I like you, Star,” he chuckles. “You're different to those two. There's no harshness or jadedness to your spirit. You like to have fun and you're no stranger to mischief yourself, am I correct?”

“I suppose,” you say, finding your feet again.

“I thought so,” he grins. “I know a free spirit when I see one. I tell you what, I'll give you a clue. The person I'm bargaining with is on this plane right now. They wish to be the sole survivor of the crash to earn money. Normally this is not my style, you understand, but I saw the flight manifest and I couldn't resist the opportunity to mess with Midnite. So you see, it's not entirely untrue that I just want to have fun, I'm just helping someone out in the process.”

“So you'd kill a bunch of innocent people to have a good time?” you ask, wide eyed.

“People are never innocent,” Anansi scoffs and points to the sleeping passengers. “That one is having multiple affairs, that one downloads child pornography on public computers, that one is embezzling thousands from a Fortune 500 company, that one abuses her husband and don't get me started on Midnite and Constantine.”

“And me?” you ask.

Anansi gives you a look that seems to peer into your very soul before he bursts out into silky laughter, “You stole a pallet of candy in your teenage years?! Well lock you up and throw away the key, my dear!”

You blush. Fuck, how did he know that?!

“You've really tickled me, Star,” Anansi purrs. “I'll be generous and give you ten minutes to find the bargainer before I drop this plane into the Atlantic...or maybe on Ireland, we're nearly over it. I've got a bone to pick with a certain leprechaun.”

“I'm sorry, leprechaun?” you blink.

“Goes by Mad Sweeney,” Anansi says with a distasteful expression but he doesn't elaborate.

Your mind is frankly overwhelmed by this point. It was one thing to be introduced to a world of demons, angels and ghosts but gods were a completely different level, especially gods who freely walked amongst humanity and spoke about leprechauns.

“Star!” John groans, as he finally manages to untangle himself from the chair he was thrown into.

“We've not got much time,” you say. “We need to move.”

You leave Anansi's side and he watches you with a curious smile as you pull John up to his feet.
“We've got to find whoever Mr Nancy made the bargain with,” you tell him. You briefly look over and see that Midnite appears to be knocked out against the opposite bulkhead. So much for his help then...

“How in the bollocking hell do we do that?” John growls. “There's easily two hundred people on this plane.”

You look around wildly before you eyes settle on someone and a strange idea pops into your head.

“The stewardess. I'm gonna take her clothes, go through the cabins and tell everyone that the situation's been fixed. Pretty much everyone is going to be happy about that except one person.”

John's eyes widen as he processes your words, “That's bloody brilliant, love. Go on, quickly.”

You dash over the stewardess, shedding your clothes as quickly as possible before wrenching hers off her body and redressing yourself. You pull your hair into the neatest bun you can before shucking into her heels. You turn to John.

“Look passable?” you ask.

“I know this really isn't the time but a lot of fantasies just came into my head,” he says, subconsciously darting his tongue out.

“For fuck's sake, John,” you sigh.

“I know, sorry, bit,” he says, shaking his head to clear his thoughts. “You look great. Hurry now.”

He half pushes you out into the Business Class cabin and you straighten up, all teeth and poise before addressing the mass of worried people.

“Ladies and Gentleman, I'm here to assure you that the issues with the plane have now been dealt with. The remaining flight will be smooth and we're still expected to land in Manchester on time. We do highly apologise for any distress or inconvenience you may have suffered,” you say, using the poshest voice you can. You'd perfected it during your many previous jobs in retail.

There's a collective sigh of relief and you see about fifty bodies relax as they start to chatter amongst themselves. You scan the row of seats. Not a single person looks disappointed or annoyed. They all look at ease.

Musn't be in the Business Class.

You push ahead, moving through to another curtain into the Economy section. Another stewardess gives you a strange look.

“Who are you?” she asks. “I've not seen you before.”

“The pilot requested a personal stewardess,” you say brazenly.

Her mouth forms a small 'Oh' and she giggles, “He's going to get found out by his wife someday.”

“I bet she probably suspects,” you laugh, continuing the ruse. “I've got to make the announcement, one second.”

You repeat your speech to the waiting passengers and you feel another collective breath being released until your eyes fall on one man. The second you stated the issue was fixed, his eyes almost bugged out of his head, and you saw his fists curl.
You nonchalantly walk past him, making a note of his seat number before turning back and returning to First Class. Midnite and John are stood together, arms folded, watching Anansi intently. They both look incredibly tense.

John turns to you as you walk back in, “Anything, love?”

“Got him,” you say proudly. “He’s in economy, Seat 58A.”

Anansi claps his hands in your direction, “Excellent! That is correct!”

“So what now?” you ask.

“Now?” Anansi says puzzled. “Well, you either deal with him or I continue.”

“Deal...” you trail off.

“You mean kill,” John finishes.

“That's usually how this goes, John,” Anansi says flippantly.

“Don't tell me you're considering this,” you say directly to John.

Midnite lays a huge hand down on John's shoulder and pats it heavily, “He doesn't have to. I said he followed a pattern. Now it is my turn to step in and save the day.”

“What are you going to do?” you ask in a small voice.

Midnite comes up close to you, using a large finger to pull your chin up so you meet his unfathomable gaze, “I assure you, little one, you do not wish to know.”

With that he strides out and you subconsciously reach for John's hand. John squeezes your hand lightly and tries his best to give you a warm smile but you can see he's just as troubled as you are. You feel like it's one of those old philosophy dilemmas. One life to save many. You just didn't expect to be actually putting that into practice.

You hear muffled screams coming from further down the plane and Anansi turns to you, winking.

“Looks like I have no further purpose here. The plane destruction was getting boring anyway,” he says, stifling a fake yawn.

Midnite reappears with a grimly set jaw, “It's done. They'll believe it was a heart attack. Constantine, tell the pilot to land.”

John nods, disappearing up to the cockpit.

“You know,” Anansi starts, taking off his hat and twirling it in between his fingers. “I've had so much more fun talking to you. A good bit of mystery, peril, the threat of imminent death and a rather fetching uniform. I'm pleased.”

“Perhaps you should torment somebody else now,” Midnite growls.

“Perhaps,” Anansi muses. “Maybe our paths will cross again sometime Star. As for you Midnite, I hope they don't. You bore me.”
“Allow me to relieve your boredom in a more permanent manner,” Midnite offers in a dangerous voice.

“Tempting but no,” Anansi bows before reaching into his jacket pocket and pulling a small object out.

He hands it to you and you take it before realising it's a brooch. It's a brooch with a spider design in gleaming gold with sapphires and rubies dotted up the legs.

“For you, my dear,” he says courteously. “Should you ever need my assistance, I'll be happy to offer it. Speak my name against the brooch and I'll appear.”

“Thank you, Mr Nancy,” you say, a little bewildered he's giving it to you. You hardly expected a god to be offering their services to you.

“Until such time,” he says, tipping his hat and giving a low flamboyant bow.

His body seems to contract in mere instants, and where once was a man, only a curious spider remained, scuttling up to the ceiling and crawling into the air vents.

“I should have stepped on him,” Midnite growls.

“I can see why he's a trickster god,” you muse.

“You seemed to have garnered his favour,” Midnite says turning to you. “Be careful with that. He's known to break that trust.”

“I'm taking it with a pinch of salt,” you say firmly and Midnite's lips quirk up into a sly smile.

“I can see why Constantine likes you,” he rumbles. “But you still have far too much intelligence to be with a man of his calibre.”

“We balance each other out,” you shrug. “I'm not that handy in a fight. Brains and brawn, right?”

That sets Midnite off roaring with laughter and John comes back to see him slapping the chairs as he's doubled over. John looks totally confused.

“You said something funny, love?” he asks, raising his eyebrow.

“Apparently,” you say. “Now let me get changed back. I don't fancy explaining to the ground crew why they've gained a different air stewardess.”

John walks you back up to the stewardess but before you can start undressing, he yanks you suddenly into one of the plane's toilets.

“Are you seriously doing this right now?” you ask.

“Not everyday a man can say he's fucked a girl in a trolley dolly outfit whilst in the air,” John smirks.

“Midnite's like six feet away,” you hiss.

“Best be quiet then, love,” John chuckles. “Also, I've not forgotten that nutjob comment.”

You pout slightly and you see that mischievous and lustful glaze fall over John's eyes. He spins you around so you're bent slightly over the sink and he hikes your skirt up, yanking your underwear down and giving your arse a short hard smack. You gasp slightly at the impact and you hear that
familiar cocky chuckle.

He reaches around you, unbuttoning the pristine shirt until it hangs loosely either side of your body, exposing your bra. He makes a hum of appreciation, looking into the mirror in front of you so he can see you at every angle. You feel his body lean over yours and his mouth is hungrily kissing at the nape of your neck. You shiver slightly and you feel his smile against you as he nips gently at the skin. You feel the throb of arousal start between your legs.

“How d'ya want it, bit?” he asks in a husky voice.


“As the lady wishes,” he growls, smacking you again before you watch him in the mirror undoing his trousers.

You feel the head of his cock lining up with your entrance and he slicks himself momentarily before plunging fully into you. You do your best to bite your lip, stifling the moan.

John gives you exactly what you asked for. His hands grip onto your hips, using them to steady you whilst he pounds into you with ferocious thrusts. Your hands scrabble for something to hold onto and you end up bracing yourself against the mirror. That allows to him to push even deeper into you and your feel your legs start to shake as the pleasure completely takes over your body. You're trying to so hard not to make any sounds and all that's coming out is small whimpers and breathy gasps.

John purrs behind you as he picks up his pace even more, “Tell me you belong to Johnny, love.” He reaches his hand around you, finding your clit and circling it with rapid motions.

“I'm yours, John,” you whisper, not trusting your voice to not break.

“That's my girl,” he rumbles, hooking his arm around you to keep you still whilst his fingers still dance over your sensitive spot.

“Fuck, John,” you breathe as you feel the knot start building in your abdomen.

He uses all his strength to push as deep and as hard as he can into you and you feel your walls clench around him as your orgasm grips you, sending you almost falling forward, were it not for his arm supporting your weight. Your body spasms in his grasp. He quickly pulls out of you, letting himself spill onto your thighs with a strangled moan. He collapses slightly on top of you, kissing your shoulders lightly.

“Mine,” he hums.

“Next time, I want a bed,” you laugh. “Pianos and toilets are not what I had in mind lately.”

John chuckles, “Don't say you didn't enjoy it at the time, love. But I agree, when we get back, let's spend all day in bed.”

“Deal,” you smile lazily. “Now clean up the mess you made.”

“Still so bossy,” he murmurs playfully before using the towelettes to wipe up the cum tracking down your legs. He gives your arse a gentle tap before tucking himself away and exiting the toilet, coming back with your normal clothes a short while later.

You ditch the uniform, redressing and feeling glad of the comfy clothes again before you go out and redress the poor stewardess who's been exposed the whole time this disaster has been going on.
You walk back to your seats just as the co-pilot announces you'll be landing soon. Midnite is already in his chair and he gives John a disdainful look.

“Very petty, John,” he says.

“Don't know what you mean,” John says cryptically.

“Your not so subtle reminder of your claim over her,” Midnite presses. “You're not as quiet as you think you are.”

You flush horribly and hide your face with your hair before ducking back down onto your bed again.

The rest of the flight goes smoothly which you're immensely grateful for. You land at Manchester Airport and John gets his suitcase. You both make towards the exit but a large hand rests on your shoulders.

You turn to see Midnite, his case in one hand, a satchel in the other.

“I appreciate your help,” he says enigmatically. “Plane crashes are not pleasant to live through.”

“Uh...no worries?” you say.

“Stay alive if you can, Star. You're certainly the most interesting lover John's had in a while. Perhaps we'll meet again.”

With that, he strides out of the airport.

“He's a...strange character, isn't he?” you say.

“Bloody understatement, love,” John says quietly.

“You know, one of these days I won't have continual reminders of your former flames and their untimely deaths,” you sigh.

“One of these days, my old enemies and sometimes allies won't want to fuck the living daylights out you,” John counters, giving you a raised eyebrow.

“Be fair, Lucifer wanted to fuck us both,” you smirk.

John's face breaks from serious to jovial and he laughs, throwing his arm around your shoulders, “Come on, bit. Let's get home. I'm bloody knackered.”

“I hear that,” you smile.

You both walk out of the airport and you're surprised to see Chas waiting outside, leaning against his taxi. His face splits into a massive grin as he comes over to you both, pulling you into a bone crushing hug.

“Ah! It's so good to see you!” he says. “And you're smiling which is good.”

“Oh you know, surviving another life or death situation, it's fun for all the family,” John smirks.

“Life or death?” Chas asks.

“We'll tell you in the car,” you say, kissing Chas on the cheek. “I'm just glad to be home.”
You spend the journey back home filling Chas in on your exploits in Los Angeles and he listens with curious excitement. Then John starts to tell him about Anansi and Chas just shakes his head, laughing lightly.

“Seriously, John, can you not just have a normal day?”


“Sounds like you made a lot of friends,” Chas teases.

“Shut up, mate,” John says, playfully whacking Chas on the back of the head.

You get back to the old warehouse and you smile fondly. It feels like months since you were last here when in truth it was only a couple of weeks. You get out of the car and hug Chas tightly again.

“We’ll do that dinner sometime,” you tell him.

“Sounds good to me,” Chas smiles.

You and John wave him off as he pulls out of the car park before John unlocks the door and flips the lights back on.

It hardly felt as though you’d left now you were stood in the main room again.

“Want anything to eat?” John asks.

“I just want to sleep,” you say, truthfully.

“Aye, love, we’ll do just that then,” he smiles.

He scoops you up into his arms and carries you into the bedroom. He lets you disappear into the bathroom and you come out to find him naked under the duvet, a lit cigarette in his mouth.

“I’ve bloody missed having a good ciggie,” he purrs, letting the smoke curl out from his lips.

You just roll your eyes. Same old John. You shed your own clothes, clambering under the sheets and he lifts his arm so you can nuzzle into his chest.

“Welcome home, love,” he says warmly, kissing the top of your head.

“Good to be back,” you smile, letting your hand gently stroke across his chest.

John stubs out his cigarette before he holds you in his arms. You both fall asleep in each other’s embrace.
The Wrath of Renee Chandler

Chapter Summary

You promised you'd go to dinner at the Chandler house but Chas' wife is probably more scary than most of the monsters you've already faced....

Chapter Notes

Bit of a shorter chapter today, just trying to recover from the early morning shift on New Years!

I'm going with the canon Renee Chandler and she's extremely vile. Be warned.

Also bringing Epiphany into it slightly even though I believe her to be the most hated Hellblazer female out there haha.

Warnings: Smut, fluff.

(Sorry I couldn't take the time to proofread, it's been hectic!)

Thanks so much for the 50 kudos! It means a lot that people are enjoying this little Constantine saga :)

- TLP x

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“This was the worst bloody mistake I've ever made!” John cries, fighting with himself not to yawn loudly.

“Whoops,” you smirk, trying to be the picture of innocence.

“I wish I'd never taught you this spell,” he mumbles as he starts to slump on the sofa, his voice trailing off.

This was the third time you'd used the sleeping spell on John. The first time had been for practice, the second had been in a faux combat situation and now you were just doing it for fun. It amused you greatly knowing you could basically power him down for an hour.

You take advantage of the silence to fire off a text to Chas.

Star: Still on for dinner later?

Chas: Yeah, fair warning, Renee wants to grill you.
Star: I go well with white wine and legumes.

Chas: Fucking smartarse. You and John are made for each other.

Star: I like you too, Chas

Chas: See you at 7

You decide to let up on your cruelty and shake the slumped figure next to you. John's eyes splutter briefly and he winces at the sunlight streaming into the warehouse.

“You're a right irritating bird sometimes, you know that?” he says grumpily.

“Oh come on, I was only playing,” you tease, poking your tongue out.

“Ooo love, you're in for some harsh punishment,” John growls but you can see the mischievous twinkle in his eye.

“Oh I am, huh?” you smirk.

“You think you can cast pretty spells on a warlock and not get a taste of your own medicine?” he purrs, his hand finding your thigh and stroking upwards.

You giggle impishly, “Do your worst, magician.”

You know that word pisses him off immensely and you hear the prideful rumble in his chest.

“Alright, I gave you fair warning, bit. I would never have used this on you but you're being a right bad girl today,” he says in a low, husky voice. “Excitā!”

Instantly you feel a huge throb in your core, like arousal was suddenly pulled into your body. You let out a little gasp and you hear John chuckling.

“That was a low blow,” you hiss.

“I could do worse,” he shrugs before repeating the spellword, his hands squeezing on your thigh almost painfully.

You start to feel the wetness creeping down at the top of your legs.

“John, stop!” you pant.

“Nah,” John smirks. “Not until I hear an apology from that smartarse mouth of yours.”

“Fuck, I'm sorry, ok?” you huff out, clenching your legs together to try and stifle the intense heat building in you.

“Don't quite believe you, love,” John laughs. “You're gonna have to try harder.”

You let out a frustrated little whimper and you see John's tongue dart out to the side slightly like it always does when he's vastly enjoying something. He must be really getting off on this right now.

You feel a sudden urge of rebellion. You didn't want him to win. Fuck it, you were gonna try the
exact same thing on him. It may not work but if it did, you'd knock him down a peg or two. You place your trembling hand on his forearm, gripping it tightly.

“Excitā,” you whisper, willing it with all your might to work.

“Bloody fucking hell, Star!” John cries. “You're not meant to use it on me!”

You risk a glance at his face. Oh yeah, he was definitely worked up. You're pretty sure you've got the smuggest smile possible on your face.

“I don't go down without a fight,” you rasp out, your voice heavy with artificial lust.

He laughs long and hard, “Alright, love, colour me impressed you got it right on the first try but you're not supposed to use these ones often. They take a lot outta you.”

“Does this mean I win?” you say teasingly.

“Oooo not by a long shot,” he growls competitively.

“Not even if I do this?” you ask coyly before you push him back on the sofa, straddling him and writhing lightly against his body.

“Ahhh bollocks,” he groans in frustration and you can see he's using all of his might to keep himself under control.

“Or this?” you ask, dipping your head to his neck and hungrily kissing along the line of his collarbone and up under his jaw. He arches back and you know you're breaking his resolve. “Just tell me I win and we can both have some fun.”


“It's your own fault for hitting me with two doses of that spell,” you say, nipping at his earlobe.

“I swear, Star, if you don't start fucking me right now, I'm gonna go crazy,” he growls.

“Beg,” you say mirthfully.

His eyes goes wide. You're pretty sure in John Constantine's entire existence no one has ever demanded that of him. You can tell he's too used to getting his own way, too used to taking charge.

“Nah, love, I ain't doing that,” he says panting heavily.

“Oh what a shame,” you say sweetly, before grinding against him, causing his hips to buck up. “Guess I'll just have to please myself then and leave you wanting.”

“Star,” he hisses in warning.

“Come on, Johnny,” you smirk, using his own terms against him. “Beg for it.”

“Fucking hell I'm gonna tan your backside so badly you won't be able to walk for a week after this,” he groans.

“Promises, promises,” you laugh, gathering his hands before they can reach you and pinning them above his head, leaning your bodyweight on them.

You make sure he's pliant before pushing his wrists into one hand and using your other to undo his
belt buckle, yanking open the button on his trousers and pulling the zip down. You drag his boxers off until he's exposed beneath you. You hike up your skirt and you give John a quick flash to let him know you've got no underwear on underneath before you press your body back down on his, the skin to skin contact radiating heat between the two of you. You can tell John's fighting heavily against his pride as he frowns, trying to let the words come out but biting them back before the sound escapes.

You lean over him, lips mere inches from his, “Tell me, Johnny, tell me what you want.”

John lets out a grunt of frustration, “I want you to fuck me, Star. Right now.....please.”

“See, that wasn't so bad,” you smirk, biting at his lower lip.

You roll your pelvis up so his cock is pressing against your entrance and ease yourself down his length. John's eyes roll back and he hums his appreciation.

You lean down, whispering in his ear, “Bet you're not complaining I'm such a bad girl now, huh?”

“Fuck, love,” John groans. “Just shut up and take what you want from me.”

You'd completely broken him down and you weren't going to lie, it felt good. You briefly consider teasing him more by taking it at a very slow pace but the lingering effects of the spell weren't making you the most patient person. You lift up and down harshly, causing John to let off a string of swear words, before you carried on with your punishing tempo. Over and over you slammed him into you and the shockwaves of pleasure cause you to relax your grip on John's wrists. He quickly wriggles free, his hands gripping onto your hips, helping you buck against him more easily.

You didn't care about the power struggle any more. You just lost yourself in the sensations rippling through you.

“That's it, love,” John purrs. “You ride ol' Johnny until you're done.”

“I need...” you rasp out, your hands diving down the front of your body.

“Let me,” John says firmly. “You're gonna fucking love this, bit.”

He presses his palm directly over your clit and mutters that spellword again. For a moment you think you may have blacked out because the intense orgasm that blasts through you overwhelms every sense in your body. When you eventually regain your vision, you're vaguely aware that you're shaking violently. John is sat up, his arms wrapped around you, lazily fucking you through your spasms.

“You're not complaining I'm such a bad girl now, huh?”

“You can't move,” you whisper. Your limbs feel completely useless, the orgasm having ripped away your energy.

He flashes you the biggest shit eating grin before swinging his legs to the side, placing his hands underneath your arse and standing up, picking you up off the sofa. He gently bends over, leaning you back down to lie flat on the cushions before he pulls out.
“Open that pretty little mouth for me,” he orders, straddling your worn out body.

You oblige, using the last of your energy to lap a long line up the length of his cock before taking it between your lips. He doesn't last long, obviously too worked up and you lazily drink down the cum that floods your mouth.

He steps back, sitting down on the sofa with a heavy thud and pulling your legs over his lap, stroking them gently as he regains his breath.

“Fuck me,” he pants. “That was intense.”

“You started it,” you giggle.

“I think you'll find you did, Miss wannabe warlock,” he laughs. “Bloody hell....never been made to beg before.”

“I kinda guessed,” you purred, stretching your limbs out languidly.

John ruffles his hair before lacing his fingers behind his head, “I take it back, you're probably the wildest shag I've had ever. Period.”

“I hope that's a good thing,” you laugh.

“Aye, it is love,” he chuckles. “God I adore you, you know.”

“Are you only saying that because I fucked your brains out just now?” you tease.

He leans over your body, gently kissing your lips, “Nah, bit. That's only a small part of it.”

“Come on, we'd better get cleaned up,” you say. “We're supposed to be going to Chas' in a little while.”

John frowns, “Still not happy about that, love.”

“I made a promise in Los Angeles,” you say firmly.

“Fine, on your head be it,” he says, throwing his hands up. “Just don't expect me to be all smiles and roses around her.”

“Is she really that bad?” you smirk, raising an eyebrow.

“Put it this way, bit. Renee Chandler is the only woman who scares the bollocks off of me.”

**

A few hours later, after you've both cleaned up and redressed, John is driving you to the Chandler household. The further you get away from the city centre, the more you realise just how dedicated Chas must be to constantly ferry John about considering his commute must be horrendous.

You eventually pull up outside a neat little semi-detached house halfway between Manchester and
Liverpool. It pretty much looked like any other suburban household.

“Sure I can't change your mind, love?” John says, looking at the house in agitation. “I don't normally go in if I know she's around.”

“She said she wants to meet me, it's good manners to turn up eventually,” you press.

“Nah, she just wants to demolish your character until you run away,” John mutters. “She's done that a few times in the past.”

“So she's like a father figure, holding the proverbial shotgun and saying 'if you harm my darling boy'—” you start.

“Not in the slightest, bit,” John interrupts. “She just enjoys making me miserable. She fucking hates me.”

“What on earth did you do?” you ask wide eyed.

“Nothin'!” John protests. “She just doesn't like Chas being in this line of work, says I'm a bad influence.”

“Well she's not wrong,” you wink but John only gives you a slight grimace. “Come on, the faster we get this over with, the faster it'll be done and then you won't ever have to do this again.”

“Promise me, love,” John says, taking your hand and squeezing it.

Well Jesus, you'd never seen him so flustered before! You were guessing Renee was quite a ballbreaker and probably one of those fierce family matriarch types.

“Promise,” you smile, trying to cheer John up.

“I'm making that a binding contract,” John murmurs. “Ahhhh bloody hell, let's get on with it.”

You both exit the car, you retrieving the small cake you'd made. You'd always had a thing about being a polite guest and it surprised a lot of people considering your career choice.

Chas opens the door, smiling warmly and ushers the two of you in. You catch him gripping John's arm firmly before he can properly enter the house.

“Don't antagonise her,” you hear Chas whisper.

“As long as she doesn't antagonise me, mate,” John hisses.

You roll your eyes before pushing on through to the dining room where you set the cake down on the table. John joins you a moment later, putting a protective hand around your waist.

“Renee, they're here,” Chas calls to the kitchen and you hear the sound of footsteps approaching.

Well....

Renee Chandler was not what you expected.

The woman who walks in has a dour expression on her face, like she'd been sucking sherbet lemons continuously. She was quite overweight with noticeable jowls around her neck and a severe black bob cut that only accentuated the roundness of her face. If anything, the briefest thought goes through your head that she's punching well above her weight to be married to Chas.
She spots you and her eyes narrow, scrutinising your very being, “So she's an Epiphany 2.0, huh?”

“Who's Epiphany?” you ask, a little confused.

“Pleasure as always, Renee,” John spits. “I see you got the first jab in straight away.”

“You're just dodging her question, John,” Renee says harshly, folding her arms. “Haven't even told her about your ex-wife, I'm guessing. Typical.”

“Ex-wife,” you repeat, feeling a little numb. You knew John had had a string of lovers in his lifetime but he'd never mentioned someone called Epiphany before.

“And she was just like you. Rock n' roll type, very young, not as good of a body as you have but I bet you have the same kind of attitude,” she sneers at you.

You just look to Chas who stands there awkwardly, rubbing his arm. You guessed he was well and truly whipped to let his wife spout off like this. Well, you weren't about to give her the satisfaction of letting her ruffle your feathers.

“Pleasure to meet you, Mrs Chandler,” you say, extending your hand out. “I've brought a Victoria sponge cake to say thank you for hosting us, I hope that's ok.”

You see the flash of uncertainty on her face and know she didn't expect you to act so courteous. She extends her hand with begrudging formality and shakes yours before drawing her hand back quickly.

“Does John's latest fuckbuddy have a name?” she asks, retrieving her cold indifference.

“Now, hang on, Renee,” John interrupts angrily. “That was right rude, even for you.”

“Well I don't see a ring on this one's finger so I assume she's just something to occupy your time for now until she gets too old,” Renee smirks, the action drawing all of her chins up in one mass.

“Renee!” Chas calls, appalled at the situation.

“Don't you 'Renee' me, Francis!” she says pointing a finger at him. “This girl is the reason you've been gone so much lately and I'll be damned if I let her continue to interrupt our life!”

“Well tough bloody luck,” John hisses. “She's going nowhere.”

You can't believe the argument that's erupted around you. You can see now why John was so reluctant to come. Renee Chandler was a complete arsehole. This was just supposed to be a nice dinner...

“Mrs Chandler,” you start, hoping to try and get the train back on the tracks. “My name is Star. It's a stage name I go by because I used to be a musician until a crossroads demon killed my friend and bandmate. I don't intend to take your husband away from you, in fact, I've tried to keep him out of this a fair bit because it's mine and John's business. I apologise if I've been a source of strife in your marriage but I really didn't intend to do so. I think John and I should leave now.”

You look to John who seems completely stunned by your little speech and you take his hand, pulling him to walk behind you.

“Wait,” you hear her say and you pause, looking round.

Renee seems to have lost her fight, her body almost collapsing in weariness. She seems almost a little ashamed.
“Can we talk alone?” she asks and you nod, giving John's hand a reassuring squeeze.

You walk with Renee into the kitchen and she shuts the door.

“Look, I may have come off as very aggressive but there's good reason for that,” she starts, fiddling with the sleeves of her jumper. “John's brought so many women into mine and Francis' life and they're either absolutely unbearable or they need saving all the time. I know exactly when a new fling crops up because I suddenly don't have a husband any more. He's off gallivanting around the UK at John's beck and call.”

“Well I can tell you really hated this Epiphany girl,” you laugh.

“Oh she was a brat,” Renee chuckles. “Far too young for John, still angry at the world and screwed up in the head. He made a mistake marrying that one and it cost him dearly.”

“Listen, I know you love your husband,” you venture. “I'd be pissed too in your situation. I can imagine you're constantly worried about his safety.”

She nods, worrying her lip.

“Well I'm getting John to teach me magic and I'm tagging along with him on his cases now so I reckon Chas won't need to do much saving in the future,” you say.

“I've heard one of his girlfriends say that before,” Renee says sternly.

“I literally just got off of a plane where I stopped a god from knocking it into the ocean,” you press.

Her eyes go slightly wide, “Maybe you're not one of his playthings after all.”

You laugh, cutting through some of the tension, “You know what, I'll take that. Truce?”

“Just promise me something, Star,” she says in a serious voice. “If Francis is in trouble, you get him out of the line of fire and you get him home safely to me.”

“I can quite earnestly promise that,” you smile.

Renee lets out a long breath, “Ok then, let's get dinner on the table.”

“Need any help?” you ask.

She gives you an appreciative tiny smile. Coming from this woman that was the equivalent of a wide fucking grin. “Yeah, grab some plates from the unit.”

**

The sight of you and Renee bringing plates, cutlery and food to the table leaves both men with their mouths hanging wide open. Renee excuses herself to go to the toilet and Chas is the first to leap in.

“What the hell did you say to her?” he asks amazed. “She hates every single girlfriend John has.”

“I just talked it out rationally with her,” you shrug. “I'm a big subscriber of the 'walk a mile in my shoes' mantra.
“Are you sure you're not descended from a magic bloodline?” John gapes. “Because that was bloody witchcraft, love.”

“And this is why neither of you will ever understand how to talk to women,” you smirk.

Renee comes back and you all settle into the dining room chairs. Mercifully, she lets Chas do most of the talking and the uneasy atmosphere is slowly dispelled as you all eat. Throughout, John keeps stealing little glances at you, squeezing your thigh affectionately. You think he may be glad the evening is not a complete clusterfuck like he'd predicted.

“So, Star tells me she got the better of a god?” Renee chimes in. You're not quite sure whether she's trying to test your claims at this point.

“Two actually,” Chas explains. “She helped us on the case in Bath and then coming back from L.A on the plane with...which one was it again?”

“Anansi, the African spider god,” John finishes.

“That was it,” Chas nods. “She's doing pretty good.”

“And she overpowered an ancient Incubus,” John continues. “And climbed out of Hell, threw out a mean poltergeist...I'd say she's done bloody brilliantly considering she was just a lowly bass player when I met her.”

“Hey!” you say, lightly whacking John's arm. “I was not lowly! I had a signed band!”

“Yeah well your band were pretty shite,” he teases.

“Sold more records than yours did,” you retort and Chas almost chokes on his drink. Even Renee seems amused that you're backchatting John.

“That was cheap, love;” John pouts.

“So was calling me lowly,” you wink.

John affectionately kisses your cheek before standing up, “I'm off out for a ciggie.”

“Don't flick the ash in my begonias,” Renee warns.

“I know the drill,” John mutters before bending down and whispering in your ear, “I'm gonna stub it out on that bloody awful garden gnome instead.”

You have to fight to keep your face impassive. John leaves the table and Renee watches his retreating back until she hears the door open and close.

“Well, I never,” she mutters to Chas.

“Hmm?” Chas asks, confused.

“He's completely head over heels, isn't he?” she says in slight dismay.

“Who John? Oh yeah, I told you before he was really serious about Star,” Chas shrugs, giving you a small smile.

“He's been serious about a lot of girls, Francis,” Renee says, her eyes narrowing.
“I suppose that's fair,” Chas laughs.

“Does this often does he?” you say, letting the sass creep into your voice.

“Not many girls he'd catch a fourteen hour red eye flight for, knowing she popped up near Lucifer Morningstar,” Chas snickers.

“You don’t have anything to worry about,” Renee says, her tone softening and almost becoming motherly. “John's clearly happier than he's been in a long time. I've had infinitely less sarcastic remarks than I expected tonight. You know, Francis, I really wouldn't be surprised if I have to pull my big hat out again soon.”

Chas coughs as he inhales the roast potato he was eating, “Jesus, Renee, give them a chance to live a little first before you marry them off!”

She just gives him a knowing smirk and you try to keep your eyes from blowing wide. This woman was completely all over the place. One second she's half threatening you, the next she's suggesting you marry John! You felt extremely sorry for Chas to have to keep up with these mercurial moods.

John comes back, motioning behind Renee's head that he's successfully marred the garden gnome outside before sitting back down after kissing the top of your head.

“I miss anything, love?” he asks.

“Nothing at all,” you say quickly at the same time as Chas says, “Not really.”

John looks between the two of you suspiciously, “Are me ears burning or were you just talking about me?”

“I was just wondering...” Renee starts with a wicked little grin and you're internally praying she keeps her mouth shut. “If I'm going to have to dust off my big hat with you two.”

John's face pales completely and he looks around to see the blush creeping up your cheeks. God, this was embarrassing! You just wanted to disappear into the chair.

“Not yet, Renee,” John finally answers, not even daring to look at you.

“Well, I look forward to the day,” she smiles sweetly.

“Anyone for cake?” you cut in, now that the main meal is over.

“I would bloody love some,” John says hastily. “Come on, bit, I'll help you plate it.”

You both scurry into the kitchen and you let out the longest sigh of tension.

“I feel like I'm at my family's and they're asking me when I'm going to meet a nice boy and pop out fifty kids,” you whisper. “This is excruciating!”

“Fucking tell me about it, love,” John hisses. “She knows how to get under everyone's skin.”

You keep up the pretence of your kitchen escape, slicing the cake whilst John fetches the small side plates.

“Queen of tact,” you mutter. “Telling me about your ex-wife and then asking when we're going to tie the knot.”
“Don't let it get to ya,” John says softly, squeezing your arm gently. “She enjoys putting people on the spot.”

He takes in your grim expression and the fervour with which you're slicing through the sponge.

“Bit, are you mad at me?” he asks quietly.

“Mad, why?” you ask, bemused.

“That I didn't tell you about Epiphany,” he says, bracing himself for an argument.

“Not really,” you shrug. “Not like you know my history with my ex's either.”

“She wasn't anything like you are,” he almost murmurs. “She was impulsive, had fierce mood swings, no filter on her gob whatsoever. She broke me self esteem for a good while after we separated.”

“Sure you didn't marry, Renee?” you tease.

John makes a fake retching sound, “Oooo, I did not need that image, love.”

“Was she abusive to you?” you ask as gently as you can and you see the shadow of hurtful memories flash across his eyes.

“You could say that,” he mutters. “Honestly, Star, you are everything I've ever needed in a woman. You may give me tons of backchat but you've always been kind to me, always been loving, always stuck by me even when I was a right arse.”

“Don't go getting soppy on me now,” you smirk, transferring the cake slices to the plates.

“Never, love,” he smiles and the corners of his eyes crinkle in that cute way. “Just letting you know what you mean to me. I made meself a promise after you climbed out into Lux that I would never hold me feelings back again around you.”

“Then give me a quick kiss before we have to go back into the lion's den,” you joke.

“Gladly, bit,” he smirks before taking your chin in his hand and pulling your mouth to his.

Chas comes through the kitchen door and makes a noise of disgust, “Oh for fuck's sake, John, put her down.”

“Mate, you've got a habit of interrupting,” John says with a quirked eyebrow.

“Well it doesn't take ten minutes to slice a cake,” Chas counters. “Come on you two.”

You laugh, grabbing the plates and John grabs the remainder before you go back out and set them down on the table.

“I see you gathered the lovebirds,” Renee says pointedly.

“It was just a quick snog,” John says rolling his eyes. “Honestly...”

“Not in my house, John,” Renee says sternly. “Keep your hands to yourself.”

“Yes mother,” John mutters, only loudly enough for you to hear.
Chas' phone goes off and he pulls it out before telling Renee, “It's Geraldine, one sec.”

He walks off towards the living room and you hear snippets of the conversation with his daughter. Chas starts to sound worried and you furrow your brow, trying to listen in better. Renee notices your tense face and snaps her head to her husband.

“Francis?” she calls. “Everything ok?”

Chas walks back in, phone pressed hard against his ear, “You haven't seen Tricia at all today or heard from her?”

“No, why?” Renee asks with a slight edge of panic starting in her voice.

“We'll look for her, don't worry sweetheart,” Chas says into the phone. “I'll call you soon.” He ends the call. “Geri can't find Tricia. She was supposed to be coming home from a sleepover today but she never showed and the other girl's parents said they never stayed the night.”

“Oh god,” Renee exclaims, clapping her hand to her mouth.

“We need to go look for her,” Chas says grimly.

“I'll help in whatever way you want me to,” John offers.

“We're not using magic,” Renee hisses.

“How about you just track her phone?” you venture. “She's a teenage girl right? It must be glued to her.”

“Right, right!” Chas says, his eyes lighting up. “How the fuck do we do that? I'm not good with phones.”

“You got her number and if she's on iPhone or Android?” you ask. “I'll do it for you.”

Chas reels off Tricia's number and you tap it into the website you used to use when Phe would disappear on one of her binges.

“I've got the last location where her phone pinged,” you say, pulling up a map.

“No...” you hear John breathe as he looks over your shoulder. “Not there.”

“John! What is it?!” Chas shouts. “Where's my granddaughter?!”

“Why the bloody fucking hell is she there?!” John hisses.

“John Constantine, so help me, tell me where my baby is!” Renee yells.

“Ravenscar,” John says, his voice cracking. “She's at fucking Ravenscar.”

Chapter End Notes

Your British slang terms for the day:
Tanning your backside = Spanking you extremely hard.

Get my big hat out = I'm expecting a wedding
You couldn't react fast enough. Chas practically leapt over the table, grabbing John by his shirt and slamming him backwards against the wall.

“You fucking prick, you told me it was demolished the day after you won the deed!” Chas yells in his face.
“I said it was boarded up!” John shouts back. “Not like I have the fuckin’ money to pull it down!”

“You lied to me, John!” Chas growls. “You lied to me and now my little Tricia is there and I bet it’s your fucking fault because I don’t have a clue how she would know about that place otherwise!”

You look to Renee who seems as shocked as you are at Chas’ outburst. You don’t dare intervene. This wasn’t your fight to step into.

“Not from me!” John hisses. “I’ve never mentioned the fucking place around her. Why would I want to?”

The two men glare angrily at each other but John makes no movement to push Chas away. Eventually Chas lets go of John and steps backwards, his fists balled and his jaw locked.

“I can’t fucking believe you, John,” Chas spits. “If something happens…if she...”

“I’m not gonna let that happen, mate,” John says firmly. “I’m going after her, right now.”

He gathers his shoes and trenchcoat, slipping them on as fast as he possibly can. You bolt up from your chair and begin doing the same.

“You’re not going alone,” you say. “I’m coming with you.”

“Cheers, bit,” John nods.

You’re mildly surprised he isn’t trying to talk you out of it for once. Maybe he thinks you’re actually learning enough to be useful.

“We’re taking my car,” Chas grunts. “Yours is a piece of shit.”

“Not gonna argue, mate,” John says, holding his hands up. “Let’s go.”

“Francis, you bring out little granddaughter back as soon as you can,” Renee calls to Chas.

“Planning on it,” comes the aggressive response.

As you move around the table, Renee grabs your arm, pulling you down to eye level, “You remember your promise, Star. You keep my Francis safe. You keep my family safe.”

“I haven’t forgotten,” you say with the utmost seriousness.

She nods, her lip quivering slightly and releases your arm again. You, John and Chas rush out to his taxi, piling into the car. Chas starts it, throwing the sat nav to John a little harder than was necessary.

“Put the address in,” he orders.

“On it,” John says, punching in the post code.

You look at your phone, refreshing the tracking website. Tricia’s still showing as being within the Ravenscar complex. You didn’t know whether that was a good thing or bad thing.

“Why the fuck didn’t you tear it down, John?” Chas says after a good thirty minutes of awkward silence. “After everything that happened there?”

“Honestly, Chas, at the time I was broke,” John sighs. “And it just kinda slipped my mind after that. I did make sure to seal it off so nobody could break in and do some stupid ghost hunting Youtube
“Shite.”

“It says she’s actually in the building,” you add, quietly.

“Shit,” Chas breathes.

“You taught her how to lockpick, didn't you?” John asks wryly.

“I didn't think she'd use it to go breaking into places!” Chas cries. “I was just trying to give her an extra skill in case she ever got stuck or kidnapped or whatever!”

“Don't worry, mate,” John says, patting Chas' arm. “We'll find her.”

“All the way near fucking Scarborough...how did she even get there?” Chas mutters to no one in particular.

“Might have taken a train or maybe she had a lad she hitched a ride with,” John shrugs. “Could be anything.”

“If she's with a boy, I'll fucking skin him alive,” Chas growls.

“Hey, every girl has to have a boyfriend who drives and is a world class twat at some point,” you say. “It's like an unwritten rule of high school. Then she can learn to date nice boys.”

“Is that what happened to you?” Chas says sarcastically. “You met a nice boy?”

“Might still be on the world class twat phase to be honest,” you smirk.

The tension bubble in the car seems to pop and Chas ends up laughing in a genuine sort of way.

“Oi!” John cries, turning round in his seat. “None of that from you, bit. You'll damage my ego.”

“It could do with a few knocks,” Chas laughs.

“Nice to know I have such support from me best mate and me bird,” John grumbles.

You reach forward, ruffling his hair playfully, “Happy to help.”

“You're lucky I love you or I'd be turning you into a frog right now,” John hisses.

You look to Chas in bewilderment who mouths, “He can't do that. He's lying.”

“Why a frog?” you ask, playing along.

“That's what bratty little princesses become,” he answers, folding his arms in annoyance.

“I'm a princess now, huh?” you laugh. “Well I'm being short-changed on the castle then.”

“Love, you're seriously in for it when we get a spare moment,” he says.

“Can't wait,” you wink teasingly.

“Not the time guys,” Chas sighs. “I'm gonna have to find a petrol station. I'm not gonna make it to North Yorkshire on what I've got in the tank.”

“Should be one coming up, mate,” John says, looking at the sat nav.
You briefly pull into a service station. You dash out, loading up on food and drinks whilst Chas fills up the car. You've barely paid and walked out of the door when John drags you to the side of the forecourt.

“You're being right mouthy, Star,” he says, boxing you in against the building. “What's up with you?”

“I'm just trying to lighten Chas' mood,” you sigh. “The more I can distract him, the less he dwells on the 'what ifs' until we can see what the situation actually is. Sorry if you got offended by it.”

“Takes a lot to offend me, love” John snorts. “You've got a good heart, you know that?”

“I try to,” you smile. “I don't like seeing people angry or upset.”

John pulls you into a tight hug, “I know, I know, just ease up on the teasing a little. I'm not in the best frame of mind.”

“You feel responsible, don't you?” you ask, your head buried against his chest.

“Yeah,” John sighs. “I should've blown that place apart meself but I got lazy. I don't even know how Trish found out about it.”

“It'll be alright,” you say soothingly, letting your hands stroke his back gently.

John moves his head to lay on your shoulder and he whispers so delicately against you that you barely hear it, “I'm afraid, Star. I never wanted to go back there. Every time I do it's like reliving the torture all over again.”

“Those men are long gone,” you murmur, nuzzling your face against his. “You can do this. I'm here with you.”

He lets out a bitter laugh, “Bloody hell, listen to me, spilling me inner most fears out. It's a wonder you've not run for the hills yet.”

“I think the ideal time to run would've been when I got stuck in Hell,” you chuckle. “And yet I'm still here.”

“Maybe you're just as crazy as I am,” he mutters. “You'd have to be to walk on this path by my side.”

“Or maybe I'm just someone who loves you no matter what baggage you have,” you say firmly, squeezing him tight.

He lets go of you slightly, moving backwards to cup your face in his hands. You can see in his eyes that he's terrified. Whenever he's spoken to you about his time in Ravenscar, he ends up having nightmares for days afterwards. Frankly you don't blame him. You can't imagine what it must have been like being beaten for hours on end, getting electric shock therapy, being mentally abused by those who were meant to be saving you. You knew it was taking all the bravery John had to be travelling back to that place but he was doing it for his friend and you admired him for it.

“Star, when we get back, let's go some place nice,” he says softly. “Just the two of us.”

“I'd like that,” you smile warmly, reaching up and kissing him gently. “Now come on, Chas needs us.”

You climb back into the taxi, waiting for Chas to pay and squeeze John's shoulder affectionately from the backseat. Eventually Chas gets back in and you speed off once more for Ravenscar.

“Anything new, Star?” Chas asks, drumming his fingers on the steering wheel in anxious movements.

You look at the website. Seems she's moved slightly to one side of the complex but nothing further, “She's moving around in the building, so that's something.”

“How is that something?” John asks.

“She's alive at least,” Chas finishes for you. “That's what she means.”

“Right,” John says, a little quietly. “Gotcha.”

Gradually the towns melt away and you're driving over desolate moors, the fog of night rolling across them in eerie wisps. You shiver slightly. You never liked how barren it was in the Yorkshire Moors. It was just...nothing. Nothing but the unforgiving harshness of nature and the complete isolation. Were it not for the road you were on, you could almost imagine this to be some sort of fantasy pulled straight from a Jane Austin novel.

“You alright, bit?” John asks, noticing your uncomfortable look.

“I keep expecting the Hound of the Baskervilles to appear,” you say, trying to lighten your own mood.

“Good job it only roams around Dartmoor then rather than Yorkshire,” John laughs.

“You read?” you cry out and instantly realise how offensive that sounds. “I mean you've read Sherlock Holmes?”

“Is that so surprising, love?” John chuckles. “I've not had a chance to do much reading since you've been in my life.”

“Or maybe it's because there was a changeling taking on the shape of the hound about seven years ago and we had to drive to the arse end of Devon to kill it,” Chas says wryly, looking at you in the rear view mirror with a knowing smirk. “And he only read the book because I told him it was good research.”

“Ah bloody Hell, Chas, can you not let me look dashingly intelligent for like ten seconds?” John grumbles. “Star was well impressed then.”

“I'm not letting you embellish the truth for the sake of impressing her,” Chas snorts. “She already loves you, you don't need to do that.”

You laugh and lean forward in between the two seats, “Frankly I'm impressed you read it at all, no matter what the circumstances.”

John flashes you an affectionate grin, “I'll take that.”

“So you defeated a faux Hound of the Baskervilles, huh?” you say. “One day I want to sit down with you both and hear all your past adventures. Sounds like you've had quite a few weird ones.”

“Aye, you're not wrong, love,” John nods, stretching his legs out to keep the stiffness at bay.
“Definitely not,” Chas adds. “This prick manages to attract the weird and wonderful.”

“Oi!” John cries. “You bloody tosser, I’ve seen you get yourself into some bizarre scrapes all on your own.”

Both men look at each other before bursting out into laughter. You feel a little more relaxed, knowing that you were all trying to keep the tension to a minimum.

Before long you see the sign for Scarborough and you look out of the window to see the crashing waves of the North Sea battering the coast with its inky waters.

“Not far now,” John says.

In any other situation, the seaside town would have been quaint but the deadly silence of the streets was setting you on edge. It was long past midnight at this point and not even party goers were still stumbling around.

Chas drives on and you see the sign looming before you.

Ravenscar

5 Miles

Instinctively you reach for John and find his shoulders are tense. You massage them gently, letting him know he was safe.

“It's just past the Raven Hall,” John tells Chas who nods grimly.

You look out of the window once more and see you've driven up onto the cliffside. Below you the thrashing waters churn heavily and you gulp slightly at the sheer drop from the crumbling rocks. Progressively the evidence of town life melted away and all that was left were dark foreboding fields dotted with farms.

“You have arrived at your destination,” the sat nav spoke in a mechanical voice.

You all got out of the taxi and you had to take a moment to gather your courage. Before you was a huge dilapidated hotel. It still held the splendour of Regency architecture but there was something sinister about the whole image with the steel boards marring the decorative windows. It was just simply vast, looming high into the night sky, obscuring the moonlight. Every instinct in you was screaming to get back in the car and lock yourself in.

You looked to John and he seemed to be fighting the exact same urge. He stared at the front door with wide haunted eyes.

“Come on,” Chas said grimly, grabbing a crowbar from the boot of the taxi.

“Right,” John nods, moving forward.

You walked with him, holding his hand as you passed the rotting sign.

Ravenscar Hotel
Past the wrought iron gates, you all made your way and up to the grandiose steps. You briefly thought it was strange that a place of such torment and anguish was later remade into something that was supposed to be luxurious.

“Star,” John whispers in your ear, breaking you out of your daydream. “I can't...”

“You can,” you say firmly, grasping his chin and forcing him to look into your eyes. “I'm right here with you. We have to find Tricia.”

He chews his lip anxiously, “Ok. Please don't let go of me, love.”


Chas pries the steel shutter over the door off and it clangs to the stone below with an almighty crash. You wince slightly at the loud sound. Finally he smashes the door lock to pieces before kicking the double doors open.

There's a blast of dust as it streams out of the entranceway and you're blinded for a short time as you struggle to peer inside. All you can see is darkness.

Chas throws you a torch and you catch it, flicking the button and a weak beam of light penetrates the gloom. You see the long forgotten lobby, its sofas long since caked in debris and the ornate chandelier dripping in cobwebs.

“I fucking hate spiders,” you hiss, staring warily at the ceiling.

“Tricia?!” Chas calls, stepping into the reception area.

Nothing. Just the whisper of the wind as it rattles against the shutters.

“She didn't come in this way, Chas,” John says. “She must have gone round the back.”

“You know the entrances to this place?” Chas asks, a look of controlled distress on his face.

“Yeah.”

“Show me,” Chas mentions, gesturing with his torch.

You hear that sharp intake of breath as John steadies himself, “Alright mate, this way.”

He strides forward with purposeful movements, his hand still fiercely gripping yours. He walks through a side door into a small corridor that you assumed would have been for the hotel staff. It felt incredibly claustrophobic given the dust mites floating through the air. It was hard to breathe.

John pauses for a second, regaining his bearings before darting into a doorway on his left and you immediately see evidence of recent activity. There's small footprints along with larger ones leading from the outside door which is open and swinging slightly in the wind. You note there's a padlock discarded on the floor outside.

“Shit,” Chas swears. “She's definitely here. We used to practice on that kind of lock a lot.”

“Follow the footprints,” you say, shining your torch on the floor. “Looks like there's three sets, maybe two girls and a guy?”
Chas briefly pokes his head out of the open door and you hear him growl in pure anger, “There's a fucking car right there.”

“Looks like she did hitch a ride with a lad after all,” John says, his mouth set tight.

“Tricia?!” Chas calls again.

Still nothing.

“Come on,” you say, leading the line as you track the footprints on the ground.

You follow them to a staircase with ornate wooden panelling. Seems like there's a hidden door because the passageway is wide open and you felt like when it was closed it would be invisible to those who weren't looking for it.

You look into the gap and see a set of stairs descending.

“Looks like there's a basement,” you say.

John's grip on your hand becomes bone crushing. You normally would tell him to ease up but you just grit the pain. He needed the comfort right now.

Down the stairs you walk, John following behind and Chas at the rear. Once you hit the landing you seemed to be in another corridor with doors branching off and one huge room at the end.

“No,” John whispers softly. “Why is this still here?”

“What's wrong?” you ask.

“The original facility,” John says. “These were the...correction rooms.”

“Shit,” Chas hisses. “Don't freak out on me, John. We need to keep going.”

“Trying, mate,” John says, his voice cracking with fear.

Chas pushes past the two of you.

“Tricia?!” he yells and the sound echoes back down the dingy corridor.

The hairs on the back of your neck start standing up and you find you're grasping John's hand equally hard. Something wasn't right.

“You sense that too?” John murmurs quietly.

“Yeah,” you nod. “I've got a really bad feeling.”

“Chas, be careful,” John calls. “There's restless spirits here. I can feel them all around us.”

Chas says nothing but continues walking, following the scuff prints in the dust. You start forward, having to practically pull John along. He's extremely reluctant to continue and as you pass one particular room he stops completely. You can feel him shivering as the vibrations run down your arm. You look at him and he's paralysed by his terror as he stares with an open mouth at a medical gurney laden with heavy leather straps.

“John,” you say, tugging at his arm, trying to break him out of his trance. “We need to keep moving.”
“They strapped me to that,” he chokes out. “They would strap me to it and scream in my face about what a shite excuse for a human being I was....all because of Newcastle...all because of Astra.”

“John,” you say a little more forcefully. You couldn't afford for him to have a breakdown right now.

“Worse than the devil, 'how could you do that to a little girl?', 'I've got a daughter her age, you fucking bastard', 'piece of shit', 'worthless'..” he starts parroting the words of the orderlies, his eyes completely glazed over.

You look to try and get Chas but he's disappeared from view.

“John Constantine!” you shout, shaking him by his shoulders.

“'Worse than the devil', 'how could you do that to a little girl?', 'I've got a daughter her age, you fucking bastard', 'piece of shit', 'worthless'..”

You start panicking, he was having a full blown PTSD episode. Sweat was trickling down his brow, his shivering was becoming violent and his incessant speech was picking up speed. You don't want to try anything aggressive in case that sets him off more.

“John, please, snap out of it!” you say pleadingly.

“'you deserve all you get', 'don't you remember what you did?', 'should just kill you right now, no one would miss you'...”

You reach up, pressing insistent kisses on his lips. For a brief few moments he continues talking whilst you do so but he seems to register your touch as you grip the back of his neck, pulling him full force against you. He puts his arm around your waist, almost crushing you to him with unnatural strength as his other hand dives into your hair and his mouth desperately seeks yours more urgently.

You break away, trying to regain the air you'd lost between his kisses and vice like embrace, “John?”

“I'm ok, love, I'm ok,” he whispers, his eyes back into focus although you see tears staining his cheeks. “Thank you.”

“Are you sure you can carry on?” you ask, worried.

“As long as you're with me,” he nods. “Thought I'd lost meself there in me memories.”

“You scared me,” you admit.

“I'm sorry, love, I didn't mean to,” John says hanging his head slightly, trying to hide his face away from you.

You place a hand on his cheek, wiping away the tears, “Don't be ashamed.”

John sighs, his voice slightly hitched with the pressure of crying, “I fucking hate this place. When we're done I'm gonna burn it to the bloody foundations and then some.”

“Come on then. The quicker we find Tricia, the quicker we can do that,” you say, interlacing your hand with his once more. “Try not to look in any more rooms unless we have to.”

“Aye, bit,” he murmurs. “Good advice. Where's Chas?”

“I don't know,” you admit. “I looked back round when you zoned out and he'd disappeared somewhere.”
“Let’s follow the footprints. They’ll probably lead us to him,” he says, clearing his throat and wiping his face with the back of his trench coat sleeve.

You walk on, dutifully pursuing the dusty trail until it leads you out into the big room at the end of the corridor. You hear a crash from your left and the sound of a girl crying.

“There!” you point, gesturing to a doorway.

“That’s the electroshock room,” John hisses.

You both run, hand in hand towards the door and burst in.

Before you a teenage girl and a slightly older boy are sprawled out against the corner of the room in a heap. You see the remnants of a Ouija board. Fucking morons. Even in your pre Constantine life you would never touch one of the things.

“Chas!” John shouts, letting go of you and running towards a chair set at the back of the room.

Chas is strapped into it, the back pitched to an almost horizontal level and wires criss crossing over his body. Smoke was billowing up from his limp form.

You rushed over, “What the hell?!”

“He’s dead,” John says, eyes looking around for the danger.

Normally you’d be completely horrified at his dismissal of his best friend's death but you’d spent enough time with Chas to know he was a little...abnormal. Sure enough, not a minute later you hear a loud gasp, like a diver coming up for air and Chas was alive again, looking around with a fervent expression.

“Where did she go?!” Chas calls.

“Who?” you ask.

“Tricia,” John finishes. “She got possessed, didn't she?”

“Uncle John...” a sweet lilted voice says from behind you and you whirl around to see a young girl staring in your direction, only you could see the aggression behind the eyes. “You came for me.”

“Get out of her right now!” John bellows.

“But she invited me in,” Tricia chuckles. “She told me I was welcome.”

“You're not fucking welcome, so get out of my granddaughter!” Chas spits.

“I thought it would be a nice surprise,” the girl continues, her hands going behind her back in almost a military fashion as she paces. “After I heard these kids talking so much about how they found this place, how they knew you Constantine, I just had to wait here for you to arrive.”

“Why the bloody hell did you want me to arrive?” John says, standing protectively in front of Chas.

“Because it's been a long time,” the girl grins. “Remember when I used to strap you to that thing? Oh you used to scream so loud, I could swear you were born a girl.”

John’s face drains of colour completely and you can see the shaking starting again, “Who...who the fuck are you?”
“Don't you know me?” the girl laughs. “Warden Chambers.”

“No...no fucking way,” John says shaking his head violently. “Not you.”

“Oh yes, it's me,” Tricia smiles sweetly. “And I'm still not done with you, Constantine.”

John falls backwards, crashing to the ground as he desperately tries to move away. You knew he was completely gone. Whichever warden this was, you were sure he'd been particularly cruel in his torture given the reaction John had. You didn't have the time to snap him out of it. You start quickly unbuckling the straps holding Chas in place. You needed someone with at least a little experience as back up.

“You, girl, stop that,” Tricia growls, the voice dropping lower until it almost sounds male. “This one is mine to play with. An immortal soul...the possibilities.”

“Gonna have to pass,” you say gritting your teeth as you work faster on the buckles.

Chas is almost free when an unseen force barrels into you, sending you flying into the wall. You smack against the broken tiled wall, your arm cut to shreds on the shards and you drop like a stone onto the debris below.

“Star!” Chas calls.

You look up, watching as he undoes the last leg restraint and springs onto his granddaughter, trying to control her. John has hunched himself into the corner, muttering furiously to himself.

You get up, grunting at the pain in your arm and stumble over towards Chas.

“Pin her down! I need to exorcise her!” he shouts.

“Isn't this a ghost?!” you ask, clamping your arms around the struggling girl.

“Is it fuck,” Chas hisses. “It's a demon. It's deliberately fucking with John.”

Tricia grabs onto your wrists in her bid to fight you off. You feel a surge of blinding heat and you scream as your forearms are singed and you let go.

“Keep hold of her!” Chas yells.

“I can't!” you cry, holding up your arms and seeing the blisters start to form already.

“Help me get her on the chair then!”

You both viciously grab the wriggling girl who's shouting all sorts of profanities and spiteful insults. You do your best to ignore the burning sensation in your limbs and you finally manage to start strapping her into the chair. Unfortunately you're not quick enough to pin her hand down and she flicks it, throwing you into the generator.

You feel the hard bite of the steel as you smash into it and cry out in pain. You're sure something's broken, maybe a rib. You land next to John who's staring out at nothing and chattering nonsense.

You crawl over to him, grabbing his hand away from his face, “Please, John! Stop it!”

He just keeps going.

You lose your rational thought. Love was not going to break his episode this time, you could see it in
his face. You sit up, yelling loudly as agonising sensations ripple through you.

“Star! I can’t hold her!” Chas shouts to you but you ignore him.

You grab John forcefully by the hair, yanking his head close to yours. He shouts in fearful alarm.

“John Constantine, you said you’d protect me!” You say aggressively, smearing the blood on your arm over your face and ignoring the extreme pain it causes you to do so. He needed to see how bad the situation was. “And you can’t even protect me from a demon!”


“It’s a demon, John, it’s not a ghost,” you hiss, your grip on his hair faltering as you draw your hands back to yourself, cradling them. “It’s trying to make you go insane.”

“Fuck!” John cries, slapping himself in the face to try and wake himself up. “Shit, you’re covered in blood!”

“Help Chas,” you grimace before collapsing to the floor, the pain winning out. Yes, you’d definitely broken something.

John gives you a terrified expression as though he wants to check you’re ok but he steels himself and jumps up, leaping towards the chair and fighting with Tricia to strap her down fully.

“Exorcise her!” Chas shouts. “Do it now!”

You’re vaguely aware of words being spoken and the sound of horrific shrieking but it sounds like it’s happening a million miles away. Oh shit, you think, I must be nearly passing out. You look across, seeing the shoes of John and Chas shuffling with intense movements and your gaze then tracks to the two kids on the other side of the room, still unconscious or maybe dead.

There’s a piercing wail and the lights flicker on brightly, so bright the whole room is almost blinding. You’re sure in its heyday it must have been completely white, completely sterile, like every stereotypical asylum you’d ever seen in movies.


The screaming is hideous as it reaches a crescendo and then abruptly it’s replaced by the crying of a young girl.

“Tricia? Trish?” you hear Chas ask, hesitantly.

“Grandpa!” Tricia says in floods of tears. “I’m... I’m so s-s-s sorry.”

You smile, splayed out on the floor as you are. It worked.

“Star!” John calls, dropping to his knees and brushing your hair back. “Fucking hell, love, tell me you’re alright?!”

“I’ll live,” you rasp out.

“Jesus fucking Christ, this is all my fault,” John cries out. “I let it get to me, I let it put me back in that dark place in me fucking head. Shit, there’s so much blood!”

“I embellished it slightly,” you laugh weakly. “This is just from my arms. Thought it might snap you back to reality.”
“It did, it really did,” John says hurriedly, trying to lift you up to a sitting position.

You shout as you feel a crunching deep inside your torso, “Stop, please stop!”

John quickly lies you back down, “Fuck! I'm sorry!”

“John, we need to get Tricia out of here,” Chas says, unbuckling the last of the straps and lifting the girl down gently to the floor, hugging her tightly.

“Mate, Star's hurt really bad,” John says. “I don't think I can move her just yet.”

“She got hurt because of me,” you hear Tricia sniffle. “I'm sorry, Grandpa. I didn't mean to-”

“Shh, it's alright sweetheart,” Chas says soothingly. “Go check on your friends ok, I'll see if Star's alright.”

Tricia runs over to her friends whilst Chas comes to the other side of you and squats down, taking your hand and squeezing it lightly.

“What's wrong,” Chas asks, his face completely serious.

“She just started screaming when I tried to move her,” John says.

“I think I've broken something,” you growl through the pain. “And my arms are still burning, I can feel it moving through the layers of the skin and I've probably got tetanus from shredding my arms too on the tiles.”

“So not much then?” Chas jokes quietly.

“Fuck you, Chandler,” you hiss.

“You bloody well will not,” John says, leaning over and kissing your forehead. “We need to get you out of here. Are you gonna be alright if I carry you, bit?”

“Maybe,” you state. “If not I can just pass out, right?”

“You do what you need to do,” John nods before looking up at Chas. “You still got that first aid kit in the taxi?”

“Yeah,” Chas confirms before looking down at you, assessing the damage properly. “She's either gonna need medical attention or serious magic.”

“I ain't taking her to a hospital,” John spits. “They'd accuse me of domestic violence if I brought her in like that.”

You hear the chatter of unfamiliar voices at the end of the room and guessed the other kids weren't dead after all.

“What the hell was that, Trish?!” a squeaky voiced girl says. “Was that real?! Like a real ghost?! Oh my god, get me out of here right now!”

“That was awesome!” the teenage boy says. “I can't believe this shit is actually real and you totally got possessed! I wish I'd filmed it!”

You felt a rush of air as Chas swiftly left your side and you craned your neck to see him shove the boy up against the wall by the throat, “This isn't a fucking game, shit for brains! Do you see that
woman bleeding on the floor over there? That's what happens when you mess with stuff you don't understand!"

The boy pales as he takes in your blood splattered face and clothing, “I didn't mean-”

“You didn't mean shit,” Chas yells. “How fucking dare you take my granddaughter to this place and treat it like a fucking picnic! Now you're gonna drive this girl home and you're never going to so much as think about the occult ever again, do you hear me?!”

“Yes,” the boy says shrilly, cowering against the wall.

“Yes what?!' Chas practically screams in his face.

“Yes s-s-sir! I won't ever do it again!”

There's the faint sound of dripping water and you register the kid has pissed himself. You're pretty sure you might of too if you were in his situation. Chas was extremely scary when he was angry.

“Get the fuck outta my sight and don't ever come near Trish again,” he growls, letting go.

The boy grabs the other girl's arm and quickly yanks her out of the door.

“Grandpa,” Tricia's quivering voice says. “I'd like to go home now.”

“Ok, come with me, we'll go to the car,” Chas nods, taking her by the hand before looking back over. “Can you carry her John?”

“Yeah, mate,” John calls back. He slides his arms underneath your body, “Ready, love?”

“No,” you admit. “But do it anyway.”

He places his foot flat for leverage before picking you up. Every expletive you can muster runs past your lips. Fuck it hurt so bad!

“Stay with me, Star,” John says softly, cradling you to his chest before slowly walking out to the bigger room, down the corridor, up the stairs, through the back reception, down the service corridor and out into the lobby.

You impress yourself by not passing out but in some ways you wish you would have. The pain is incredible.

“Set me down,” you say as he descends the steps to the driveway.

“We're nearly to the car,” John protests.

“Do it,” you hiss.

He lowers you to the ground and your hand dives into his coat pocket, pulling out his beloved lighter. You flick the top open, handing it to him.

“Burn it to the fucking ground,” you say through clenched teeth.

John takes the lighter, staring at it before looking back at the looming building.

“I love it when you're bossy,” he laughs, the familiar smirk creeping back into his features.
He kisses you gently before walking back into Ravenscar and disappearing into the darkness with only the flickering flame of his lighter to guide him.

“Where the hell has he gone?” Chas asks, coming back to see you lying on the ground.

“He’s putting an end to it,” you say, nodding towards the hotel. “Doing what he should have done when he won this place.”

“Maybe he’ll finally have closure now,” Chas mutters.

You both watch as smoke starts to billow out from the doors to the lobby. Not a moment later, John emerges again, charging the lighter flame with magic so it almost becomes a flamethrower. He directs it towards the rubble covered sofas which spark up immediately in great whooshes. He walks out to towards you and turns around, watching the fire start raging as it consumed everything on the ground floor.

You all sat there, watching the flames completely engulf the building, the dancing orange and red melting into the sunrise blossoming in the sky.

“It's done,” Chas says. “I'll give you a moment, John. I'll meet you in car.”

He walks off leaving you and John alone.

“It's almost done,” John mutters, pulling something from his coat and showing it to you.

It was a hospital band.

CONSTANTINE, JOHN. DOB: 10/05/1953. DR HUNTOON.

“Jesus, is that-” you start.

“Mine, yeah. I found it in one of the filing cabinets whilst I was tossing the paper about for something to burn,” he finishes. “Last link to the asylum.”

“Do you want to keep it or burn it?” you ask.

“Nah, I ain't keeping it,” John says. “It burns with the rest of this place. I'm not a patient any more.”

He stands up, walking to the entranceway before lobbing the band in as far as he can throw it. He walks back to you, more relaxed than you've seen him the whole time here.

“That felt good,” he laughs.

“I'm glad,” you smile.

“Now, time to heal you up,” John says firmly, taking one last look at the building as the upper floor crashes down in a smouldering heap.

“But doesn't it drain you?” you ask.

“I'll be alright, love. I'll just sleep it off on the way back,” he says warmly before touching your arms in a spot not covered by cuts or blisters and begins chanting.

You look down to see the wounds knitting back together and the angry weals receding into the skin. You feel a horrible pop as something clicks back into place in your midriff and you're able to breathe normally without shuddering in pain. John finishes and almost loses his balance as he stands back up.
You jump up off of the ground, steadying him.

“I'll never get used to that sensation,” John chuckles. “Let's get the bloody hell out of here.”

You support John's weight, slinging his arm over your shoulder as you go back to the taxi. The engine is already running and you slide John into the backseat, next to Tricia. You figured it was better to sit her with someone she knew rather than a complete stranger. You hopped into the front seat.

“Good to go,” you nod to Chas.

“Fighting fit?” Chas asks, looking at your arms.

“One not so broken ribcage and smooth arms, can't complain,” you laugh.

“And how is he?” Chas asks, looking back at John who's spark out, head slumped against the window.

“He'll be alright,” you say. “He just needs rest.”

“I mean how is he mentally?” Chas presses.

“I think destroying this place certainly helped. I'll deal with the fallout when we get back,” you say, shifting in the seat so you're more comfortable.

“You don't have to do that,” Chas says quietly. “That's what I'm here for. I helped him through it the first time, I can do it again.”

“Doesn't hurt to have two people looking out for you right?” you shrug.

Chas smiles, “I suppose not. You're good for him, Star, like really good. I knew you would be.”

“Enough with the sappiness,” you laugh. “Let's get home. This place gives me the creeps still.”

Chas starts pulling out of the driveway, snaking back down the country lanes towards Scarborough again. Tricia falls asleep as you're passing through the seaside town. In the morning light it looks completely different, almost homely and welcoming with it's quaint little shops and beach side stalls.

“So how did she find this place?” you ask, checking to see whether she was still out of it.

“She lockpicked my safe and found my old diaries,” Chas groans. “I wrote a lot back then and one of those diaries mentioned John and Ravenscar. She showed it to her friends and they thought it would be just fucking fantabulous to do a séance there.”

“Even though she knew about yours and John's world?” you scoff.

“Even though she knew that,” Chas nods. “She broke every rule of the spirit board too. I'm gonna have her mother ground her for a year.”

You laugh softly, “At least she's ok.”

“As much as a young girl can be when possessed by a demon,” Chas says. “I'm gonna have to walk her through this otherwise social services are going to be asking Geri a lot of questions.”

“It'll be alright,” you say. “She's a Chandler, she'll be tough.”
Chas smiles at that.

You drive on through the rising sunlight back across the moors. You see Chas trying to fight with himself to stay awake so you ask him to pull over.

“I'll drive,” you say, unclipping your seatbelt. “Get some sleep.”

“But-” Chas protests.

“John gave me most of his energy, I'm wide awake,” you smile.

“Ok but if you wreck my car you're officially not my friend any more,” Chas laughs, getting out of the driver's seat.

“Duly noted,” you grin. It felt nice that Chas had called you his friend.

You drive back in relative silence, following the sat nav route as the rest of your little gang slept heavily in the seats. You took great amusement in the fact that Chas was a loud snorer and you had to stifle your giggles more than once.

“Where are we?” a soft voice comes from the backseat.

“Nearly home,” you say, looking in the rear view at Tricia who was stirring. “Nearly back at your grandparents.”

“Oh,” the girl says, blinking widely before you hear the audible rumble of her stomach growling.

“There's food in the carrier bag down there,” you say, pointing without looking at the footwell behind you.

“Thank you,” she nods before scouring the bag and devouring a Mars bar. “So who are you? I've never seen you before.”

“I'm Star,” you introduce yourself. “I'm John's girlfriend.”

“As in Uncle John?” she says, looking over at the man curled up in a ball on the seat next to her.

“Yeah, as in him,” you laugh.

“And you came all that way with him to save me?” she says in amazement. “Even though you didn't know who I was?”

“Of course,” you smile. “Chas is my friend, I'm always going to help him out.”

“Auntie Star,” Tricia says, rolling the words around, trying them out. “You have a pretty name.”

“Thank you,” you chuckle. “So I'm a default auntie now?”

“Yeah but you're a cool one,” Tricia grins.

You chance a slightly jealous question, “Cooler than Epiphany?”

Tricia looks conspiratorially over at Chas before leaning forward and whispering to you, “Epiphany was a bitch. She babysat me once and she made me go to bed at 8pm. I'm like fourteen, I'm not a little kid. She also took away my special colouring pens that Grandma got me for art class and broke some of them.”

“I think she was mad at Uncle John,” she shrugs. “She used them to write letters and she pressed so hard she ruined them completely and she blamed me for it so I got them taken away from me.”

“Wow, she sounds like a mard-arse,” you mutter. The more you heard about this girl the angrier it made you. There was no reason to take out relationship troubles on a little kid.

“Yeah, totally,” Tricia sighs, leaning back in the seat.

“When's your birthday, Trish?” you ask.

“In like three weeks,” she says. “Why?”

“I'll get you a whole art set. Pens, paints, calligraphy, all of that,” you say firmly. “Creativity shouldn't be stamped on.”

“Really?!” she cries and wakes Chas up in the process.

“Yeah,” you laugh. “Just don't tell your family, ok?”

“You're awesome, Auntie Star,” Tricia grins.

“Auntie?” Chas asks, looking from you to his granddaughter. “What the hell have I missed?”

“Just some bonding time,” you smile.

Chas eyes you suspiciously before he gives a tired chuckle, “Seems you've almost won over my entire family.”

“Still got your daughter yet,” you point out with a wry smirk.

“I'm sure she'll be your biggest fan after this,” Chas smiles. “I texted her and Renee before we left Ravenscar, they're waiting at the house.”

Sure enough, you pull into the Chandler driveway and there's an extra car ahead.

“I'll wake sleeping not so beauty back there,” Chas winks, looking at John before getting out of the passenger seat and opening the back door John's been leaning against. John pitches out, half falling out of the car and he flails in his confusion.

“Bloody fucking hell!” he cries out as Chas catches him.

“Rise and shine, you prick,” Chas laughs. “We're back.”

“Love you too, Chas,” John grumbles, steadying himself and wiping the sleep out of his eyes. “I slept the whole way back?”

“Yeah, Star ended up driving in the end,” Chas says nodding to you.

“You alright, bit?” John asks, unclipping his belt and leaning forward.

“Peachy,” you smile and John strokes your hair affectionately.

Chas starts walking towards the front door and Tricia turns round in her seat to look at John.

“Uncle John, can you stay with Star, please? She's cool,” the girl says earnestly.
“Uhh...” John stammers, caught off guard. “Yeah Trish, was planning on it.”

“Awesome,” Tricia smiles before running off towards the front door. You hear loud exclamations coming from the Chandler household and a lot of sobbing.

“Think you've got yourself a little fan there, love,” John chuckles.

“She's a good kid,” you nod. “She's just too curious for her own good from the sounds of it.”

“Sounds like someone I know,” John says with a raised eyebrow.

“Piss off,” you snort playfully, shoving John backwards.

“Mancunian birds, always so violent,” John smirks.

“Says the Scouse arsonist,” you fire back.

John inhales through his teeth and purses his lips in a pout, “Ooo, fair point, love. Come on, let's get this over with. I'm dying to get home, it's been a fucker of a night.”

You both climb out of the taxi before walking in the front door. You're immediately set upon by Renee who pulls you into a crushing hug.

“Thank you,” she says in a serious voice. “You kept your word.”

You just accepted it. Clearly Mrs Chandler had no idea her husband was impervious to death and she never had anything to worry about in the first place.

“You got my little Trish back,” Renee continues. “I'll always be grateful.”

“Any time,” you smile, patting her on the back.

“And you,” Renee says, turning her attention to John. “I know how you felt about that place. Thank you for going with Francis.”

“Always will, Renee,” John says, slightly embarrassed. “He's me best mate after all. I'd do anything for him.”

A woman with wild black hair who doesn't look much older than you bursts out of the living room and throws herself at John, “Thank you! Jesus, thank you so much for finding her!”

You assumed this was Geraldine Chandler.

“Of course, Geri,” John nods, awkwardly hugging her back. “You know I wouldn't let anything happen to her.”

Geraldine turns her attention to you and looks back at John questioningly, “Is this her?”

“Yeah,” John says, gesturing for you to come over. “This is me bird, Star. Star, this is Geri.”

You're not prepared for her flying leap as she encases you in her surprisingly strong arms, “Seriously, I'm so fucking thankful. Thank you for risking your life.”

“It's no problem,” you laugh.

“If you ever need a favour, just let me know,” she says to the both of you.
“Ok,” John smiles. “We're gonna head off now. It's been a long night and I think we both need the sleep.”

Chas returns to the hallway with Tricia in tow. It looks like he's been telling her off because you can see the red rings of tears around her eyes. Chas walks over to John, pulling him into a hug.

“Cheers, John. I know that really fucked you over back there but I'm happy you came with me,” he whispers, trying to maintain his manly image in front of his family. “I really appreciate it.”

“You're my best mate, Chas,” John whispers back. “I ain't gonna let anything happen to your family, you know that, regardless of what I think of your missus.”

Chas laughs warmly and pats John on the arm, “That's fair. Now fuck off you two and get some rest, we've got a lot to discuss as a family here.”

“Aye, not gonna argue,” John smiles. “Come on, love. I need to sleep for like a day.”

“Bye,” you call out to the Chandlers and they wave you off.

You drive back to the warehouse and once you get inside you immediately shoo John off to bed.

“What are you gonna do while I'm asleep?” John asks, a little crestfallen.

“Just get in the bed, John,” you say, pushing him through the bedroom door. “You need it.”

He reluctantly strips off and climbs under the covers, turning onto his side so you can't see his face. You take your clothes off too and surprise him when you press your body against his back, crooking your arm over his torso and kiss his neck softly. He reaches up, gripping onto your arm, trying to centre himself.

“To answer your question I'm going to be right here, watching over you,” you whisper against him, snuggling yourself into the pillows.

“I don't think I can sleep,” John murmurs quietly.

“Do I seriously have to use that spell?” you laugh.

“Please don't,” comes the small reply and you instantly stop laughing. John sounds so vulnerable, so afraid that you clutch him to you tighter.

“Ok, I won’t,” you reassure him, kissing his hair gently. “I promise.”

“I don't want the nightmares,” John whispers, curling instinctively into a fetal position.

“It's over, John,” you say soothingly. “That place is ash.”

“When I was in the car asleep,” John tells you. “I dreamt about you, I dreamt about you on that floor, covered in blood and screaming. If I wasn't so fucked up...I could've stopped that from happening.”

“You're not fucked up,” you say firmly, rolling him onto his back and forcing him to look at you. “You're not fucked up, broken, damaged or whatever. You've survived things that most people couldn't even dream about and you're still doing this...I guess, job. Don't ever beat yourself up for what you've lived through.”

He processes your words for a little bit, anxiously chewing on his lip, “You still want me, love? Even after seeing that? Seeing me like that?”
“Would I be in bed with you right now if I didn’t?” you laugh.

John stares into your eyes before reaching his hand to the back of your head and pulling you down. The kiss he gives you is shy, insecure even. He leans up, turning so you're now lying under him and he buries his face in your neck and hair, inhaling the scent.

“I want to make love to you, bit,” he whispers.

You understand the gravity of that sentence. John Constantine is not a man who makes love to a girl. He's carnal, cheeky, rough and kind of kinky, all the things romance novels never write about.

“I wanna drown meself in you,” he continues, his fingers gently running down the soft skin of your torso.

“Then make love to me, John,” you say.

The experience is unlike anything you've ever had. John is extremely slow, passionate but soft as he explores you. His lips never leave yours as he traces the lines of your body with gentle fingers. Even when he enters you he's languid, rolling his hips ever so lightly, just rocking against you with mild movements. One hand slips into your hair whilst the other softly gathers your thigh, bringing it up so he can press further into you. You clutch him close, holding onto his muscled shoulders as he rests his forehead against yours, looking deep into your eyes. It's the most intimate moment you've ever shared.

You have no idea how long you stay like that for but you don't want it to end. His thrusts eventually start picking up speed a little as he finds your mouth with his, kissing you with deep unbridled urgency.

“I love you,” he whispers as he breaks away, peppering your face with tiny kisses.

“I love you too, John,” you moan as he drives particularly deep into you.

“Can I?” he asks, halting his movements completely, trying to stave off his impending release. “I'd understand if you said no.”

“Don't you dare stop,” you say, weaving your fingers into his hair and pulling him back down to you.

He nuzzles his face into your neck once more and you feel the slight tickle of his stubble against your skin. He starts moving again, his pace becoming more erratic as he drives in and out of you until eventually he pushes deep, his body tense and your name tumbling from his lips as he spills into you.

He rests his head against yours, regaining his breath. You stay still, letting him revel in his afterglow as he leans his weight on his elbows.

“Sorry for being selfish, bit,” he whispers. “I just...I needed that.”

“No need to apologise,” you lazily smile, stroking his face. Truth be told you felt content, despite not finding your own release. Something about the whole experience was extremely fulfilling and you still had that same warmth that filled your chest.

“You never let me go, back there at Ravenscar,” he says, kissing your nose lightly. “Thank you. God you're bloody amazing. I really don't deserve a girl like you. I'm a terrible person.”

“Let me be the judge of that,” you say, stroking his shoulders.
A comfortable silence falls over the two of you as neither one of you wants to break your embrace.

“I could stay like this forever,” John murmurs, closing his eyes and sighing calmly as he carefully lays his head on your chest, listening to your steady heartbeat.

“We're gonna have to move sometime,” you laugh.

“I know, love, I know,” John chuckles. “Just...let me stay here a little while longer...please.”

“Alright,” you nod, wrapping your arms around him and kissing the top of his head.

“Star,” John whispers, the sound barely audible. “I really do love you, you know.”

“I know, John,” you murmur. “I know.”

Chapter End Notes

I think that may have been one of my favourite chapters to write along with The Devil's Nightclub - Chapter 12!
Emerald Nights

Chapter Summary

Chas visits the warehouse and John keeps his promise to you

Chapter Notes

Just a dropping a casual chapter!
This is more of a character study one with some plot advancement at the end.
Warnings: Smut, mild kink, violence
Also major fluff ahead.
I recently set up an email which is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com if you want to send me a message privately, discuss anything or leave comments if you don't have an account :)

Enjoy guys!
- TLP x

(Also I'm trying to proofread this at 12:30am after doing a long arsed shift so forgive me if there's any mistakes!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Flash!

You wake up with a start to find something heavy on your body keeping you pinned down.
No...correction, someone.

You and John must have fallen asleep exactly as you were because he's still between your legs with his head curled on your chest. He must have drifted off later than you did, however, because there's a blanket pulled up around the two of you.

Your eyes try to look for the source of the blinding light and you see Chas at the foot of the bed creased over with laughter holding his phone.

“What the fuck?!” you cry out and John wakes up immediately, whirling over and nearly exposing your naked body for his friend to see.

“Mate, what the bloody hell are you doing?!” John asks, his hair sticking out at all angles.

“Sorry guys, couldn't resist,” Chas chuckles. “You looked so adorable.”

“Did you just take a picture?!” you demand, trying to pull the covers up more over you.

“Oh yeah,” Chas grins. “This is gonna be great leverage someday.”

“Oi you bloody tosser!” John shouts. “Me bird's naked here and you're like some fucking peeping
“But it's sweet!” Chas says, trying to keep a straight face. “Never seen you so cutesy John.”

John leaps out of the side of the bed, not giving a shit apparently that he was still nude and lunges for Chas.

“Woah! Put it the fuck away!” Chas protests, trying to simultaneously shield his eyes and keep his phone out of arms reach.

“Not until you gimme that phone you bloody pervert!” John hisses, grappling with Chas.

This is the most surreal scene you've ever witnessed. You don't know whether to be anxious or burst into fits of giggles.

“Oh my god, it's touching me,” Chas twists away in disgust.

Now you definitely decide to burst into laughter. You try to stuff the covers over your mouth to keep the sounds from escaping.

“Fucking fine!” Chas says after John practically presses him into the wall. “Jesus, you can't take a joke can you?”

John grabs the phone and hurriedly taps away before throwing it casually back to Chas, “Much obliged, mate.” He throws himself back on the bed next to you, lounging backwards with one arm crooked behind his head. He makes no effort to cover himself still.

“You deleted it!” Chas exclaims. “Oh come on, that was a nice picture of you two.”

“If I want a picture of me and Star in the buff I'll take it me bloody self,” John huffs, grabbing a cigarette and sparking it up. “Now why the rude awakening?”

“Are you at least gonna put some clothes on?” Chas asks, staring at the floor.

“Nah, you wanna take pictures, you can fucking look for real,” John smirks, smoke curling from his lips. “I'd say you're beginning to enjoy it, mate. You keep walking into these situations.”

“Star, please. For the love of god, cover him!” Chas pleads.

You just fold your arms indignantly, “Hey, you invaded our privacy just now. I'm not doing shit.”

John starts laughing warmly, “That's my girl.”

“Christ,” Chas sighs. “He's rubbing off on you too much.”

“I've done nothing,” John shrugs. “She's always been a firecracker.”

“So why are you here?” you ask.

“I need to talk to John,” Chas says. “But I'm not doing it when he's starkers. And I did not invade your privacy. Your damn bedroom door was wide open, I could see you from the living room.”

“Oh, whoops,” you blush slightly.

“Gimme a minute to wake up then,” John grumbles. “Go out there, shut the door and I'll promise I'll put some clothes on. I just need me morning ciggie right now.”
Chas just rolls his eyes, flipping John the V's before walking out, making a dramatic point of closing the door.

“Well that was embarrassing,” you half laugh.

“I'm beyond embarrassment with him, love,” John smirks. “He's seen me bollocks too many times by now.”

“Yeah but he's not seen me,” you point out.

“Nor will he,” John rumbles possessively.

He reaches over for his phone and you take the opportunity to swipe the cigarette from him. He gives you a bemused look for a second until he sees you take a drag and hand it back.

“Need a bit of pep this morning?” he asks wryly.

“I still feel wiped out,” you admit. “I don't know how. We practically slept about twenty four hours.”

“Magic exertion and mental exertion will do that to you, love,” John smiles before offering you the rest of the cigarette. “Here, I'll start a fresh one.”

“Thanks,” you nod.

You didn't often smoke and you'd never done a lot of it in your life but the entire events of Ravenscar had taken a large toll on you. The long journey, the stress of keeping John from breaking down and the confusingly intimate sex you'd had all weighed heavily on you.

You can feel John watching you as you exhale the smoke and you see something akin to hunger in his eyes. You make a quick glance down. Oh yeah. He was definitely enjoying watching you.

“Didn't realise you had a smoking fetish,” you say with a quirked eyebrow.

“Well, no lass has ever made it look quite so erotic,” he grins. “Gives you a real bad girl image with the tatts and all.”

“So what, I'm your personal punk porn star now?” you wink.

“Love, I could fuck you for hours, honestly I could,” he rasps and he chews on his lip slightly as he watches you take another drag. “The things you do to me.”

“Best not,” you say. “I'm pretty sure Chas might actually kill you if we fucked about five feet away from him.”

John makes a noise halfway between a frustrated grunt and a lustful whine, “Bloody fucking tosser that he is.”

He settles back into the pillows and looks at his phone and you see his face morph from one of animalistic lust to almost adoration.

“Something good?” you ask.

“Chas was right,” he mutters. “It was sweet.”

You manoeuvre yourself close to him and peer at the screen. John's not deleted Chas' picture at all, in fact, he's texted it across to himself. The both of you look incredibly peaceful and content as you're
wrapped in each other, fingers entwined as well and you have your face nestled in John's hair.

“Now I'm not the sentimental type,” John starts. “But if it's alright with you, bit, I think I'll keep this picture.”

“Fine with me,” you smile.

“Bloody hell,” John sighs, a slight grin playing over his face. “This is all so....normal. Don't think I've ever had bog standard relationship pictures with a bird before. Not cute ones anyway.”

“You're not gonna get scared again, are you?” you ask a little apprehensively. John definitely had a habit of running away from his feelings when they got too overwhelming.

“Nah, love,” John chuckles warmly and kisses the top of your head. “I've learned me lesson there. Besides, any lass who's willing to go through what you have for me, I would be absolutely bonkers to mess about.”

“Ok then,” you laugh. You turn over to your side of the bed and grab your own phone from the nightstand, unlocking it and turning the camera on, “Then I get a picture too.”

“Come here, let's make it a good'un,” John grins.

He sits up, pulling you in between his legs so you're sat with your back flush to his chest. He wraps his arms around you, resting his head on your shoulder with his cigarette dangling roguishly from his mouth. You take the picture and immediately giggle.


“No, it's just very....us,” you say, showing him.

“I see what you mean,” John laughs. “You're giving it some rock star attitude with the smoulder there and I'm just me usual arrogant self.”

“Oh so you acknowledge that you're arrogant?” you tease.

“Don't make me tickle you, bit,” he says in a cheeky growl. “Picture's grand, send it to me.”

“Sure,” you smile, doing just that.

“Cheers, love,” he says before giving your neck a huge wet kiss. “Now, piss off out of the bed before I end up ravishing you because when you're this close to me, I can't contain meself.”

He presses up against you to illustrate his meaning and you feel his hard cock against your back. You make a big show of getting up and stretching and you hear the purr from behind you.

“You'd better,” he husks out. “Now put some clothes on. You're far too sexy right now.”

You make a big show of getting up and stretching and you hear the purr from behind you.

“One of these days I'm gonna get you to gimme a show,” he murmurs.

“Down boy,” you wink, finishing off the last of the cigarette and letting the smoke slowly eke from your lips.

“Bloody fucking hell, woman,” John practically snarls. “Stop being a cocktease.”
You can't help the massive smirk that plays across your face before you disappear into the bathroom. You slip on a bathrobe for the time being before walking back out. John's got boxers on now and he's pulling on some baggy jogging bottoms to try and hide his evident erection. The second he spots you he just gestures to the strain in his underwear and gives you a reproachful raised eyebrow.

“Oops,” you shrug before getting dressed yourself.

“Alright mate, we're decent,” John calls before gesturing you over.

You both walk out into the living room and John gives your arse a covert squeeze before he leaps over the back of the sofa and sits down.

“What's up then, mate?” he asks Chas.

“Uhh...” Chas starts, looking to you.

It takes you a second to cotton on but your eyes go wide and you mouth 'oooohhh' to Chas before coughing and announcing, “I'm just gonna nip to the shops to get a few bits. I'll be back later.”

Chas gives you a secret thumbs up and a small smile.

“Oh, alright, love,” John says, a bit bemused. “You couldn't pick us up some more Silk Cut's whilst you're out?”

“Sure, anything else?” you ask, pulling your shoes on.

“Got a mad craving for something sweet,” John says, ruffling his hair to try and restore some order to it. “If you see anything we can share, bang it in the cart.”

“Will do,” you smile. “See you both later.”

You're about to turn and walk out when you hear, “Oi!”

“What?” you ask, looking back round.

“Where's me goodbye kiss?” John asks, looking mock upset.

“God you're so clingy,” you smirk, walking over and giving him a small peck on the lips.

“Only with you, love,” he chuckles. “Be safe, alright?”

“Always try to be,” you nod before leaving.

You decide as well as getting groceries, you'd hit up the art store and get that set for Tricia too since her birthday was pretty soon. It felt nice to get outside, back into the familiar streets. Sure the warehouse was safe and all but you got cabin fever pretty easily.

As you drove out into the city centre, you found yourself reflecting on the last time you'd been in this place. Your life had changed so much in the space of a few months. You went from being a sweet but dorky bass player in a moderately successful band to a tattooed hunter of monsters and a dabbler in magic. Not exactly how you saw your life going. And you certainly didn't expect to fall head over heels for the man that broke into your apartment and made himself a bacon sandwich.

John Constantine's world was certainly interesting.
John watched you leave the warehouse, noticing how your hips swayed as you walked. He knew it wasn't intentional. It was something you always did without noticing and he loved to watch the motion.

“Hey, dickhead, I'm talking,” Chas says, snapping his fingers in front of John's face. “The fuck, John? I'm trying to give you compliments and thanks and you're too busy staring at Star's arse.”

“Sorry mate,” John laughs. “Couldn't help it. Anyway, go on.”

Chas sighs, “Really I just wanted to check in on you. I know the whole Ravenscar thing was a complete mindfuck for you and I know how hard you pushed yourself to save Trish. Are you doing ok?”

“I am, actually,” John nods. “Burning that hellhole to the foundations was amazing.”

Chas eyes him suspiciously, “Where's the but?”

“What do you mean?” John asks confused.

“Well, usually there's heavy drinking or you lock yourself away for days or you have waking nightmares. You actually seem...composed.”

“Guess it kinda helps having a supportive bird,” John says wryly.

“Ahh,” Chas says in mild surprise. “So...you're completely fine because of Star?”

“Wouldn't say I'm completely fine,” John says, leaning back into the sofa. “But I had no nightmares for the first time in a long while.”

“Well holy shit,” Chas mutters. “You're madly fucking in love with her, aren't you? I mean I knew you cared a lot but Jesus, if she's that much of a calming influence...”

“Alright, alright,” John says, a little embarrassed. “Easy on the Hallmark sentiment there.” He can feel the slight flush burning his cheeks.

“But I mean it's fucking fantastic!” Chas cries, his arms throwing out wide and a huge smile on his face. “I never thought I'd see this from you.”

“Christ, Chas, you make me sound like a spinster on the shelf,” John hisses uncomfortably.

“I knew you'd picked a good one when she gave me the taxi fare the first time you met,” Chas laughs.

“She did what?” John says bewildered. “I didn't even know that. Christ she's so...selfless.”

“Oh yeah,” Chas nods. “John, will you do me a favour?”

“Uh...sure, mate,” John says tentatively.

“Make sure you tell her how you feel...you know, before more supernatural shit happens to the both of you because we all know you find trouble easily.”
“I did,” John says shyly. “Told her last night.”

“And?” Chas asks.

“Well, you saw how we were this morning,” John simply shrugs.

Chas claps a hand down on John's knee, “Don't let this one go, John. Don't fuck it up. I mean, Jesus, my entire family thinks she's the best thing since sliced bread and you know how picky they are.”

“No pressure,” John grumbles, hooking his thumb into his waistband and drumming with the other fingers in nervous movements.

“Not that I think you can fuck up that much with her. I think Star's in just as deep as you are,” Chas smiles fondly.

“You been talking behind me back?” John asks, his eyebrow raised.

“Oh fuck off being jealous,” Chas snorts. “I talked to her when we came back from Ravenscar. She wouldn't let me take the brunt of dealing with your mental health, insisted that she do it herself.”

“Aye,” John nods, his face becoming a mixture of serious and affectionate. “That she did. She took bloody good care of me, even after seeing the fucking wreck I became. You know, Chas, I promised her I'd take her somewhere after we got back. Do you think...would it be a bit...much...I mean, I don't know if this is too big of a step or...ah bollocks, I'm tripping over meself here...”

“Too big of a step for what?” Chas asks confused.

“If I took her on a holiday,” John mumbles, embarrassed. “Is that too much? Shit, I don't think we've even discussed whether we're properly an item...”

“John, shut the fuck up,” Chas laughs, highly amused. “I think it's safe to say you're a couple, considering what you keep doing for each other and the fact Trish keeps calling you both Uncle John and Auntie Star. I think a holiday will do you both good. I know you were in L.A but that didn't sound particularly relaxing from what you told me.”

“Fuck no,” John shivers. “I still haven't purged the memory of Lucifer in that club yet.”

“So take her somewhere,” Chas smiles.

“Should I tell her or surprise her?” John asks. “I'm no good with this romance bollocks.”

“Surprise her,” Chas winks conspiratorially. “Get your laptop, we'll sort something out before she gets back.”

The two men spend the next hour discussing various places with Chas making a lot of sly digs throughout. John for the most part happily accepts any advice he can get whilst they scroll through various websites.

“How about Scandinavia?” Chas asks.

“Too bloody cold,” John shakes his head.

“Fine, Spain?”
“After flying with Midnite and Anansi I'll be buggered if I'm stepping back on a plane again for a good while,” John hisses.

“Fuck me, you're picky,” Chas says rolling his eyes. “Fine, so that limits it to Britain and Northern Europe. You can either drive or take a ferry.”

“Ferry sounds good,” John nods. “How about Ireland? Is that alright? I mean she's not expecting to go clubbing or 'owt like that is she?”

“She's not a drunk teenager, John,” Chas chides. “I know she was a musician but she's never struck me as the Ibiza 'let's get plastered for two weeks straight' type.”

“You're right, you're right,” John shakes his head. “Fuck...how do normal people do this? It's bloody maddening.”

“Ireland's fine,” Chas says patting his friend on the shoulder. “And normal people look for clues. You never noticed how much she knows about history, like with Sulis Minerva, or all the fantasy novels she had in her old place?”

“Er....no,” John fidgets, incredibly annoyed at himself that he's never noticed and Chas has.

“Ok,” Chas sighs. “Seriously, John, fucking pay attention. I think at this point she knows more about your life than you do hers.”

“Bollocks,” John swears, raking his fingers through his hair. “You're fucking right. I barely know shit about her other than from when I walked into her life.”

“It's like having a second child, I swear,” Chas rolls his eyes. “At least I don't have to teach you about the birds and the bees because you've already scarred me enough with that for one lifetime.”

“You don't fool me, perv,” John smirks. “I'd bet if you weren't so scared of Renee you'd be watching me and Star go at it.”

“Ohhhh fucking ugh!” Chas exclaims loudly, his entire face wrinkling in disgust. “You think I wanna see your ugly mug getting your rocks off?”

“Bit personal, mate,” John grins. “You're not denying you'd be interested in seeing Star though.”

“IRELAND'S FINE,” Chas says in almost a bellow, trying to cut through the awkward conversation before John can open his mouth again. “It's got history stuff and nature and bars you can both get drunk in.”

“Sign me the fuck up,” John says, rubbing his hands eagerly. “The Irish know how to bloody drink.”

“Then buy the damn holiday and go pack her stuff you idiot,” Chas says.

John doesn't need any more encouragement. If Chas thought you'd enjoy it, you probably would. He was good at reading people like that. He buys the tickets, books a hotel and scurries off to pack your suitcases before walking outside and throwing them in the boot of the car.

“You look like a kid at Christmas,” Chas laughs as John practically bounds in.

“I'm just excited and also bloody terrified she'll think I'm coming on too strong,” John says.

“Because flying across the world to find her again wasn't a big fucking declaration of love,” Chas says knowingly.
“Mate, I swear to god, I’m gonna punch you in the gob if you don’t shut up,” John growls.

“I have been truly blessed by a divine miracle,” Chas laughs, doubling over. “I finally have something to tease the shit out of you about.”

Chas doesn't have time to duck as John lobs a book at his head and it smacks him on the side of the face. Of course you would choose that second to come in and you stood there bewildered as the book hit the ground.

“Do I want to know?” you asked. “Or shall I leave you to have your lovers' tiff?”

John loved the way your mouth quirked up in that slight smile when you were being a smartarse. He especially loved the way the wind outside had obviously ruffled your hair around and given you lightly pink cheeks. He had to fight hard not to pull you into a hardy snog right then and there.

“I was just leaving,” Chas says, throwing the book back at John who's distracted by watching you. It hits true and John just gives Chas a dirty glare.

“So who gets the house and who gets the kids?” you say slyly.

“He can have the kids,” John says smirking. “Bye darling.”

“Fuck off you prick,” Chas says with a grin and starts walking towards the door.

“Oh wait!” you say. “I need to talk to you about something. I’ll walk you to the car.”

John's interest was peaked but he squashed down the question by utilising his usual charm, “Keep your hands to yourself Chas, I'll know if you don’t.”

Chas just gives him a 'wanker' gesture before walking out with you.

**Bloody right, John thinks. I've got some serious thinking to do.**

**

You walk with Chas to the car and motion for him to stay there before fetching the art set for Tricia which you had had gift wrapped.

“What's this?” Chas asks, confused.

“It's for Trish,” you smile. “She's turning fifteen soon right?”

Chas just looks stunned as you handed the box over to him, “How the hell did you know that?”

“We had a talk in the car when we drove back,” you grin.

“Jesus...I mean, thank you. You didn't have to do that,” Chas smiles fondly.

“I wanted to,” you shrug. “Just say that's from me and John.”

Chas pulls you into a big hug and you're squashed against his broad chest, “You're a real sweetheart, you know that?”
“Yeah yeah, just shut up and put it in the car,” you laugh.

Chas drops it into his boot before turning back round and giving you a slightly less bone crushing hug this time, “Thank you, Star. I'm sure she'll love it. I'll see you soon, yeah?”

“Bye,” you smile, waving him off before turning back and going into the warehouse.

You barely had time to lock the door when you hear a “Oh thank fuck” behind you and you're pinned to the metal as hands rove all over you.

“Jesus, John!” you cry out. “At least let me get in the fucking room properly!”

“No,” John rasps hoarsely in your ear. “You've been bloody teasing me all morning. I'm not waiting any longer.”

He spins you round and you see his lustful face, his tongue darting out quickly to wet his mouth as he devours you with his eyes. This was the John you were used to for sure.

All of sudden his mouth is on yours, tongue hurriedly seeking yours as he pins your wrists above your head, pressing himself to your body. He breaks away for just an instant.

“I wanna try something if you don't mind, bit?” he asks with a cocky smirk.

You narrow your eyes suspiciously, “What exactly?”

“Oh don't gimme that look, love, you'll enjoy it,” he cheekily grins before picking you up and walking you into the kitchen, setting you down on the table.

He's all hands again as he practically rips your clothing off with eager movements, tugging desperately at your underwear. He refuses to let you yank off his jogging bottoms, pushing your hands away every time you try.

“Not right now, bit,” he says huskily, sliding his fingers across your bare skin and you shiver with anticipation. “Now this thing I wanna try...”

He digs out his last smoke from his trouser pocket and hands it to you with an almost predatory gleam. “Since you made such a show about it this morning.”

He drops to his knees, his hands forcing your legs apart and viciously kisses a line up one of your inner thighs.

“You want me to smoke whilst...” you say, a bit distracted.

“Whilst I taste you,” he winks, his breath ghosting oh so close to your centre. “I wanna look up and see your pretty mouth moaning for me and I wanna see your pretty lips around that cigarette.”

“Deviant,” you half giggle. “Where am I gonna flick the ash?”

“On the bloody table,” John says, not really paying attention as he bites gently at the soft skin of your thigh. “Don't give two shits. Say you'll do it, love.”

“Fine,” you gasp. “But next time I get to pick the kink.”

“Done,” John growls and he mutters a brief spell, conjuring a fireball in his hand.

You bend down to light the cigarette and lean back, inhaling and you close your eyes as you feel the
nicotine rush mingling with your arousal. John's instantly on you, burying himself between your legs as the smoke pours out of your mouth in little starts as you mewl out little moans.

“Oh bloody hell, love, you're fucking gorgeous,” he says, looking up at you and you hear him fidgeting with his clothing, pulling them down and then you see the distinct motion of him stroking himself.

“Enough talking, Scouse boy,” you smirk, taking a long drag and holding it for a while, puffing your chest out and making your breasts more prominent. You let it go in one long wisp.

John chuckles darkly, “You right bossy mare. I'll show you not to backchat.”

He dives upon you once more, tongue swirling thickly around your clt and you can't help but let your head loll back. Fuck he was amazing at this. One of his hands reaches under your thigh, gripping hard and pulling you closer to him before he dips his tongue into you and laps a long line back up.

“Shit,” you moan, bucking slightly.

“Not so bossy now for ol' Johnny, hmm?” John grins. “Let me see you, lass.”

You look down, cigarette dangling from your fingers and John's positively primal in the gaze that he gives you. Shit, this really must be getting his rocks off! He presses his mouth on you once more, not breaking eye contact and you decide to encourage him on by taking another drag on the cigarette, letting the smoke swirl out from your lips as you groan heavily. John's eyes dilate until they're practically black.

He furiously strokes himself whilst his other hand leaves your thigh and two crooked fingers ease into you. He deftly keeps a punishing rhythm and you feel him draw your clit into his mouth a bit more, tongue flicking rapidly against you.

You feel the orgasm building and you bite your lower lip savagely. John doesn't let up the entire time and you half scream as the pleasure wracks your body, your stomach jerking with the spasms. John lazily laps up the mess he's created and you hear him grunt harshly.

His mouth moves away and he lets out a long content sigh, “Bloody hell, Star. That was intense. Are you alright, love?”

“Yeah,” you say, practically breathless.

You're vaguely aware that the remnants of the cigarette are being taken out from your fingers and you hear a sharp inhale followed by a long exhale. You guessed John was finishing it off.

Finally you raise your head and look down, seeing a small pool on the floor.

“Is that me or you?” you ask in your daze.

John laughs warmly, “Me, bit. You think I'd let anything of you go to waste?”

“Fuck,” is all you can manage as you try to steady yourself again.

“Oh, love,” John sighs, lazily watching you from the floor. “You are a fucking vision. You look well and truly ravished.”

“Certainly am,” you smile.
“I’m definitely gonna need a picture of you like this sometime,” he chuckles.

“Not today, John,” you say.

John stands up, going to retrieve some paper towels and cleans up the floor and the table where ash has spilled onto it before standing in between your legs and pressing his forehead to yours, “I’ve got a surprise for you, you bloody beautiful woman.”

“John, I really don’t think I can go for round two just now,” you say, still trying to put your head back together.

“Jesus Christ, love!” John laughs. “Get your head out of the gutter!”

You poke your tongue out at him and he just mockingly licks it with his own.

“I said I’d take you somewhere, just the two of us when we got back from Ravenscar,” John starts, his eyes closed as if he’s worried to open them. “So I’ve booked us a holiday. Hope that's alright.”

“More than alright,” you grin.

The biggest smile comes across John’s face and he finally looks at you, the corners of his eyes creasing in that affectionate way, “Was hoping you'd say that, love. I've got a few errands to run to pick up essentials but we leave this evening.”

“Gonna tell me where we're going?” you ask.

“Nah,” John winks, pulling away from you and giving you a quick kiss. “You'll see.”

“Ever the man of mystery” you say, rolling your eyes.

**

John’s looking over at you on the ferry, watching as the ocean breeze picks up your hair and tousles it slightly. In the setting sunlight you looked positively divine. Your skin radiated to the point where it almost glowed. He didn't realise he'd been staring so much until he feels the butt of his cigarette drop out of his mouth and disappear over the side of the ferry. Shit. Hopefully you didn't notice that.

He couldn't believe how excited you'd been when you'd finally figured out where he was taking you. He'd been internally thanking Chas all evening.

“You ok?” you asked him, smiling in that sweet way you always did.

“Fine, love,” John replies with a wink. “Just taking in the natural beauty...oh and the Irish coast as well.”

He watched you giggle and blush slightly. How on earth had you invaded his heart so much? He'd tried so hard to not get attached, even ran away like a complete prick but you consumed him, his every waking thought. Not that he'd ever tell you that. Articulating that he loved you was one thing but spilling every inner most secret romantic thought was way beyond his comfort level. In fact this whole thing was beyond his comfort level but boy was he ever enjoying the ride.
'Don't let this one go, John' Chas' voice floats around in his head.

His fingers instinctively tapped at the box hidden in his inside trench coat pocket.

This is way too fucking soon, Johnny boy. She'll run a million miles away.

He shook off the intrusive negative thoughts but more and more kept coming.

She's just gonna compare it to Epiphany.

But it was different to Epiphany. With her it'd been a slow grow of affection after she'd relentlessly pursued him and then once she had him..well..he still remembered her disgusted face when she quickly lost interest. That was forever seared into his brain. His heart gave a small pang as the insecurity crept back into his mind but he brushed it off.

With you, it'd been electric from the start. He'd half expected it'd burn out just as quickly as it'd ignited but he couldn't get enough of you and from what he gathered you returned that sentiment wholeheartedly.

He was so sure after Ravenscar you'd pack up and leave or that you'd start to find him unattractive. He wouldn't of blamed you, he was a complete disaster. And yet..you'd never let go of him and you let him fulfil his own selfish needs just so he could feel some comfort.

Slowly the mental image of Epiphany's disgust was replaced with your face as he made love to you and the sweetness and adoration in your eyes.

Fuck it. The worst that can happen is she says no.

John came behind you, slipping his arms around your waist and hugging you to him. You laced your hands over his, leaning into his embrace as you watched the Irish coast grow larger on the horizon.

And the best she can say is yes and then maybe we can get that bloody sign made for the warehouse.

**

You both reached the hotel and flopped down on the bed.

“This is like a trampoline,” you giggle, bouncing up and down slightly.

“Oh love, don't do this to me,” John groans, watching your body. “Your tits look amazing right now.”

“Get a grip,” you roll your eyes.

“Maybe I'll have to,” John winks.

“Later,” you smile. “We're on holiday right? People on holiday get drinks.”

“I like your thinking, bit,” John laughs. “First day in Ireland and you already want to get pissed up. You're a girl after my own heart.”
“I already have your heart, John,” you smirk. “And now I want to get it drunk.”

“Alright alright,” John grins. “You make a persuasive argument, lass.”

“But change first,” you say.

“What’s wrong with me gear?” John asks, mock wounded.

“It’s the same thing you always wear,” you laugh. “Come on, please? For me?”

“Ughhh fine,” John groans. “Seriously Star, you’ve domesticated me too much.”

“Not like you don’t enjoy it,” you say coyly. “Especially when you’re getting sex on tap.”

“Well it certainly helps,” John winks before shucking out of his usual suit pants and shirt and pulling on some black jeans and an old band t-shirt of his. He grabs for his trusty leather jacket that he’s had since the seventies and slings that on too. “Better?”

You just stare at him. Sure you like his usual shambling detective look but it was something different to see him in the casual rocker style.


“Remember I said I’d pick the next kink? Well I think I’ve found it,” you smirk.

“Oh really?” John says, his voice dropping as the swagger crept into it. “And why don’t you enlighten Johnny boy so he knows for next time?”

“You, in that jacket,” you purr. “Just in that jacket.”

“You’ve got a wicked mind, love,” John winks. “Aye, I can do that. Now control yourself, bit, we’re meant to be going out.”

“I’ll control myself now...maybe I won’t later,” you say, getting off the bed and walking out of the door.

“Oooo I’m so gonna shag you til you can’t move when we get back,” John growls after you.

You head to the nearest local pub. It’s definitely quaint in that family business kind of way. There’s not much in there besides a pool table and a fruit machine but the atmosphere seems friendly enough. You buy John a drink and you both down it before eagerly returning for more.

“You play, love?” John asks, motioning to the pool table.

“God no,” you laugh. “My co-ordination is terrible.”

“Oh come on, bit, I’ll go easy on you,” John grins.

“No thanks,” you say. “I have no desire to be utterly humiliated.”

John pouts heavily but you just shake your head whilst smiling.

“I’ll play ya,” a man says from next to John and you look up to see a guy with a shock of red hair
and a beard to match.

“Yeah alright mate, you’re on,” John nods.

“I play fer stakes though, sonny boy,” the man says with a mischievous gleam in his eye. “Tenner and I'm in.”

“Deal,” John chuckles before leaning over and whispering in your ear. “I'm gonna rinse him dry.”

“Good luck,” you wink.

You watch the two men rack up and internally roll your eyes at John's ridiculous hip swagger as he strides around the table. He really was a cocky bastard sometimes.

You take absolute mirth in watching his face subsequently fall as the stranger pots ball after ball into every pocket. Guess he wasn’t such a legend at it as he thought.

“Bad luck, sonny boy,” the man shrugs. “Wanna try again?”

“I'm just rusty is all,” John huffs, his feathers ruffled. “Rack ’em again.”

John puts up a better effort this time but again the stranger decimates the game and stands there with a shit eating grin that puts John's usual one to shame.

“You're bloody hustlin' me!” John cries.

“You're just fuckin' shite at pool,” the guy shrugs.

“No way,” John shakes his head. “That's not normal luck.”

“Yeah, blame it on luck,” the guy snorts.

“One more time,” John practically growls.

It ends with much the same conclusion as the first two and you can see a fight is brewing. John's too hyped up on alcohol and he's intensely proud. This guy was practically waiving John's defeat in his face.

“Definite hustler,” John spits, walking back to you.

“Nah, you're just an English chicken shite with bad aim,” the guy laughs but you can see in his eyes there's a slight gleam of a challenge there.

John tenses up, his fists balled and the stranger moves closer.

“Go on then, sonny boy. If you think ya can,” he presses.

“John, enough,” you stand up. The last thing you wanted was a full scale barfight on your first day here. “Leave it.”

“Yeah, listen to yer pretty wife,” the stranger goads. “She knows what's best fer ya.”

“Hey!” John shouts. “Don't you dare talk about her!”

Oh fuck, this was getting really bad really quickly. You knew John was seconds away from snapping.
"Don't talk about her huh? I'm fucking sorry fer her. She got lumbered with an English cunt who can't play pool properly," the guy laughs. "Hey pretty wife, maybe ya wanna try ditchin' this fella for someone with skill. I'm free, whaddya say?"

That's it. John's fist is flying into the guy's face and the second it connects and you see that slight smile on the guy's lips, you knew that the stranger had been spoiling for a fight. There's a glaze that comes over his eyes, aggression and a slight tinge of insanity.

"Shit, John! Stop it!" you call, scrambling to get off your barstool.

It's fruitless. The two men start grappling with each other, fists raining down blows on either side. They lurch from one side of the pub to the other. Strangely it doesn't seem like any of the patrons in the place are phased in the slightest.

"Oh!" the guy yells. "So you can pack a punch! Not such a fuckin' pansy after all!"

"You bloody bastard wanker!" John shouts back, delivering a fierce right hook that sends blood flying out of the guy's mouth.

The guy falls backwards for a second before he breaks out into the most insane laughter you've ever heard. You try to reach John, to pull him away before this escalates any further but the guy just gives you a cheeky wink before socking John straight in the temple, knocking him clean out. John drops like a stone to the floor, his limbs splayed and his mouth slightly open.

"What the fuck is your problem?!" you cry out, bending down to check on John. "You wanna fight so bad, go find the nearest council estate."

"Yer man there was a good challenge," the guy chuckles. "Fights better than he fuckin' plays pool that's fer sure. Now, if you don't mind me, I got some winnings to collect."

He stoops down, trying to search through John's jacket but you force him away.

"I'm holding the purse strings tonight, not him," you hiss. "And you can fuck right off if you think you're gonna shake me down for money."

"I'm not asking, pretty wife," the guy glowers.

"And I'm not his fucking wife. Now piss off," you angrily say.

There's a faint glimmer of amusement on his face for a second before he unceremoniously pushes you backwards and you skid across the pub floor. The guy ruffles through John's jeans and jacket before you see him pocket something and stand up.

"Give that back!" you shout.

"Pipe down," the guy laughs.

You're in a rage now and you stand up, crossing over to him and shove him as hard as you can into the partition wall for the booths.

"Seriously?" the stranger says, with raised eyebrows.

"Give it back," you repeat.

"Get out of the fuckin' way," comes the gruff reply and he tries to push past you but you pull all the power from your hip and drag it through to an uppercut, busting his nose open.
“Fuck!” he howls, clutching his bloodied face and his cries of pain gradually morph into that laughter again...the one on the edge of insane. “Ain't ya a fuckin' spitfire, huh? Fuck, you know how to fire a guy up, pretty wife.”

Before you can reply he's pushed you roughly against the back wall and he kisses you harshly as you try to struggle away. You're about to make a well placed kick to his groin when he jumps back, whooping loudly.

“What a fuckin' good night for ol' Mad Sweeney!” he shouts before he practically races out of the door, kicking the chairs over as he went.

Mad Sweeney?! You'd heard that name before. It's the one Anansi said on the plane but he also said that named belonged to a leprechaun. Was that guy a leprechaun?!

You shake your head. John was the priority right now. You drop down trying to jostle him back to consciousness.

“John? John!”

**

John felt like he'd been hit by a freight train. Whoever that guy was, he definitely wasn't human that's for sure. What a bloody night to get into a barfight with a supernatural being, especially when he'd had much nicer plans.

“John!” you called to him and he opened his eyes, wincing at the harsh fluorescent strip above him.

“M'Alright, love,” he groaned.

He finally set his eyes on you and his insides flipped. Your face was smeared with blood.

“What happened, Star?” he asks urgently. “Are you alright, bit?”

“Wounded ego but nothing more,” you shrugged.

John sat up, even though his head span unpleasantly. He knew you weren't telling him the whole truth. “What happened?”

“The guy knocked you out and tried to go through all your pockets,” you told him. “So I pushed him away but he shoved me back and I think he got something. I tried to get it back, I really did. He was trying to leave so I hit him but he weirdly got off on it and pinned me against the wall and kissed me before fucking off out of the door. I'm sorry John, I don't know what he took but I couldn't get it back.”

“He fucking did what?!” John cries. “Is that why you have blood on your face?”

“Probably,” you told him and the firm set of your jaw at least let him know you'd not been the least bit pleased about the experience. “I broke his nose before he dived on me.”

“Bloody fucking prick,” John hisses before he starts going through all his pockets trying to find out
what the guy had taken.

“John, I think he was a leprechaun, as weird as that sounds,” you said. “Anansi told me about one called Mad Sweeney and that's what that guy said he was called.”

“Explains the unnatural luck,” John grunts. “Insane bloody leprechauns, that's all we need on our holiday.”

He can't find anything obvious that has been taken. He'd left his wallet in the hotel room on your insistence and his hellfire lighter was still there. His fingers go to the small catch on the inside pocket of his jacket and his heart drops through the floor.

No...

No he can't have taken that...

He desperately palms the material as though the small box would appear out of nowhere.

“Oh bloody fucking hell!” John exclaims loudly.

“What's wrong? What has he taken?” you asked with big earnest eyes.

Not like I can tell you, love, he thinks.

“I'm gonna track him down and beat the living shit out of him,” John snarls.

You must have caught that it was something important because the next sentence you utter catches him off guard.

“I think I know a way to track him down.”

“You do?” John asks, bewildered.

“Yeah,” you nod. “Anansi.”

Chapter End Notes

It's nice to write from John's perspective sometimes :)

To Catch a Leprechaun

Chapter Summary

The hunt for Mad Sweeney begins and you turn to Anansi for answers.

Chapter Notes

Afternoon!
Dropping another chapter down. Gotta say I'm having fun with the American Gods characters!
Only warnings I'm providing for this chapter is possible offensive swearing (sorry, not smut today!)
Remember, if you wanna talk to me in private about anything, give me prompts or make a comment if you've not got an account, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com
Happy reading!
- TLP xx
(And as always, I suck at proofreading)
Side note: Suibhne is apparently pronounced 'Siv-neh' (not that I can say it properly myself!)

You had to half carry John back to the hotel as the second he tried to stand up, he pitched into the side of the pool table. He was being remarkably quiet as you pulled him along, almost unnaturally quiet and you wondered what exactly was going through his head.

Finally you got him to the hotel and managed to hide his dishevelled appearance from the receptionist, blocking their view with your own body. The receptionist just gives you a sly look, like they imagined you'd been drinking too much.

You get him up to the room and sit him on the bed, grabbing toilet paper, a bowl of water and anything you could find really that might help you patch him up a bit.

“M'fine, love,” John says grimly.

“You're not fine,” you retort back. “You've got a bust lip and a black eye that'd put a boxer to shame.”

Your roguish warlock was sporting the deepest purple shiner you'd seen on a person, though you'd never been that up close to a fight before, nor the aftermath. John also had blood crusting on his chin from where his lip had split, not to mention a few stray scratches here and there.

“Leave it,” John hisses and you get the sense he feels embarrassed.

“Stop being a baby about it,” you roll your eyes, wetting some tissue paper and dabbing at his skin.
“Star, seriously, I'm fine,” John presses but he makes no move to push you away.

“You don't need to feel bad about it,” you say. “Pretty sure a seven foot leprechaun with stupid amounts of luck would've decked anybody, including some gods.”

“Not the point,” John says, wincing slightly as you pass over his lip. “You told me to back away and I didn't and now that ginger prick's stolen something important from me and the only way I'm getting it back is to call on Anansi of all gods. Not a bloody fantastic evening.”

“We do seem to find trouble,” you laugh.

“Aye, we do,” John says darkly. “Not even six hours into being here and we find it. I think I'm bloody cursed.”

“Well at least you have me here,” you say, abandoning the bloodied tissues into the bin. He looks marginally better but he's going to be sporting some hellish bruises for a while.

An idea comes into your head that you're sure John would protest at. You move behind him and he gives you a confused look for a second until you start massaging his shoulders. For a second he tenses, unsure of what to do but then he gradually relaxes.

“Bloody hell, love,” he moans slightly. “That's good.”

You work out the knots in his shoulders and the ones tightly wound in his back before replicating one of his particular chants in the lowest whisper you can manage so he doesn't hear you. You keep your hands on him, hoping you're doing it right. You haven't tried any new spells in a while and you can sense the resistance in your system but eventually it's like a light switch pops on and you can feel your energy transfer to him.

*Heal*, you think.

You continue the massage, trying to provide some cover for your actions. It's the strangest sensation. You're hyper aware of his body and the damage to it and it's like you can almost direct the energy to specific injuries. You heal his lip, his eye, his face and some of the nastier deep tissue bruising on his torso before the whole thing becomes too much and you have to stop before you pass out from exhaustion.

“Star?” John says nervously. “Star, are you doing somethin’?”

“Yeah, I'm massaging you, idiot,” you retort, trying to keep the strength in your voice.

“Oh no you're bloody not!” John exclaims, cottoning on to what you're doing and he whirls around, catching your tired and guilty face. “What the hell are you doing that for?!”

“You need your strength,” you say simply.

“And you need to not be trying advanced magic!” he cries out, taking your hands and squeezing them tightly in his own. “Two wrong words in that spell and you could've given me your life essence completely!”

“Oh,” you blanch. You didn't know that. Shit...good job you remembered it word for word. “I didn't know.”

“Exactly,” he says angrily. “I would've been fine, less pretty for a while, but fine, whereas you could've died. Don't you ever do that again!”
“But it worked,” you protest.

“I don’t bloody care!” he spits. “Love, if you died and went to heaven I could never get you back. That’d be it. Do you know how much that would kill me inside?”

He’s almost on the verge of tears as he tries hard to make you realise exactly the implications of messing with magic you didn’t fully understand.

“I’m sorry,” you say quietly, looking down at your lap and feeling incredibly small.

John sighs heavily, “You’re a bloody stubborn woman, you know that?”

“I was only trying to help,” you whisper, almost to yourself.

“I know, bit, I know,” John says, his tone softening and he pulls you into a tight embrace. “Just please, I don’t want to lose you again. That week you were in Hell felt like a fucking eternity.”

“Hey, I was the one running from demons and doing a whole bunch of weird trials,” you remind him, trying to bring the mood back up again.

“And I was the one summoning the bloody First of the Fallen and dealing with me ex’s pissed off daughter to send you a psychic message,” he says sharply back.

“You summoned the First of the Fallen??” you cry out. This was news to you! “And you want to lecture me about doing dangerous things??”

“Bahh,” John dismisses. “The First is like a pussycat these days. Doesn’t scare me any more.”

“Oh John,” you sigh. “What a pair of reckless screw ups we are.”

“Aye, that we are,” John says, mirroring your sigh and holding you tighter.

You feel incredibly sleepy in his arms and your head starts drooping onto his shoulder. Maybe if you closed your eyes for a second you’d be ok.

Morning sunlight streamed through the curtains and you felt extremely disorientated. The last thing you remember was hugging John and now you appeared to be in bed, stripped naked and lying on your side. You feel a warm presence at your back and know John is sleeping behind you. His arm is wound tightly over your waist, leg crooked over yours and he’s resting his chin on your head.

“John?” you whisper.

“What is it, love?” John answers, almost slurring in his drowsy state.

“Did you put me to bed?” you ask.

“Yeah,” John says, nuzzling up closer to you. “You fell asleep on me shoulder, thought you could do with some rest. Least you know what I go through when I do that spell now.”

“You’re sweet,” you smile, knowing he can’t see your face.
“I'll put that on me gravestone,” John snorts. “Here lies John Constantine. He was sweet.”

“Shut up, Scouse boy,” you laugh.

“Make me, Manc girl,” he retorts.

You twist your body round so you can face him and give him an affectionate kiss which he returns wholeheartedly.

“Mmm, that's one way to do it,” he smiles warmly and strokes your hair.

You rub the tip of your nose against his lightly before resting your forehead against him, “Works every time.”

“No reason to keep talking when a pretty girl is kissing me,” he laughs. “Best start to a morning a guy could ask for.”

“Charmer,” you wink.

“Always, love,” he smirks. “You know me.”

“We'd best get out of bed and get this god show on the road,” you say, making to get up but John pulls you back down.

“Not just yet, bit, I was enjoying that,” he pouts.

“John, I love you but we need to get going. Mad Sweeney could be anywhere right now.”

John sits up and the covers fall away from his body. You have to fight with yourself very hard to keep your hands from wandering over his muscled chest. John definitely notices your look and squares his shoulders a little bit, one eyebrow raised in that cheeky way you've come to adore.

“Love you too, lass. Sure you don't wanna stay in bed a bit longer?”

“Come on,” you roll your eyes. “The quicker we get this over with the quicker we can get back to our holiday of culture, booze and outrageous amounts of sex.”

“Oh well there's an incentive if ever I've heard one,” John laughs, practically leaping out of the bed and dressing himself in his usual attire.

You dress practically, not knowing exactly what the day would bring and dig around in your bag to find the spider brooch Anansi had given you. You hadn't quite known what to do with it but you felt like keeping it close was a good idea so it was stowed away in the small pocket of your purse. You pulled it out, running your fingers over the bejewelled shape.

“What's that then, love?” John asks, lighting his morning ciggie.

“Something I was given in case of emergencies,” you say.

“By our ol' plane trickster god?” John says, his expression becoming a little more hardset.

“Yeah, and it just might be our ticket to finding Mad Sweeney and whatever he stole from you,” you nod. “Ready to do this?”

“Ugh, I'm never ready when it comes to him,” John grumbles. “Let's just get this over with.”
You bring the spider brooch up to your lips and whisper, “Anansi.”

Nothing happens.

“That'd be just like him to give you a magical object that doesn't work,” John huffs, folding his arms.

You're a little perplexed but you also remember that Anansi doesn't exactly go by his name any more so you try something else, “Mr. Nancy.”

The brooch glows and you hurriedly bring it away from your mouth. The sapphires and rubies seem to roll in on themselves and form a beautiful carapace. The precious metal legs begin twitching and the colour dissolves into an inky black design. And then....suddenly the spider is gone and you turn around to see the grinning face of Anansi as he doffs his hat to you.

“Well well well, Star, didn't think it'd be quite so soon that you called upon me,” he drawls.

“Needs must, mate,” John says gruffly, taking an aggressive drag of his cigarette.

“I see,” Anansi says, his eyes narrowing. “This disaster of a male is still your lover I take it?”

“Oi!” John calls. “Every offence taken there!”

“Yes he is,” you say firmly. “But we have something you might be interested in if you help us.”

Anansi's unnerving grin comes back full force and you're treated to the sight of his needle like teeth again, “Oh now that sounds fascinating! Do tell!”

“Someone you told me about on the plane has stolen something from John. Goes by the name Mad Sweeney.”

Anansi's eyes widen to almost comical proportions, “So I take it I'm called to Ireland right now?”

“Yes,” you nod.

“Oh well isn't this just....divine retribution,” he snorts. “You're right, Star, I am interested. That goddamn overgrown faerie has been giving me the run around for quite some time now. Refuses to answer the call of Mr Wednesday, even managed to hitch a prayer ride straight back to his homeland.”

“Who's Mr Wednesday?” John asks, puzzled.

“Another of god kind,” Anansi says cryptically. “Mortals shouldn't concern themselves with such questions.”


“Still bloody amazes me that you remember this stuff, love,” John says, ruffling his hair.

Anansi looks incredibly put out and you get the impression you'd stamped on his fun of confusing the both of you. You think he might be annoyed but he just gives you a devilish wink and advances upon you until you're backed into the wall.

“What are you doing?!” John asks angrily.

“You're a big believer aren't you, Star?” Anansi asks in almost a purr. “Long before bleach blonde
showed up. You read our legends, read our so called myths and you believed. I knew I could sense that on you on the plane.”

“I just always loved the stories,” you say, a little bewildered.

“Did you know that belief fuels us?” he continues, putting his hands on the wall, either side of your head, effectively boxing you in. “One little prayer from a human is like a big ol' hit of power straight in the veins. We crave it, we need it. So tell me, Star, which god do you worship? Or perhaps I could take your faith for my own?”

“She isn't gonna be worshipping anything,” John hisses aggressively, coming to stand right next to you.


“I don't worship anyone,” you say bravely.

“Well let me give you some advice,” Anansi says, leaning in so his face was mere inches from your ear. “You're gonna have to start if you want to catch Mad Sweeney.”

“Oh no fuckin' way,” John spits. “You're not doing that, love.”

“And why not?” Anansi grins, enjoying winding John up. “Sweeney isn't a Celtic god per say, he doesn't demand blood sacrifice and sex. I'd say she's getting off lightly here.”

“Wait, so I have to pray to Mad Sweeney to find him again?” you ask.

“More like he'll find you if you pray,” Anansi corrects, taking a lock of your hair and curling it gently. You can feel John's hateful stare without seeing it. “There's rituals for summoning fae folk. Find one, use it, draw him out and then maybe you can get Constantine's item back but...I want you to summon me like you did just now when Sweeney appears. If you do that for me, I'll tell you Sweeney's name to help you along. Do we have an accord?”

You look at John's rigid expression before turning back round to face Anansi again, “Deal, Mr. Nancy.”

“Wonderful,” he grins. “Another adventure, I'm all giddy.”

“The leprechaun's name,” John says sternly.

Anansi ignores John and whispers into your ear, “Suibhne mac Colmain or you can simply say Suibhne.”

You have to repeat that several times over in your head to remember it. Anansi draws back and gestures for you to put your palm out. You mirror his movement and in a whirl of limbs, a spider now sits on your palm, stiffening out until the jewels begin to shine brightly again. Now you're only holding a brooch once more.

“What is it with gods and you?” John mumbles in a pissed off sort of way.

“Hey, it's one god,” you correct him. “Sulis Minerva didn't look like she wanted to go a round in bed, did she?”

“One god and a leprechaun,” John mutters.
“Are you really being that jealous?” you ask with a raised eyebrow.

“Worrying about other blokes stealing you away I can handle but gods are entirely different,” John glowers. “And demented archangels for that matter.”

“I wasn't the one who kissed Lucifer,” you smirk.

John legitimately shivers, “Yeah thanks for reminding me of that, love.”

“If you're going to get your boxers in a twist that much, don't introduce me to Aphrodite then if she exists,” you laugh.

“Why?” John asks, genuinely puzzled.

You just stare at him. He could be an idiot sometimes. You can see the cogs of his brain turning and then his mouth forms a small 'oh'.

“Are you...” he starts. “Are you like me then?”

“Like you?” you laugh. “Just come out and say it John, I'm not shy.”

“You like girls as well as guys? Bloody hell, I feel like I know barely anything about you sometimes,” he shakes his head. “Now I have a whole new spectrum to be jealous about.”

“You'll have to play twenty questions with me when this is done,” you smile. “Then you might know something.”

John looks truly embarrassed, “I'm sorry, Star. Jesus Christ, that was such a basic thing to miss.”

You just shrug, “It didn't really come up in conversation when you've been about but hey, I guess we have that in common now. John and Star, bisexual reckless screw ups.”

You start giggling which manages to infect John and you soon hear him chuckling away to himself.

“Come 'ere you,” he says with a roguish grin and he pulls you into a fierce kiss. “Though I have to say now-”

“Don't tell me,” you roll your eyes. “You're imagining me and a girl right now.”

“Errr,” John splutters and turns slightly pink. “No?”

You shove him playfully in the chest, “You're a terrible liar. Come on, we've got research to do.”

You manage to find the local library and pour through every book you can find on fae folk. Most seem to be absolute nonsense. John's not much of a help as he takes ages to scan through one copy whereas you've gotten through several volumes already.

“I feel like me head's melting,” John grumbles. “Tell me again why we couldn't use the internet?”

“The older the book, the more likely it is to be true,” you shrug, pulling a particularly battered tome.
out of the library's archive section. “The internet is full of half truths and misdirection.”

“As are some books,” John points out. “Dante’s inferno. What a crock of shite that was. Bet he never even went to Hell.”

“I’ll give you that one,” you laugh, thumbing carefully through the worn and musty pages until your eyes settle on a particular passage.

The book you’re reading is from an English traveller who journeyed from the top of Ireland to the bottom and wrote about the customs of each town he passed. One such town had a curious ritual of summoning faeries and leprechauns. They would place a bowl of fresh cream and a loaf of fresh bread on the window sill each night to gain favours and luck and sometimes the fae folk would visit to bestow further gifts upon them if their offerings were worthy enough.

“Got it,” you say, showing John the book.

“Cream and bread?” he says incredulously. “Maybe Anansi was right, this is pretty light stuff for summoning.”

“I think the danger lies more in the actual leprechaun himself rather than the summoning,” you say grimly.

“Not when I knock him the fuck out in return,” John hisses. “See how he likes it.”

“So how do we play this?” you ask, sitting on the edge of the table. “In the hotel?”

“Nah,” John shakes his head. “Far too exposed and if Sweeney's gonna kick off, I ain't paying to fix up the damages. We need to find somewhere abandoned or somewhere in a forest. You get the bits we need and meet me back here, I'm gonna go hunting for a space.”

“Ok,” you nod and stand up.

John puts his arm around your waist pulling you to him and tips your chin up so he can kiss you, “Be safe, love.”

“Back at you,” you wink.

An hour later you return to the library entrance. Fresh bread had been easy to find but fresh cream was a complete fucker to get. Everything was either store bought or flash frozen and thawed. You’d had to trek out to a traditional dairy parlour and even then they’d been bemused by your request.

John was already waiting for you, nervously puffing away on a cigarette. It was endearing how much he worried about you.

“Hey,” you call and he immediately turns around, shoulders relaxing and a lopsided smile on his face.

“ Took your time,” he says with a cheeky grin.

“You try getting fresh cream that's not from Tescos,” you say, pulling a face. “Any luck on the
abandoned place or forest?”

“Yeah,” John nods, dropping the cigarette and scuffing it out with his shoe. “Come on, bit, I don't wanna delay this any longer.”

He takes you out of the town centre, down a couple of winding alleyways which brings you, surprisingly, to a big wooded area. The further you go into the trees, the more you're glad you put sturdy boots on because the terrain was all tangled roots and slippy leaves. You're half wondering how John can stride so confidently forward.

Eventually you see a dilapidated old mill house loom into view. It at least looks like it won't collapse on your head which is a small mercy. John leads you inside and he groans in disgust slightly as his shoe sinks into some mud on the floor, marring the shiny black leather.

“The sooner we can get back to our holiday the better,” he growls, extracting his foot with great effort. “Now, Star, I'm gonna have to hide. If Sweeney sees me, he won't come near the place but from what you've said he's taking a liking to you.”

“So...what?” you ask, trying to sort this out in your head. “You want me to..”

You don't think you've ever seen this expression on John's face. It's like resoluteness mixed with boiling anger.

“You're gonna have to pretend to like him, love,” John grunts and he's clearly extremely unhappy.

“Oh sure,” you say flippantly. “What's not to like about a violent, hotheaded giant leprechaun?”

“Star, please,” John says. “I don't like this at all but it's the only way to get me item back. I wouldn't ask it of you if it weren't important.”

“So what the fuck am I supposed to do if he dives on me again?” you say, your brow furrowed. “Play along?”

“No, you call for Anansi at that point,” John says.

“Fine,” you huff, folding your arms. “This is a terrible plan.”

“Course it is, love,” John snorts. “It's one o' mine.”

“Just promise me you're gonna keep me in bed all day tomorrow, yeah?” you ask.

“Ooo now that's a promise I'll have no trouble keeping,” John winks and he smacks your arse playfully. “And I'll even wear me jacket for you.”

“You'd better,” you say. “Now go hide. I'll give you two minutes and then I'll put the offering up.”

John gives you the most possessive kiss, even more so than when you were both in Lux and then disappears, climbing up a ladder to the upper floor.

You wait for a time, trying to steel yourself. In truth, you were mildly afraid of how this was going to go. Sweeney was extremely aggressive, or at least he was when you saw him last.

You place a tray you'd bought up on the windowsill and put the loaf and cream on top before saying the name Anansi had told you.

“Suibhne.”
You go to sit on the upturned mill stone. You had no idea how long this would take. Anansi was instantaneous but then he'd given you a direct line to him so to speak.

Thirty minutes go by and you just look up at John who's hiding in the rafters above you. He gives you a dramatic gesture to denote he's bored and you have to stifle a laugh.

Suddenly there's a great noise as the sound of lumbering footsteps approach. Sweeney. He enters the mill house, striding past your vantage point and missing you completely, singular in his aim to receive his offering. Shit, he's even taller than you remembered and more broad. You swallow nervously, trying to calm your jangling anxiety.

Sweeney takes a large gulp from the container of cream and a huge bite of the loaf and you hear something akin to a pleasurable groan, “Oh fuck...fuck me, this is the fresh stuff. Come out, lad or lasslin', make yerself known. Yer certainly tryin' to butter me up with this.”

“Hi,” you say, trying to keep your voice as confident as possible.

Sweeney whirls around and his eyes go wide when he spots you sat there. It's comical how he quickly wipes his mouth to dislodge the crumbs and the stray cling of cream, almost like he's conscious of his appearance.

“It's you,” he says in that coarse voice. “Pretty wife...well, pretty not wife should I say?”

“That's me,” you say casually.

Ok well you certainly didn't expect Sweeney to start sauntering over like a prowling animal but there he was, invading your personal space within seconds. You had to really crane your neck to be able to see his face which was currently housing an expression of attempted charm.

“So, liked the little display I put on, huh?” he drawls, running a thumb up and down the inside of one of his suspenders. “Got ya all hot and bothered for Ol' Sweeney? Can't say I blame ya. Blondie's not much fer fightin' is he? Bet he's not one fer fuckin' much either.”

You're sure John's insanely angry above you but you try to keep your composure, “I was curious.”

“Bet you were, lasslin',” he laughs. “Curious enough to leave an offerin' and curious enough to learn me name. I'm sure that took a lot a' readin'.”

“Definitely wasn't easy,” you nod in fake agreement.

“You got my attention, pretty not wife,” Sweeney says, bending over so his face hovers inches above yours. “Question is, what are ya gonna do with it?”

“I do have a name,” you retort.

Sweeney gives you a small laugh, “Fiery ain't ya? Ya definitely got some kin blood in there. So lasslin', what's your name?”

“Star,” you reply, your hand curling around the spider brooch in your pocket.

“Star,” you reply, your hand curling around the spider brooch in your pocket.

“You got my attention, pretty not wife,” Sweeney scoffs. “That may be the name ya tell the world but it ain't the name ya were born with right?”

“Well Star is all you're getting,” you huff.

“And am I gettin' ya...Star?” he says in that low dangerous voice. “Are ya curious enough to pledge
yerself to one a' the fae folk?"

“What does that involve?” you ask, a little wary of the answer.

Sweeney grabs your free hand, pulling you up to a standing position. You were right next to him and you only came up to his shoulders. He took your chin and tipped your head back to look into his eyes which seemed to swirl with flecks of gold and rich brown.

“Belief, true devotion,” he says cryptically. “I can make yer luck turn, yer ash become riches, yer goals become reality. All I need from ya is the words o’ consent.”

“And what words are those?” you say, hyper conscious of the irate warlock above you.

Sweeney dips his head to whisper in your ear, “That yer faith is mine alone, that yer dreams are mine to bend on a whim, that yer body is mine to take when I need my fill, that yer love is reserved for only me.”

Shit, this was getting way too overwhelming too quickly. Sweeney was holding you too close for you to bring the brooch up. You chanced a look upwards into the furious face of John and motioned with your eyes. You needed a distraction.

“What's it gonna be, pretty not wife?” Sweeney murmurs against your ear, pressing his huge body to yours. “Is that brave streak still there?”

John drops from the rafters behind Sweeney and grabs his ankles, muttering a spell you've not heard him use before. There's a mild flash of light and a red pulsating circle of energy surrounds the leprechaun's feet.

“What the fuck?!” Sweeney cries, letting go of you to turn around and you jump backwards, drawing the brooch out.

“Mr. Nancy,” you say against it.

“What the fuck did ya say?” Sweeney shouts, looking back round to you the second he hears that name.

“She said Mr. Nancy,” Anansi grins from Sweeney's left.

“Ah fuckin' cuntin' shite!” Sweeney roars, trying to move his legs but he can't. “Ya fuckin' set me up, lasslin'!”

“You stole something from me,” John growls.

“Ah piss off ya English gobshite,” Sweeney hisses. “Ya ain't gettin' it back.”


“And you can fuck off as well,” Sweeney spits. “I ain't doin' shit for Grimnir.”

“You know he doesn't like it when he doesn't get his way,” Anansi says in a dangerous voice.

“Tell him to shove his spear up his arse,” Sweeney says, desperately trying to move. “Ah fuck!”

“Maybe you shouldn't have stole from a warlock, Sweeney,” Anansi laughs, watching the leprechaun's predicament. “Especially this one.”
“What's so fuckin' special about blondie here?” Sweeney rages, his muscles pumped up from his anger. “Is it her? Did he trick the fuckin' lass into matin' with him?”

“Hey!” you shout in annoyance. “I can take care of myself you prick!”

To illustrate your point, you use John's trick of conjuring a fireball in the palm of your hand before extinguishing it in a small puff of smoke.

“Ah great,” Sweeney groans. “Pretty not wife is a witch. Fuckin' fantastic.”

“Will you just bloody shut up and give me back what you stole?” John hisses.

“And why the fuck would I do that?” Sweeney says, throwing his arms up in frustration. “Who the fuck are ya and why are ya ruining my week?”

“Ruin your week?!” John's almost apoplectic with rage. “Mate, this was the first holiday I took my missus on and you goaded me into a fucking fight!”

“And royally kicked ya fuckin' arse, might I remind,” Sweeney coarsely laughs.

“Enough, Sweeney,” Anansi drawls. “Give John back his item.”

“John is it? John who exactly?” Sweeney asks, a little suspiciously.

“John Constantine,” Anansi answers. “That one's versed in the Dark Arts and seems to be the Christian God's favourite plaything.”


John flicks his hand up, crossing his palm with his fingers and mutters something. The circle's light shoots up forming a cage which presses in harshly, crushing Sweeney's frame.

“Alright alright!” Sweeney shouts in alarm. “Fuckin' hell!”

“Told you, you shouldn't have stolen from him,” Anansi laughs silkily.

“Fuckin' fine!” Sweeney says. “It's in me left trouser pocket. Take it and let me out!”

John immediately dives upon Sweeney, riffling through his pockets until he takes something out extremely quickly and hurriedly places it in his trench coat. You don't have time to see exactly what it was but it was something small.

“He's not letting you out until you agree to meet with Mr Wednesday again,” Anansi grins.

“Fuck Wednesday,” Sweeney hisses before turning his face to you. “Star, let me out. We had a moment there yeah? Come on, lasslin'!”

“You beat up my boyfriend and then forced yourself on me,” you say grimly. “Not the best of introductions Sweeney.”

“Oh I see how it is,” Sweeney sneers. “Ya can't worship any god or fae folk because ya worship at the altar of John Constantine. Do ya scream his name when he takes ya? Do ya risk yer life fer him? I bet ya do.”

“Bloody shut up!” John yells, tightening the cage again.
Sweeney just continues, laughing at your stricken face, “We hear about him ya know. John Constantine, saviour of humanity, he who has died to save the world from monsters. Like a fuckin’ Scouse Jesus Christ and there ya are, pretty not wife, givin’ him yer belief and yer faith and yer love, givin’ it all to Johnny Constantine, patron saint of catastrophic fuck ups...no no, patron saint of apocalyptic fuck ups. Wait and see what he asks of ya soon, I'm sure it'll remind ya of the offer I made.”

Your head is spinning slightly. Was he suggesting John was actually a patron saint or was he just trying to mess with your head? You look to John who seems completely alarmed, liked Sweeney had just spilled some big secret.

“Stop talking, Suibhne,” you say, folding your arms. “The more you talk, the more likely John is to leave you here trapped.”

Sweeney's face pales, “No no, don't do that, sweet lasslin'. Fuck, I'm sorry!”

“Here’s your choice, Sweeney,” Anansi drawls, walking over to the cage and taking his hat off as if inspecting it. “Either you come back with me to America or you stay here for...however long John Constantine lives for, which by all accounts is quite a long life span considering the demonic blood.”

Sweeney seems completely defeated and you kind of feel sorry for him. You had no idea what kind of god Odin was but it was apparently enough to scare this rugged brawler which meant you should be terrified. It also pained you a little to think of gods wandering the earth with their ever dwindling followers, wondering where their next supplication would come from and seeing the big five world religions enjoying such prosperity.


“Excellent,” Anansi grins. “See that wasn’t so hard.”

Sweeney turns his baleful eyes to you and he seems to read your sympathetic expression because he gives you a small sad smile.

“Constantine, you can release him now,” Anansi nods. “He won't run this time.”

John brings his palms together, chanting something before sliding them apart and Sweeney is free to move.

“Can't say it's been a pleasure,” John grumbles as he moves around the dejected leprechaun to you.

“And what do you think you're doing?” Anansi asks, with a wicked glitter to his eye.

“Getting me bird, what the bloody hell does it look like?” John says viciously. “Gotta salvage this fucking holiday.”

“She won't be going anywhere,” Anansi says with a cheery expression.

“Excuse me?” you choke out.

“You're coming with us. I've sensed your belief and your magic. It's more powerful than you know. Wednesday and I could use someone like you.”

“Star, we're going right now,” John says urgently.

John is flung backwards into the crumbling wall and he plows straight through it. You can't even see
him amidst the dust and filth.

“John!” you cry out, trying to rush over to him but Anansi grips your jacket, pulling you back to him.

He holds you in one hand whilst he gathers Sweeney in the other and there's an odd compressing feeling as the mill house shifts to make way for a small dark corridor to the side. It's almost as if you're watching the mill house on a television.

“Where are you taking me?!” you demand, trying to squirm out of Anansi's grasp.

“This is the backstage of reality, my dear,” Anansi purrs. “Bit of a shortcut. I'm not so keen on flying again.”

Holy shit, was he really shoving you through reality to take you to Odin? This really wasn't good! Sweeney's looking at your terrified expression with something akin to curiousity and pity. He seems to be psyching himself up for a second before he unleashes a barrage of punches upon Anansi which catches the god off guard and he lets go of you.

Sweeney bodily picks you up and begins running down the dark corridor for some distance before he sets you down.

“Go, pretty not wife. Yer right to be scared of Grimnir.”

“Why are you helping me?” you whisper. “I just tricked you.”

“Because ya made the effort to get me a fresh offerin' and not some store bought shite, because yer not easily pushed around and because I still have hope I can steal ya from yer fuckin' blondie warlock there someday.”

“Thank you, Suibhne,” you say sincerely.

Sweeney chuckles, “Plus the way ya say that starts a fire in me. Now, fuck off little English lasslin', don't let that cunt catch ya.”

You can hear the running footsteps of Anansi and he starts coming into view. You're not sure where to go. All you can see is the dimly lit corridor. Sweeney notices your disorientation and gives you an unceremonious shove to the right. You flail as you seem to pass through a doorway which closes behind you.

You look up and all you can see is stars, stars and whirling galaxies overhead. Where the hell were you?! Nothing looked familiar. You tried your best to get your bearings but for all the world it felt like you'd wandered into a planetarium display with no exits. You walked for ages in all directions but the outcome was still the same. You had no clue where you were and you had no clue how to get home, back to John.

You sat on the floor...well you presumed it was a floor, it was just as dark as the rest of this place. What a mess. Papa Midnite was right, you should never have trusted Anansi. You sincerely hoped whatever Sweeney had stolen from John was worth all this.

A quiet male voice sounds out in the gloom, making you jump and scramble to your feet.

“You're very lost, child.”

You almost scream as you see a tall figure in a long cloak of black with flames decorating the bottom and with a mask that terrified you to your very core. You stagger backwards and drop back onto the
“Who are you?!” you stammer out.

“Have my apologies,” the soft voice speaks again from behind the bone strewn mask. “I didn't mean to frighten you.”

The figure takes off the mask and clasps it to his side. You see an errant mess of black hair, almost like an eighties goth would sport and the palest skin you could ever have imagined. Razor sharp cheekbones gave way to the feature that you were intensely staring at. His eyes. His eyes were completely black, save two burning irises that looked as bright as the stars above your head.

“I am one of the Endless,” he spoke and your stomach flipped in horror. John had warned you about them before.

“The Endless,” you breath back.

“Do not fear me, child,” that soft voice said smoothly. “I mean you no harm. You have wandered into my realm by some unfortunate happenstance I gather.”

“And what is this realm?” you ask, in a small voice.

“This is the realm of dreamscapes,” he says, gesturing outwards. “I am Dream.”

Chapter End Notes

So here comes the Sandman tie in as well. Gaiman's work and Constantine have gone side by side for a long time and I may have been reading Preludes and Nocturnes earlier and re-read the first time Dream and John come into contact. Whoops ;)}
Bring Me a Dream

Chapter Summary

You're stuck in The Dreaming with Dream of the Endless whilst John frantically tries to find you...after all, he has an important question to ask.

Chapter Notes

Hello again!
Dropping another chapter down at 1am so excuse me if there's any mistakes!
Almost 1000 hits and over 60 kudos, wow!
I'm so happy there are people out there enjoying this!
I love receiving your comments <3
Remember if you want to send me private messages, prompts for one-shots with any of the characters in this fic or some such, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com!
No warnings today!
Happy reading!
- TLP x

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

John sat up, groaning heavily as he brushed the splinters and debris from his body. How long had he been out? He wiped the face of his watch on his already stained trousers and saw he'd barely been unconscious for five minutes. Bloody hell, Ireland was going to give him brain damage....

A thought hit him like a freight train...Star.

He leapt up wildly, rushing around the partition wall but there was no one in sight.

“Star?” he called. “Star!”

Only the rustle of leaves was heard.

“Oh bloody fucking hell!” he shouted, kicking at the stray beam that was lying in the mud and earning nothing but toes that screamed in pain.

He'd lost you AGAIN. What had it been, barely a month since you were in Hell? He couldn't fucking believe it.

“Anansi, you fucking bastard wanker!” he yelled at the air.

Trickster gods...fucking trickster gods...

He pulled the little box from his pocket and stared at it angrily. Fuck, why had he been so insistent on getting it back? He could have just bought another one, he could've stopped this whole fucking misadventure. I mean, Christ, he could have even gone through with the plan without it.
He opened the box and sighed, looking at the contents. It was perfect for you though. That's why. Would he even get to show it to you now?

*My Star...my shining Star...*

*Oh bloody snap out of it*, his brain told him. *Not the time for your idiotic pet names.*

He began the long trudge back to the hotel, his feet not wanting to move, just in case, just in case maybe you'd pop back up at the mill. He edged his way in the staff entrance, keen to not be spotted by the receptionist when he looked an absolute state.

When he eventually got to the room he stripped everything off he could, bunging it in a plastic bag and did the quickest shower on record before yanking his world map out of its hiding space in his suitcase along with the scrying crystal.

*Please don't be in America.*

He grabbed one of your necklaces, the one with the moon and the howling wolf that he'd often made fun of and entwined it into the crystal's cord before swinging it methodically over the map, starting with Europe.

Nothing.

Africa.

Nothing.

Asia.

Nothing.

Australasia

Nothing.

South America.

Nothing.

He held his breath as he swung it over North America.

Also nothing.

“What the fuck?!?” he hissed.

You weren't anywhere. He even desperately swung the crystal over Greenland and the Antarctic just to be sure. He was a hundred percent certain Anansi wouldn't have taken you to Hell or even Heaven for that matter. The old regional gods weren't known for their pally nature with Judeo-Christianity deities.

So where were you and where did he even begin looking for you?

Fucking hell...if he ever found you again he was going to get the both of you tattooed with The Chains of Binding, that way he could always find you. It was a big gesture and not something he'd ever done for a lass but he'd do it...he'd do it for you.
Christ...he missed you already. He wanted to see your beaming smile, that twinkle in your eye whenever you looked at him. His heart practically ached at the thought.

*I'm such a fucking idiot...I should never have let this happen.*

**

“Dream?” you stammer.

“That is correct, child,” Dream answers with a noble nod.

“You're not what I expected,” you say honestly.

Dream lets out a low rumbling laugh but it doesn't scare you, in fact, it feels warm and comforting, “I suppose I never am to mortals. I'm curious as to how you associate me though, child. May I?”

You had no idea what he was going to do but you really didn't get the impression he wanted to hurt you, “Um...sure?”

Dream reaches into a pouch and draws out two minute grains of sand before casting them upwards into the void of galaxies above you.

Music floats around the two of you:

> Mr Sandman, bring me a dream  
> Make him the cutest that I've ever seen  
> Give him two lips like roses and clover  
> Then tell him that his lonesome nights are over

Dream chuckles in a homely sort of way, “I've always liked that song.”

“So have I,” you smile.

“Tell me, child. What do I call you?” Dream asks, coming to sit cross legged next to you as he stares up at the twinkling celestial bodies.

“Nobody seems to use my real name any more,” you muse. “Everyone calls me Star.”

“Star,” Dream nods. “So that is why my realm has made this.” He gestures upwards.

“Made what?” you ask.

“Humans are not meant to be in the realm of Dreaming,” Dream explains. “It adapts, it moulds around those who are here. My realm has searched your soul and found that name which you wear to the world and projected it here for you. It's beautiful.”

You look up at the swirling mass of stars as they shine and ebb, nebulas snaking through the gaps in the void in an array of bursting colours, “Very beautiful.”
“How did you come to be here, Star?” Dream asks, leaning forward to study you a bit better.

You briefly lose yourself in those intense eyes as they catalogue every feature of your face, “A god tried to push me through the...uh...backstage of reality he called it? A leprechaun helped me escape and shoved me in here.”

“You are no stranger to the supernatural, are you child?” Dream smiles. “Which god was trying to abduct you?”

“Anansi,” you answer.

“Ah,” Dream says, his mouth becoming a tight line. “The Spider God is greedy. I assume he sensed your magus abilities and wanted them for his own?”

“Magus?” you question, unfamiliar with the term.

“You cast spellwork, Star. I can see it in your mind. You've not reached your full potential just yet though,” Dream says, slightly towering over you as he looks at your face. “Your mind is full of imagination, it's a powerful tool. The Spider God and the All Father must never gain control of it. You are welcome to stay in my realm for a time to hide from them.”

“I need to get back,” you say in almost a whisper as those twin burning suns of eyes bore into your soul. “They stole me from someone.”

“Perhaps I can help with that, child,” Dream smiles. “I could relay a message through their dreams.”

“You could?” you say, eyes wide and a grin spreading on your face. “Thank you!”

“Thank you...” Dream seems to ponder the words. “I have not had gratitude often from mortals.”

“You must have come across some bad people then,” you posture.

“Many,” Dream says cryptically before his purely alabaster hand tips your chin up to meet his gaze properly. “Whose dreams shall I enter?”

“John Constantine,” you say and Dream's eyes dilate massively until the burning whites are little more than dots.

Instantly you're afraid, afraid that John has pissed him off in the past. It would be just your luck to find someone helpful and then realise they bore a grudge against John.

The low deep rumble of laughter that escapes Dream's body is not what you expect.

“John Constantine,” Dream chuckles. “Now there is a name I've not heard for a long time.”

**

“Chas?” John asks as he dials home.

Fuck the extortionate cost of calling abroad.

His heart sinks when he hears that familiar grating voice, “Francis is in the garden. What do you want, John?”
“Renee, it's urgent,” John says, trying to make her understand. “It's about Star.”

“I'll get him right away,” Renee says seriously.

What?!

John had fully expected an earful or for Renee to hang up or for her to stall for time. He certainly hadn't expected her to get Chas. No way...was she actually becoming nice?!

There's a fumbling on the line and Chas comes on, “Hey, what's up? Renee said you needed to speak about Star? Please tell me you two are still together...”

“Mate, it's bloody complicated,” John sighs.

“She broke up with you?” Chas asks, concerned.

“No no no,” John says hastily. “I got in a bar fight with a leprechaun who then stole something from me so Star asked Anansi for help but once we got it back, Anansi fucking carted her off somewhere and I don't know where she is.”

“Woah woah woah!” Chas exclaims. “Fucking calm down! Go slow! What exactly did this leprechaun steal that was so important?”

John takes a deep breath, “A box...”

He can practically hear the dripping sarcasm as Chas says, “A box.”

John winces, kneading his fist into his temple, “Ahhh bloody hell...it was an engagement ring, alright? You fucking happy now, mate?”

“I knew it!” he heard Renee say in the background.

“Oh piss off, Renee!” John hissed angrily into the speaker.

“Oh my god, John,” Chas says seriously. “You were going to propose on this holiday?!”

“Yeah I bloody was,” John sighs. “I thought about what you said and...you're right. I'm not letting go of her, Chas...I mean...ah bollocks, I've fucking let go of her, haven't I? She's fuck knows where with Anansi and Mad Sweeney.”

“Who the hell is Mad Sweeney?” Chas asks.

“The wanker leprechaun,” John explains hurriedly. “They're taking her to Odin in America but she's not showing up when I scry for her.”

“Why did they take her anyway, John?”

“Because apparently she's got this huge well of belief and she made the stupid fucking mistake of showing off her magic in front of Anansi,” John spits. “I'm gonna fucking stamp on him. I'll conjure the biggest fucking news rag out there and smash his brains in. I'll fucking do it. Page Three of the fucking Sun and BAM.”

“John!” Chas cries out in alarm. “Calm down! We'll find her! You've done it before, you can do it again!”

“What if I can't this time, Chas?” John says, feeling the lump rising in his throat. Fuck, he couldn't
cry over the phone, not with Renee listening in. “What if I've lost her forever?”

“I won't let that happen,” Chas says firmly. “John Constantine, I promise you I'll help you find her.”

“I'll help too,” Renee calls from the background. “So help me, I want you to make that girl happy, John. If you don't propose to her the second you find her, you'll have me to answer to.”

“Got it, Renee,” John says, feeling a slight smile tugging at his lips.

*The universe must be truly fucked if Renee Chandler wants to help...*

**

“You knew John?” you ask, a little unsure of yourself.

“Many years ago,” Dream nods, before settling himself down.

His attire seems to morph into what you'd almost call casual clothes. He's now wearing a grey t-shirt and jeans, those blindingly white arms now solidly on view.

“Forgive me, perhaps I should have presented myself to you like this,” he murmurs. “You seem to be less afraid now.”

“Well the bone mask was a little....primal,” you say hesitantly.

“I made it from the bones of a god long dead,” Dream shrugs. “It is older than most of your civilisation.”

“Wow,” you breathe. It still spun your head to know that there was so much out there you'd not even thought was real.

“John Constantine, the Englishman,” Dream starts. “I was imprisoned a long time ago in your realm by wretched men who stole my symbols of office, one being my helm, another my Dreamstone and finally my pouch of sand. The sand was bought by John Constantine, who in turn had it stolen by a former lover of his.”

Why did that not surprise you....John's list of ex's was extensive.

“So how did you get it back?” you ask.

“I found John Constantine and journeyed with him to the woman's house. He helped me retrieve it at the cost of his former lover's life.”

“He...what?” you say, a bit alarmed. Did Dream just tell you John sacrificed a woman?!

“You are distressed,” Dream notes and lays a hand on your leg that you assume to be in a comforting manner. “This woman had been dead a long time. The sand was the only thing keeping her alive. I gave her nice dreams for her end.”

Oh! You felt your breath rush out in relief. You knew there were a lot of stories floating around
about John, claiming he often killed his friends and partners for his own means. You'd asked him about the rumours once and he'd flat out told you that he would never cause himself that much grief intentionally. Being with him all this time, you knew that to be categorically true but it was always something that niggled in your mind.

“I helped him in return,” Dream continues. “I took away his nightmares of Newcastle for many years.”

“I can't imagine what those dreams must have been like,” you murmur.

“Unpleasant,” Dream says with a curled lip. “John Constantine's dreams and imagination are hideous to behold. The man has experienced much pain.”

“Don't I know it,” you nod. “Can you please help me then? I don't want to be the source for another bad dream for him.”

“I can't take you to the mortal realm,” Dream says, a little quietly. “I do not wish to visit there again for some time.”

You get the feeling Dream has experienced some pain of his own by the way he says it.

“But I will need to send the message soon,” Dream says firmly. “If you spend too much time here, child, you won't be able to leave.”

“I'll be stuck here?” you almost whisper.

“Yes,” Dream nods, squeezing your leg. “But should that come to pass I will make sure you are looked after, young Star.”

“Thank you,” you say, not exactly sure what to think.

“Now, I shall search for John Constantine,” Dream mutters, sitting rigidly and drawing his hands back to his own body.

You wait for a time, just watching him as he goes stock still, eyes closed and breathing at an almost undetectable rate.

“I cannot,” Dream states after a while. “He is deliberately keeping himself awake.”

“Stupid idiot,” you hiss, knowing he's probably working himself up into a panic.

“We shall just have to wait for him to sleep,” Dream says, standing up and holding his hand out to you. “In the mean time, I will show you the castle. It might be more pleasant than sitting here.”

You take his hand and stand up. Well...guess you didn't exactly have anything else to do.

**

John downed his third cup of black coffee, grimacing at the taste before taking a hefty drag of his cigarette. He felt like he was wired. He was very aware of his racing heartbeat and shaking limbs but he didn't care. He would not let himself sleep until he found you.
He'd been awake for thirty hours by this point.

If not Earth, Heaven or Hell...that left practically all supernatural dimensions and some alternative timelines.

_Fucking great, Johnny Boy, that narrows it down._

He could always visit the House of Mystery in Kentucky and try his luck with every dimensional portal in that awful place but that could take him weeks. Then again...what other option did he have? His usual trick of torturing a few demons for information wasn’t exactly going to work wonders.

He grabbed one of your t-shirts before lying on the bed and he held it close to his face. It smelled like you, a faint scent of citrus and berries. The more he breathed the scent in, the more his body subconsciously relaxed. For just a moment, he could pretend you were right next to him.

He wasn’t even sure how it happened after his potent cocktail of caffeine and nicotine but he fell asleep without meaning to and for the first time in a long time, his dreams took on a different shape...

**

Gothic. That was the first word that came into your mind when you saw Dream's castle. The towering spires, the large wrought iron gates, the crooked roof tiles.

“This is my home,” Dream announces and the gates swing open with dramatic effect.

“It's amazing,” you say truthfully.

Dream gives you a large smile that seems to briefly give some colour to his pale skin before leading you inside. He walks you into a decadent room with a roaring fireplace and high backed velvet armchairs.

You stop as you see a white arm dangling backwards over one of the chairs and a leg encased in a heavy buckled boot.

“Sister?” Dream asks.

Immediately the limbs retract and a head pokes up over the armchair. A pretty girl with wild black hair stares at you with immense curiosity. She looks for all the world like a stereotypical sullen goth girl but the second she looks to Dream her face splits into the widest smile and she starts bouncing on the chair cushion.

“Little brother! You've got company!” she squeaks, before jumping over the side of the chair and throwing herself at Dream with her arms outstretched.

Dream seems awkward as he pats her on the back in a familial way, “This mortal was thrown into the Dreaming by accident. I am trying to return her.”

“Nawww,” the girl smiles, lightly punching Dream in the arm. “Aren't you just the sweetest?”

She turns to you with her perky grin and holds out her hand, “Hey, mortal! You gotta name?”

“Star,” you reply, shaking her hand.
“That's pretty,” the girl muses. “So how does a human get shoved into here?”

“She was escaping from the Spider God and the All Father,” Dream explains. “Star is a fledgling magus.”

“Really?!” the girl half screams, doing a mini dance on the spot. “Show me something! Please?!”

“Er...,” you start. “Ok then.”

Once again, you use John's fireball trick and think to yourself that you really need to learn some more spells sometime.

“Wooooow,” the girl says in utter amazement as she inspects every angle of your fireball. “It's soo cool how humans can do that! You're impressive!”

“And you're sweet,” you laugh. This girl was incredibly endearing and her cheeriness was very infectious.

“Did you hear that, Dream?” she grins. “She thinks I'm sweet! This mortal just made my decade!”

“Sister-” Dream starts in an admonishing sort of way.

“Shush you,” she says with a cheeky wink.

Dream folds his arms in a show of annoyance. Honestly, the last thing you expected from The Endless was for them to be like every other family out there but here they were. Siblings are siblings no matter if they were supernatural beings or humans, you guess.

“Maybe you want to introduce yourself, sister,” Dream says, his eyebrow raised.

“Do I have to?” the girl whines. “Everyone gets scared when I do and I don't want her to not like me any more.”

“I promise I won't get scared,” you say with a smile.

“Are you sure?” the girl says, nervously fiddling with her gloves.

“Positive,” you nod.


You blink for a moment before regathering yourself. This was Death?! This perky little goth girl was Death?! I mean sure, you just met the literal Sandman. Really you should be expecting the unexpected by now.

“Hi Death,” you say warmly. “Nice to meet you.”

Death looks at you like you're crazy for a second but then she jumps into the air whooping loudly, “See, Dream! I told you one day someone wouldn't be scared of me!”

Dream sighs heavily, “Sister, I need quiet. I am to check on the dream status of her lover to pass a message.”

“Oh come on...” Death rolls her eyes. “You're that lazy? You can't even take her to the door of the Dreaming?”
“You and I both know that door will not put her back where she was,” Dream says curtly.

“At least she’ll be on the mortal plain,” Death reasons.

“Without a way to return home,” Dream states. “I know all too well the pain of being trapped somewhere that you do not know.”

Death’s lip seems to quiver a little and she looks a little guilty. “Sorry, little bro, I’ll be quiet.”

“Thank you,” Dream nods before settling himself in one of the armchairs and going rigid again.

It takes all of a minute before he announces, “John Constantine is dreaming. Hold my hand, Star. We shall visit him together.”

You walk over, sitting yourself on the floor and take Dream's outstretched hand, gripping it tightly before you feel an odd weightlessness settle in your body and the room pitches sideways and morphs into a familiar place.

“What is this place?” you ask, a bit startled.

Welcome to the dream of John Constantine, child,” Dream says quietly.

**

John was on the warehouse sofa, smiling as you plucked the strings of your bass guitar trying to get them in tune.

“Play us a song, love,” he smiled warmly. “Only ever got to hear you play once.”

“Oh you mean the time you told me our songs were shit?” you laughed.

John groans, “Oh bloody hell, you're never gonna let that go, are you?”

“Nope,” you grin.

“Come on, bit, please?” John asked. “For me?”

“Fine, but only because I love you,” you sighed.

You started playing a complicated song that John recognised as Tool – Schism. He smiled, knowing that you were only doing it to impress him. You were cute like that.

He took in your furrowed brow of concentration, the way your tongue poked out slightly as you focused and the way your fingers deftly skipped over the strings. You were bloody gorgeous.

“You gonna sing along, Johnny?” you said with a sly wink. “You seem to know this one.”

“Aye love, I just might,” he grins, wriggling on the sofa to clear his lungs a bit.

I know the pieces fit 'cause I watched them fall away
Mildewed and smoldering. Fundamental differing
Pure intention juxtaposed will set two lovers souls in motion
Disintegrating as it goes testing our communication
“John,” you suddenly said and he broke off from his singing.

He looked up and you'd stopped playing completely. You had a look of urgency on your face.

“Star, what's wrong?” he asked, suddenly afraid.

“John, can you hear me?” you asked.

“Yes, bit, I can,” John said, his panic levels starting to rise.

“John I'm in The Dreaming,” you said, your eyes staring at a spot straight past him.

“The Dreaming?” John breathes.

“Anansi lost me in the backstage of reality and I'm in the Dreaming,” you said, more hurriedly.

“Fucking hell,” John hisses. “I'm dreaming right now, aren't I?”

God this was cruel. He should never have fallen asleep. You were so close but so far away from him. He wondered if you actually were in The Dreaming or just an inhumane figment of his subconscious brain.

“Find me you fucking idiot!” you yelled.

“Star, tell me you're real and I'm not just imagining this to give me false hope,” he pleaded.

“I'm with Dream of the Endless...well and Death too,” you said with a small awkward laugh.

“It's true, John Constantine,” a quiet male voice said from next to him and he looked up to see the face of Dream staring down at him. “It has been a long time, friend.”

“Dream,” he whispered. “Is she really with you?”

“She is but you need to hurry to my realm, John Constantine. If she lingers here too long she will become trapped,” Dream says enigmatically before melting into nothingness.

“Star?!” John calls for you.

“Find me,” you said before your features reverted back into the Dream You and you continued with the song.

John awoke with a start, your t-shirt wrapped around his neck and he panted for a good while trying to get his bearings again.

Fuck, looks like he'd have to go to the House of Mystery after all but at least he knew where you were now.

_The Dreaming, that's all I bloody need. Jesus Christ, Star, you get yourself into some shit situations..._
“Hey, are you alright?” Death says as she leans extremely close to your face.

You jump in alarm and she seems a bit embarrassed for a second before you wave it off, “Fine, that was just...a weird experience.”

“Dreamwalking can be confusing for some,” Dream nods from his sitting position above you. “The message is relayed. John Constantine will know how to reach this realm.”

“Are you sure you don't wanna stay?” Death pouts. “You're fun.”

“It would be nice to,” you say politely. “But I'd just started a holiday before I got kidnapped...I would kinda like to actually go back to it.”

“A holiday!” Death exclaims, clapping her hands together. “Dream, let's have a holiday sometime!”

“Sister, I can create any place you wish,” Dream says a little sulkily. “Why would the mortal realm be of interest?”

“Because humans are interesting!” Death says with a wide smile. “And I'd like to find more humans like Star.”

You're sure Dream slightly rolls his eyes and you stifle a budding smirk which he catches and raises an eyebrow in mirth.

“It will not be too long, child,” Dream says, the corners of his mouth tugging into a smile. “Just be prepared that my realm will conjure what John Constantine's soul projects upon his arrival. Having seen his nightmares, he will need you when he reaches here.”

“Oh,” you say, a little solemnly.

Well that could mean anything, although from the way Dream said it, it probably wasn't going to be good. Maybe the old adage was right, trauma leaves scars on the soul and Jesus were you shit scared to see the emotional scars left on John Constantine....

**

“Mate!” John exclaims into the phone, hurriedly packing some clothes together.

“John, what's up, you sound like you've found something?” Chas says on the other end of the line.

“I know where she is. She managed to get a message to me,” John says, almost breathlessly.

“Well don't keep me fucking waiting, you prick!” Chas hisses. “Where is she?”

“She's in The Dreaming,” John explains. “Said she got away from Anansi and ended up there.”

“You need to fit a tracker to this girl,” Chas laughs.
“Planning on it,” John says.

“Wait, I was fucking joking,” Chas starts. “You’re not being serious are you?!”

“Deadly,” John says. “Providing of course she doesn’t run for the bloody hills when she sees this ring. Chains of binding, both of us.”

“Holy shit, John, that’s a big commitment,” Chas says in alarm. “If you don’t make it, you’ll be bound to her forever and if she dies...”

“Then I die as well, I’m aware,” John says a little snappily.

“She's gotten under your skin something chronic, hasn't she?” Chas says quietly.

“Aye, mate,” John sighs. “A mouthy Mancunian musician and her mental magus...almost bloody poetic.”

“Well write her a fucking song then,” Chas teases.

“Maybe someday, Chas,” John laughs bitterly. “Gotta fly out to Kentucky first.”

“The House of Mystery huh?” Chas says knowingly. “Heard about that place. Good luck with it.”

“If I get into trouble...” John starts, almost embarrassed to ask.

“I'll find your idiot arse like I always do,” Chas says warmly. “You know me, forever pulling you out of the fire.”


He clicks off the phone and packs all your belongings into his own suitcase, throwing out the unnecessary shit he didn't need. Shirts he could replace, socks and underwear he could buy at the airport but he steadfastly refused to leave your possessions behind.

A short time later and John was grimacing as he caught a flight from Dublin to Kentucky.

_Bloody hell, Star, I'm going to have thousands of air miles soon._

The flight was tedious. All John could think about was finding you again. He'd touched the box in his pocket about fifty times by now.

Fucking hell, he was working himself up into a state. He could handle all of this bollocks when he knew he could propose to you the second day of the holiday but this was just dragging it out and it was making him feel sick. What if he went through all of this and you said no?

_Get it together, Johnny Boy! She loves you! She said it herself!_

He decided to give his brain a mental fuck you and do what Chas suggested. He'd write you a song. Frankly it'd be a good distraction and it'd help him sort out his whirring thoughts.

He drew out a small pad he kept in his trench coat and a pen and sat there, thinking. Christ, it had been bloody ages since he'd done this...he'd not written a song since the eighties.
Slowly, he began to write:

*Angry chords and rising smoke*

*Acid tongue*

*A whispered joke*

*The pull of rain upon your skin*

*That conjures up my greatest sin*

*The star that shines through my night*

*My shining star that burns so bright*

*Bourbon dreams and a stolen kiss*

*I fell so deep*

*A beloved abyss*

*A fire Hell could not tame*

*Upon my heart you made your claim*

*The star that shines through my night*

*My shining star that burns so bright*

“Oh, love,” he sighed, setting the pen down and staring out of the window. Maybe if he slept again he could see you, see your smiling face. “What on earth have you done to me? I'm practically domestic.”

Although deep down, John Constantine secretly loved the thought.
Bit of a music heavy one here but seems appropriate given how Star and John met!

I tried to make Star's song in line with the Venus of the Hardsell kind of verses so hopefully it worked out!
Chapter Summary

John is coming for you but needs to get through the House of Mystery first and Dream's warning still resounds in your head. What will the Dreaming do when John Constantine arrives?

Chapter Notes

I'm spoiling myself here by writing another chapter when I should be working on my other fics haha. Sorry, though, I couldn't leave it where it was!!!

Warnings: Vicious smut (I know some of you have missed it), angst

More colourful British insults are here for those who want to learn them.

Remember if you want to send me private messages, prompts for one-shots with any of the characters in this fic or some such, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com. I'm always happy to receive any ideas!

(Usual disclaimer, I suck at proofreading)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
There it was, the House of Mystery.

John stood there on the driveway, holding the suitcase and feeling rougher than he'd been in a long time. He was physically tired, emotionally drained and seriously just wanted a long bath. Even his precious Silk Cuts didn't seem to be doing the job any more. The nicotine had long stopped working since he'd set foot on US soil again.

This place gave him the fucking creeps. It looked for all the world like one of those Civil War mansions but the inside could look like anything on any given day. The house changed, it morphed, it was a sentient being.

He'd once owned the keys to this place, a long time ago. He'd won them in a poker game against Father Time but then he'd lost them soon after to Zatanna.

Ah Zatanna. The woman he couldn't stay away from many years ago. The powerful magician with a sarcastic tongue.

*Star's right. I do have a bloody long list of lovers...and maybe I have a type as well....*

He steeled himself before walking up to the door and his hand hesitated on the handle. It'd been easy when he was the master of this place to navigate its complicated corridors and tendency to spit you out into other dimensions but now he was just a regular Tom, Dick and Harry to the House. Would he even be able to get in any more?
He pressed his hand down and the handle bowed under the weight, allowing the door to swing open. He drew in a sharp breath and walked in.

**

“He’s taking his time, isn't he?” Death said from the swingset Dream had conjured outside.

“He probably has to get home first,” you explain. “We were in a different country.”

“What's it like?” Death asks, curiously looking up into the sky which still holds the swirl of galaxies.

“What's it like?” you ask, puzzled as you kick your legs up to swing higher.

“Love.”

“Terrifying,” you laugh and she gives you a wide eyed stare. “But also amazing. It's weird to think about it abstractly but I guess it’s like this overwhelming urge to constantly be with someone and experience life with them...as well as the sexual attraction part. But the level of the feelings is the scary bit. Some people die from heartbreak.”

“I've seen,” Death says quietly, coming to a stop. “I hate having to collect those people. They seem so sad, like not even the afterlife can calm their souls.”

“Love is a powerful thing,” you nod.

“And does it always go the same?” Death asks. “Love then binding yourselves together than producing babies?”

“Er..” you say a little nervously. “Not always.”

“Does John not want to bind himself to you?” Death say curiously.

“I don't think he'd ever want to get married again,” you say, laughing slightly. “Didn't work out so well for him the last time by all accounts.”

“Mortals are very strange,” Death says, starting to swing high again.

“I suppose we are,” you agree.

Dream comes out of the front door of the castle and appears very bemused that you and his sister are both swinging high.

“Sister, you're influencing this human,” he says with a wry smile.

“Oh buzz off Dream,” Death laughs. “I'm talking with my new friend.”

You're sure in the history of humanity there are barely any people who could say Death considers them a friend.

Dream just shakes his head before walking over to you, “John Constantine is in The House of Mystery. He will appear in this realm soon. Come, child. I shall take you to the door of the Dream House.”
“What's the House of Mystery?” you ask.

“It is a vessel, a living entity that transports mortals who know how to navigate it into other dimensions and realms,” Dream explains. “I believe John Constantine was master of the House for a short time.”

“Nice of him to tell me,” you mutter.

“Come, Star,” Dream holds out his hand. “Let us walk together.”

You turn to Death who seems quite sulky that you're leaving and you get up off of the swing and hug her. She's incredibly surprised for a time before she returns it and you move away to see tears glistening in her eyes.

“No mortal's ever hugged me before,” she smiles. “I won't see you now until it's your time, Star, but I'll have a hug waiting for you when that day comes.”

“You'd better,” you grin. “And you'd better take me some place nice.”

Death giggles and winks at you, “You betcha. Bye, Star!”

“Bye Death,” you smile before you take Dream's hand and start walking, the road ahead phasing into view and the galaxies melting into a glowing sunrise.

**

The second John set foot into the House, the floor pitched sideways and he had to grab onto the balustrade of the grand staircase. The suitcase flew out of his grasp and disappeared into the ether.

“Bloody hell! Calm down! It's me!” he shouted to the air.

The House responded by flipping the room completely upside down and John was clinging onto the staircase for dear life.

“Alright, alright! I get it! I'm not welcome!” he hissed, his arms burning with the tension of keeping himself aloft. “But I need to find me missus! That's all! Then I'll sod off and never come back!”

Gradually the room spun back to a normal position and John was fighting not to spew his guts out on the fancy rug. Christ, he should really learn not to piss things off.

He practically crawled to his feet before four doors around him burst open, each containing a whirling portal. He fell to the ground as his limbs were being pulled in all directions.

_Fuck, gotta specify where I'm going or it'll send me anywhere. Schoolboy error…_

“I need to get to The Dreaming!” he beseeched the House.

He was just at the point where his joints would've been dislocated before the doors suddenly slammed shut. The House was quiet and all John could hear was the hammering of his own heartbeat. Guess it wasn't going to help him find that particular door then….
He would've muttered some of his usual brand of scathing wit but the House was temperamental and took offence very easily. He'd once joked to Zatanna that it must be female but that had only earned him a slap for his efforts.

“Right,” he nodded, standing to his feet. “Where the bloody hell to get started?”

He knew the ground floor tended to be reserved for corporeal dimensions so he headed up the stairs. The top floor was more for the abstract and spiritual realms.

His footsteps creaked on the oak floor although he knew this was just for effect. The House liked to be dramatic in that kind of Scooby Doo quirky vibe, although lately it had gone more Amityville Horror. He half expected to see a painting with eyes that followed him on the wall but instead there was just a mirror.

The second he came into the field of view of the mirror he saw you, saw you with Dream as he lead you somewhere. Thank fuck, you looked unharmed.

“Jesus fucking Christ,” he sighed before turning to the general corridor. “Thank you for showing me that.”

He turned back and the mirror's picture gradually melted back into his own reflection...only he wasn't alone.

“Bollocking hell!” John cried as he ducked and narrowly missed the clawed hand of the vampire standing behind him.

Should've realised the House wasn't going to play happy families...

He sprun up and to the left, dashing down the corridor and hastily fumbling through his coat pockets. He was acutely aware of the screeching creature just inches away and that certainly didn't help his search.

Bang!

The vampire smacked full force into him sending his head into the wall at an alarming speed. John briefly saw colours flash across his vision before he forced himself to activate a wall of flame, keeping the vampire at bay away from him until he could stand back up.

He knew the House was going to be royally pissed off at him but he didn't give a shit. He wasn't getting bitten today, thank you very much.

On cue, the ground beneath him started to shake and he knew he had moments left. He found the long sliver of silver he kept hidden in the lining of his coat and he ripped it out before he leapt through the flames and buried it straight in the vampire's heart. The vampire writhed and managed to rake its claw down the side of John's face before it dissolved into a pile of ash.

Fucking toser, John thought. And after you'd made him all pretty again too. Maybe you'd find it attractive. Some birds got off on violence and their blokes playing the hero.

He could feel the blood running down his face and he hurriedly wiped it away with his sleeve before it dripped into his eye.

“Alright, we're bloody even,” he hissed into the air. “Just show me where the fucking door to the Dreaming is.”
There was a groaning of wood behind him and John looked around to see a door to the left opening up. He walked to it and stopped, fearful the House was playing a trick on him.

*Only one way to find out, Johnny Boy.*

He stepped through the portal.

**

You stood at the door of a huge house that looked like it belonged in a Stephen King novel.

“This is the Dreaming's version of the House of Mystery,” Dream explained, gesturing forward. “I sometimes utilise it to visit other realms.”

“So John's in there?” you ask. “Can I go in?”

“No, child,” Dream shakes his head. “The House of Mystery is fickle. It does not like guests, especially not new ones. John Constantine knows the House, you do not. You would end up dying.”

“Oh,” you say in a small voice.

Dream turns to you in almost a brotherly manner, laying a hand on your shoulder, “I am not decrying your magical abilities, Star but the House has killed many an advanced sorcerer and sorceress.”

“I understand,” you nod. “So he'll come out of that door?”

“In theory,” Dream says cryptically before his eyes latch onto a window above the door. “Or perhaps not.”

You look up to where Dream is staring and see a whirl of tan fabric as something drops from the window squarely into Dream's waiting arms.

“John!” you cry out as you catch sight of his face.

Oh my god, he was covered in blood! He looked dreadful, his cheeks were sunken in and he was sporting large bags under his eyes. His stubble was very overgrown also.

Had it really only been almost two days since you'd seen him?

“Welcome to the Dreaming, John Constantine,” Dream says, placing your warlock down gingerly.

“Star?!” John calls for you, but the blood in his eyes makes it difficult for him to see you properly.

You race towards him, gripping him fiercely in your embrace, “I'm here, John.”

“Fucking hell, love,” John laughs. “Easy on the hug there, you'll crack me bloody ribs.”

“Shut up, you idiot,” you smile. “I missed you.”

“Aye, bit, I've missed you something terrible,” he mutters, winding his arms around you. “Ah bollocks, I'm bleeding all over you. Sorry, love.”

“I don't care,” you say. “Although what on earth happened?”
“Vampires,” John states but he doesn't elaborate any further.

“The House is still offended by you then, I take it?” Dream says with an arched eyebrow.

“Apparently,” John huffs. “Don't exactly know what I did to piss it off so much.”

“Probably by merely existing,” you say with a sly smile.

“Oooo I've missed that cheeky tongue,” John smirks and almost gives you a kiss but he backs off. “Ah best not when I'm openly bleeding this much. Don't want you accidentally ingesting demon blood, no matter if it's diluted somewhat.”

“Ever the gentleman,” you laugh.

A crack of thunder breaks your reverie and the beautiful sunrise turns dark as storm clouds form overhead.

“It is as I warned,” Dream says quietly. “The Dreaming is searching his soul. Prepare yourself, child.”

“What's going on?” John asks, a little worried.

The world around you dims into a violent shade of red and the landscape fades to dust and ruin. It reminds you of Hell.

“Dream?!” John says, startled.

“Mortals should not be in my realm,” Dream says, retreating from the two of you. “This plain is a construct of the living imaginations within and it projects your soul upon the realm. Your soul is strong, John Constantine. I can feel it. It is strong and it is distorted. It has surpassed your lover's imagination and is fighting with my own.”

You're anxious now. Dream seems to be leaving and he's almost wearing an expression of fear.

“Child, I have helped you thus far. I cannot help you any longer,” Dream says grimly, raising his hands up. “I shall have to seal this part of the Dreaming off or John Constantine's soul will take all of it over.”

“You're trapping us here?!” you shout.


“Thank you, friend,” Dream nods and there's an eerie whistling as a curtain of light descends, separating you from him.

You can see on the other side it returns to bright sunshine and curiously coloured flowers spring up from the ground. On your side, the sky only seems to grow darker.

“I wish you luck in returning to the mortal realm,” Dream calls as he walks away.

“Shit, what do we do now?!” you say.

“We go back in the House and get the bloody hell out of here,” John nods.

You both turn around to be met with....nothing. The House had gone.
“Are you fucking shitting me?!” John yells.

The world around you seems to morph and undulate until it throws up a scene that makes John’s face pale.

“No...” he breathes softly. “This is just cruel.”

There’s a body of a girl, limbs ripped away and blood splattering the ground in front of a nightclub that you see is called the Casanova Club.

Oh god...this was Newcastle.

“It's not real, John,” you say urgently, grasping his hand. “Don't give me another repeat of Ravenscar, please. We need to get out of here.”

“Aye, love,” John murmurs, tearing his eyes away from the scene. “It's...it's so fucked up, innit?”

“Just close your eyes,” you say softly. “The less you see, the better until we can find the House.”

“Promise me something, Star,” John whispers. “Don't think of me any differently if you see some things.”

“Pretty sure I've seen you at your worst,” you joke but John doesn't reciprocate.

“You've not, love,” he says quietly. “Not even close.”

You kiss him on the only bit of his face that's not covered in blood, “Whatever happens we'll face it together.”

“I'll hold you to that,” he says with a faint smile.

“Now close your eyes,” you insist.

Guiding John blind through his horrorscape was challenging to say the least. It was like walking through a museum, a still video of all of the worst nightmares he'd ever experienced.

You made your way through a scene that you were sure was his birth. A woman you assumed to be his mother was dead and the midwife was holding a baby up to a man you assumed to be his father who was turning away in hatred.

Oh John...

Your heart reflexively ached for him. Not even a day old and his life was already sadness and misery. Instinctively you squeezed his hand.

“Is it bad?” John asks in a quivering voice.

“Let's keep moving,” you say firmly.

You pass through many scenes of him losing friends, even through the one where he lost Gary Lester to a hunger demon. You pass through all the times he'd lost lovers through death or just from driving them away. You saw the First of the Fallen and nearly bricked it as you looked up at that malevolent grin.

“What is it?” John says, feeling you come to a stop.
“I think it's the First,” you say.

“Ugly looking tosspot, isn't he?” John says, trying to force humour into his voice.

“I wouldn't like to meet him in a dark alleyway,” you say, shivering slightly.

“Bad enough meeting me in a dark alleyway,” John smirks.

Instantly the scene around you changes and you see yourself leaning against the backstage door of the rock club, dressed in your stage gear and clutching John's business card with a bewildered expression.

“Open your eyes, John,” you smile. “Trust me.”

John experimentally opens one eye before you see a warm expression on his face. Well...as warm as he can manage with claw marks down his skin.

“Feels like a lifetime ago,” John smiles. “I may have been watching your mate that night but Christ did I wanna rip your clothes off after talking to you.”

“You just love the backchat, don't you?” you laugh.

“Love, you have no idea,” John grins. “Gotta say this gives me a plan though. If I just conjured this from thinking about that night...”

“Maybe you can conjure the House back,” you finish.

“You're gonna have to keep me grounded, Star,” John says, taking your hands and placing them around his neck. “Just talk to me, bit, talk to me about anything.”

He closes his eyes once more and your press your forehead to his, not caring about the mess of blood transferring onto you.

“We're gonna get back John. We're going to finish that holiday in peace,” you murmur and you can see him concentrating. “We're going to go back to that hotel room and you're gonna fuck me like you promised and the next day...I don't know, we'll go to a hill where we can see the whole of Ireland if we really squint. Maybe we'll go to a local festival and dance until our feet are sore. Maybe we'll find a pub that'll actually be quiet and we can kiss in a booth until last orders...”

You can see John is smiling widely and you chance a glance to your right.

“John, you did it,” you murmur.

John opens his eyes and there before you is the House of Mystery again.

“Quick, lass!” he cries out, pulling you towards the door. “Before it fucks off again!”

You both pelt towards the House and John practically barges the door open with his shoulder. You both fall in a heap onto the floor.

You look up to see the interior is almost like castle stonework with a spiralling staircase in the centre of the atrium. It really didn't match the outside at all.

“It changes,” John explains. “Don't you dare let go of me, love. I'm not losing you again.”

It takes you a minute to register that John's slapped handcuffs onto each of your wrists, tying you
“What the fuck, John?” you say in surprise. “Why do you carry those around with you?”

“They've been known to come in handy,” John winks.

“I don't wanna know,” you groan.

“It's only for insurance, bit,” John says, pulling you down one of the corridors. “Easy to let go of me hand but not so easy to break cuffs.”

“Yeah yeah, you're just a kinky fucker,” you laugh.

“Not arguing that point,” John smirks. “Now whatever you do, don't disrespect the House. It's already tried to kill me once today.”

“Noted,” you nod, watching the torches in the wall sconces flicker with ominous movements.

“We want to return to the realm of Earth,” John says in a formal voice. “We mean no trouble. We just want to pass through.”

You hear a sound almost akin to a low rumbling growl as the entire corridor flips on its side and you crash into the wall with John falling on you seconds later.


“I want to get back, please,” you say, feeling silly for talking to the air. “I want to get back to our holiday in Ireland.”

“Love, it doesn't work like that,” John says, standing up and dragging you up also. “There's only one exit onto the earthly plain and that's in Kentucky.”

You've only just gotten to your feet when the corridor rights itself again and you land on top of John in an undignified manner, your torso splayed out on his crotch area.

“Not to be offensive, lass but you're bloody heavy on my nads there,” John winces and you scramble away.

“You can take it,” you smirk, trying to keep the mood up. Humour really was your default way of coping with things lately.

“I'd much prefer a different part of you there,” he grumbles, getting up.

A long double door at the bottom of the corridor flies open.

“That's it,” John nods.

You're about to start walking when you hear the grinding of stone upon stone and you look back to see that the wall behind you is bearing down upon you both.

“John!” you scream and he whips his head around, his eyes going wide.

“Run, Star!” he yells.

The two of you sprint like your lives depend on it. Your legs burn with the effort and your lungs are tightening with the sheer breathlessness. You daren't look back.
You reach the double doorway and John leaps forward, pulling you through behind him. You just have time to glance back to see the wall is nowhere to be soon and only a wooden corridor exists where once was stone.

Oof!

You land with a bounce on a bed and not a moment later the wind is knocked out of you as a suitcase is flung into your torso.

“Fucking hell!” John cries, hurriedly pushing the case off of you. “Are you alright, love?!”

“Ow,” you say meekly. “What the everliving fuck was that about?”

“I lost it in the House earlier,” John explains. “Guess it was really bloody tired of us being there and decided to forcibly evict us.”

“Is there anything you haven't pissed off in the universe, John?” you say grudgingly.

“Well, I'm hoping you,” John laughs. “Christ, well tie me bollocks together and call me a sailor, we're back in Ireland...”

You take a minute to get your bearings but you look around and see you'd fallen onto the hotel bed. Try as you might, the smug smirk just crept onto your face.

“Guess the House likes me more than you,” you tease.

“I think the House likes anybody more than me,” John smiles before drawing you close to him and squeezing you tightly. “God, Star, it feels good to have you close again. What the fuck happened whilst I was out? You said you were in the backstage of reality?”

“Yep,” you nod. “Sweeney saved me...well...Sweeney dropped me into the Dreaming.”

“That ginger prick helped you?!” John says in alarm.

“He fought Anansi and helped me get away, told me to hide and then pushed me through...well I guess now it was a portal?”

“Why the bloody hell did he do that?” John says, his eyes wide and you grimace slightly at seeing how the blood has stained his corneas red.

“Said he wasn't going to let Odin get me,” you shrug. “Also said he appreciated the effort we put into the offering.”

“And...” John presses, knowing there was something more.

“And that he wants to steal me from you someday,” you say, not daring to look at John's face.

“Right, that's it!” John hisses. “Shower. Now.”

He gets up from the bed and due to the cuffs, you have to follow. He steps into the bath area fully clothed and turns on the water, swearing loudly as it hits the gouges on his face. Red rivulets run down his body, turning his sodden shirt from transparent to pale pink.

“John, what are you doing?” you ask, feeling your shoes getting soaked as you stand in the bath with him.
John says nothing but wipes his face until it's completely clear of blood and then you're pulled close to him, under the stream of water and he presses you against the tiles. He kicks apart your feet, holding his body flush to yours.

“Nobody is gonna fucking steal you away from me,” he growls, holding his cuffed hand above your head so your arm dangles away from your body. “Not gods, not leprechauns, not angels, not demons, not even beings from the beginning of bloody time.”

You would be lying to yourself if you said John's aggressive possessiveness right now wasn't doing unmentionable things to you. Also the way his shirt clung to his body as the shower raged above you....and the wounds were actually pretty roguish in that ancient warrior kind of way...and the fiery gleam in his eyes as he held your gaze...fuck, this man would be the death of you.

“John, you're hurt,” you say, trying to be sensible, even though every fibre in your being is screaming for you to let him have his way with you.

“Don't give two shits, lass,” he hisses and his mouth crashes onto yours.

You're sure the noise you make is utterly obscene and should've been reserved for some porn film as your free hand comes to grip the front of his sodden shirt.

“Oh love,” John groans as he kisses a line down the side of your neck. “Those pretty little songs you sing for me. Let Johnny hear it.”

He rips your top off with a strength you didn't know he had, the fabric blocking the drain of the shower as he discards it with urgent haste. He still keeps his hand above you, letting his other hand roam over your chest as he hungrily kisses you, pawing at the soft flesh of your breasts.

“Fuck,” you murmur, in between kisses. “Let me out of the cuffs, John.”

“Not yet,” he says darkly as he grabs your other hand.

In one fluid motion he twists his wrist out of the handcuffs and slams the metal onto your other hand, looping it through the support bar at the top of the shower.

“Whatever is Ol’ Johnny gonna do with you, eh?” he chuckles, unbuttoning your trousers. “Pretty girl all tied up and at me mercy.”

“Swear to God, John, you don't fuck me right now..” you trail off as his hand dips into your underwear, finding the pool of wetness.

“Oh patience, love,” John smirks. “I wanna see ya fall apart for me. Wanna hear me name in your moans.”

“Gotta do something to earn that first,” you say teasingly, looking up at him through the wet strands of your hair.

“You're a right tease, lass,” he husks, yanking the rest of your clothes off and throwing them into the sink, along with your top that's settled in the drain so you don't flood the bathroom. He kneels down and pulls your thighs apart, “Oooo I've missed being here.”

“John, stop talking,” you plead, desperate to feel his touch.

“And why should I?” John says with the biggest wicked smirk he can muster.
“Because I need that clever tongue to be elsewhere right now before I go insane,” you whimper, feeling his fingers stroking the inside of your thighs.

“I bloody love seeing you like this for me,” John chuckles before you feel the warmth of his mouth pressing into you.

“Shit!” you moan, your legs trembling as his tongue swirls and flicks against you.

He's deliberately teasing you and he knows it. He gets you close to orgasm several times but pulls away at the last second, going to kiss another part of you. He presses his fingers just over your entrance, not enough to slip inside but enough to drive you nuts with the pressure.

“John!” you cry out. “Please!”

“Payback’s a fucker isn't it, love?” John laughs. “You think I’d forgotten the time you made me beg?”

“John!” you say more urgently.

“Nah, lass, say it properly,” he winks, drawing his finger up lightly over your clit and sending you into a shaking frenzy. “You should know by now. Drives me fucking wild when you say it.”

That weird quirk of his. The name he always refers to himself by in sex. You wonder whether he likes using it because it reminds him of a time when he was carefree.

“Johnny,” you say breathily.

“There we go,” John smirks before lapping a long line that ends with him groaning obscenely. “Bloody hell I love how you taste, bit.”

“I'm gonna collapse soon,” you say, your head lolling back and your legs trembling with the effort to keep you upright.

“Well, can't have that,” John laughs, standing up and discarding his shoes, trousers and boxers before he hoists your legs around his waist and you feel how rigidly hard he is. “At least not until I shag your brains out.”

“Is that a promise, Johnny boy?” you giggle, squeezing your thighs tightly around him.

In one stroke John buries himself into you and you clutch onto the handcuff chain as your body spasms around him.

“You bet your arse it is, lass,” he hisses and he digs his fingers into the soft flesh of your bottom. “And what a great arse it is. Hang on, love, I'm not gonna be gentle.”

“Don't want you to be,” you murmur.

“That's me girl,” he laughs.

Experimentally he holds you aloft, away from any side of the shower wall and chances a few thrusts into you before grunting and pushing you back against the tiles again, obviously not finding the purchase he needed. The second you're pressed against the wall, his demeanour changes completely and he's almost primally carnal in how he ruts into you with desperate need.

Your hands are almost turning white with the vice grip you have on the bar above your head as you fully let your moans echo around the bathroom.
“Fucking hell, love,” John growls. “You fucking sing for Johnny, you hear?”

He does a particularly deep roll of his hips that has you clenching around him and you completely lose yourself, openly screaming his name. That seems to encourage him on even more and he becomes completely feral in his thrusts, almost to the point of painfulness.

John Constantine was desperate to reclaim you.

“Star, I need...” he grunts and you know what he's trying to say.

He's almost there and he doesn't want to stop. Christ this man was going to end up getting you pregnant someday...you were lucky Lucifer had slipped a bunch of morning after pills into your pocket secretly as you left Lux. Maybe that wink he'd given you held more understanding than you knew.

“Come on, Johnny,” you rasp in his ear. “Make me yours.”

There's an animalistic growl that rips through his throat as he drives as deep as he can into you and you can already feel the trickling of liquid down your legs as he finds his release.

“Fuuuck,” he groans setting you back down. “God I bloody adore you. Now let me just..”

His fingers return to your aching clit and start vicious little circles there in the way he knows you like. His mouth returns to hungrily kissing you, swallowing your little whimpers and moans.

“Don't stop,” you breathe, feeling the knot build in your abdomen.

“ Wouldn't dream of it,” John smiles, lightly biting at your shoulder.

The sharpness of the pain tips you over the edge and you cry out, your legs shuddering as they try to support you and your thighs clamping around John's fingers, desperate to ride the wave of pleasure out.

“Bloody. Fucking. Gorgeous,” John says, punctuating each word with a kiss. “Now I'll let you out of the cuffs.”

With a flick of his wrist, you're free and you wonder how the fuck he manages to do that without a key.

“Let's clean up, bit. I wanna take you somewhere,” he says softly, pulling you into a gentle hug under the shower stream.

It still surprised you how John could go from something so feral to something so affectionate but right now, the happy glow in your limbs just didn't give a flying fuck.

You were home. You were with John. That was all that really mattered.

**

“No,” you say, surprised.

“Just a bit higher,” John says, puffing with the effort of climbing up the hill.

He'd insisted you do exactly what you had suggested in the Dreaming. Of course that meant he had
to abandon his usual outfit of choice and you were surprised to see he'd found some biker boots in a nearby charity shop. It suited him.

Looking at him as he crested the hill, you were struck by how handsome he was at that point. The jeans that clung to his leg muscles, the band shirt with worn holes in it that just hinted at his muscular torso underneath, the way that leather jacket accentuated his shoulders....

Even the claw marks added something. John had managed to reduce them down to faint lines by mixing a poultice together but they would need to properly heal on their own.

Pull yourself together. You literally just had sex an hour ago...

“You alright, love?” John asks, turning to you.

“Fine,” you smile. “Just admiring the view.”

“Aye it is beautiful,” John says, looking out at the valley below.

“I mean you, you muppet,” you laugh.

“Oh, right!” John smiles a little shyly, redness creeping into his cheeks. “Not got a patch on you though, bit. Come ‘ere.”

He holds his hand out to help you scale the last rock and you both stand on the top of the hill, gazing out. In the late afternoon sun you could see the dappling light falling on the fields below that were dotted with small towns. The wind carried the smell of the nearby sea and the heady grass to you both.

“See,” John says, pointing outwards. “The whole of Ireland if you really squint.”

“I love it,” you smile warmly, just content to look at the beautiful scene before you.

John comes behind you, wrapping his arms around your waist and nuzzles into your neck, “No more misadventures for a while, yeah? Just you, me and whatever we wanna do.”

“Don't make promises you can't keep,” you laugh. “We have a habit of finding trouble.”

“That we do, love,” John says, kissing your cheek. “But until the next catastrophic fuck up occurs, let's enjoy each other.”

“Gladly,” you smile and John squeezes you gently before he lets go, staring off into the distance with a placid expression.

You gaze down at the fields below, picking out the sheep milling around and you sigh, closing your eyes and feeling the sun's warmth on your skin.

“Star,” John says softly, taking your hand. “Got something I wanna ask you, love.”

“Go ahead, I'm all ears,” you say, still keeping your eyes closed so you can take in the sensations of the utter calm around you.

“Alright,” John says from the side of you, stroking your cheek. “But promise me you won't open your eyes until I've asked it.”

“Ok, mystery man,” you laugh. “You are odd sometimes.”
“Aye, that I am,” John laughs softly. “Star, I love you, you know that right?”

“I do,” you nod. “Is that the question?”

“No it is not, you bloody smart-mouthed mare,” John says and you don’t make an effort to hide your smirk.

“Ok fine, I love you too, you berk,” you giggle. “Carry on.”

John sighs heavily, “I love you and every time you're away from me it's like I can't function right. Can't remember the last time I fell this deep for a bird if I'm honest.”

Your stomach was tightening a little. Why was John making a big declaration right now? Was something wrong?

“Maybe I never have,” John carries on, his voice becoming softer and softer. “I've never wanted to risk me life so much for someone before.”

“John, what are you saying?” you gently probe.

You feel John take your hand and squeeze it, his fingers running over the skin.

“Chas said something to me in the warehouse before we came here. He said not to let you go and I'm inclined to agree with him. So...Star...”

There's a movement and you feel your hand drop down.

What on earth was going on right now....

“Will you walk on this bloody dangerous path with me and never let go? Until the road ends?” John asks.

Was that....

You still didn't understand what was going on.

“Open your eyes, love,” John says, letting go of your hand.

He's on one knee, holding a small box. In that box is a ring with a fire opal cut into the shape of a bursting star.

John bites his lip viciously as he looks up into your face, “What I mean to say is, will you marry me, love?”
Sorry not sorry for the cliffhanger :).
Also I make no apologies for the gratuitous John picture above....definitely how I imagine he looks when he's on some downtime
A Burning Question

Chapter Summary

Are you going to say yes to John?

Chapter Notes

Hello friends!
Dropping down another shorter chapter before I work on a longer one in the future.
Thank you for all the kudos, comments and hits! I'm amazed some of you have stayed as long as you have considering the sheer amount of chapters going into this haha.
If you wanna leave me private messages, comments or send me prompt story ideas for Rockabye one shots, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com :)
Warnings: Smut, fluff
Enjoy!
- TLP xx
(Also I'm insanely tired so there's likely to be proofreading mistakes!)

Oh fucking hell love, say something!

You were just standing there, staring at him like he was mental.

Shit, shit shit! He'd fucked up. He'd totally misjudged it. Why had he thought this was a good idea?! It was far too soon! Oh god, you were gonna bolt. You were gonna run far away from him.

Well done, Johnny Boy. Good to know you can fuck it up all on your own. You had a good thing going and you decided to get too possessive.

He chanced some humour, “Usually this is the part where you say yes or no, love.”

You were spluttering, trying to find words and John could feel his heart hammering wildly, his stomach churning as he waited there. Christ, this felt like an eternity had gone by.

“Are you sure?!” you said after finding your voice.

John couldn't help but burst into laughter, the tension knot in his chest releasing quickly.

She's not going to run at all, you bloody idiot. She's just surprised. Calm down.

God, you were adorable....terrible self esteem apparently....but adorable.

“Would I be asking if I weren't?” he chuckles. “And would I have gone to the effort of finding a ring like this? It wasn't bloody easy, you know! Now are you gonna give me an answer, bit because me knees are fucking killing me on this hill.”
You burst into giggles. He loved the sound of your laughter...

You held out your hand to him, pulling him back to his feet.

“Then get up, you old man,” you smirked.

“Listen, I'm not above spanking you in public, you cheeky bleeder,” he hissed, but in a jovial sort of way.

“Maybe I'd like it,” you winked.

Fuck...

John felt his cock twitch slightly as that fantasy briefly flitted through his mind.

Not the time

“Star, you're keeping me in suspense, love,” he said, trying to clear his head.

“I didn't think you'd ever want to get married again after...you know,” you murmured and John could see the blush creeping into your cheeks. “It caught me a little off guard.”

See, told you she'd compare it to Epiphany.

John's brain could fuck off right now. He needed to make you understand.

“I'm no good at this romance bollocks but I'm gonna give it a go so bear with me,” he says earnestly, taking your face in his free hand and looking deep into your eyes. “Star, I fucking love you, alright? What I feel for you...it's so much more than I ever felt for Epiphany. You're beautiful, you're fiery as fuck, you shag like the world's ending and you're wickedly smart. I don't ever want to lose you. I told you once that Star Constantine suited you and I bloody meant it so please, for the love of God will you give me a fucking answer before I go insane, woman!”

“John,” you said breathlessly before pulling him into a kiss.

He poured every ounce of the passion he felt for you into that kiss.

Say it, love.

“Yes,” you smiled. “Yes I'll marry you.”

John couldn't contain himself. He bodily picked you up and span you round, laughing although he didn't know why. He hadn't felt this good in decades. Not even after he'd saved his own soul, not even after he'd saved Astra's. It was like the years of tragedy and pain were melting away. He felt light, so light and happy.

“Thank fuck for that!” he chuckled. “Now let's get this on you.”

He slipped the ring onto your finger and the afternoon sunlight caught in the gemstone, reflecting fiery orange patterns onto your skin. Good job he'd enchanted it to fit you perfectly because he'd be fucked if he knew what your ring size actually was.

“So is that what Sweeney stole?” you asked, with a quirked eyebrow.

“Aye, lass. That's why I was so keen to get it back,” John laughs. “Questioned meself for a while there whether it was worth losing you in the Dreaming for it.”
You looked down at your hand and John could see the beaming smile on your face.

*It worked out. She said yes. Maybe you're not such a fuck up after all, Johnny Boy. You haven't managed to drive her away. Somebody up there must be giving me a really big win right now.*

“I love it,” you said. “It’s perfect, thank you.”

“No, love, thank you,” John smiled, pulling you close and brushing your errant hair back from your face. “Now if you don't mind...I've got the Chandler family threatening me bollocks if I don't update them so...up for a picture?”

“They knew?!” you cried out.

“Might have had to tell them when Anansi took you,” John murmured. “And Renee always eavesdrops.”

“Looks like she gets to wear her big hat after all,” you laughed.

“As long as it hides her face,” John winked before pulling his phone out. “Put your hand on me shoulder, love.”

You did just that and John pulled you even closer, gazing at you with blatant happiness before he took a picture and sent it across the sea to dreary Manchester.

**

Chas sat at the dinner table with Renee, Geri and Tricia. He'd scarcely let them out of his sight since Ravenscar.

Honestly, they were coping better than he expected, especially Trish. She was a little fighter. Chas could tell he was going to have trouble with her when she got a bit older. He seriously hoped she wasn't going to get dragged into the world of the occult any more than she already had done.

His phone pinged and he drew it out, earning the ireful stare of his wife. She hated the family using technology when they were eating. He ignored her. He'd been on tenterhooks since John had told him you were lost in the Dreaming and he'd not heard anything since John had told him he'd reached the House of Mystery.

The second he opened up the text he let out an audible gasp.

“Something wrong?” Renee asked.

“Did John find Star, dad?” Geri questioned.

John's sent him a picture of the two of you standing somewhere in the countryside. He guessed you'd both made it back to Ireland. He also wondered what the fuck happened to John's face as he had long claw marks across his eye area. In the photo, John was looking at you with utter affection and you were looking back, a huge smile across your lips. Then he saw it.

The ring.

“Er...” Chas said, looking at the picture on his screen. “You could say that.”
“What is it, Francis?” Renee demanded. “Tell us!”

He turned his phone around so his family could see and they all squinted hard until Geri screamed in surprise, “Oh my god, they're engaged?!”

“So he can do something right,” Renee said with a satisfied smile. “Finally...even though she's much too good for that ill mannered oik.”

“Oh mum,” Geri sighed, rolling her eyes. “They adore each other, just let them be.”

“Yeah, grandma,” Trish chimed in. “I'm happy for them! Uncle John kept his promise after all!”

“Well I suppose it gives me an excuse to find a new dress,” Renee laughed.

As much as his wife hated John and was trying to maintain her image here, Chas knew she was secretly happy about the engagement. She'd spent the whole of the next day after Ravenscar singing your praises and saying you were a good influence and you might turn John into a decent member of society. She'd also spent all her time since she found out John was going to propose fussing about whether he actually deserved you. Needless to say, Chas was pretty sick of hearing about it but he was also intensely happy for John that he'd found someone who'd given him that spark of life back. He'd frankly been a right miserable bastard the last few years since the divorce.

Chas texted John back.

Chas: Really happy for you mate. She must really love you if she said yes when you look like that.

John: You're just jealous because I look more dashing

Chas: Fuck off, you dickhead. You look like you lost a fight with a kitten and a ball of string.

John: Still prettier than you, you minging bastard.

Chas: You wish. Glad you're both safe.

John: Me too. Cheers for all your help, mate. Needless to say, best man offer is open.

Chas: Wouldn't miss it for the world. Now enjoy your fucking holiday this time. If either of you gets into more supernatural trouble, I'll beat the shit out of you myself.

John: Love you too, mate.

Chas just laughed, causing Renee to look around in alarm.

“Guess I have a speech to prepare at some point,” Chas smiles and even Renee gives a genuine grin.

**
You spent the next few days exploring, dining out and receiving noise complaints from the hotel staff for your loud sex sessions. You didn't care though. You felt on top of the world.

Holy shit, you were engaged! You never in a million years would’ve thought that would happen. You literally had no idea that John was even planning it. When you saw him on one knee, it was like your brain took a holiday of its own. You were sure you came across as a naïve idiot but John didn't seem to mind.

Speaking of John, he'd never been so vibrant before. He smiled more, he laughed more and the terrible innuendos increased exponentially.

He'd even not been terrified about you sending that picture to your mother who practically exploded with questions and seemed incredibly excited. John had even suggested you both visit her when you got back so he could meet her properly which you thought was pretty mature of him. It was like you were seeing a different side of him completely.

You were both walking back from a pub and got into the hotel when you heard the curt cough of the receptionist.

"Mr Constantine, may I have a word?"

"Sure mate," John said, his arm not leaving your shoulders. "What's up?"

"Really, we've had six noise complaints now. I understand this is probably embarrassing but-"

"Alright alright," John laughs. "Sorry, pal. Just got engaged to me missus here and maybe we got a little over excited."

The receptionist looks to your hand before a look of understanding washes over him, "Congratulations."

John reaches into his coat and pulls out a small roll of notes before tossing it over to the receptionist, "If we're that much of a nuisance, mate, maybe you can stick us somewhere away from everyone?"

There's a crooked grin that comes over the man's face as he unfurls the roll and nods graciously, "I think I can arrange that Mr. Constantine."

An hour later you were moved into the bridal suite, which you found absolutely hilarious.

"You know we're not actually married yet, right?" you tease as you pick up the complimentary champagne.

"Oh come on, love," John laughs. "It's a bloody huge bed and look at all the nice furniture I can fuck you over."

"We've only got two days left John," you roll your eyes. "You can't do me on every single object in here."

"I can bloody well try," John smirks.

"And just how did you have that much money in your pocket?" you ask.
Of course you'd never actually asked him how he made any money at all since you'd known him. Now you thought about it, it was a bit strange how he could fork out for all these flights and items...

“Betting,” John admits. “I practised a minor luck spell for a year in me thirties and gambled on horses. Always win big. Got banned from every single bookies in Peckham once...possibly might be heading that way in Manchester too.”

“Why am I not surprised,” you sigh. “John Constantine...lad's lad. Booze, women and gambling.”

“It was a different time, love,” John shrugs. “Yupies n' all that.”

“Can't imagine you as a Yuppie,” you laugh. “Thought you would have been a New Romantic.”

“Never been one for wearing eyeshadow and lipstick,” he grins.

You just shake your head before going into the bathroom. When you come out again, you're treated to a sight.

John's lazily sprawled on the bed wearing nothing but his boxers and his leather jacket. He gives you a wink, “I promised, didn't I?”

“Fuck,” you murmur, committing this scene to memory. “Give me a minute to get my brain working again.”

John laughs and beckons you over, “Come 'ere, love. I'll help you with that.”

You walk over and climb onto the bed, straddling him as he sits up against the headboard.

“I do hope you approve,” he purrs against your ear.

You don't say anything but you guide his hand underneath your skirt so he can feel the damp material of your underwear.

“Already wet for Johnny eh?” he husks, letting his fingers skate over the fabric lightly. “I'll have to wear this more often.”

“I wouldn't say no,” you grin.

“Bet you wouldn't, you naughty lass,” he chuckles. “Let's get these off so we can break this new bed in.”

“Not yet,” you say, kissing a line down his chest and he just leans back, hands interlaced behind his head and watching you with a hungry gaze.

You tug at his boxers and he graciously lifts his hips so you can slide them off. He definitely was enjoying this himself. You could see it in the slight smirk on his face and the way he rolled his hips ever so slightly as you ran your hands up his thighs.

“Oh Christ, love, lemme watch you,” he murmurs.

“That's the plan,” you say impishly before making a slow line of kisses up his inner thigh.

You finally give him what he wants after teasing him for a while and lap a long line up his cock which earns you a sharp intake of breath. You take your time sinking your mouth down on him and his head bounces off the wooden headboard as he arches backwards.
“Fuck!” he hisses, half in pain and half in pleasure.

“Easy there,” you laugh.

“Can't help it, love,” he grunts. “Your mouth feels bloody amazing.”

“And how about when I do this?” you ask in a teasing manner before taking all of him into your mouth, feeling him hit the back of your throat.

“Fucking hell!” he groans. “God if I hadn't asked you to marry me already, bit, I'd do it right now.”

You giggle which sends vibrations running through your mouth and you actively see him savaging his lip to keep himself steady. He was intensely attractive like this, all splayed out, face consumed by lust and his hair going wild. You hollowed your cheeks out, picking up your speed and his hand finds your hair, gripping slightly as he bucks up against you.

“Star...Star, get up here,” he rasps.

“Oh?” you say, letting your tongue trail lazily up his length. “Not enjoying it?”

“I really could let you do that until I cum in that pretty mouth but I want you, love. Get up here,” he says, tugging your hair slightly so you move up his body.

You properly straddle him and he pulls your head down, kissing you fiercely. Your hands wander to his jacket, grabbing the lapels as you grind against him.

“That's it, lass,” he purrs against your neck before lurching forward so you fall onto your back with him hovering over you.

He grabs your thighs, pulling your underwear off and then hiking your legs up around him before his head dips into the hollow of your shoulder and he playfully nips at the skin. You melt under his touch as his hands dive underneath your blouse lightly caressing the soft flesh of your breasts.

“John,” you pant, trying to remind him.

“Ah, fuck...yeah,” he says, shaking his head before he retrieves a condom from his wallet. “Seriously need to master that anti-fertility spell sometime. Much prefer fucking you as is.”

“I enjoy it too,” you giggle.

“Oh well...definitely mastering it when we get back,” he grins before he rolls the condom on and drives into you.

He takes a much more languid pace then you expect, his jacket falling either side of you as he thrusts with precise movements, eager to elicit a response from you. You don't hide the fact he's hitting all the right spots like this and your fingers grasp onto the leather pulling him closer to you.

You get brave enough to flip him over and he seems surprised for a second and tries to get up but you push him down.

“Oi!” he says smirking. “Who said you could take control, eh?”

“I did,” you say, slamming yourself down hard and his eyes practically roll into his head.

“Ohh bloody hell, you make a compelling argument,” he groans. “Keep fucking going.”
He helps you move up and down, his hands on your hips and you both find a rhythm.

“Take that shirt off, I wanna see those tits bounce,” he hisses.

“You take it off,” you pant, the challenge evident in your eyes.

He takes one side of your blouse in either hand and wrenches them apart, popping the buttons until the fabric hangs uselessly either side of your body.

“Much better,” he husks, thrusting upwards particularly hard and you cry out. “Come on, lass. Sing for me.”

Another hard thrust and you're struggling to stay upright now.

“Fuck, Johnny!” you hiss, digging your nails into his chest for purchase.

“That's what I wanted to hear,” he chuckles before his thumb drifts to your clit, teasingly circling with the ghost of a touch before he presses full force.

It doesn't take you long before you orgasm, crying out his name as you spasm and jerk on him, clenching around his cock. He holds you in place and brutally drives up into you, not giving you a chance to fully ride the wave out as he chases his own release with a string of curses.

Finally he stills, lying backwards on the mattress with a lazy grin on his face.

“I will never get tired of that, bit,” he pants.

“It's a wonder we get anything done,” you tease.

He just laughs, drawing you down into an affectionate kiss.

You clamber off, stripping down until you're wearing nothing and John shucks off the jacket, throwing it onto a chair before he climbs under the covers and motions for you to join him. You half jump onto the bed and he just gives you a daft look before drawing you close and wrapping you both in the duvet.

“I'm glad you didn't run a mile, love,” he says warmly. “Honestly, can't bloody remember the last time I felt this...content, I guess. At least not for this length of time.”

“You don't get rid of me that easily,” you say, poking your tongue out and he just bops you on the nose.

“Nor would I want to,” he laughs. “In fact, every fucking supernatural being out there keeps trying to take you from me.”

“Fair point,” you say, nuzzling further into his chest. “Although I always make it back.”

“Aye, that you do,” he smiles. “Lucky for me, eh?”

You're both so satisfied and cosy that it doesn't take long before you start drifting into a lazy nap...
“Star? Star!” a voice says from the whirl of nebulas and galaxies. “Are you there?”

“Death?” you ask, looking around yourself. “Is that you?”

The girl materialises in front of you, a look of happiness mixed with one of concern. She's fidgeting heavily with an old fashioned umbrella.

“You made it back!” she cries.

“Yeah, yeah I did and funny enough John proposed,” you laugh.

“He's binding himself to you?!” she squeals, seeming to temporarily forget whatever her anxiety was about. “That's so cooool! Wait until I tell Dream! Hey, Dream! Star and John are getting married! Isn't that adorable?!”

“Sister, you need to relay the message,” Dream says from just behind you and you jump in fright, turning around to see his pale impassive face.

“Right right...” Death sighs. “I'm really not supposed to do this and I'm gonna have to be cryptic but that which is already dead is coming for you, Star. Please be careful, I really like you and I don't want to have to collect your soul so early.”

“What do you mean 'that which is already dead'?” you ask. “Is there going to be a zombie outbreak?”

Death bursts out into giggles, “Now that would be funny!”

“Sister, please,” Dream sighs. “Child, tragedy awaits you. I did not wish it to find you so quickly after your happy reunion with John Constantine but be alert and do not trust the homely male.”

“Tragedy,” you whisper, turning to Death who seems incredibly sad. “Death, are you coming to this world for someone soon?”

She nods, “Though I'm not allowed to say who. Just...just be safe ok? You're my only human friend.”

“We must leave, child,” Dream says, placing a hand on your shoulder and gazing intensely at you with those burning eyes. “You will not forget this dream.”

**

You wake up with a flail, causing John to have to restrain you. You fight against him for a few moments before it feels like all your energy is drained.

“Woah woah!” he cries in alarm. “Calm down, love! What the bloody hell is wrong?!”


“And what the fuck did they want?” John asks warily. “We didn't leave them problems in The Dreaming, did we?”
“I think they were trying to warn me,” you say, tightly gripping John's body for comfort. “They said tragedy was coming and to...er...beware the homely male?”

“Homely male?” John says in confusion.

“And that someone who is dead is coming for me,” you try to remember. There were basic details you retained but the finer nuances were slipping through your fingers like sand.

“A dead homely male,” John sounds out, blatantly perplexed. “Bloody Dream can't speak in anything other than riddles. It's well infuriating sometimes.”

“It's not their fault,” you sigh. “I got the impression they were breaking some rules even trying to get that message to me.”

“It's alright, bit,” John says, rocking you softly and kissing your hair. “I'm not gonna let anything happen to you.”

“It's not me I'm worried about,” you murmur.

“And I won't let anything happen to me either,” he says, squeezing you tightly. “I'm far too happy to die right now. Finally got life goals n' all that.”

You laugh although you're not fully able to shake off the uneasy feeling in the pit of your stomach.

“Come on, love, don't let it spoil the rest of our time here,” John says softly, pressing his forehead to yours. “We promised we'd enjoy the moment until the next catastrophic fuck up.”

“Yeah ok, I'm sorry,” you say, forcing a smile onto your face. Instinctively you nuzzle harder into John, trying to find some comfort and on some level he must have known because he kissed your forehead gently before pulling you into a tighter embrace.

*That which is already dead is coming for you. Do not trust the homely male.*

Just what the fuck did that mean?!

Chapter End Notes

Some Brit terms:

Yuppie - Young Urban professional (young and trendy businessmen of the 80s)
New Romantic - See Adam Ant and Boy George for reference!
The Bells of St. Johnny

Chapter Summary

You return to England with John but something has started stalking you both in the dead of night...

Chapter Notes

So first off, sorry for the wait! I've been away and not had access to my laptop. Second, this is a very long chapter to make up for it.

Warnings: Smut, gore

Over 70 Kudos and 1,200 hits, by the way! I'm so chuffed! <3 Much love to you all!

If you want to send me anything private like comments, messages or prompts for any of the Rockabye characters, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com.

Happy reading!

- TLP x

(I suck at proofreading...this is traditional now right?)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The ferry seemed to take ages to get back and you were growing ever anxious the closer you got to England again. Dream and Death's warning had been playing on your mind. You'd tried to push it back for John's sake but it had been difficult. Hopefully he hadn't noticed you were worrying yourself something stupid.

“Penny for your thoughts, love,” John says reaching behind your ear and showing you a pound coin.

“And you say you're not a magician,” you scoff.

“All in the sleight of hand,” John smirks. “Magicians are a load of bollocks. It's really about the distraction and being agile with your fingers.”

“Then why did you learn it?” you ask. “If you hate them that much, I mean.”

“They're useful skills, bit,” he shrugs. “Saved me arse a few times by giving the ol' illusionist routine. Disappeared from under the nose of the Third after palming an athame from another demon.”

“You really have had some adventures,” you laugh.

“You have no bloody idea,” he grins. “What I wouldn't give to have some more peace and quiet though. These last few days have been fucking ace.”
“I don't think it's the universe's style to let us have peace and quiet for too long,” you joke.

“Aye, love,” John sighs. “It enjoys grabbing me by the short and curlies and unfortunately you're stuck with me now.”

“Whatever shall I do?” you mock roll your eyes.

“I can think of a few things,” John winks.

“Wait until we get back first,” you laugh. “Then maybe you can list them and I might work through it if you're good.”

“Ooo you are a tease, you know,” he pouts. “You're not good for me health at all. Kill me faster than me ciggies, you will.”

“At least you'll have a smile on your face,” you grin.

“You're bloody right I would,” John laughs and kisses your forehead.

He pulls you close and you nestle into his body. Your mind drifts towards the warning again and you saw the coastline looming ahead. You shiver and John pulls his trenchcoat around the both of you, mistaking your fear for cold.

Something was coming, you could just feel it and it was coming soon.

**

You reach the warehouse and the second the door slams behind you, you feel marginally better. You know this place is warded up to the gills. It'd be hard for anything to get in here unless they were God himself.

“You gonna relax now, love?” John says knowingly, and you see a warm smile on his face as you whirl around in surprise. “Think I can't tell that look? That's a worried look. I've worn it meself many times. Nothing's gonna get either of us in here.”

“I might be overthinking it,” you admit.

“You don't say?” John says sarcastically. “Seriously Star, it'll be alright. If there's one thing I'm good at, it's getting out of fated death situations.”

“I suppose that's true,” you acquiesce. “Ok, I'm sorry. I'll try to stop worrying.”

“Just think about the good things that happened in Ireland,” John smiles. “And the fact you have a wedding to plan. Birds love that sort of thing, don't they?”

You pick up a cushion from the sofa and lob it at his head. He skilfully ducks and just gives you a cheeky grin.

“Such a violent woman,” he tuts. “You're lucky I like it rough, bit.”

“Well if you will be a sexist arsehole,” you shrug, daring him to say something else.
“All in the spirit of fun, love,” John laughs. “Don’t take it to heart.”

You fake being annoyed at him, crossing your arms and huffing heavily. John just shakes his head, the laughter lines creasing at the corner of his eyes.

“Am I in the doghouse now?” John pouts before coming behind you and massaging your shoulders. “Lemme make it up to you then. Let Johnny massage those worries away for you.”

You melt into the feeling of his deft fingers that work out the knots in your back, “It’s a start.”

John leans forward and whispers in your ear, “I can make it a lot nicer for you if you get on the bed.”

You turn around, giving him a raised eyebrow before casually stripping your top half off completely and wandering into the bedroom. John can’t seem to shut his mouth at how brazen you were and you have the most wicked smile on your face by the time you crawl onto the bed, face down and expectantly waiting.

“Well?” you call. “You’ve promised a lot, Mr Constantine. Hope you can deliver.”

There’s the telltale bow of the bed as John gets on it, straddling your waist before he leans down and you can feel the scrape of his stubble on the nape of your neck.

“Can’t let the future Mrs Constantine down now, can I? Want me to show you the other tricks I have up my sleeve?” he husks.

“I’m waiting,” you smirk, wiggling your shoulders in mock impatience.

“You’re just gonna love this then,” John laughs.

The second his hands make contact with your skin the most delicious warmth spreads from his palm to your back. You’re not sure whether he’s heating his hands or whether he’s forcing your skin to warm under his touch. Whatever he’s doing, you let out a small contented sigh.

“I think the lady likes,” John chuckles. “I’ll just take care of the rest of these troublesome clothes.”

He pulls off your jeans, underwear and socks leaving you completely bare before he starts working his way up your legs, that same strange heat spreading through you as he massages.

“What exactly are you doing?” you ask curiously.

“Little trick I learned while I was sleeping rough in a hippy commune,” John tells you as he starts on your lower back again. “Fucking freezing it were and I’m absolutely shit at camping so rather than freeze to death, I toned down the fireball spell so it's like a mini handwarmer.”

“That’s actually quite smart,” you say, impressed.

“It have been known on occasion to be clever,” John snorts, pressing hard at a particularly tense spot which makes you groan lightly.

“Can’t imagine you in a hippy commune,” you say lazily.

“Had a beard and everything,” John laughs. “Was on the run because the rozzers had stitched me up for murder. It was the safest place at the time.”

“What happened?” you ask.
“Same thing that always does, love,” he says, his voice becoming a little softer. “I messed it up.”

“Not always,” you say, looking over your shoulder at him and smiling which he returns in that lopsided kind of way.

“Anyway, enough talk from you, bit,” John hushes. “You’re meant to be relaxing, not gabbing.”

“Fine by me,” you shrug and flop further onto the bed.

John takes his time with you, not letting any inch of your body go untouched. You’re half falling asleep from how relaxed you are, just content to feel his strong hands and listen to him as he softly hums.

“How we doing?” he asks gently.

“Just pull the duvet over me,” you mumble into the mattress. “I could quite happily doze off.”

John laughs warmly before his hands change direction and begin massaging your inner thighs, skipping higher and higher in between your legs. You feel that intense throbbing start pretty much immediately. You had no idea how he could coax your body into arousal so quickly but suddenly you were no longer half asleep.

“Sure you want the duvet?” John says knowingly.

“Maybe duvet is a euphemism for John,” you joke.

“Whatever the lady wants,” John starts before leaning over you and kissing between your shoulder blades. You’re surprised to feel his bare skin on yours and wonder when he took his shirt off. “I am happy to oblige.”

“The lady wants you to have your way with her,” you say, playing along. “I do hope you can manage that.”

John’s fingers are stroking up and down in between your legs, gliding through the burgeoning wetness there, “Oh I’m sure I can handle that.”

In one fluid motion, he manoeuvres himself between your legs and pulls your thighs up so you’re bent over. There’s a rustle behind you which you assume to be him getting his trousers off before the sound of a wrapper being torn rings out.

“Question is,” John says, almost breathlessly. “Sure you can handle me, lass?”

“Guess you’ll find out,” you giggle.

John gives you no warning before he drives deep into you causing you to moan loudly as you adjusted to his length. His hands come around your hips, holding you steady whilst he thrusts hard. Your fingers bury themselves in the mattress and twist in the undersheet as you try to keep yourself from losing control completely.

“Come on, love,” John grunts as he ruts particularly hard into you. “Let it out. We’re not in a hotel any more.”

His fingers dig into your torso as he starts fucking you harder and you can’t hold back any longer. All sorts of moans, curses and stilted breaths tumble from your mouth.

Suddenly he stops and you’re confused for a second.
“Nah, this ain't working for me. Turn over, bit,” he says before pulling out.

You’re a little bewildered but you do so and he settles himself on you again before driving his cock in again up to the hilt. Involuntarily your hands grab at his back, nails digging in so you can hold on for dear life.

“That’s better,” he laughs. “Come on, lass, get rough with me. You put the idea in me head and now it won’t go away.”

Your mind briefly flits back to the first time you ever kissed John and how you’d yanked on his hair whilst doing so. You decide to try that again, your fingers knotting in the short blonde strands and pulling his head violently down to yours in a messy kiss. The groan that rips through him turns you on even more.

“Oh fucking hell, Star,” he rasps as he ruts harshly into you. “More.”

You drag your nails down his back so hard you’re sure you’re drawing blood and John lets loose a deep and primal grunt.

“You like that Johnny?” you say sweetly into his ear.

He only responds with an affirmative ‘uh huh’ before leaning on one side and finding your clit with his fingers, rolling little circles around it. You take the opportunity of him being distracted to find his neck, mouthing hungry kisses before becoming braver and biting hard. You can physically feel him twitch inside you as he swears loudly, picking his pace up.

You reach your orgasm before he does, squeezing him hard with your thighs and moaning his name. John rolls fully back on top of you, pounding hard.

“Do it again, love. Do it harder,” he says urgently. “Leave a pretty mark on me.”

You reach up, wrenching his head to the side and you bite harder than you did before, growling slightly as you do so, fully into what you’re doing.

“Oh fuck!” is all you can hear as John stiffens, pushing as far into you as he can go.

You let go of him, lapping at the bite mark to soothe it. It’s aggressively purpled and you can see the tiny imprints of your teeth in it.

“Is it a goodun?” he asks.

“You may need to wear high collars for a bit,” you laugh.

John gets off you to go to the bathroom and you can hear the laugh from the other side of the door. He comes back in with a devilish grin.

“You weren’t kidding, love,” he smiles. “Fuck me, you know how to get aggressive.”

“Well you asked,” you shrug.

“Aye I did,” John says, running his hand along the tender skin of his neck. “I love actually having a bird that can do damage.”

“You’re messed up, you know that?” you tease.

“I do,” John smirks before jumping back into the bed and throwing the covers over the both of you.
“But I think you like that about me. Least I ain’t a boring bastard.”

“Nobody could ever accuse you of being boring, John,” you laugh.

“’Spose not,” John grins before rolling you onto your side so he can spoon into the back of you. “Feel a little less wound up now, bit?”

“Yeah,” you say. “By quite a lot.”

“Oh well…job done then,” John says, kissing the crook of your neck. “Let’s get some shut eye, yeah?”

You mumble out a lazy ‘mmhmm’. You can already feel the tiredness seeping into your limbs. Between the massage and the sex, you were pretty much melted into the mattress by now. With John’s comforting presence behind you, it didn’t take long before you fell asleep.

**

You sat bolt upright as the sound of, what appeared to be, a school bell rang out loudly in the warehouse. It was joined by another three that melded into a cacophony of bleeding noise.

“What the hell is going on?!” you yell, your heart hammering wildly.

John leaps up from the bed, his face drained of colour as he quickly jumps into some jogging bottoms.

“Stay there,” he says, in a deadly serious voice.

“John, what’s happening?” you ask.

“Something’s tripped the warding,” John whispers. “Keep quiet, stay there. If I don’t come back in ten minutes you get out of here and go to Chas’.”

“But-” you start.

“Don’t bloody argue with me,” John hisses, ducking underneath the bed and pulling out a case that you know contains a gun.

“Death didn’t say she was coming for me, John,” you fire back. “I’m the safer one here.”

John checks the revolver is loaded before he stands up and grips your chin fiercely, forcing you to look up, “I don’t give two shits. I’m not letting you walk out there when it could be fuck knows what. Now, please, Star. Lemme handle this.”

He looks so aggressive and serious right now that you don’t push it. You just nod and he leaves the room. If John looks that disturbed right now it can’t be anything good outside. The warehouse is warded from the highest level of supernatural, demonic and divine beings.

Shit….should you have let him go alone?
The alarms are still blaring out all around you and it feels like you’re in a nightmare you once had as a school child.

Minutes go by and you’re starting to panic heavily. John’s still not come back and he told you to go to Chas’ if he didn’t reappear. Like hell you’d actually do that…

You get up, taking one of the poles that lie next to your clothes rack and make your way out into the living room. There’s nothing around and everything seems secure enough. You do a quick glance to the main door to see it’s shut. You wouldn’t be opening it any time soon after your last little mishap of doing that.

“Well?” you whisper.

There’s nothing.

You walk into the kitchen and there’s still no one around. Everything’s in darkness and everything’s quiet, apart from the alarm. It’s really starting to unnerve you now.

You walk over to the foyer by the main door, trying to look out of the window. All you can see is the car park with the spare car just sat there.

“What the bloody hell are you doing?!” John’s angry voice comes from the side of you and you almost scream in fright.

He’s managed to silently come in the main door and he shuts it before muttering a number of spells that settle on the door in glowing effervescent light.

“I told you to stay in the bedroom!” he says.

“You didn’t come back,” you say meekly. “I got worried.”

John just sighs before waving his hand and the ear piercing ring of the bells stops completely. You can still faintly hear it echoing around your inner ear in the new silence.

“There’s nothing out there,” John announces, “Don’t know what the fuck set the warding off but whatever it was, it’s long gone.”

“That’s...not very comforting,” you admit.

“Not in the slightest,” John agrees. “Whatever it was, it was powerful and the sigils that sparked off meant it was powerful in the dark arts. I really don’t like this one bit, Star.”

“What should we do?” you ask.

“Nothing we can do for now,” John says, walking back to the sofa and throwing the revolver onto the cushion. “Can’t exactly do ’owt when they run away and can’t do any research when we don’t know what it is.”

You just stand there, processing the warning of the Endless again. Something is definitely coming and it tried to come tonight.

“Star, enough of that,” John says firmly, looking at your face. “I’ll keep you safe, I promise. Come ’ere.”

You dutifully drop the pole on the floor and sit next to John, leaning into his waiting arms as he hugs you tightly.
“I’ve never seen you with that gun before,” you murmur as he strokes your hair.

“Keep it for emergencies,” John mumbles back. “Sometimes it ain’t always the occult or supernatural.”

You knew full well John had had to kill ordinary people before. You’d even seen that in his horrorscape in The Dreaming but you’d also seen how much that had affected him mentally.

“It’ll be alright, love,” John says, trying to force the warmth back into his voice but you knew he was just as anxious as you were. “Let’s sleep in here for the rest of the night. That way I can see the door and windows.”

“Ok,” you nod. “I’ll get the duvet.”

You drag the duvet and pillows and the both of you curl up in the corner of the sofa. John keeps the gun right next to him and you can see him training his eyes on the door. It takes both of you a very long time to fall asleep again.

**

It happens again the next two nights. Both of you are extremely on edge and barely sleeping. You’ve ended up making the living room into the bedroom, just so you can’t be trapped if, whatever it is, gets into the warehouse.

John pours himself some coffee in the kitchen, almost collapsing against the unit. He looks tired, haggard even.

“Take a nap,” you say, whipping the cup out of his hands before he can drink it. “You need it.”

“M'fine,” he says in a low voice. “Shouldn't be sleeping right now.”

“John, you're on the verge of passing out. Just do what I say,” you firmly press. “It only comes at night and it's ten a.m. Get some rest.”

You can tell he wants to argue the point but he just nods, defeated, “Alright. Only if you'll sit with me whilst I do. I don't care if you put on the telly, I just don't want you too far away from me.”

“Ok,” you say, setting the cup down on the unit before dragging him back into the living room and practically swaddling him in blankets.

He’s asleep within minutes, obviously exhausted beyond belief. It's not a good sleep though, you note. He's turning every so often, making soft little noises of terror and his brow is intensely furrowed. You wish you could ask Dream to help him have a peaceful nap but you wouldn't even know where to begin on that one.

John sleeps for a couple of hours before he shoots up, eyes wide and panting.

“Star?!” he calls, his mind not fully awake yet.

You wrap your arms around him tightly, “Right here. It's ok, I'm with you.”

“Thank fuck,” he breathes, relaxing into you.
John spends the rest of the day tightening up the warding and adding new nuances to it.

**

The bells ring out loudly again and John bolts up from the sofa, hand clutched around the Webley revolver. He doesn't even look back at you at he single-mindedly races towards the door and flings it open before running outside.

Nothing again.

He does a lap of the building, desperately trying to catch a glimpse of whatever it was. He's only met with the desolate sight of the industrial estate and the car park. John even tries looking around the spare car.

Nothing.

He doesn't stray too far from the warehouse, painfully aware, he's left the door open with you right inside.

_Fucking hell, I'm too tired for this shit. I'm making errors._

He sprints back to the door, cursing every step of the way that his lungs aren't what they used to be and he should really have given up smoking after his lung cancer was cured. He gets in and sees you stood there with the pole in your hand, ready to strike.

He hated seeing you like this. He didn't want you to have to fight. He winced every time he saw the deep bags under your eyes and the vacant expression you'd begun to sport when you drifted off mentally. You were exhausted and he knew you were pushing through for his sake, knew that you made him sleep when you needed it more.

“All clear,” he said, slamming the door shut and reinforcing the wards. He also stopped the alarm.

You swayed for a second before collapsing onto the sofa, the pole dropping from your hand with a metallic clank.

“All clear,” he said, slamming the door shut and reinforcing the wards. He also stopped the alarm.

“You're not dizzy, you're delirious, love,” John said, stroking your face. “You've barely slept in days. I'm gonna use the spell.”

“Don't you dare,” you hissed.

“Dormi,” John whispered, touching your forehead and you yawned heavily, trying to fight it.

“You absolute prick,” you said through the yawns and scowled at him.

“You can hit me later,” John dismissed before pulling the duvet up over you.

Not moments later you were asleep. John breathed a sigh of relief. At least that was one thing he could worry less about now.
He moved to the room he used to sleep in before you came into his life. It still housed his main computer and his weaponry. He quickly brought the computer whirring to life before he took a small drive out of the CCTV camera deck that Chas had helped him set up yesterday whilst you were napping and hooked it up to the desktop.

He poured over the footage from ten minutes ago, going frame by frame. All he could see was a dark figure in a hooded robe approach the warehouse and a gloved hand pressing at the hidden sigils before the figure melted back into the gloom.

“Fuck!” he swore, slamming his palm down on the desk.

That was absolutely nothing to go on either. He'd not seen the face, the skin tone, the build...nothing except the height which was that of an ordinary man. Whatever this thing was, it was good at covering its tracks.

He looked back out to the living room, seeing that you were still sleeping peacefully. Just how was he supposed to protect you when he couldn't even figure this out? He felt useless. He knew you were absolutely terrified about the Endless' warning and this was putting you right on the edge. He couldn't do anything about it.

*Some Master of the Dark Arts you are.*

He texted Chas, although he knew he wouldn't be up at this time.

**


John gathered the spare duvets and went back out into the living room, setting himself a little nest right next to the door. From here, he could still see you and now he would be able to burst outside the second the thing came back.

John fiddled with the gun, trying to keep himself awake but everything in his body was screaming for rest. He reckoned he passed out about four a.m.

**

You woke up and were surprised to find daylight streaming through the windows. How long were you out for? You certainly felt well rested.

And then you remembered....

John.

He'd used magic on you to get you to sleep.

You sit up, fully intent on giving him the slap of his life before you saw him in a cocoon of blankets and pillows next to the door, gun clasped tightly to his chest. He must have been there all night.

“Fucking loveable muppet,” you whisper under your breath.

You see John's phone on his lap lighting up and you walk over to him, gingerly taking it and reading
the screen.

**Chas: Shit. We could try floodlights and infrared too? Might make the CCTV work better.**

CCTV huh?

You walk into John's room and see there's a hard drive linked to the computer. You switch it on and have to stifle the shiver that runs through you.

You can't help but stare at the figure on the screen, knowing that it was the one tormenting you both. You're deadly sure this is who Death was trying to warn you about.

“Star?!” John's panicked voice calls out as he stirs.

“In here,” you say.

John barrels in and sees you looking at the screen and he savages his lip, looking to your expression.

“I didn't want you to see that,” he says quietly.

“Too late,” you shrug. “Least I know what I'm looking at now.”

“This is doing me bloody head in,” John sighs. “How long has it been?”

“Five days,” you answer, still staring at the computer.

“Feels like a fucking lifetime,” John says. “I shouldn't be saying this because it ruins me macho image n' that but I'm not sure I can take much more of this, bit.”

“I know what you mean,” you say softly, turning to him and seeing him fully for the first time that morning.

He looks truly knackered. The bags under his eyes are deep and heavily shadowed, the bright gleam of his eyes are dulled to almost hollowness and if you ever wondered about what John would look like with a beard, here it was.

“Feel like I'm going mental again,” he whispers. “I'm hearing every single bloody noise in a ten mile radius.”

“I hear that,” you nod. “I feel like I need to be constantly alert. It's like being trapped in one of those shite cabin in the woods horror movies.”

“I'd almost wish for that more,” John murmurs. “Least a crazy redneck would be easy to get rid of rather than some powerful dark arts...whatever the fuck it is. Looks like it's playing dress up as the Grim Reaper.”

“Well you know what they say...” you start, a smile spreading across your face.

“Love, if you start singing 'Don't Fear the Reaper' at me, I will tickle you to death,” John says with a raised eyebrow.

“Spoilsport,” you wink and John bursts into laughter.
You're sure he's only reacting this way because he's almost delirious with sleep deprivation but it's nice to see him laugh, if only for a little bit and for a stupid reason.

“Bloody hell,” John sighs after he's calmed down. “Honestly, bit, I'm feeling every year of me age right now.”

“Then go get some more sleep,” you urge. “It's over for now.”

“Promise me you won't go outside?” John asks, grabbing your hand and squeezing it tightly.

“I promise,” you nod.

Finally he goes to settle down on the sofa and you watch him until he falls asleep again.

**

As suddenly as it started, it stops.

The first couple of nights you both stay up again, fighting the compulsion to sleep, afraid the bells will start ringing again. The second couple of nights after that, you both manage to drift off without waking up every few seconds.

Seven days go by and there's been no further ward trippings.

“This is bloody weird,” John says on the eighth night after the last alarm. “Why the fuck would something do that and then bugger off completely?”

“I have no idea,” you admit. “It's a little unsettling.”

“Understatement,” John says. “I don't know whether to be relieved or nervous.”

“Let's go with relieved for now,” you nod. “At least we're both sleeping again.”

“Aye, I suppose that's true,” John sighs. “Should probably shave at some point now I know I'm not gonna slice me face off by accident.”

“Get on it then,” you smirk.

“You know one day I'm gonna fuck the bossiness out of you,” John mutters as he gets up to go the bathroom.

“Good luck with that,” you call after him.

Your phone starts ringing and you're surprised to see a familiar name cropping up on the caller ID.

“Hey Val,” you say, picking up the phone.

“Hey stranger,” Valentine says warmly. “How goes the self exile?”

“Considerably less free drinks than I'd like,” you say and Valentine laughs hard.

“Well kinda happens when you get yourself mixed up in weird shit,” he chides. “Listen, I was wondering whether it's safe for you to see us again because Geffen's PR department want us to do an
interview and they'd like all of us there.”

Your heart still pangs a little at 'all of us' considering what happened to Phe but you push it down, “An interview for what?”

“Some high end rock magazine. They wanna talk about the album and how we're gonna move forward...I mean if we're gonna move forward, I don't know what the fuck is going on really,” Valentine continues.

You consider it for a little bit. You'd only distanced yourself from the band because demons were trailing you and they appeared to have given up that particular fight lately. There was your mysterious 'reaper' but they also seemed to have given up.

“You know what, I think I will be ok to do it. I'm gonna check with John and get back to you,” you say.

“Check with John, huh? The guy I spoke to ages back?” Valentine asks curiously.

“Yeah...well...he's actually my fiancé now,” you admit.

“What?!?” comes the screech down the line. “What the fuck have you been up to, Star?!”

“I'll explain when I see you,” you laugh. “Just gimme a minute ok?”

“Uh yeah, sure,” Valentine says and you can hear the amazement in his voice. “Roxy is gonna flip her shit when I tell her. Catch you later, chick.”

You look around to see John standing there. He's shaved his beard down to his usual stubble and he's reflexively rubbing his face.

“Something I should know?” he asks, looking at you peculiarly.

“That was Val,” you explain. “Wants to know if I can meet them to do an interview for Geffen.”

“Think it's a wise idea getting back into your old life, love?” John asks.

You can sense the intimation behind his words. He doesn't want you to go back.

“I'm only considering going for the interview, not getting back into touring full time,” you shrug, a little defensively. “Besides, if they wanna reform the band, the bass player is the most expendable right?”

John winces slightly, “Ah bollocks, I've upset you, haven't I? Sorry, didn't mean to. I'm just...I'm just worried. With all this shit going on lately, I don't really want you venturing out alone.”

“You could always come with me,” you point out. “You'd have to stay in the wings or something when the interview happens but there's nothing stopping you from tagging along.”

John seems to be fighting with himself for a minute before he comes to a conclusion and sighs, “Nah. This is your world, bit, not mine. Think I need to start trusting you can take care of yourself. I guess I'm just being bloody selfish and not wanting to share you with any one. Go on, love, you go to your thing.”

“Are you sure?” you ask.

“Yeah yeah, bugger off before I change me bloody mind,” he laughs.
You walk up to him, giving him the deepest kiss you can and he seems to cling onto you longer than is necessary.

“Go on, Star,” he says, letting go reluctantly.

“Ok, but invite Chas over or something so you've got some company,” you press.

“Maybe,” he says with a slight smile. “Might be good to amp up the security on this place tenfold.”

“Then you do that, John,” you nod.

“Love you, lass,” he says quietly. “Be safe.”

“Love you too,” you smile back at him before you walk out of the door, calling Valentine as you go.

**

It felt strange being back.

The studio seemed like both a foreign place and a familiar one at the same time. It was still lined with the pictures of the current signed artists and you grimace to see the promotional picture of the band all together and happily rocking out.

**

New Artists: Unlawful Reactor.

Signed 2017.

Roxy Animal, Phoenix Rising, Star Bright, Valentine Love

You don't have time to dwell on it as you get charged from behind by a streak of platinum blonde as Roxy dives on you.

“Oh my god!” she squeals. “You're actually here!”

“Roxy, get the fuck off,” you groan, almost buckling under her weight.

“Whoops!” she giggles, sliding off your back and coming round to hug you. “I've missed you like crazy, babe!”

“Missed you too,” you laugh.

Valentine comes round the corner and just looks bemused at the sight of the two of you hugging it out.

“Told you she missed you,” Valentine chuckles before coming over and making the hug into a group hug. “Fuck, chick, it's been ages. You look so good!”

“She does!” Roxy chimes in, stepping back and looking at you. “And....oh my god! Look at that ring!”
She almost screams as she lifts your hand up to examine it.

Valentine just puts his hand behind his head, mussing up his dirty blonde hair, “Shit, you actually are engaged....how did you meet this guy anyway?”

“Awkward story actually,” you say blushing.

“Oh now you have to tell me!” Valentine laughs.

“Remember the trench coat guy at the last gig we played?” you say, not wanting to look either of them in the face.

“Him?!” Roxy shouts. “Are you serious?!”

“Yeah,” you admit.

“What did he look like again?” Valentine asks. “It's been so long I can't actually remember.”

You show them the picture you took of yourself and John whilst you were in bed and you hear Val's understanding 'ohhhh'.

“Ah yeah, that guy,” Valentine nods. “Well you both seem happy from that picture. Glad to know he's keeping you ok from all the shit you got yourself into.”

“He's pretty cute in that bad boy way,” Roxy says, still examining the picture. “Always knew you liked the cocky ones.”

“We got an invite to the wedding right?” Valentine asks with a wide grin.

“Of course,” you laugh. “I may have had to drop off the radar for a few months but doesn't mean you're not still my friends.”

“You ever gonna tell us why you had to go?” Roxy questions with wide eyes.

“Can't,” you shake your head. “Wouldn't be safe to and I'm not dragging you guys into it.”

“Fine fine,” Roxy sighs. “At least you're safe and at least you could come out today.”

Two men enter the corridor and look at all of you, “We're ready to start, if you'd like to follow.”

You all traipse into a room with a seated area where a cameraman is adjusting his lens to focus on a row of chairs.

“Sit, please,” the elder of the two men says and you all obey. “Now, I know this is likely to be uncomfortable what with Miss Turner...I'm sorry, Phoenix's death but we'll be as sensitive as possible in regards to it. I'm Mr Morris and my colleague is Mr Roberts, if you have any questions, feel free to ask.”

You all sit there, looking at each other before Valentine chirps up, “Nah, think we're ok.”

“Excellent,” Mr Roberts grins in a charming sort of way. “Now let's begin shall we?”

The interview goes well enough but you can't shake the feeling that something was a little too perfect about Mr Roberts. The way he flashed that debonair smile all the time, the honeyed compliments he gave the band and the pure enthusiasm he seemed to exude about the whole process. Your bullshit meter was just uncomfortably registering right now.
Beware the homely male.

Surely they couldn't mean him, could they? I mean...there's been no PR on the band for months since Phe and as soon as you get back to England this interview suddenly appears.

Are you being a bit too paranoid?

“Final question,” Mr Roberts smiles. “Do you think Unlawful Reactor will continue in the future?”

Valentine deftly steps in to answer this one and you're super grateful, “I think we're just obviously still getting over what happened and I'm sure we'll talk it out soon but for now it's on hold.”

“Ok that's great,” Mr Roberts laughs. “Cut! We'll wrap that up right there. You guys did fantastic! Stay right there whilst I go tell PR HQ we've finished.”

You all relax a little and your phone pings off so you take the opportunity to look at it.

**Mum: Are you still coming round tomorrow with John? I'm excited to meet him x**

Shit, that's right. You'd arranged on the way back from Ireland to go over. With all the night time antics recently, you'd almost forgotten.

**Star: Yep, still coming. Go easy on him, he's nervous x**

You laugh reflexively and Valentine looks at you curiously.

“Something good?” he asks.

“Just my mum,” you explain. “I'm taking John to meet her tomorrow and she's super excited whereas he's terrified.”

Valentine laughs, “He doesn't know your mum very well does he? She'll be trying to force feed him rather than interrogating him.”

“Very true,” you nod.

You look away and catch the eye of Mr Morris who pleasantly smiles at you but seems impatient for his colleague to return. He seems to be thinking about something in great depth. The more you look at him, the more something is sparking in your brain like a kind of familiarity but you have no idea why.

Mr Roberts returns and you're all ushered back out into the foyer, “Truly truly great guys. I'll get that press pack out to you soon. I hope you have some more creativity left in the tank for the future.”

“We'll see,” Roxy says in a sultry kind of way, winking at the guy who returns the sentiment with a smirk of his own.

Oh for god's sake, Roxy....

Mr Roberts surreptitiously gives Roxy his business card before waving at you and Valentine and leaving the foyer.
“Please, Rox, don't screw him,” you sigh. "He gives off such a corporate creep vibe."

“I'm not gonna!” she protests loudly. “I'm just trying to keep him sweet in case we need him in the future! Geez!”

Valentine leans over and whispers in your ear, “And by that she means she'll do everything but screw him, just to keep him on a short leash.”

You snort, trying to keep your laughter contained, “Man I've really missed you two.”

“Sure you have to go, babe?” Roxy asks, fiddling with the business card.

“Yeah, I have a nervous Scouser to get back to,” you smile. “I'll keep in touch though.”

“You'd better,” Valentine huffs before pulling you into a bear hug. “And if that guy of yours ever hurts you, lemme know and I'll be right round to sort him out.”

“I'll bear that in mind,” you laugh and go to hug Roxy. “Bye guys.”

You make to go out of the building but first you take the photo of the band off the wall. It didn't belong here. It belonged with you. It was something to remember you all by in those carefree days. You took one last look at the studio before heading home.

**

You barely made it five steps into the warehouse before John pounced on you, unleashing a flurry of kisses on your face.

“Woah, calm down!” you giggle. “I've only been gone a few hours!”

“Felt longer,” John rasps in between kisses.

You end up dropping the band photo towards the floor because John is so insistent on holding you close. Before it can hit the floor, Chas catches it out of the air.

“Alright, John, let the poor girl settle herself,” Chas chides before he looks at the photo. “Oh wow. I knew you were in a rock band but fuck me that's a throwback look.”

“Shoulda seen 'em live, mate,” John laughs, putting his arm around your waist. “It was like a time warp to the late 70s/early 80s.”

“Star Bright?” Chas questions, looking up at you.

“I got precisely ten minutes to think of a name at the time,” you shrug. “Didn't realise the first part would be all anyone ever addressed me as for the rest of my life.”

“Yeah but it suits you,” Chas smiles. “Drop the Bright though, sounds much better as a singular name.”

“I just did as I was told,” you laugh.
“Oi! So you'll follow their orders but not mine?” John huffs from the side of you.

“Roxy's even bossier than I am,” you point out. “You trying say no to that.”

“Alright, fair do's,” John concedes. “Chas and I put infrared and floodlights outside as well as a multi-spectrum camera. Hopefully if our mysterious 'reaper' turns up we'll be able to actually bloody get somewhere with figuring out what it is.”

“You both holding up ok?” Chas asks.

“Just on edge, mate,” John admits.

“Understandable,” Chas nods. “What about you, Star?”

“Coping,” you say simply. “Not really what we wanted to come back to after Ireland.”

Chas puts a hand on your shoulder and squeezes it affectionately, “I get that but I know this bellend over here will do everything in his power to protect you. Don't worry, you'll get it sorted and then you can actually do the domestic thing of prepping for your future.”

“Thanks,” you smile.

“Besides, I already started writing down anecdotes for the best man speech,” Chas chuckles. “I'll be pissed if you don't stay alive to hear it.”

“Duly noted,” you laugh. “I hope you put some embarrassing stories into it.”

You look to John who just gives you an adorable scowl and his world famous pout.

“Oh I'm planning on it,” Chas says wickedly. “I gotta pick up Geri from the clinic, I'll catch you both later. Any more weirdness, let me know.”

“Will do, mate,” John nods and Chas leaves the warehouse after passing the photo back to you.

“Looks like you were productive,” you say.

“All in a day's work, bit,” Johns says nonchalantly. “How was your er...thingy?”

“My interview? It was ok. It was nice to see Val and Rox again but I don't think I'll be going to any more.”

“Oh?” John presses, his curiosity piqued.

“One of the interviewers was just...I don't know, he seemed a little overfriendly,” you sigh, looking at the ground and knowing you sounded overly paranoid.

“And you immediately thought of 'the homely male' right?” John says knowingly. “Normally I'd say you were overthinking it but if you got that vibe, it's not worth testing that theory out, so to speak. I know you never listen to me but maybe don't go back to the studio for a bit, yeah?”

“I think on this occasion I'll listen,” you murmur, suppressing a shiver at the thought of Mr Robert's grinning face.

John kisses the top of your head, “I know you'll probably be disappointed, lass, but I don't want you putting yourself in danger if your gut is telling you to run.”
“Yeah I know,” you say, trying not to dwell on it. “Oh on a lighter note, remember we're going to my mum's tomorrow.”

“Oh bollocks,” John hisses, his face going an odd shade of pale. “I bloody forgot. Shit. I've been so focused on this...whatever it is. I'm not prepared.”

“Prepared?” you laugh, turning round to wrap your arms around his neck. “She's not an exam invigilator. All she'll do is offer you endless cups of tea and cake.”

“But what if she doesn't approve of me?” John says quietly, trying to hide his obvious insecurity. “I'm a sixty four year old bloke with no proper job and a criminal record. Hardly son-in-law material.”

“For the purposes of our visit, you're thirty four, because that's how old you look maximum. You also work procuring items for university professors, like the faerie head in the freezer. As for the criminal record...let's skip that part,” you smile. “Although, just how extensive is your record?”

“Er...” John says, turning pink. “Petty theft, inciting violent disorder, burglary, grievous bodily harm...and...uh...murder.”

“Astra?” you ask.

“No, funnily enough,” John sighs, running his hand through his hair in that nervous way. “That was manslaughter but I was never brought to trial. The murder was an accident but I served time in an American prison for it all the same.”

“Yeah, we'll definitely skip that part,” you wink. “Guess I bagged myself a bad boy with a heart of gold.”

That seemed to shatter his anxious mood and his trademark smirk crept in full force, “Like a bad boy, do you?”

“Why don't I show you?” you say, pulling him towards the bedroom.

“Oh, love,” John smiles wickedly. “Been waiting for you to gimme a show. I'm not missing this for anything.”

**

John woke up with you tangled in his arms. The biggest smile played across his face as he sighed contentedly. You'd pretty much fucked the entire afternoon and completely worn each other out.

It felt good to be intimate with you again. Sex had pretty much been on hold whilst the 'reaper' was active. Both of you were far too tired and your minds weren't in it.

John lazily gazed at the alarm clock to see it was nine a.m.

Oh Christ, today was the day. He was going to meet your mother.

A lot of emotions swirled through him at once: anxiety, fear, apprehension, self doubt, insecurity, self loathing.

*Keep it together, Johnny Boy. Don't be a wreck in front of her.*
“Love, wake up,” he said softly, gently shaking you. “We've got places to be.”

“But I'm comfy,” you whined in that adorably grumpy way.

“Yeah but I'm not, bit,” he laughed. “You're on me arm and it's gone numb. Shift.”

Begrudgingly you rolled away and sat up, blinking in the morning sunlight, “Fine....”

“As much as I'd love to keep you in bed all day, lass, your mum's waiting on us,” John said, trying to force some confidence into his voice.

“Ok, let's get dressed then,” you nod, still half asleep as you pulled on one of your dresses.

It just happened to be John's favourite and he couldn't bury the smile that formed at his lips. God you looked bloody gorgeous in it. It hugged everywhere it was supposed to and showed a lot of your assets.

He had to shake the thoughts out of his head. Now wasn't the time to get randy about it. He had to look presentable....well fuck, where did he even begin?

“Star,” he said, admitting defeat. “What shall I wear? I don't know how to do this.”

“Just wear what you usually do,” you shrugged. “Makes you look very professional.”

John smirked. He'd never been told that before. He'd had the many 'detective' and '40s gangster' comments but never one that said he looked smart.

He decided to throw on some attire he'd not worn in a long time, namely, his double breasted dark blue pinstripe suit. He was mildly surprised it still fitted. He'd not tried it on since the 90s. He turned around to see you with your mouth hanging open in shock.

“You alright, love?” he said, wondering whether you liked it or thought it was ridiculous.

“Wow,” you said, almost breathlessly. “Why haven't you worn that before?”

John shrugged, “Gets a bit old hat doing the full shebang all the time. You like it, bit?”

“Fuck, do I ever,” you grinned and John saw the mischievous twinkle in your eye.

“You can strip me out of it later,” he winked. “Come on, Star, let's do this before I lose me nerve.”

You both got in the car and John sat in the passenger seat whilst you drove. The further you got away from the warehouse, the more anxious he was getting.

What if she doesn't like me? What if she refuses to let me marry, Star?

He desperately tried focusing on the radio as it spewed out a Ramones track but it wasn't doing any good.

If she says she won't allow the marriage, fuck it, I'll elope with her.

John internally groaned. He was acting like a teenager. Not his fault, he theorised. He'd never really had a normal childhood...or adulthood for that matter. Traditional things like this seemed to skip him by in favour of the weird and wonderful. Even with Epiphany that was a whole bunch of odd sequences leading to marriage. You were refreshingly normal in that respect but Christ did it terrify him to experience it for the first time.
“Almost there,” you smiled at him.

Shit shit shit.

John's leg was bouncing as he tried to calm himself down.

*It's fine, Johnny Boy. It'll all be fine.*

You pulled up into a semi-detached house and squeezed his leg gently. It did nothing to alleviate his anxiety but he appreciated the gesture all the same.

“Big deep breath,” you said in a knowing way. “She doesn't bite.”

“Good to know,” John muttered before exiting the car,

The second he took a step towards the door he could sense something wasn't right. He'd always had a wickedly accurate gut instinct and right now, his was screaming at him.

Another step towards the door and he smelt it. When you'd been in the world of John Constantine long enough, you knew the smell of blood and decay.

“Star, stay there,” he said, earning a confused look from yourself.

He walked to the door and placed his hand onto the handle. Immediately the residue of a spell reverberated up his arm...a dark arts spell.

“What's up? That eager to meet her?” you laughed.

“Just stay there,” John hissed.

Instantly your face fell and worry set in, “John, what's going on?”

“Something's been here,” John murmured. “Whatever you do, don't come in after me.”

“John?” you said in a panicked voice.

He ignored you, opening the door and the full scent of gore and decomposition hit him full in the face. He gagged reflexively but pushed on until he saw the scene before him.

Blood stained the entire living room carpet and chunks of flesh were scattered across the room. Organs were flung hither and thither. Then he saw the head....

He heard a sharp intake of breath behind him and knew you'd followed him in here anyway. Oh bollocks...

“Star, don't look!” he yelled.

He'd never heard a more heartbreaking sound like the one you made just now. It was halfway between a scream of terror and a deep wrenching sob.

“Shit,” he swore and pulled you fiercely into an embrace before you could collapse.

He held you tightly as you cried, keeping you upright.

“I'm so sorry, love,” he whispered against you.

“Death said she was coming for someone soon,” you whimpered into his chest. “I didn't think....I
didn’t expect….why her?!”

“I don’t know,” John said honestly. “I’m sorry, I wish I did. I promise you, Star, I’m going to fucking rip the bastard limb from limb who did this.”

Your legs gave out and John squatted to the floor with you, trying to stop you falling into the blood pool on the carpet. Then he saw it. Two little initials painted on the ceiling in your mother’s blood.

F.M

Beware the homely male.

No…not the homely male. Dream had mangled the moniker on purpose to not give too much away.

Not the homely male….the Family Man.

The Family Man was back from the dead.

He took one look at your distraught face and anger boiled up inside him.

I’ve killed you once you fucking bastard, I’ll do it again. You fucked with the wrong warlock….

Chapter End Notes

The Family Man is one of my favourite arcs in the original Hellblazer run <3
I had so much fun writing this!
John hadn't been in a police interview room for, oh what...two years? This was getting embarrassing now. He knew he should have disappeared the second you'd called the emergency services but he couldn't leave you like that, he refused to leave you like that. Unfortunately with his record he was prime suspect number one right now...

“You're looking very good for a man in his sixties,” the detective says, staring at the case file he was holding.

_**Oh bollocks, how the bloody hell did they work that one out?!**_

“Sorry mate?” he says feigning dumbness.

“Your fingerprints. When the Met uploaded their print cache into a digital format it went live to all police forces. Your fingerprints match a person _also_ called John Constantine. Rather a coincidence,” the man says wryly.

“Yeah me dad lived in London for a while,” John shrugs, trying to play it off. “Must have similar dabs or something.”
“Must have,” the detective nods in way that John reads as 'he doesn't believe a word I'm saying'.
“What's your date of birth, John?”

“13th March 1982,” John parrots. He'd gotten pretty good at remembering his fake birthday recently what with all the bloody jetsetting he was doing.

“You and your dad look very alike,” the detective says, throwing an early mugshot of John across the table.

Jesus Christ, that must be from the eighties! He remembered wearing that long black coat, the turtleneck jumper, the gelled back hair and the pitch black sunglasses. Fucking hell he looked a right ponce back then....Although, everyone gets free licence to be tragically unfashionable in the eighties, right?

“Yeah, never took after me mum,” he shrugs.

“Right..” the detective glares.

The door opens and another policeman walks in.

Oh thank fuck

Detective Sergeant Michael Chambers strode in and, man alive, was he a sight for sore eyes. He kicked off his suit jacket, slamming a bunch of files down on the desk.

“I hope you weren't planning on starting without me, DC Tyler,” the DS says grimly.

“Just doing some preamble,” DC Tyler mutters before turning on the digital recorder. “DC Andrew Tyler and DS Michael Chambers present in the room with one John Constantine, date of birth 13th March 1982. Mr Constantine, you have been read your rights, do you understand them?”

“I do,” John nods, knowing to play along with this game.

“So tell me why you went to the household in question last Sunday?”

“Me girlfriend...ah I mean me fiancé...sorry, only recently got engaged, she was taking me to meet her mother for the first time,” John says honestly.

“And your fiancé would be...” DC Tyler presses.

Fucking hell, it felt weird to say your actual name. The words were foreign on his tongue.

Sorry, love, you'll always be Star to me.

“We all just know her as Star though,” he explains so he won't have to keep tripping over himself to remember to use your birth name.

“Right because she was...in a band, yeah?”

“Aye, she was,” John nods.

“So you'd never met her mother before?” DS Chambers interjects, helping John out a bit.

“No, it was going to be the first time,” John says, raking a hand through his hair with the nerves.

“Kind of a whirlwind romance you see? Not really had the opportunity to say hello.”
“Describe what you saw, Mr Constantine when you entered the house,” DC Tyler demands.

“A fuck lot of blood,” John grimaces. “I could smell it before I went in. I opened the door and it was just everywhere. I've never seen anything like it...”

He trails off for dramatic effect. He had seen something like it, he'd seen something like it many times but he wasn't about to divulge that information.

“Go on,” the DC pushes.

“Look mate,” John says, giving his best distressed face. “I'm not right comfortable thinking about it again.”

“We just need a conclusive account of what you saw, Mr Constantine,” DS Chambers says. “Any detail you took in might be important.”

“I just...I saw Star's mother in pieces...like literally decapitated and dismembered,” John murmurs quietly. “And there was some writing on the ceiling.”

“What did it say?” DC Tyler asks.

“F.M,” John recounts. “Although I don't know what that means.”

“Anything else you can remember?”

“That's it. I just walked in and saw that and then Star...” This time John really does choke up because he remembers the broken look on your face. “Is she alright? Can I see her soon?”

“She's being interviewed right now,” DC Tyler says a little more harshly than was necessary. “Where were you on Saturday night, Mr Constantine?”

“With me missus, in bed,” John says back equally as tartly.

“All afternoon and all night?”

“Yes,” John grunts.

“Doing what exactly?”

“Newly engaged, mate. You work it out.”

“That'll be all Mr Constantine,” DS Chambers cuts in, switching off the recorder. “DC Tyler, if you'd like to step out with me.”

Both men leave the room and John heaves a huff of irritation. This was bloody stupid! He was trying to do the decent thing for once and abide by the law for your sake and it was just opening up a can of worms. He was wasting time. The Family Man was out there and he was hunting you the same way he'd hunted John all those years ago.

DS Chambers re-enters the room, setting a cup of tea down in front of John.

“Fuck me, John. Can you not stay out of trouble for five minutes?” he smirks.

John takes the tea and drinks it, trying not to pull a face at the fact it had instant milk granules in it. He'd never get used to the brews they made for prisoners...
“Sorry Mike. This one was unexpected,” he sighs.

“That one really your fiancé?” Mike nods towards a wall and John assumes you're in the room next to him.

“Aye she is and I really was going to meet her mum for the first time,” John says, fiddling with the paper cup. “Not really what I was expecting."

“This some more of your supernatural shit?” Mike asks, a wry expression on his face.

“Resurrected serial killer,” John explains.

“Well...fuck,” Mike sighs. “Guess this means this case is going to be an unsolved ball of shit on my record, huh?”


“That guy?!” Mike cries. “We heard about that case. Nasty business.”

“Very,” John mutters. “Listen, I don't know how this is going to go but I'm going to try to stop him from killing anyone else...but if I don't get to him in time...I may end up back in here, fair warning n' all.”

“I keep a revolving door open for you in this station, John,” Mike laughs. “You should trust me more rather than getting your taxi driver friend to break you out.”

“Er...” John stutters, not knowing how he'd worked out that Chas'd jailbreaked him the last time.

“CCTV you mitmot,” Mike rolls his eyes. “Which I had to doctor by the way. You're lucky you saved my family or you'd of been in prison ages ago.”

“Been there, done that, nearly got me arse buggered by a bloke called 'Big Tony','” John chuckles. “Can't say I wanna do it again.”

“Go on, John,” Mike says pointing towards the door. “Go get your girl, she's gonna need you. I'll take care of the rest.”

“Much obliged,” John nods. “Keep yourself safe, Mike.”

“Rodger dodge,” Mike nods, waving him off.

**

“I can't come with you into the church, bit,” John said, cringing that he sounded so unsupportive right now. “The demon taint, it literally boils me blood if I step on holy ground.”

“Oh,” is all you said back to him, your eyes downcast and looking terribly sad.

*Oh bloody hell...stop breaking my heart, love.*

“I can come to the wake though,” he said quickly.

You just nodded, turning away from him to stare out of the window. You'd barely spoken to him in days and you'd recoiled away from his touch every time he'd tried to be near you. He understood
why. He'd probably blame himself too if he was in your shoes, after all, none of this would've happened if he'd never come into your life.

*Oh god, please just look at me. Please.*

“I need to tell you something,” he breathed. “It's about something I saw at your mum's.”

That caught your attention and you turned to face him full on. God, you looked thin. You'd barely eaten since it'd happened and your skin was turning pale.

“I saw two initials on the ceiling. F.M. The Family Man. I think Dream was purposefully scrambling the name into the 'homely male' so he wouldn't get in trouble.”

“Who's the Family Man?” you asked quietly.

John sighed, knowing this was going to be a long story, “I once house sat for a mate of mine, Jerry, down in London and this bloke showed up at the door one day saying my friend had left him a package to collect. I gave it to him but only after I'd had a cheeky peek in the package and seen some names written down. Then I saw in the news rag the next day that people with those names had been murdered.”

“Oh god,” you said, eyes wide.

“Naturally I felt like a right shitbag because I'd caused their deaths so I went after The Family Man and the Family Man went after me. I found out he was an ex-policeman who'd gone full psycho. He beat the shit out of Chas trying to draw me out. When that didn't work, he went after me old man and killed him.”

“He killed...he killed your dad?” you whispered.

“Aye, love, he did,” John said with a grimly locked jaw. “I may have hated the old bastard but he was still me dad, you know?”

“I never knew,” you said and finally, finally you touched him, wrapping your arms around his waist to hug him.

John leaned into the touch fully, savouring the human contact, “He was the first human I'd ever killed. He ambushed me when I was getting a coach to Liverpool for me dad's funeral. Of all the times, he jumped me when I was having a slash in a tunnel.”

John felt the small vibration of laughter from you pass through his body. Thank god you were laughing again.

“I shot him...well I shot him in the leg, he was the one who used my gun to blow his brains out. I threw him in a river. I don't even understand how he's back in the mortal realm, Star. It shouldn't be possible.”

“Did he not climb up the tower?” you asked.

“He can't. He's a dead soul. We're living souls,” John explained. “He'd have to know the shortcuts in and out of Hell which are nigh on impossible to find.”

“So what does that mean?” you said, looking up at him with those beautifully innocent eyes.

“It doesn't mean anything good,” John murmured. “But I promise you this, love. I will get revenge
for your mum. I swear it to you. I will obliterate him from all the dimensions in existence.”

“You'd better, John Constantine,” you whispered against him. “Because if you don't, I will.”

John pulls away, putting a hand under your chin and stroking your face lightly, “We'll do it together, love. You and me.”

The kiss you gave him was full of purpose, full of fiery anger and full of sadness.

_You and me against the world and all the forces of Heaven, Hell and Beyond. You and me 'til the end, bit._

**

The funeral was awkward to say the least. You had to field a lot of questions from your family members about why John wasn't with you right then. You settled on some lie that he couldn't get out of work until later. The pitying looks they gave you only served to piss you off. You knew John was hanging around the churchyard, waiting for you to come out so you didn't need their fake sympathy.

You glazed over, just staring at the portrait of your mum that was propped up next to the coffin. God there was barely anything left of her to put in there....

_Don't think about it. Don't think about it._

Every time you did, you felt this surge of intense hatred and anger. How could anyone do that to a person? She'd never so much as hurt an ant on the pavement. She didn't deserve that. You could only hope that she was happy in Heaven right now.

You'd made John find out exactly where she ended up for your own peace of mind. At least it made it a little easier to think about.

And John....

Oh you'd been awful to him in the last week to the point where you wondered if he even still wanted to marry you. You were sure he thought you blamed him but in truth, you didn't. You blamed yourself, blamed yourself for not having the foresight to protect your own mother from the monsters that you constantly seemed to piss off or that wanted to own you.

_I should have asked John to ward her house the second we got back from America._

A fat lot of good that sort of thinking did you now.

_Oh John, I'm sorry._

As well as your mother's face, all you kept seeing was John's hurt one. Every time he'd tried to comfort you, hug you or kiss you you'd pulled away. You'd shut him out completely and he was only trying to help you.

The brush of Valentine's hand on your back startled you momentarily and you realised the vicar was motioning for people to leave. Shit, had you zoned out that much that you'd missed all of the readings? That only made you feel even guiltier.
“Can't even pay attention at my own mother's funeral. What the fuck is wrong with me?”

“Come on, chick,” Val says softly, helping you up to your feet because in truth, you had no strength left in your legs. “Time to go.”

You let him lead you out after the coffin had passed by with Roxy trailing a little distance behind. The second you get into the entrance of the church, John strides up, dressed in a sharp black suit. You appreciated the gesture immensely. You appreciated it even more when he stepped over the threshold of the church and you saw him visibly grit his jaw in abject pain as he beelined straight for you.

“I've got her from here, mate,” he says grimly, trying to restrain his senses.

Well he certainly still loves me enough to subject himself to literal boiling blood.

You quickly slip from Valentine's arm and take John's, pushing him so he's outside the boundary of the church and there's a stuttered sigh as the pain leaves him.

“You fucking idiot,” you whisper quietly. “Why did you do that?”

“Because you needed me,” he says simply, kissing the top of your head.

You couldn't help but let more tears escape from your eyes, but not from grief, from the intense swell of love you felt right then. John could be clumsy, offensive at times and a bit crude but he knew how to show affection and he obviously cared.

“Hey hey, shhh,” he says gently, gathering you in his arms and rocking with you slowly, trying to soothe you. “I'm here, love, I've got you.”

From the man who'd insulted you the first time you met, to the man who ran away when he started feeling too much, to the man stood before you who'd put himself through agony just to give you a hug five seconds earlier than he could've.

“John, I love you,” you murmur.

“Love you too, bit,” he smiles. “Nice to hear you say it again. Got a bit worried for a while. Now come on, darlin', don't smear your pretty make-up.”

He produces a handkerchief from his pocket and gently dabs under your eyes.

A handkerchief. How old fashioned.

“Take it you're John?” Valentine asks, after watching the two of you for a while.

“Aye mate, take it you're Valentine?” John says, holding out his hand warmly.

“Uh yeah,” Val laughs quietly, taking John's hand and shaking it. “Or Ollie if you prefer.”

“Nah pal,” John chuckles, snaking his arm around your shoulders. “I'll call you what she calls you.”

Val seems to square up a little and you internally groan at what he's doing. You highly suspect he's going to give him 'the dad talk'. Valentine had always treated you like his little sister.

“Just wanna say...” he starts and you're trying not to cringe at what's coming next. “Thank you.”

Oh...you weren't expecting that.
“Thanks for taking care of her,” Valentine nods towards you. “She seems really happy with you. You're a good guy.”

“Mate,” John snorts. “She takes care of me most days. I'm lucky to have her.”

You hear the most sickeningly sweet ‘aww' coming from Roxy who then punches Valentine in the arm, “Why can't I find a guy like that?”

“Because you like total dickheads,” Valentine rolls his eyes, rubbing his arm where she'd hit him.

“I'm Roxy,” Roxy introduces herself to which John nods pleasantly enough. “And that's my actual name thanks very much. Come on, we're going to be late for the wake, Val, and you're supposed to be helping Star's family find seats so MUSH.”

She bodily carts him away much to Val's chagrin.

“Shit, see what you mean, love,” John smirks. “She is right bossy. Bossier than you.”

“I did say,” you shrug. “Now you can see why I never got a word in edgeways.”

“Bloody hell,” John breathes. “Remind me never to owe her a favour.”

You laugh softly and John beams at you like you were the best thing in the world.

“Good to see you smile, love. You look beautiful when you laugh,” he grins.

You flush horribly and John just gently kisses your forehead.

“Come on, bit, let's face your family,” he says, starting to walk you down the church yard path.

“Oh goody,” you grumble. “I get to listen to a bunch of horrible people pretending they liked my mum and feigning interest in my life.”

“Don't get on then?” John asks.

“There's...issues,” you sigh. “There was a big falling out a while back where my mum got basically exiled from family functions. They're only here to feel less guilty about themselves.”

“Don't worry, Star,” John says, squeezing your hand tightly. “If they're looking for a fight, I'll bloody well give it to 'em. Nobody's upsetting me lass today.”

**

“Strewth...” John breathes after meeting your vile aunt and having a veiled war of words with her. “You weren't joking about them being horrible, were you?”

“No,” you smile.

The wake had turned into you, John, Roxy and Valentine sat at your own table. John was deftly handling each member of your family who tried to slip fake sentences of sympathy your way or those who questioned your life choices. In the end, John had even garnered some praise and you could visibly see some of the women in your family mooning over how charming and protective he was over you.
Back off.

You didn't realise you could be this fiercely jealous until your estranged cousin put her hand on John's arm whilst talking to him, trailing her fingers up a little and the green mist descended.

You were both outside, John having nipped out for a quick smoke and you were a little way away from him, staring out at the park behind the working men's club whilst you took a breather. You saw her lean in and say, "Why don't you show me how that accent sounds screaming my name?"

Fucking really?!! Did your family hate you this much that they'd try to even sabotage your relationship?!

"Sorry, love, spoken for," John says firmly, moving away from her slightly.

"She doesn't need to know," your cousin draws, closing the distance again. "Just disappear with me for a little while, I'll make it fun."

"I'm going to say this again only once," John says, even more steadfastly. "Spoken for."

"Oh come onnn," she laughs. "Just because you're getting married doesn't mean you can't play out once in a while. I promise you it'll be better than her, you may even come back for more."

"Listen, love, I don't know who the fuck you think you are but I love that bloody woman and frankly...I don't think you'd outshag her in the slightest," John snarls.

You feel the huge grin spread across your face as you keep looking out at the park. He was completely loyal to you. Funny how the criminal bad boy was the most loyal man you'd ever been with.

"Ooo I like a challenge," your cousin giggles before you turn round and see her throw herself on John, kissing him.

Your legs were running before your brain caught up and you wrenched her off John, delivering a solid punch straight into her face, busting her nose open.

"No means no, you fucking bitch," you hiss.

"You hit me!" she squeals, trying to stem the blood flow from her nostrils.

"And I'll do much worse if you don't fuck off right now. You ever come near my guy again and there'll be consequences. How fucking dare you try this at my mother's funeral! Get the fuck outta my sight!" you bark.

Your cousin squeaks, wiping her nose on her sleeve before she scurries away.

"Bloody fucking hell," John breathes. "Is it wrong to say I'm fucking turned on right now?"

You shoot him a questioning eyebrow, your chest still heaving with adrenalin.

"Never had a bird fight someone for me," he laughs. "And you've got a wicked right hook. Jesus Christ, 'my guy'...I think I like jealous you a lot."

You say nothing but grab him roughly by the tie, leading him forcefully to the toilet and locking the door behind you.

“What are you—" he starts but he doesn't get to finish as you're on him, roughly yanking at his hair to
bring his mouth to yours.

All the pent up aggression, all the grief, all the jealousy just broiled into one lone emotion and that was the urgent need in your core. All you wanted was something familiar to keep you grounded. You knew it was disrespectful, you knew it was just plain wrong but you needed it...you needed it because otherwise you'd just break down into an inconsolable mess and you didn't want John to have to pick up the pieces.

“Love, I don't think this is the right time,” John says, breaking free of your urgent kisses. “I know I said I was turned on but...oh fuck...”

He trails off as you start kissing down the side of his neck. He tries to push you back as gently as he can but you pin his wrists to the back of the door.

“Star, enough,” he says. “You just buried your mum, it's not the time.”

There's a struggle as the two of you fight for dominance and John wriggles free out of your grasp. You switch tactics and rake your fingers through his hair, holding him in place against the door.

You're highly aware you're breathing hard as you hiss out the words, “You needed me after Ravenscar, I need you after this. Let me drown myself in you, for once.”

That seems to flick a switch in his head because he nods, a slight smile at the corner of his eyes, “What do you need, bit?”

“I need you to shut up and fuck me...hard,” you pant before roughly palming him through his suit trousers. “Give me everything that you got because it all belongs to me.”

You can feel his cock jerk as you said that.

“Fuuuck,” he moans. “God, I never knew I'd fucking love you being possessive over me.”

“Get to work, pretty boy,” you snarl, yanking his suit jacket off of him and throwing it onto a peg on the wall.

John wastes no time in unzipping you out of your dress, throwing it over the door handle and turning you round to bend you over the sink. He drags your underwear to the floor and you kick them off into a distant corner, not really caring where they landed.

John undoes his fly and makes to move behind you but you look over your shoulder at him.


“As the lady wishes,” he smirks, doing as you ask. “Like looking at my bare chest do you?”

“I've got a good view,” you nod to the mirror in front of you.

“As have I,” John purrs behind you, roughly grabbing at your breasts and you arch back into his touch. “Look at yourself, love. Bloody fucking gorgeous.”

The way he touches you, the alternating harsh grabs and the soft caresses, it's almost as if he's worshipping every inch of you. Glancing at his face in the mirror, it's practically reverent as he watches his fingers dance across your skin. You can feel his stuttered breaths fluttering against your cheek as he works you into a frenzy.

“John. Now,” is all you can pant.
He says nothing but bends you further over the sink and you hold onto the cold ceramic, feeling the chill creep up your body. Not even a second later you feel the press of his cock against your entrance and he glides in with ease, hissing through his teeth as he does.

You expect him to fuck you like this but he pulls your torso up so you're both standing and he lazily thrusts in, in a maddeningly slow way. Your hand reaches behind you, fisting into his hair as you force him to look up at the two of you in the mirror.

“Are you mine, John?” you husk.

You hear the low groan start in his throat and ripple throughout his chest, “Always....fucking hell, love, I'm all yours.”

“Then fuck me like I told you to,” you hiss.

The vicious snap of his hips takes you by surprise and you moan so loud John has to clamp his hand over your mouth to stifle the sound.

“Don't want those pricks outside overhearing, do we?” he purrs in your ear. “As much as it pains me to not hear you scream for me because I fucking love it when you do.”

John holds your mouth tightly, one arm wrapped around your waist to keep you upright as he drives into you over and over as roughly as he can...just like you asked. You can feel him watching your expression and the second your eyes meet with his you feel his thrusts get harder.

“Star,” he growls as he listens to the muffled half screams you're making. “Bind yourself to me...magically.”

You can't process what he's asking you right now. You're too focused on the vicious ruts that John's doing.

“Bind yourself to me and I'll bind myself to you. No one can tear us apart then, not even the bloody fucking universe. You'll always be mine and I'll always be yours.”

He lets go of your mouth, dialling down his pace massively to allow you to breathe.

“How?” you croak out, breathing the chilled air again in through your mouth.

“We meld part of our souls together,” he rasps. “I'll always know where you are, you'll always know where I am, no matter what dimension. The feelings we have for each other will give us more strength both physically and magically. We'll share a life, you die, I die, I die, you die.”

He stops completely, chest heaving behind you as he pulls you close and tucks a loose strand of your hair back behind your ear.

Oh fuck, that is so much more intense than a proposal...

John's studying your face in the mirror, watching the swirl of emotions play out.

Is he really willing to do this for me? Oh shit, I should have asked that out loud.

“You'd do that with me?” you ask.

“Yes,” he answers without hesitation. “For no one else, only you.”

You know what a big statement that is to make considering the countless men and women John has
been with. Gotta say you never took John for such a fierce romantic.

*God it's a strange world where I consider magically melding my soul to someone else's as romantic.*

His hand comes under your chin to tip your head back up so he can see you and he presses the most tender kiss to your cheek.

“Oh only you,” you repeat back to him with a nod and he smiles broadly. “Yes, John.”

“Oh now,” he says, his demeanour returning to something more familiar. “I believe the lady asked me for a hard fuck.”

He pushes you over the sink and you brace your hands on the mirror as he grabs your hips, using them to keep you steady whilst he punishingly fucks you. You have an extremely hard time keeping your noises in check.

“Oh where are me manners?” he chuckles before reaching around you and finding your clit, rubbing small circles there. “Can't have you saying your Johnny never gives you anything nice now can we?”

“Fuck,” you hiss as quietly as you can, your hands sliding down the surface of the mirror as you scrabble to keep yourself upright.

“Mmm, that's it love. You enjoy it,” John purrs, moving his fingers with such practised ease.

You look up at his reflection to see his brow furrowed in concentration, his bottom lip being savaged by his teeth and his eyes intensely watching his cock disappear into you over and over.

“John!” you whimper as your orgasm rolls over you like a freight train and you're desperately pawing at the wall, trying to ride the spasms out.

“Look at me,” John demands and you lift your gaze up to meet his in the mirror.

He withdraws from you quickly and you feel the hot splatter of his cum against your legs.

“Jesus, fuck,” John groans. “You can lead me into the loos any time you like, love, if this is going to happen.”

He takes a moment to centre himself before he grabs some tissue paper, cleaning you up and the both of you redress.

“Want me to find your knickers, bit?” John says, watching you pull your dress back down.

“Nah,” you shake your head. “Fuck it.”

“Ooo,” John inhales through his teeth. “Bloody hell, I'm gonna be thinking about you being bare under that dress all day now.”

“You can handle it,” you shrug before hugging him tightly. “And thank you...I...I needed that.”

He wraps his arms around you, kissing your head, “You've done the same for me many times, darlin'. This is only scratching the surface of the debt I owe you. Now come on, we'll talk about the binding later but we'd best get back to the wake. No doubt your cousin's probably playing the victim to everyone so we have damage control to do.”

You huff loudly before the both of you step out of the loos. The second you walk out, you spot
Valentine who just looks at the pair of you and your slightly dishevelled hair with a curious expression.

“Did you two really just fuck in the toilets?” he asks.

“She needed distracting,” John says. “Otherwise she would've murdered someone.”

“Yeah I saw your handiwork,” Val smirks. “You got a good punch in.”

“She was pissing me off,” you shrug. “She forced herself on John and I took exception to that.”

“Wow, she did that?!” Valentine says in disgust. “Some people have no fucking tact. She's lucky you only gave her a nosebleed.”

“It was something to see,” John laughs softly.

“Anyway, do you mind if I borrow you for a second, Star? Roxy and I need you,” Val asks.

“Uh yeah, sure,” you nod, turning back to John. “I'll be back in a bit.”

“No worries, love. Gives me time to have a post shag ciggie,” he winks before striding outside, retrieving his Silk Cuts from his suit pocket.

“Well I never would've took you for the public sex type,” Val chuckles as he leads you into a different room.

“It was either that or smashing up the place,” you laugh.

Once you get into the adjoining room, you see Roxy sat at a table with Mr Morris and Mr Roberts. What on earth were they doing here?

“Oh, Miss Star!” Mr Roberts says immediately. “Our deepest condolences on this terrible day.”

*You fake fucking wanker.*

“Thank you,” you reply quietly.

“We didn't really wish to bother you on today of all days but Mr Morris thought you might like to know that the interview was very highly rated and sales of the album went through the roof. As a gesture from Geffen, we'd like to forgo our share and donate it to whatever charity you wish.”

*They seriously interrupted my mother's wake for this*?!

“Find a charity for drug rehabilitation...for Phe,” you murmur.

“Excellent choice,” Mr Roberts nods. “And we've also put in 50k for you personally to cover the costs of today. I know it's not a patch on losing your mother but we hope it helps somewhat.”

Fuck...50,000 pounds?!

“I don't know what to say,” you stutter, genuinely amazed. “Thank you.”

Mr Roberts nods and gives you that unnaturally plastic smile again. You suppress a shudder and subconsciously move towards Mr Morris more.

“Star, may I put my number in your phone so we can call you when the money's been moved?” Mr
Morris asks.

You trust him a hell of a lot more than you do Mr Roberts so you agree, handing your phone to him and he deftly taps away, making himself a contact.

“So we're really doing well with sales, huh?” Roxy says with a proud little smile.

“Oh immensely,” Mr Roberts grins. “Unlawful Reactor has rawness, local appeal and a story behind it. The public is eating it up.”

“Hell yeah,” Roxy beams. “I'm glad. Phe would've been so happy if she could...if she could see this.”

There's a small 'ahem' from your left and Mr Morris hands your phone back with a curt smile.

You see he's entered his number and also that you have a text from Chas.

Chas: John told me what happened. I'm so sorry. If there's anything I can do, let me know, ok? I'm only thirty minutes away.

Star: Not right now but thank you and thanks for being a good friend x

Chas: Any time.

“How any, we'd best be heading off,” Mr Roberts says. “We’ve interrupted you at a bad time. We'll see you all soon.”

He walks past Roxy and you see the faintest twitch of his hand as if he wants to touch her shoulders. She responds to his passing by leaning back slightly, twiddling her hair between her fingers.

Oh no...they are definitely fucking....

You sincerely hoped that Mr Roberts wasn't the Family Man because that would be really awkward to explain to Roxy that she was screwing an undead serial killer...

Both men leave and you feel like the weight of the world is crashing back on your shoulders. Suddenly you just want to hide in the safety of the warehouse where it's familiar and safe.

“I think I'm gonna head back,” you announce. “I kinda want to be alone, no offence.”

“None taken, babe,” Roxy nods. “We get it.”

“Thanks for coming with me,” you murmur. “I really appreciate it.”

“Any time, chick,” Val says, giving you his famous bear hug.

“It was nice meeting John too,” Roxy smiles. “He seems totally obsessed with you. It's adorable.”

Valentine just gives you a sly smile and you know he's making a reference to catching you post sex. You do your best glare, warning him to keep quiet. Roxy didn't need to know.

“He's a good guy,” Val laughs. “You two are good together. I give my official approval.”
“Oh well thank you,” you say sarcastically, sweeping into a curtsey before bursting into tired giggles. “See you soon guys. Keep safe.”

“Same to you,” they call after you.

**

“So how do we find the Family Man?” you ask. “Because that PR executive, Mr Roberts is freaking me out now.”

“Not a fucking clue, bit,” John sighs, cuddling closer into you on the sofa, his jacket long since discarded and his tie loose. “Did you not see his face whilst you were in The Dreaming in me memories?”

You think back really hard and it's like trying to hold water in your hands. You just remembered seeing a face covered in blood and John's horrified expression as he held the Webley revolver in that particular scene.

“No, it was post bullet,” you sigh.

“Fuck,” John hisses. “Guess we really can't rule the guy out then...and you say he just showed up at the wake to pass on some money and some congratulations? That's a little bit too bloody coincidental.”

“Right?” you nod in agreement. “Is there anything about his actual life that could help?”

“He's just some twisted policeman,” John shrugs. “Shitty parents. Always told him to keep a stiff upper lip and never show emotion and he ended up killing them and then going after other families.”

“Is that all?”

“Not much more to tell,” John says, furrowing his brow, trying to remember anything else. “This was almost thirty years ago, love.”

“Did he have an actual name?”

“Samuel Morris,” John replies.

Morris....

Mr Morris....

OH FUCK.

“Star, what is it?” John asks, catching your wide eyed look.

Mr Morris with his stern face and piercing gaze...the harsh angular features. Those features in your memory blended with the echo of John’s horrorscape and overlapped until you could see the maniacal grin that was splattered with blood.

It was Mr Morris!
I knew he seemed familiar! Fuck, why didn't I trust my instincts more?!

“Star!” John says more urgently.

“It's the PR executive alright but the other one,” you explain. “And he was called Mr Morris.”

John's face pales.

Another memory comes flooding back to you, “John, he was in the room when I was talking about my mum and how you were going to meet her.”

“Fuck,” John hisses. “What did he say at this meeting you had today?”

“Nothing he just wanted my phone to put his number in,” you stammer...until you remember what had been waiting on your phone when he gave it back. “Shit...John, I had a text from Chas pending when he looked at my mobile.”

“I'm warning him right now,” John says, quickly dialling his friend. “Mate, it's urgent. You know I said about the Family Man? He knows you're still alive and that you live close by. Do anything you can to protect the house. Do not let Renee, Geri or Trish outside, DO YOU HEAR ME? I'm going after him so keep yourselves safe or I'll fucking come to Heaven and batter you meself.”

He hangs up and stares at the phone for a while before he whips his head up and looks at you with wild eyes, “Star, your mates.”

You immediately text Valentine.

**Star:** You ok?

**Val:** Yeah, why?

At least he was safe so you text Roxy.

**Star:** You ok?

You don't get a reply and you know she's practically glued to her phone. You ring her but the line chirrups twice before cutting off. You try it again and someone answers with a curt little chuckle before hanging up.

“John?!” you squeak in a panic.

“Get in the car,” John growls, grabbing a bunch of magical tools and also tucking the gun into his trench coat as he grabs it. “Direct me.”
Shitting hell this is bad.

John grimly gripped the steering wheel as you pointed out which streets to go down. His mind was fully focused on the task. He couldn't let another person you cared about die. He refused.

He really is hunting Star....well not on my fucking watch, you bastard.

He pulled up at a set of apartments and sprung out of the car, racing towards the entrance and carelessly casting an unlock spell on the communal entrance, not giving a shit who saw. You were not far behind him as you both raced up the stairs and practically barged into Roxy's flat.

“It's been a long time, John,” the Family Man purrs from his position on the sofa as he idly stirred sugar into a cup of tea. “You may look young still but your soul...oh your soul is looking old.”

“Where is she?!” John hisses.

“Who? Oh, Miss Fielding? She's...indisposed,” the Family Man grins, showing his needle like teeth. “What the fuck have you done?!” you shout, desperately searching for your friend.

“Her brashness really was unladylike so first...I removed her tongue,” the Family Man chuckles, tenting his fingers together. “Then I removed her eyes....they were so full of emotion, too much emotion. It's not becoming.”

John quickly looked at your face. You looked physically ill. Without hesitation he raised the gun and fired, straight at the Family Man's head. The bullet punched through the skull and the man rocked back on the sofa.

Undead...gotta shoot 'em in the head.

The sound of cackling laughter quickly had John's stomach falling through the floor. The Family Man just sat up and dug a finger into the wound, fishing the bullet out before discarding it onto the floor with a minute clatter.

“Won't work this time, John,” he smiles. “Although your confidence is to be admired. You weren't so sure the last time we had this duel, now I sense no indecisiveness. Excellent. That is to be commended.”

“Shut the bloody hell up!” John roars. “How the fuck did you escape Hell?!”

“I had a message...and a purpose,” the Family Man says cryptically.

John saw you out of the corner of his eye edging around the room, trying to find Roxy. Oh fuck, he had to keep the Family Man distracted.

“What message?” John says, stepping forward so he takes up more of the Family Man's vision.

“From the First of the Fallen, of course.”

The First...Of course. The only being to know the routes in and out of Hell and how to change them.
“He took great care for me to tell you that he's owed a soul. He's owed her soul. She stepped into his kingdom and she is his to play with.”

“The fuck she is!” John snarls. “She's mine!”

You'd disappeared into one of the rooms by now and John was glad you weren't paying attention because this probably would've distressed you a lot.

“She is tainted,” the Family Man spits back. “You tainted her with your demonic blood the moment you took her to your bed, Constantine. She was tainted further when you abandoned her to her fate in Hell. She is marked for Hell, just as you are and the First wants her soul back. Your suffering in this process is just a boon for him.”

*Shit, I tainted her...I didn't even think I was capable of passing it along any more...What the bloody hell have I done?!*

“He can pry her soul from my cold dead hands,” John hisses.

“Oh that shouldn't be too difficult,” the Family Man smiles, finally getting to his feet. “Think you can hurt me by mortal means, John? I'm far too powerful for that any more.”

“Oh well...” John smirks, finding his hellfire lighter in his pocket. “Good job I'm not a warlock or anything, isn't it?”

A plume of fire curls around his hand as he swirls it into a flaming wheel and launches it straight at the Family Man who tries his best to dodge. There's a tremendous sound of bubbling flesh as the spell hits a limb, charring it to the bone.

“All this power and you never used it,” the Family Man laughs in a demented way. “You could have killed me so much sooner, John. You could've been great.”

“I don't kill humans, only monsters,” John replies, circling with the man in front of him.

There's a glint of steel as a knife barely misses, kissing along his cheek and leaving a loud thud in its wake as it buries itself into the wall behind him.

Fuck!

*Keep your guard up, Johnny Boy!*

There's a small cry behind him and he quickly darts his eyes to see the knife hasn't buried itself into the wall at all, it's buried itself into your shoulder as you came out of the bedroom.

*Oh this is fucking personal now.*

He couldn't afford to see if you were ok. The Family Man was quick and he was brutal. If John took his eyes off of him for another second it was all over.

He concentrated, letting the rage boil over in him, pushing it into electrical energy and forming a shard of lightning in his hands. With a bellow he let it loose, the tongues of electricity snaking towards the Family Man and connecting with the knife he was just about to throw. It barrelled up the metal, burning the fingers clasped around it.

Worryingly that only made the man laugh louder.

“Oh but you are truly a god!” the Family Man grins. “But even gods can be brought to their knees.
Soon John, we will have our time but today is not the day. She is being brought to the First even as we speak.”

Against his better judgement, John looked back to see you slumped on the floor, purpled veins spidering up your face.

“What the fuck have you done?!” he screams in terror.

“Poison is not just a tool for women,” the Family Man chuckles.

The knife was poisoned?!

“Star!” John cries as he races towards you, picking you up off of the floor and cradling you in his arms.

He turns to unleash a flurry of fire blasts but the Family Man is gone.

“YOU FUCKING BASTARD!” John roars into the empty flat before he turns back to you and your unresponsive body. “Oh no no no, love, come on, stay with me...fuck!”

He frantically began muttering the healing spell, feeling the scorch of the poison flaming through your bloodstream. He extinguished every molecule he could find and the purple veins receded a little but they didn't fully fade. You were still dying, just slower, much slower.

_It's a fucking start._

He pulls a chant from the back of his brain, one he used as a teenager. A preservation spell. A spell that would keep you at this moment in time until he could figure out how to rid you of the poison completely.

The glowing blue light settles over your skin and he knew it had worked. He relaxed but only marginally.

He looked around him and saw the body of Roxy splayed on the bed in the room next to him, every extremity gutted and her organs carefully organised around her.

_**I'm so sorry I couldn't save her, love. Please forgive me.**_

He may not be able to save Roxy but he could bloody well save you. If the First wanted a fucking fight, he would get one.

The Family Man seemed like he could take a lot of damage. The spells John had used had burnt his body but he knew he would just keep coming. He couldn't take him with sheer force of magic alone. He needed to be clever....

_Got it._

There was only one being in existence who knew how to drag a powerful soul back to Hell, that could take on the First directly.

He pulled out his phone.

_Am I really bloody doing this?_

He took one look at your prostrate body on the floor and made his mind up instantly.
Lucifer Morningstar calling...

Chapter End Notes

Told you a certain someone would come back at some point ;)

Brit translation guide:
Dabs - Fingerprints
Mitmot - Idiot
Rodger dodge - Brit police radio speak for 'affirmative'
Having a slash - Having a wee
Strewth - An exclamation like 'bloody hell' only a bit tamer
“Helloooooo,” Lucifer purrs down the phone. “Well this is a surprise, Johnny!”

“Morningstar I—” John begins to speak but he's cut off by Lucifer's rambling.

“Never thought you of all people would be keen to talk to me again, well...perhaps your lovely paramour might be but certainly not you...I do so have to wonder—”

“SAMAEL!” John roars into the speaker, losing his patience.

There's a very undignified huff on the line, “Well there was no call for that, John. Fine, I'm listening.”

“I need your help,” John says through clenched teeth.

“Of course you do,” Lucifer says nonchalantly. “Everyone does. I am the giver of favours after all, you know. So you want to make a deal with the Devil, John? Your beautiful Star run off with someone more of her calibre and you want her back? Oh I can certainly—”

“Fuck’s sake, Morningstar!” John yells. “Star's in danger! The First let a serial killer loose from Hell to hunt her!”

“And why exactly do you need my assistance?” comes the bored reply. “Surely this can't be too much trouble for the famed John Constantine? You do keep wittering on so about your 'warlock'
“None of the spells I know can kill him,” John admits, pushing through the shame he felt to declare that. “I think the First did something to make him stronger. This is bloody killing me to ask, Lucifer, but I need you to drag him back to Hell.”

“Oh but it's so ghastly since I left!” Lucifer groans. “I popped down after your visit and I simply hate what the First has done with the place. It's so dreary! All the tortured screams, the desert landscape.....oh in my day it was much more elegant and grand.”

“Lucifer, Star's dying,” John says quietly, hoping this will be his proverbial ace card. “The serial killer that was sent, The Family Man, he stabbed her with a knife poisoned by...well it looks like the waters of Phlegethon. I've managed to get her stable but I can't save her and kill the Family Man too.”

“Look, John,” Lucifer sighs. “I'm dealing with my own thing right now, as much as I'd love to take a holiday, so unless your Family Man is anything to do with The Sinnerman, my hands are tied and not in the fun way.”

“Who the bloody hell is The Sinnerman?!” John asks, confused.

“Now that is something I'd love to know,” Lucifer grumbles. “He's been murdering my clients willy nilly and it's making me look rather bad.”

“So you're fucking telling me you've got a serial killer after you as well and you don't think they're bloody connected in the slightest?” John growls. “You don't think the First is giving you the finger on this one as well?”

“Oh....” comes the quiet reply. “I never thought of that. Yes...well...I suppose he might be rather miffed that I kicked over his silly little statue in the throne room but honestly, John, who works in bronze any more?”

“Shut up!” John hisses. “Just...please, please help me Morningstar. I can't lose her, not like this. I'll do anything.”

There's silence on the other end of the phone and John's heartbeat is hammering wildly.

*Oh just fucking give me an answer you bloody fucking feathered tosser!*

“That's a dangerous offer, Johnny,” Lucifer purrs, and John can practically hear the deviance creeping into the tone. “Owing the Devil a favour, a clean ticket...”

“Mate, whatever it is, she's worth it,” John says firmly.

“My my my, you've really fallen hard for her, haven't you?” Lucifer murmurs. “A love story for the ages....the chainsmoking guardian of the mortal realm and the rock star magus. I want the rights to the motion picture, I hope you know that and I'll play you but a more charming version-”

“Lucifer, tell me you'll help me,” John pleads, looking down at your marred face. “She's not got much time.”

“I'll help you, John,” Lucifer replies. “For her sake...well I suppose for yours as well considering you're an intangible wreck whenever she's gone, but you will owe me a favour. Do we have a deal?”

“Deal,” John says without hesitation.
“Wonderful,” Lucifer chuckles. “I'll be there by the morning. Do stay alive until then. I wouldn't want to come all the way to England for just the ambience.”

“Noted,” John grunts. “I'll text you the address where we'll be.”

“Ta ta, Johnny,” Lucifer says before hanging up.

Bollocks...did he really just make a deal with the Devil? He supposed it was a good thing Lucifer was nothing like he was a couple of decades ago or John reckoned the favour would be much worse and likely involve the eternal torment of his soul.

*He could ask me for anything...*

For all John knew, he might have just willingly agreed to sleep with Lucifer at some point...or for you to sleep with Lucifer...or both....

*Better a forced fuck than death.*

Well if that's what Lucifer requested there was always alcohol to wipe any memory of the process...

“I promise you, love,” John murmurs, stroking your cheek and cradling your body to him. “I'm gonna save you, no matter what the cost.”

A stifled sob made his head jerk up as he sought out the noise. He straddled your body, keeping you shielded from whatever lay in the direction to his right.

“Out!” he barks. “Get out here!”

He sees movements through the slats in a storage cupboard.

*Oh bollocking hell, who the fuck is this? I don't have time to give someone the 'supernatural' talk.*

He raises the gun and points it towards the noise, “Get out now or I'll shoot. I won't ask again.”

A mess of dirty blonde hair falls out of the door as the person scrambles in haste to obey.

*Oh Jesus Christ, this just gets worse.*

It was your friend Valentine.

“What the bloody hell are you doing in there?” John hisses.

“Shit, I...I...I came over to ask Roxy to stop seeing the PR guy Mr Roberts,” Valentine stammers, his eyes looking past John to Roxy's corpse. “And Mr Morris came over and he...he...oh fuck he stabbed her. I didn't know what to do! He hadn't seen me yet so I hid. I texted Star that I was ok so she wouldn't come looking for me. I was trying to wait for my chance but...”

John's eyes travelled down to the dark halo on Valentine's jeans. Poor lad had pissed himself in fright.

“You were scared,” John finishes for him.

“I was a fucking coward,” Valentine whispers. “I'm a man, I'm supposed to get out there and die to save a woman but I just couldn't fucking move and...he wouldn't fucking stop hacking at her and...”

Valentine turns a little green.
“If you're gonna chunder, don't do it on the floor,” John says quickly. “We need to get out of here before the rozzers show up.”

John starts picking you up, putting you over his shoulder where you hang like a dead weight.

_Not dead...still alive, don't think that way._

He's just about to stride out when a quiet voice comes from behind him.

“You made lightning. You made fire and...I don't know what you did to Star. Tell me I didn't imagine that. Tell me I'm not going fucking crazy right now,” Valentine pleads.

_Oh fuck, here we go._

John whirls around, his patience having long since left him, “Magic is real, everything about Heaven and Hell is real, monsters are real. That man who killed your friend was a serial killer who's been dead since 1990. The reason Star had to disappear was because she was being hunted by demons because she helped me. Are you up to bloody speed now because I don't have the fucking time for this.”

“I just have one question,” Valentine says in a shaky voice.

“What?!” John snarls, a little bit more aggressively than he meant to.

“Is Star going to die?” Valentine practically whimpers.

“Not on my fucking watch,” John says firmly. “Come on. You'll need to go into a safehouse until this is over.”

“Is this what she went through?”

The question makes him stop in his tracks. He remembered so vividly finding you half strangled to death in your flat and the terror that flooded him even then. He remembered the bloody amazing way you'd adapted to living in the warehouse even though you'd have to leave everything of your life behind. He still remembered the first time you'd fucked and how he wasn't really sure if it was just a distraction from how messed up your world now was but he'd loved it all the same because it was worth the mind fuck to see you smile at the time.

“Not quite,” John replies after a time. “She almost died fighting a demon. Now, let's go.”

Valentine trails after him and helps put your body in the car, securing it with belts. The ride back to the warehouse is tense. Valentine seems to want to babble incessantly, asking anything and everything about John's world. All John wanted to do was concentrate on how he could cure you. He could've used the sleep spell on the lad but he really didn't fancy dragging two limp bodies into the warehouse when he was already fighting the effects of having used a healing spell.

“Does Star use magic?” Val chatters idly.

“Aye, she does,” John nods. “I've been teaching her.”

“Do you have to be a special kind of person to learn it?”

John sighs heavily, trying to keep his temper from snapping, “Look Val, I'll tell you the secret of magic for free. Any cunt can do it.”

“Just takes practice then?”
“Aye. Not to be offensive or anything, lad but pipe down. I need to think.”

“Oh, sorry. It's just a lot to take in,” Valentine mumbles, staring at his lap.

I refuse to feel guilty for hurting his feelings. I have to think how to save my Star.

John reaches the warehouse and with Val's help they manage to get you on the sofa. John shows Valentine to a room on the upper floor as well as pointing out the kitchen before he makes to go downstairs.

“Is there anything I can do?” Valentine calls after him. “Anyway I can help? I mean, we're only as great as the sum of our parts and all.”

Sum of our parts? Who the fuck was this bloke and why was he parroting philosophy? Every drummer John had ever met was not particularly gifted with brains but apparently this one was Immanuel Kant.

Must be a generational thing. They're all getting smarter.

Something tickled at the back of his mind...a thought. Gradually the thought grew tendrils which spiralled into something resembling a plan.

Sum of our parts....stronger together....

“You bloody genius!” John cries, laughing and he kisses Valentine square on the lips in his excitement.

To his credit, this doesn't phase Val at all but he seems marginally surprised, “I am?”

“I know how to save Star,” John says, breathing wildly. “Lock yourself in the room and don't come out until I tell you to, ok? This is gonna be risky.”

“Errrm alright,” Valentine says, nodding. “Don't let her die, John.”

“You really think I would?” John says.

“No,” Valentine answers without hesitation. “I think you'd rather die in her place than that.”

“Too bloody right I would,” John nods. “Lock yourself in. Don't come out.”

Val does as John requests and John puts a barrier spell on the outside of the door just to be sure. The next process required a lot of concentration, a lot of energy and well...it might be downright embarrassing.

He moves downstairs and kicks the rug into the corner, freeing up the floor space before he grabs a paint spray can and painstakingly traces lines, circles and runes. He can feel the acrid taste of the paint in the back of his throat but he presses on, widening the ritual circle out and out. It would need a few minutes to dry but it'd do.

He grabs candles, bowls and spell ingredients from the cubby holes in the shelves, placing each carefully and filling them one by one.

West bowl with amaranth, east bowl with orgonite, north bowl with honey and south bowl with.....shit, I need to remember this.....oh! Sea salt!

John had never really had cause to memorise binding spell ingredients or love spells for that matter.
Suddenly he wished he'd paid a bit more attention.

John began stripping you of your clothes until you were naked in his arms and then he carried you into the centre of the circle, laying you down gently on some cushions he'd shoved there. He also stripped down, throwing the garments far away before he knelt next to you. Slowly, he began wrapping a chain around both of your wrists, tying them together before he shoved a padlock through the links and snapped it shut.

Now came the hard part. He needed you awake for this, he needed your consent but....that meant taking off the preservation spell and you'd start dying the second he did that.

*This has got to be the most mental thing you've ever done, Johnny Boy. You could lose her completely.*

He had to try right? Anything was better than you being stuck as a preserved corpse for the rest of time.

Slowly he passed his free hand over you, taking off the spell and your eyelids fluttered open.

“John?” you murmur.

“Lass, I don't have much time,” John says hurriedly. “You've been poisoned by the water from a river in Hell and I can't heal you. My magic is too limited. I need your consent to perform the Chains of Binding ritual and then I'll be strong enough to save you.”

There was abject fear in your face as you gripped him tightly on the arm, “I saw him, John. The First. He wants me, he's not gonna stop until he gets me.”

“Star!” John says urgently. “You're dying! Please, love, don't leave me! Gimme consent!”

“Don't let him take me, John,” you pant, almost hyperventilating.

*Shit, she's panicking and I'm running out of time.*

“I won't, sweetheart,” he says, stroking your face and your hair. “You know I won't. Just say yes.”

**

“*You can't evade me forever, little one,” the First practically purrs into your ear. “Constantine can only keep you tethered to life for so long and then....then you'll be mine to play with.*”

“Yeah well I'm not dead yet,” you hiss back.

“*A trifling matter,” the First laughs and the sound is so deep and loud it echoes around your head. “I have many things in store for you. Do you think it will send Constantine insane again if I ruin you?”*

The First punctuates that with a clawed hand trailing over your shoulder and coming to rest under your chin, pulling your gaze up. You stare back defiantly.

“*Behold, the dying light of the evening star,” the First sneers into your face. “And when I take you, little one, I'll make sure to snuff out every atom of light from your soul.*”
“You’d have to get my soul first,” you spit, refusing to let fear overtake you. You couldn't show him any sign of weakness.

“I am patient,” the First grins, showing his monstrous mouth. “By all means return to him but he cannot save you. The poison in your body is from the Phlegethon river in Hell. There is no human cure for it. It will burn your little mortal frame to cinders and I'll be waiting to collect you personally.”

“I don’t go down without a fight,” you say, standing your ground.

The gnarled claws twist into your hair and you can feel the hot sulphurous breath cascading over you, “I suggest you be quiet, mortal. You're only inflaming my ardour with your rebellious spirit.”

There's the press of his body to yours and you instantly feel sick.

“Oh perhaps...you enjoy it,” the First chuckles. “I'll find out soon enough, little Star.”

The world dims and you no longer feel his presence against you. He's simply vanished. You feel a slight chill and open your eyes to see John hovering over you with no clothes on. Reflexively you grab for him, suddenly very afraid of the First's threats. Now he was no longer in your mind, you'd allow yourself to be terrified by his thinly veiled threats of rape and torture.

You don't even realise what John's saying. Your thoughts are completely consumed by the impending stay in Hell that you start babbling incoherently. It's not until he starts stroking your face that you manage to control your breathing and listen.

“Just say yes,” John urges.

You lift one hand only to find it wrapped in chains along with John's and, now you're not panicking, you can see you're in the middle of a ritual circle.

The binding. That's what's going on. John said we'd be stronger if we did this, that he'd always find me but if I die...

“John if this doesn't work, you'll die as well,” you whisper.

He just responds by giving you the sweetest kiss on the lips, “Well....couldn't be arsed with a life without you in it anyway, bit. Rather take me chances with you in Hell.”

You stare into his eyes to see the resoluteness and the sheer affection there. He clearly meant what he said. He really would fall to Hell with you.

“'Sides, gotta keep you away from the First no matter where you are,” John smiles. “You always do find trouble, love.”

“I consent,” you nod quickly, feeling your energy start dipping.

There's not much time. It's starting to burn again.

“How do we-” you start.

“Remember after Ravenscar? We have to make love, declare our union to all the dimensions. I'll do the rest. Just don't let go, Star.”
John starts mumbling words that you can't even place in any modern or dead language. There's a hum as the circle starts to glow and the flames on the candles grow until you're hemmed in a wall of light.

“Gonna start now,” John says. “I know this isn't a terribly sexy situation but I'll try me best.”

Well with words like 'declare our union' you assume you had to give it your all too. You place your hand behind John's neck, pulling him to you and kissing him languidly. It's not long before you feel his tongue slip inside your mouth, deepening your kiss.

John's free hand begins roaming ever so gently over your skin and you can't help but arch into the touch. Even though your insides feel like they're burning, you can clearly distinguish the telltale heat building between your legs. It intensifies even more when his hand cups your breasts, softly teasing your nipple and you moan openly.

You could swear the light around you escalates a little but you didn't want to open your eyes to check.

“That's it, lass,” John breathes in your ear as he leaves a trail of kisses down your neck. “Let go completely. It's just you and me.”

His fingers run down your stomach, skipping in between your thighs as he ghosts them over your centre. You weren't used to John being so delicate with you and you could feel the whine of urgent need starting in your chest.

“Patience, love,” John smiles. “We gotta do this proper like.”

The pad of his thumb grazes over your clit and you let out a little gasp, followed by a little whimper. Again the light in the circle seemed to brighten momentarily.

You understood now. You really did have to let go. You had to push everything out of your mind apart from John and the actions he was doing. That was all that mattered.

You interlaced your fingers on the chained hand with his as he teased you relentlessly, working your body so you'd be ready for him. Without much thought, your free hand started exploring his chest, the muscles, the scars, the tattoos, the small patch of dirty blonde chest hair. It was like you were memorising every part of him.

You clung onto his bicep when he finally sank a crooked finger into you, moving it so slowly that it was almost maddening. In turn, your hand finally lowered to his cock, curling your fingers around it and moving to the pace he was setting. You saw his mouth drop open slightly with the pleasure of it. That only made you want him more.

“John, I need you,” you pant, not caring how awkward that sounded.

“Alright, love,” John nods. “Just don't let go, no matter what.”

He withdraws his finger and comes to move in between your legs, lining his cock up with your entrance. Just before he pushes into you, he kisses your forehead gently, then the tip of your nose and finally your lips. The groan you let loose when he buries himself in you is stifled by his soft kisses.

The light is almost blinding and the flames from the candles arc overhead forming a cage. There was no going back. Either a bonded soul awaited you or death.
John starts gently rocking himself in and out of you, mumbling words again. You're too caught up in the sensation to even try and decipher what he's saying. This feels different, much more different than Ravenscar. You were both so exposed to each other in a way you never had been.

You tighten the hold you have on his chained hand as he hits a particular spot that sends your body into a deep arch, your head lolling backwards.

“John,” you can't help but moan.

“Open your eyes, love,” John rasps, never breaking his languid pace.

Your eyelids flutter open and you see it.

*Holy shit, I would never have imagined they were so beautiful...*

You could see John's soul, burning brightly inside his body. Most of it was an undulating pure sky blue but there was a large corner that swirled with angry black smoke.

*That must be the demon taint.*

“It's so graceful,” you murmur, not realising you actually said that out loud.

“You should see yours, bit,” John laughs, flushing a little with embarrassment. “Look down.”

Seeing your own soul was never something you would've thought was possible but there it was. It was the colour of summer daffodils, a vibrant yellow with the merest tinge of black starting at the edge.

“It's different,” you point out.

“Every soul is different, love, that's kinda the point,” John smiles warmly. “Although now I can see the Family Man was right, I have tainted you. I'm right sorry about that.”

“I don't care, John,” you say, wrapping your arm behind his head and resting your foreheads together. “I don't care if you've tainted me, it's not going to stop me being with you, not now not ever.”

There's a hum that grows and the ground starts shaking beneath you.

“It's working, Star,” John says, giving you a searing kiss. “You just made a declaration without realising.”

“I did?” you ask, before John's thrusts pick up a little speed and you find you can't talk much any more.

“I love you. I'll always be with you, I'll fall into the bowels of Hell for you, I'll fight all of Heaven for you, I'll scour the dimensions of Space and Time just to keep you by my side. Star, I bind myself to you,” John proclaims.

Should you say something back? You didn't really know what to do.

You gather his free hand, interlacing your fingers together like your other hand and hold them close to yourself.

“I love you too, John Constantine. I'll never let you go. I bind myself to you as well,” you say, hoping that was correct.
It was an odd sensation, one you could never fully describe. You felt your soul rise up out of your body and part of it detached. The ground shook even more violently underneath you and the hum was almost deafening.

You watched as part of John's soul detached too and the two blended fiercely, moulding, shaping until only a green shimmering light was left. The light split in two and rejoined your respective souls before they entered back in your body.

“Hold on, love,” John pants before he picks up his pace even more.

His mouth crashes to yours, urgently seeking your lips. You can feel the ferocity of his passion washing through you although you have no idea how. It merges with your arousal and you can feel the twitch in your core starting.

You're practically screaming as the strongest orgasm you've ever had burns through your body and you clench your thighs tightly around John whilst holding his hands to the point of breaking his bones. John's hips stutter as he pushes as deep as he can go, yelling like you've never heard him do before and you feel the warm wetness release into you.

The chains around your wrist tighten, pulling your arms flush against each other. There's a momentary searing pain before they vanish.

“Don't let go,” John pants against you, utterly spent. “It's not quite finished.”

Slowly you see a tattoo form on your skin and John's. A perfect band of chains around each wrist with a large link in the middle showcasing a symbol. John's seems to have a star motif, yours seems to have a eye of Horus like John sports on his forearms.

“There,” John nods. “It's done. We bloody did it.”

You want to say something but you feel the poisonous burning start even more fiercely again now you're not concentrating on the ritual.

“John!” you cry out for him as the raging fire seems to reach your lungs.

“Bollocks, shit!” John swears. “Moment of truth, love. God I hope this fucking works.”

He chants the words of the healing spell, touching your face as he does so. You can feel the fiery wave recede down and you can breathe easy again. It's not long before you don't even feel the burning any more and even the scar on your shoulder disappears.

“Jesus, fuck!” John says, falling off you to the floor.

“Are you ok?!” you panic, scrambling to his aid.

“M'alright, love,” John says, starting to laugh uncontrollably. “Just a little surprised how strong the magic was. How you feeling?”

“Fucking amazing,” you laugh back, the sound contagious. “Shit, that really worked.”

“I do have good ideas now and again,” John smiles. “Although your mate helped me with that one.”

“Mate?” you ask, puzzled.

“Valentine, he was in Roxy's flat the entire time. Gave me the idea. He's upstairs,” John groans, trying to sit up a bit more.
“You're saying my friend listened to us have sex...again,” you flush. “He's going to think that's all we ever do.”

“Dunno 'bout that,” John smiles. “He were pretty impressed when I told him you practice magic.”

“So he knows,” you trail off.

“Yeah, love. Had to tell him. He saw everything the Family Man did and everything we did too. Least he understands better now.”

John tries to get up but fails miserably.

“Let me help,” you say, pulling his arm over his shoulder and guiding him to the bedroom. “You need rest after healing me. I don't reckon that's changed now we're magically amped up.”

“Aye, bit, you're right,” John yawns. “Make sure I don't oversleep. Lucifer's coming tomorrow.”

“What?!” you cry. “Why?!”

“Only being who can drag a soul to Hell,” John mumbles, his eyelids drooping. “Needed his help.”

With that, the small snuffles start signalling he's fallen asleep.

Lucifer? John truly must've been desperate to contact him. You guessed the Family Man was more powerful than he'd expected. At least he'd been able to save Valentine....that was something I guess.

The image of Roxy floats in your vision and the tears start pricking at the corner of your eyes. You walk upstairs after dressing yourself and release the barrier on the door before you knock. Valentine answers and he looks completely haggard.

“Hey,” you say weakly.

You're gathered into a fierce hug, “Thank fuck you're alright. I knew he'd save you.”

“Roxy,” is all you manage before the waterworks start and you're full on sobbing.

Valentine pulls you to him tightly, “I know, chick, I know. I'm sorry I was such a coward.”

“He would've killed you, Val, don't blame yourself,” you whimper.

“I'll blame myself until the day I die, Star. That's just the cross I'll have to bear,” Valentine says grimly and you feel the splash of his own tears falling against you.

The two of you stay there for the longest time, just comforting each other.

*The last of Unlawful Reactor. The last of our friends. It's all my fault.*

**

John awoke to two noises.

One was your soft moans in your sleep as you twitched in an apparent nightmare and the other was
an actual moan of lust coming from somewhere in the warehouse.

*What the bloody hell*...*

First things first. He gently stroked your hair, peppering kisses on your head until you calmed down. He found it adorable you'd somehow managed to tangle yourself up in him whilst sleeping.

*You're mine forever, love. Can't believe I actually get to keep you.*

The moan sounded out again. Definitely male. Well the only other bloke in this place was Valentine so it had to be him. Bit of a strange character if he was getting off that loudly but then John supposed he'd already set the precedent for unabashed sex with the session in the loos and the entire ritual.

Whatever, it's not like it was any skin off of his nose. He was just insanely happy that he'd managed to save you. Here you were, resting on his chest, one hand curled into his chest hair and the other buried underneath the pillow you were sharing. John momentarily traced the chain tattoo on your wrist and felt the thrum of power. It was like this overwhelming safe feeling cascaded through his body.

Was that you? Did you feel that way with him? Or was he projecting his own feelings?

As if in answer, you stirred slightly, a lazy smile across your face. John's thumb was still on the tattoo and he now felt a wave of contentment.

That was you! He was experiencing your own feelings for *him*.

*I don't believe in soulmates, love, but I think this is the closest approximation. We were meant to be together.*

John mentally scolded himself for how cheesy that sounded. Maybe he'd have to find the Fates sometime and see if he really was destined to find you...you know, just for his own curiosity. Not that it mattered much any more. You were bound together and now your destinies would always be intertwined.

Something crashed outside. The noise was definitely coming from the kitchen.

“Love, wake up,” he said, shaking you slightly.

“Everything ok?” you slurred sleepily.

“Your mate's being right weird. I keep hearing moans and crashing,” John explained.

“Well go find out,” you grumbled.

“He's your mate,” John laughed. “If he's doing freaky things I ain't bloody going anywhere near him.”

“Fine,” you sighed, extracting yourself from John and wandering out in just your underwear.

*Well she's clearly comfortable around him.*

John couldn't help but feel a little jealous even though that was ridiculous.

*They've been friends for a long time. If anything would've gone on between them it would've happened already. Stop being an idiot, she literally merged her soul with yours a few hours ago.*
You poked your head back round the door.

“There’s someone else here. I saw a different coat on the hook,” you whispered. You looked afraid.

John immediately sprang out of bed, jumping into some jogging bottoms and walked out with you.

Who the fuck was here and how did they get in?!

**

You grabbed John’s arm and your fingers accidentally hit the tattoos. You felt a surge of power and before you knew it, you had a small shard of lightning forming in your hand without any effort.

“Good idea, bit,” John whispers. “Also nice form.”

“Cheers,” you whisper back. “It was so easy to do. Is this gonna be the same with all our spells?”

“Maybe,” John replies. “Who knows? Not exactly done this before, have I?”

“Fair point,” you murmur.

You both move silently to the kitchen before you burst in, ready to attack a potential intruder.

“Strewth!” John cries as he sees the scene before him.

“Jesus Christ, Val!” you yell, trying to shield your eyes but the image was already burned into your brain.

Valentine was half on the kitchen unit, hungrily kissing Lucifer and the both of them were down to their boxers. Lucifer’s hands were firmly down Valentine’s underwear.

“What?” Lucifer shrugs, ignoring the embarrassed Val who was hurriedly trying to redress himself. “You were both asleep and this lovely young man let me in and we had some time to kill.”

“You’re unbelievable,” John sighs, shaking his head before turning to Valentine. “And you shouldn’t have opened the door.”

“He knocked,” Valentine says quietly, turning pink whilst he pulls one of John’s spare t-shirts over his head.

“Oh look, you’ve made the poor lad embarrassed now,” Lucifer chides, rolling his eyes. “It was just a bit of fun, Johnny Boy.”

“Val, you know he’s the literal devil right?” you ask.

“Really?!” comes the half terrified squeak.

“So sorry, should have used my full title rather than Mr Morningstar,” Lucifer smirks. “Lucifer Morningstar, pleasure to get intimately acquainted with you.”

“Uhhh....” Valentine stammers. “Does this mean I’m going to Hell now?”

“Why does everyone always think that?” Lucifer huffs, leaning back against the kitchen unit. “I’m
still a bloody archangel, I'm not a demon for goodness sake! I don't even have my Devil face any more!"

“Guess you're a changed being,” John says. “Sounds to me like you're becoming divine again.”

“Oh how awful!” Lucifer frowns. “Amenadiel would never let me live that down!”

“Amenadiel?” John asks. “He's on earth too?”

“Lost his wings, poor thing,” Lucifer muses. “Well...if he will sleep with a demon...”

“Bloody hell, have you two switched roles or something?” John says in amazement. “Amenadiel was always a right poncy wanker. Always spouting 'the word of god' in a fight like a broken record.”

“Exactly,” Lucifer nods fervently. “He was boring. L.A's certainly changed his tune. I notice on your silly little wardings you've specifically named him along with three others to keep out of this place.”

“Aye,” John says. “Along with you if I remember right.”

“Obviously that worked,” Lucifer winks and also winks at Valentine who looks like he's going to be ill. “Although I can see why you've blocked out Gabriel and Michael. Self righteous bastards that they are.”

“I don't like angels,” John says simply.

“Well they don't like you either, Johnny,” Lucifer laughs. “Well, except me, although we've trod down that particular path before, haven't we?”

You roll your eyes, wandering around the two men before gathering up Valentine and pulling him out of the kitchen. He didn't need to be present for when John inevitably got annoyed at Lucifer's constant flirting. You could just feel that an argument was forming.

From behind you you hear John shouting, “Oi! Stop looking at her arse!”

“I can look where I please, John!” Lucifer hisses back. “Far be it from me to appreciate your fine young lady's assets. You should be happy she's coveted so.”

“If every being in the bloody fucking universe never looked at her like that again, I'd be fucking ecstatic,” John snarls.

“So possessive,” Lucifer drawls and you can hear the eye roll. “So you don't agree she has a fine posterior?”

You don't hear the end of the conversation because you're already ascending the stairs with Valentine. You manage to bundle him into his makeshift room.

“I was going to fuck the Devil, oh god,” Valentine murmurs, his eyes wide. “What the hell is wrong with me?”

“Nothing,” you laugh. “Lucifer's charming, he's attractive and he's had millennia to practice his seduction techniques. You stood no chance.”

“You talk about him like he's a friend,” Valentine breathes.

“More an acquaintance,” you smile. “He helped me after I climbed out of Hell and he's actually not
what you'd think. He can be generous and funny.”

“You climbed out of Hell?!” Valentine practically yells. “How are you so calm about this?!”

“It's been months, Val,” you remind him. “I got used to it. You'll get used to it. Now stay up here, John and I need to speak with Lucifer.”

“Has he ever tried it on with you?” Valentine asks quietly.

“A couple of times,” you nod.

“And did you ever...”

“No,” you shake your head. “I've got John, you idiot. Listen, don't feel bad about it. At least you found out before you went all the way.”

“I suppose,” Valentine mumbles. “Fuck, this is spinning my head, chick.”

“I know,” you smile warmly, hugging him. “It'll take time but you'll process it. Just...stay up here for now.”

You leave him in the room before coming back down to the kitchen. The two men are already squaring off again and you have to stifle your laughter.

“Something funny, love?” John says, casting his eyes your way.

“You two,” you smirk. “You always end up butting heads.”

“Yes, well, if this working class philanderer would be a little less jealous then we might actually get somewhere,” Lucifer sighs.

“Working class?! You elitist prick!” John shouts.

“Oh don't take it as an insult, darling,” Lucifer laughs. “I enjoy a bit of rough.”

You have to physically restrain John from leaping at Lucifer. You pin his arms to his side, bear hugging him furiously to keep him still.

“If you don't want my help, Johnny, I'll just leave,” Lucifer smirks, amused at the display.

That seems to calm him down a little and he winds a protective arm around your waist, holding your tattoos together. In that instant you can feel his fierce possessiveness and you're a little taken aback by how strong it is.

“What on earth have you done?” Lucifer mutters.

“What do you mean?” you ask.

“Your souls...they're...merged,” Lucifer breathes, wandering around the two of you like a scientist assessing his work. “I couldn't see it until you touched but....why have you done that?”

“Only way I could save her,” John explains. “I told you she was dying.”

“You poor woman,” Lucifer shakes his head. “Bound for all eternity to this one.”

“Oi!” John snarls.
“I would be mildly impressed that you pulled off an angelic ritual, John but you've just ruined her for everyone else,” Lucifer sighs.

Angelic...so that's the language John was speaking in.

“Everyone else can go fuck 'emselves,” John hisses. “She's mine.”

Lucifer's eyes travel down to your hands and they widen as they spot something.

“Oh and you're betrothed as well?!” he exclaims. “Goodness me, I leave you two alone for a couple of months and you act like Odysseus and Penelope! Binding yourselves together....I mean honestly....”

“I don't have 108 suitors though,” you point out.

“Ohhh,” Lucifer grins. “Somebody knows their mythology, although a little spoiler for you, that all actually happened. And you may not think yourself particularly special, Star, but believe me, your name is making the rounds in the supernatural world for the right reasons.”

“It is?” you stutter, a bit blindsided. You had no idea people talked about you.

“Let me see....a beautiful woman who knows magic and ended up attracting a few gods? News travels fast. I met somebody you'd run into recently actually. Quite a brash chap, very rowdy when he gets drunk.”

“Sweeney?!” you say.

“That's the name,” Lucifer nods. “Oh he was very impressed with you, darling. Wouldn't shut up about the 'lassling' who'd made him an offering. It's so wonderful that you're charitable to meagre beings like that. I'm sure you'd be a saint if Constantine hadn't gotten to you first.”

“Did he manage to escape Anansi?” you ask.

“Certainly seems so. He just burst into Lux and began drinking like a man possessed. Maze had to end up...distracting him, otherwise I fear my piano may have been lost. We already had a table be mangled beyond recognition.”

“Not that you care, love,” John says in a dangerous voice, warning you to not say anything else about the leprechaun. “Anyway, enough bollocks of catching up formalities. The Family Man. Can you drag him back to Hell or not?”

That maniacal grin bursts into life, “Oh Johnny Boy, I am the Devil am I not? I think it's time the First remembers exactly who's in charge....”
Chapter End Notes

I literally could write entire chapters of dialogue between John and Lucifer <3
Chapter Summary

You're taking the fight to the Family Man with John and Lucifer

Chapter Notes

First off, sorry for the long wait! I've kind of snookered myself with a lot of ongoing fics and then having a heavy workload at work.

Warnings: Some minor gore, Lucifer being Lucifer.

Thanks to Flamefeather Draws for a story prompt which is featured in this chapter (I'll tell you guys at the end what it was)

If you have any comments/emails/prompts/one shot ideas for this fic, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com and my tumblr is theliveshipparagon.

Happy reading!

- TLP xx

(Insert usual proofreading thingy)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I'm not sure this is a good idea, Star,” Valentine says in sheer panic.

“Nonsense, darling,” Lucifer purrs. “Bait is a very viable way of attracting an entity such as the Family Man and clearly he's not going to stop until he eradicates your little band.”

“Lucifer, don't be so....” you start but you're not quite sure how to finish the sentence.

“Blunt,” John finishes for you. “Don't be so blunt around the lad. He only just found out bloody magic is real and he's had a crash course in Heaven and Hell.”

“He's certainly had a crash course in the Devil,” Lucifer grins.

“What if you don't get there in time?” Val asks with wide eyes. “I mean, I could die.”

“We could all die, mate,” John sighs. “This shit is risky business but taking the fight to the Family Man is better than never being able to leave this building.”

“Is it really though?” Val presses. “I mean, I could just get takeaways to this place and be perfectly happy.”

“Val, he's been tormenting us in here for days before Roxy died,” you say softly. “He kept tripping
the alarms so we wouldn't sleep. He'll do that again.”

“I mean...I just....ah fuck!” Valentine swears, gripping his hair tightly. “I'm not good with this, Star. I'm not a hero.”

“We're not asking you to be,” you say hugging him to you. “I want to get revenge on him for killing my mum, for killing Roxy and I need you to help me do that. I know it's asking a lot, I really do but there's no other way I can stop him.”

“Jesus chick...what the hell is your kinda world now?” Valentine mutters.

“You can run away after this, never see me again...just please, help me,” you plead.

“Only because it's you,” Valentine says firmly, embracing you tightly. “And because I was gonna ask Roxy out that night. I finally got the fucking courage and....I want revenge too, Star. I had to sit there whilst he...whilst he did those things to her...”

“Shit, Val, I didn't know,” you breathe. “You liked her?”

“Liked her for a long time,” Val says grimly. “I was just too scared to say anything. Now I guess I never will.”

“We'll get him...for Roxy,” you nod.

“And for your mum,” Valentine nods back.

“Nothing quite like the bond of friendship is there, Johnny?” Lucifer murmurs in wonder.

“Maybe if you stopped trying to shag everyone you might have a few more yourself mate,” John points out, lighting up a fresh cigarette.

“You can be friends and enjoy each other carnally, John,” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “I believe there is a literal term for it.”

“Friends with benefits?” you say.

“Oooo don't mind if I do,” Lucifer drawls, making his way over to you with that predatory gleam in his eye.

He's stopped by John who deftly steps in between the two of you. The two men glare at each other for a while before Lucifer backs up a little and John exhaled a puff of smoke towards him, straight into his face.

“Nasty little habit, Johnny,” Lucifer coughs.

“Weren't complaining too much when your tongue was down me throat,” John shrugs before putting his arm around your shoulder.

“As I recall I was rather distracted by your-”

“Lucifer,” you chide. “Concentrate. We need to get this plan airtight.”

“Ohhh never knew you were so dominant, Star,” Lucifer chuckles.

“She's a bossy one alright,” John says fondly, kissing the top of your head. “Right, love. Plan is as follows. Strip all the CCTV out of here and put it on Val's house. Hide in the loft until the Family
Man appears and then that's where you come in Lucifer. Star and I will distract him long enough for you to drag him back to Hell.”

“So simple,” Val says weakly and you can see he's quite terrified.

“Well what are we waiting for?” Lucifer grins. “Let's show the First I'm back in business.”

**

This was the most uncomfortable moment of your life. You were sandwiched in between John and Lucifer as you all lay on the floor of Valentine's loft, staring at the monitor in front of you. There was not enough room to stand up and barely enough to be three abreast as you all perch on the support beams.

“Well this is cosy,” Lucifer chuckles.

“Shut your gob, Luci,” John sighs. “Bad enough I gotta wait here in this sweatbox with me missus but I'm not putting up with your bloody flirting too.”

“Good gracious, Johnny,” Lucifer huffs. “There's nothing happening right now. Why not make the time more bearable hmm?”

You feel a hand brush against your back and lightly caress your arse but you can't tell which man it's coming from. Jesus Christ, this was awkward....

You resolutely look forward to the camera, trying to focus on the monitors. Maybe if you tried your best to ignore what was going on it would be better.

“If that's your hand on me bird, Morningstar, I swear to your father I will rip it off your arm,” John growls.

“I could put it on you if you like, John,” Lucifer laughs. “No need to be jealous. There's plenty of me to go around.”

“Star, swap with me. Now,” John says bluntly, rolling you over his body so you can switch places.

“Oohhh so you're taking me up on my offer?” Lucifer says with an amused eyebrow.

“Just making sure you can't touch Star any more,” comes the gruff reply. “Hope you enjoyed that grope because that's the bloody last time you'll be doing that.”

“Oh you can be sure I did,” Lucifer drawls, winking at you. “You work out don't you darling? You certainly have the firmness of a peach—”

“MORNINGSTAR,” John practically yells. “Will you bloody fucking concentrate?! This lad's life is on the line and you're too busy copping a feel....of my missus no less!”

“Such a drama,” Lucifer sighs, looking back to the monitor and silence descends for a few moments.

Moments turn into minutes and you can tell the archangel is extremely fidgety. You surmised he'd never had to wait long for anything in his life so this was a real stretch of his patience. In fact it was a test of patience for both Lucifer and for John. John was hating every minute of being this close to
Lucifer and you knew it was costing him a lot of his dignity to even need his help in the first place.

“Oh nothing's happening!” Lucifer huffs. “Is it always this terribly dull in your line of work, Johnny?”

“I don't think he's going for the bait,” you say to John, watching Valentine make himself dinner on the kitchen segment of the monitor.

“I don't either, lass,” John murmurs. “Maybe he knows we're here and he's staying away.”

“We can't stay up here forever,” you sigh.

“Alright, love, we'll give it another half an hour than call it quits,” John nods. “I'll need to think of a plan B.”

“Perhaps you should just parade Star around,” Lucifer suggests with a nonchalant shrug. “It is ultimately her that this Family Man is after, yes?”

“I'm not sticking her out into the line of fire, Morningstar,” John grunts.

“Ooooohhh so you'll sacrifice the poor nubile young man instead?” Lucifer says knowingly.

“Too fucking right I would,” John hisses. “I know Val's a decent lad n' all but me missus comes above all others.”

“Nothing to do with your little Chains of Binding pact, hmm?” Lucifer chuckles. “No typical John Constantine self preservation going on?”

“I'm well bloody aware if she snuffs it so do I, Morningstar, but frankly I don't give two shits about my own life. Hers is more important,” John says fiercely.

“Good gracious, Star,” Lucifer says in wonder. “What on earth have you done to him? He's positively heroic now! I rather miss the reckless philanderer you used to be, Johnny. You knew how to have a good time back then.”

“Mate, she keeps me plenty entertained,” John shrugs. “Don't have a need for booze or fumbles in B&B rooms any more.”

“You must be a phenomenal lover,” Lucifer grins widely, looking at you with that predatory smile.

“I do alright for myself,” you say in an effort to shut the conversation down.

You were reaching the limits of your own patience now. You were unbearably hot in this stuffy loft and the two bickering men beside you was making you want to crack completely. Couple that with your worry for Val's safety and it really was a potential bomb to explode.


“So I spent hours sweating in a roof in England and ruined my suit for nothing?” Lucifer says a little snappily.

“You've had a feel of me missus, what more do you fucking want?” John snaps back.

“Enough,” you interrupt before Lucifer can describe *exactly* how much more he wants. “Let's get out of here and back to the warehouse.”
“Aye bit, let's do that,” John nods before everyone awkwardly shuffles their bodies along the support beam to the trapdoor and down into the main house.

**

You're all driving back and the atmosphere is...tense. You know John feels like a bit of a failure that his plan didn't work and the fact Lucifer was there to witness that. You do your best to idly stroke his hair from the seat behind him as he drives because you know it calms him down.

Valentine is the only person who seems relieved by what's happened and you really don't blame him. You don't think you'd of liked being used as bait either.

John's phone starts ringing and he momentarily glances at it before handing it over his shoulder to you.

“Answer that will you, love? It's Chas,” he says, keeping his eyes on the road.

“Hello?” you say, after swiping to accept the call.

“Star?! Star is that you!” Chas cries and he sounds completely panicked to the point you're sat ram rod straight in your seat.

“What's happened?” you ask immediately.

“Tell John he's here! The wards are keeping him out for now but they're failing!” Chas yells and you can hear a great booming sound in the background. “If that prick was ever my friend, you tell him to get here now and save me and Renee!”

“On it,” you reply quickly. “Keep me updated.”

The call cuts off.

“What was all that about lass?” John asks, looking at you via the rear view mirror.

“Get to Chas' now. The Family Man is there,” you explain hurriedly.

There's not even a breath of hesitation as John slams his foot on the accelerator and you're pressed back into the seat from the inertia.

“Oh now this is more like it!” Lucifer purrs. “A good ol' car chase after the villain!”

“Shut your bloody gob, my mate's in danger!” John yells, wildly turning the steering wheel so he can speed onto the motorway. “ Fucking hell, Chas. Why did you have to live out in the middle of the bloody suburbs!”

“Murder in suburbia. Sounds like a rather good crime novel,” Lucifer muses to himself.

“Lucifer!” you say in horror. “Do you mind?! Bit insensitive there!”

“Ah...yes....sorry,” Lucifer says awkwardly, turning to stare out of the window instead. “Forgot I was with company.”
“You know what your fucking problem is, mate?” John hisses. “You've got no bloody filter and you
don't give a shit about anyone but yourself unless it's in your best interest.”

“Johnny!” Lucifer says in alarm, his eyes wide. “There was no need for that! My therapist says I'm
coming along leaps and bounds with my selflessness!”

“Yeah well it's pretty fucking easy when you were starting at the bottom to make any kind of
improvement,” John hisses, dodging in between cars in the lanes.

“Oh is that how it is, hmm? Well while we're telling home truths, how about you tell Star about Gary
Lester,” Lucifer challenges.

“She already knows,” John scoffs.

“Does she now? Does she also know how quickly you sacrificed him for your own means? Your
supposed friend?” Lucifer continues.

“I saw,” you nod. “Now would you-”

“And did he also tell you about his demonic taint and where it came from? That he stopped the
second messiah from being conceived due to his own selfish desire to live?”

When you're quiet he carries on, happy to have found a subject to needle John about.

“Oh well....he was dying you see and Nergal, one of the higher ranking of my old minions, proposed
a deal that he would give John his blood to heal but he had to have intercourse with a woman who
was deigned to be the mother of the messiah. That way, my darling brother Gabriel would reject her.
You could have had paradise on earth and he spoiled that for you all. That's the kind of man you've
bound yourself to Star. That's the kind of man who dares to call
me selfish.”

John just glances at you in the mirror, an expression of pure regret and sadness behind his eyes. Your
heart instantly breaks for him.

“Well that's not the man he is now,” you say firmly. “People can change Lucifer and they can
change for the better. All it takes is the right person to come along at the right time like perhaps a
certain detective.”

Lucifer completely blusters and looks resolutely out of the window, “Preposterous.”

“There's good in both of you,” you declare. “You're just too wound up in your own self loathing or
absorption to see it sometimes.”

Both men glance at each other before John holds out his hand in a peace offering and Lucifer shakes
it. They then go back to concentrating on getting to the Chandler house.

“I can't believe you just told off the devil,” Valentine whispers and you smile slightly back at him.

“Not something I ever thought I'd do,” you whisper back.

John's phone starts ringing and you immediately answer in record time and put it on speakerphone,
“Chas?! Are you ok?!”

“We're down to the last ward!” Chas yells. “Tell me you're coming!”

“Nearly there mate!” John shouts. “Hold on for us!”
“Hurry, John!” Chas says and you hear an almighty crash in the background and the sound of Renee screaming. The line cuts off again.

“Anyone opposed to me breaking the speed limit even more?” John says quickly. “No? Good.”

You must be going ninety miles an hour by this point and cars are becoming blurry all around you. You hold onto the door frame for dear life.

_Hang on, Chas. Please hang on._

**

John was experiencing this kind of terror far too often these days. Surely a man must become desensitised after a while? He couldn't be this bloody scared all the time right? I mean....you almost died and now Chas was about to be filleted. Renee he didn't give much of a toss for but he even felt some worry for her too.

He was almost at the house and it was a fucking miracle no rozzers had pulled him over. He'd have to ditch the licence plate if you all made it through this.

John kept taking surreptitious glances at you in the mirror. It kept him grounded. Your faith in him also kept his head level. He really didn't deserve it mind, but he would take it nonetheless. He'd never believed he was a good man. Not to say he was a complete arsehole or anything but he wasn't a goody two shoes and yet...somehow you only saw the best in him and that made him want to work harder to keep that admiration you kept for him.

The second he hurtled down Chas' street his heart dropped. The front door was splintered and off the hinges.

_He'd gotten in. Fuck fuck fuck!_

He was out of the car faster than he cared to think, single-mindedly racing into the house.

The Family Man was cornering Renee and Chas was dead on the floor. John took no hesitation in unsheathing his demonic athame and leaping onto the Family Man's back, jabbing it into an eye socket.

“Constantine!” The Family Man roared, bucking wildly to throw him off and John fell ungracefully to the floor where he scrambled back to his feet quickly.

Seconds later you and Lucifer appeared in the doorway and John was glad you'd at least had the sense to tell Valentine to stay put. The Family Man must have noticed his eye movements because he spun around, grasping the athame that was lodged in his head and pulling it out with a sickening pop.

“Ah, Miss Star,” he cooed. “I was wondering when you would finally stop hiding behind your drummer.”

“I'm right here you fucking bastard,” you said, spreading your arms out wide. “Come get me and leave the Chandlers alone!”
“Such a strong desire for eternal damnation,” the Family Man chuckled. “Come my dear. Let's end this quickly.”

_Come on, Lucifer. Do your bloody thing already!_

“I didn't say I'd go quietly,” you spat and made a wheel of flame in readiness.

Despite the situation, John allowed himself a millisecond to be proud of you for mastering that spell so easily...or maybe it was the soul merging that helped...either way, he was proud of you.

“Oh I rather think our friend will be seeing a different kind of fire quite soon,” Lucifer drawled, stepping out in front of you.

_About bloody time you lunatic._

“I don't believe I've had the pleasure,” the Family Man grinned. “Are you someone I should be eviscerating for the First as well?”

Lucifer laughed, almost doubling over before he regained his composure, “Oh darling, I don't know what that minor inconvenience told you but there are worse things than the First out there.”

That seemed to take the Family Man by surprise, “Just who are you? Answer me!”

“Lucifer Morningstar, I'm the devil and you're going back to Hell,” Lucifer smirked, his eyes flashing red for the briefest second before he clapped his hands down on the Family Man's shoulders.

Two enormous white wings unfurled from Lucifer's back and John saw the abject fear take over the serial killer. It was almost poetic in a way...

Lucifer outstretches his hand and a doorway appears to his left, just in the middle of the room. It mildly fascinated John as he'd never seen this particular route into Hell and he thought he'd had them all mapped out long ago.

_Focus, Johnny Boy._

Chas was coming back to life again and his neck snapped back into its normal position. John took great mirth in watching Renee's expression change completely as she finally saw her husband's 'special ability'. Oh hell, they were going to need a long conversation about this!

He silently moved Chas and Renee into the other room and away from the fight and he wordlessly urged them to hide upstairs. It took a while for Renee to move but she eventually managed it, her eyes locked on Chas the entire time in an expression of 'we're talking about this later'. Once they were safely out of the way, he came to your side and held your hand as you watched the exchange in front of you.

“No! I'm not going back!” the Family Man cried, trying to twist out of the Devil's hands.

“Oh I think you are,” Lucifer chuckles and the door opens to the familiar swirl of the dead and barren landscape.

“If I go, I'll take everyone with me!” the Family Man bellows and reaches into his suit jacket.

“Stop him!” John yelled, lunging towards the man but he was too late.

A flash erupted in the living room, searing John's vision and he went temporarily blind. He didn't need his sight to know where he was though...the blistering heat and arid dryness gave it away
instantly.

He was back in Hell.

*Well bloody fucking marvellous.*

**

“John?!” you cry, desperately holding out your hands in front of you as you can’t see anything.

The flash had been so intense you lost your sight and you felt so exposed and so vulnerable stumbling around.

“I'm here, love,” John says to your right and you almost jump in terror at the sudden noise.

“Jesus, fuck, don't do that to me,” you pant. “I can't see anything.”

“Give it a minute, it'll come back,” John says quietly, taking hold of your arm. “I've got you, lass. Don't worry.”

The sound of Lucifer's mirthful laugh draws your attention.

“Clever little party trick, Family Man but a little magic is not going to stop me from making you an example,” Lucifer says. “Let's see the First, shall we?”

“Where did you get that magic from?” John demands. “You shouldn't know that.”

“The First has many secrets,” the Family Man says cryptically.

“I don't like this, John,” you whisper. “Something's off.”

“I don't like it either,” John murmurs. “This feels like a trap.”

“Can we get out?” you ask, slowly seeing the centre of your vision return.

“Not without attracting a fuck ton of attention,” John replies. “We're right in the bowels of Hell outside the throne room. Nothing but demons above us for miles.”

That really wasn't the answer you wanted to hear. Despite how brave you felt earlier being the distraction, getting dumped into Hell was eroding your fearlessness quite rapidly. You still vividly remembered the last time you were here.

“Star, calm down,” John says softly.

You look to him in surprise but he just nods towards where his hand is. Ah...the tattoo. That's how he knew you were completely losing your shit.

“It's a trap, it's a trap for me,” you end up babbling, losing your coherence in your fear.

“Look at me,” John orders. “Look at me, Star!”
Slowly you meet his gaze, your vision now fully returned.

“I will *not* lose you. Do you understand?” he says firmly before kissing you.

“Even in Hell? My my you two are certainly deviants,” Lucifer chuckles, ruining the moment you were having. “I knew there was a reason I put up with the petty insults.”

“Fuck’s sake,” John mutters, rolling his eyes. “Let’s just get this over with. I don’t wanna linger down here any longer than I bloody have to.”

You all walk up to the grandiose double doors and you realise they’re made up of bones. You’re not a particularly squeamish person but the whole thing is putting you really on edge and as the doors swing open, you’re clinging onto the last spark of your bravery.

“Who dares interrupt me?!” a loud and booming voice echoes towards the doorway.

“Darling, I'm home!” Lucifer says in a sing song voice. “Did you miss me, First?”

Silence.

“Oh come now,” Lucifer purrs. “I thought you'd be happy to see me back here! And I've brought you one of your minions back too.”

Still silence.

“He's waiting for you,” the Family Man smiles horribly. “Enter.”

That sentence gave you the chills and you’re pretty sure he noticed because there’s a sly smirk on his face.

“Onwards,” Lucifer says before pushing the Family Man into the throne room.

Slowly, you and John follow behind.

The second you pass the balustrade of a staircase you see him. The First. Somehow it was even worse in person than in your fever dream. He looked even more imposing in the flesh.

“You're in my seat,” Lucifer says disdainfully.

“You relinquished your right to rule Hell when you fled to the mortal realm,” the First sneers. “This is *my* empire, archangel. You never had any right to it in the first instance!”

“Good grief,” Lucifer sighs. “Still as dramatic as ever I see. I suppose the Sinnerman was just your idea of petty revenge too?”

If it were possible to say, the First looked genuinely baffled, “I do not know of this Sinnerman, Morningstar. It is not of my doing.”

“What...really?” Lucifer whines. “For goodness sake...John, I thought you said they were related?”

“I said it was coincidental,” John points out.

“Ahh Constantine,” the First grins. “So nice to see you where you belong.”

“Only a flyby, mate,” John shrugs. “Just returning your shitty handiwork to you.”
“Samuel Morris,” the First announces and the Family Man stands upright to attention. “You've proven incapable of killing a weak girl. Your time on the mortal realm is finished. I should throw you in the Phlegethon myself for your incompetence...”

“No! Please, oh gracious majesty!” the Family Man begs, throwing himself on the floor. “I did what you asked! Constantine managed to cure the poison!”

The First waves his hand and incorporeal mist appears. Well...it seems incorporeal. Every now and then you could swear it had a face.

“Third of the Fallen, this is now your plaything,” the First laughs. “Enjoy my gift.”

Third of the Fallen? Oh shit this was getting bad. You indistinctly tightened your grip on John's hand and he gave you a gentle squeeze of reassurance.

The mist swirled and descended on the Family Man, lifting him into the air and compressing his body into fine paste before it melded with the cloud. You would be cheering right about now if you weren't resolutely watching every movement the First made. You were still convinced something was going to happen.

“Your gift has been receiveeeeed,” the Third hisses and it sounds vaguely snakelike. “Why is Constantine in our dominioooon?”

“Um, hellooo?” Lucifer butts in. “Are you forgetting the literal Devil is right here? Not like I used to rule you or anything.”

“The Morningstar's light has fadeeeeed,” the Third snickers. “You are nothing noooow.”

This was the first time you'd ever seen Lucifer truly angry and you felt like you needed to hide behind something strong quite quickly. He walked up to the Third and grabbed the mist until it formed a rudimentary body, squirming under his grip.

“You forget your place,” Lucifer snarls. “I am a child of God. You are the remnants of a twisted soul.”

“You are the bitter son of a being long since gone,” the First says, smirking horribly. “Your daddy issues will not serve you well now.”

Lucifer spreads his wings again, his jaw clenched, “I am the first, the first being of God's creation and you will bow to me again!”

“I will use your feathers to stuff my mattress,” the First challenges.

Lucifer bodily throws the Third into the nearby wall where the swirling mist hits it and spreads before reforming, albeit a little less this time before it disappears completely into the walls.

“Alright lads, calm down,” John says, casually lighting a cigarette and striding into the centre of the room.

You had no idea how he could smoke when the very air you were breathing felt like it was scorching your lungs.

“And you can be quiet, Constantine,” the First hisses. “I have not forgotten your trickery.”

John chuckles to himself, “Little insignificant mortal besting all of the three, yeah, I didn't forget that
“And how many of our number do you count, Constantine?” the First sneers.

“Two....” John says, his face falling and the cigarette dropping out of his mouth as he whips round to you. “Star!”

Many many hands wrap themselves tightly around your body until you can't move. The smell of putrid rot is unbearable as...whatever it is...holds you tightly in place.

“Second of the Fallen, well hidden,” the First laughs. “Bring her to me.”

Immediately John has two hands full of sparking electricity, “Let her go right now. I won't tell you again.”

“Release her, Second,” Lucifer orders in that terrifying way.

“No,” comes the sickening whisper from behind your ear.

“Did you wonder where Samuel Morris' magic came from, John?” the First asks.

“I don't give a flying fuck,” John spits, throwing one energy ball to the side of your head.

The Second pulls you to the floor out of the way and you feel it's body press ever further against you. You were paralysed by fear. This was everything you'd had nightmares about recently and it was all coming true. This was a trap and it was a trap for you. You'd just willingly walked right into it.

“A certain voodoo priest found himself unfortunately deceased and we struck a deal,” the First continues.

“Voodoo....” John trails off, his eyes going wide. “Midnite?!”

“Hello Constantine,” that deep voice rumbles. “This is nothing personal, even if I do find you repugnant but needs must. The First wants Star and I want my life again.”

“You fucking sold her out you piece of shit!” John bellows, turning his remaining energy sphere and launching it at Midnite who deftly dodges.

Lucifer is about to lunge for the voodoo priest but there's a whirl of light, a spell in a language you've never heard and a clap of thunder before you can't see the archangel anywhere.

Oh shit! Did he kill him?! How the hell did he best Lucifer?!

“Angels are such annoyances, don’t you agree?” Midnite smiles calmly. “Easier to remove the father of sin before I make short work of the magus.”

“You can bloody fucking try!” John shouts but he has to jump out of the way of the First who charges him with a sword so big you have trouble taking it all in.

“Now, Papa Midnite,” the First commands.

The voodoo priest casually strolls towards you and places a crooked finger under your chin. You look up into his indeterminate expression.

“Please don't,” you plead.
“I like you, Star, I do but I don’t like you more than I like life,” Midnite says. “Now relax, little one. This will not hurt.”

Your fight response kicks in and you twist wildly in the Second's grip, almost dislodging the many hands with your enhanced strength from the soul bond. As soon as you begin muttering a defensive spell, Midnite clamps a huge hand over your mouth and puts his other around your neck, choking the words before they can leave your lips.

“Don't make this difficult, girl!” he growls.

You can see behind the voodoo priest that John is fighting the First, the trade of blows vicious. You couldn't call for his help right now. You were well and truly fucked.

Midnite briefly releases your throat before blowing some dust into your face and you cough harshly as you try not to inhale it. Gradually you just feel your drive slipping away and it's almost terrifying how compliant you feel, like you're just happy to stand there whilst a demon and a voodoo master are surrounding you.

“You shall obey only myself and the First. Forget John Constantine.”

So this is it, huh? I'm sorry John. You tried your best but in the end...Hell was stronger.

**

John looked away from the First for an instant and his heart dropped through the floor. Midnite had you. Midnite had you and your eyes were misted over and he was whispering in your ear. He'd made you his thrall.

Oh bloody fucking hell! Why did I never teach her to defend herself against that?!

The First starts laughing in that rather shit stereotypical villain way that he always does, “Did somebody assume Papa Midnite would always be on their side? That your lover would never be in this situation?”

Oh you fucking prick...I will end you....

“She is mine, Constantine,” the First said, walking over to you whilst you stood there placidly and he dismissed the Second with a wave of his hand. “You have given me the greatest gift I could ever have hoped for...a way to break you completely. You should not have loved again, John.”

“You will seriously fucking regret this,” John growled. “As will you Midnite. Our truce is officially over.”

“I'm crying on the inside, John,” Midnite scoffed. “If you live through this, I'll be sure to look for the trail of destruction to see you coming.”

“So what's your big plan, First?” John goaded, trying to figure out how the bloody hell he was going to get out of this with you. “Kill her? Is that it?”

“Oh no, Constantine, you think so small,” the First chided. “For starters I'll have her use your own spells against you until you're mutilated beyond your own repair. Then I'll keep you on the edge of
death so you can see me take her and Papa Midnite will make sure she performs well for me. Then I shall kill her. Perhaps I shall twist her soul, I think she could be valuable to my dominion..."

So that was his plan. Well he gave the First zero points for creativity. Maybe if he could....

“Little mortal, remove his leg from his body,” the First smirked, caressing your cheek.

*Oh fuck.*

John had to run behind a pillar as a huge blast of energy came his way. This was really not a fantastic situation to be in when the soul bond enhanced your magic. From what he could tell, the state of calmness Midnite had put you in seemed to make the spell focus a lot better too.

*Well this is fucking champion.*

There was no way he could get near you if you kept throwing spells at him and both the First and Midnite knew that. This was just a waiting game until an opportunity arose.

The pillar exploded behind John, sending chunks of masonry down on his body. He ignored the pain and dashed across behind the First’s throne. He had a feeling the ugly tosspot was too vain to destroy his precious chair.

“Amusing inference, John but I can rebuild the throne,” the First laughed.

Oh....well....that didn't work as he expected. He stayed approximately one second longer before leaping out of the way as a sphere of flames incinerated the throne and crashed into the wall behind.

*Think think think! I need a plan!*

“Star, it's me!” John yelled from behind his new hiding spot. “It's John!”

“Did you honestly think that would work?” Midnite said in wry amusement. “You should know my thrall magic is more powerful than your petty words.”

“Worth a try though, ennit?” John said, sprinting out of cover to direct a storm of ice shards towards the voodoo master and Midnite has to throw himself on the ground to avoid them.

“Oh well now, you've really angered me...” a voice comes from the doorway and John looks up to see Lucifer was back, framed in the doorway, eyes red and breathing heavily and behind him was....

“You brought Amenadiel?! Are you fucking bonkers?!” John cried, catching sight of the angel.

“Hello to you too, John,” Amenadiel fires back. “Not like I’m Heaven’s greatest warrior or anything which would seem to be really useful for this fight.”

“Alright, fair point,” John shrugs. “Take out Papa Midnite, he's the one capable of throwing you out of Hell.”

“Come on, brother,” Lucifer grins, the bloodlust taking over his face. “I've not had a good scrap in simply ages!”

Although John hated angels with every fibre of his being, he had to admit the sight of them descending on Midnite was awe inspiring. Fists flew so fast he could barely register them.

He would've continued watching out of fascination but you suddenly lunged for him, a lightning bolt held back in your hand like a short spear.
“Bollocks!” John yelled, ducking.

“I grow weary of my plan, John,” the First said inspecting his ragged claws. “Star, kill your lover.”

**

Killing John was the only thing that mattered.

Why wouldn't the smug bastard stay still and let you end it quickly?! You had to overcharge your spells for maximum potential damage and it was taking a lot out of you but you couldn't afford to let him get away.

“Star, it's me, love!” John was pleading but it made no difference to you in the slightest. You had your purpose after all.

When spells didn't work, you swung your fist round in a hook which caught him straight in the cheek, knocking him backwards.

“Fucking hell!” he cries, scrambling away but you're on him, hands raining down blows over his body.

You won't let him get away. You can't. You can't disobey. Over and over your fist slams into his torso and face until you're sure he's starting to lose consciousness.

“Star, stop it!” Lucifer shouts, dragging you off John. “As much as I love seeing you get rough, you're damaging his pretty face!”

“Kill the false king also, Star,” the First says with great mirth from his vantage point at the back of the room.

You whipped your head round, glaring at the archangel.

“Uh....Amenadiel?” Lucifer calls, backing away uncertainly. “Little help would be rather appreciated.”

“Not now, Luci,” Amenadiel calls back, breaking one of Midnite's arms.

You conjured a wall of flame, holding it in place and daring Lucifer to run away. You had him completely where you wanted him.

“Look, John would go simply ballistic if I hurt you and I really don't want to leave a mark on that spectacular body of yours so can you just put the wall of flames down please?” Lucifer says, holding his hands up.

“You have to die, false king,” you parroted.

“Now now, come on darling. You're far too pretty for me to get full on angel aggressive with,” Lucifer says, trying to hold his ground.
You hear the sounds of John stirring and you divert your wall towards him, knowing he was the weaker target and could be ended quickly.

“Stop, little mortal,” the First barks. “The Morningstar's words have given me a new idea. Seduce the false king.”

“I'm sorry, I don't believe I heard you right just then,” Lucifer stutters as you begin sauntering over to him.

“I remember your rivalry with Constantine,” the First chuckles. “I think it would break him to see you with his lover the same as if I were to take her myself.”

You could see the conflict on the archangel's face. On the one hand he seemed to be responding to the way you were running your hands up his chest, on the other he didn't want to give the First the satisfaction of helping his scheme.

“For goodness sake, John!” Lucifer calls to the dazed Scouser on the floor as you gently nip at his earlobe. “Do something! This is the most horrid situation I've ever been in and it's your fault!”

You moved to mouthing kisses along Lucifer's neck and you visibly felt him shudder.

“Amenadiel?!” Lucifer cries in a strangled voice.

“Just push her away, Luci!” Amenadiel shouts back, dodging a bright green spell from Papa Midnite.

“But she's....ohhh Star, you certainly know what you're doing, don't you?” Lucifer trails off before he shakes his head rapidly and presses you back by your shoulders. “No, darling. As much as I want you, I'd rather have you willingly and I'd rather not play into the First's hands, so if you can just-”

You cut him off by grabbing the back of his neck and pulling his lips to yours. You feel him protest at first but the more you deepen the kiss, the more he melts into it, even wrapping a hand around your waist to pull you closer to him. It really doesn't take him long to lose his inhibitions as his hand even slips under your top, feeling the soft skin underneath.

Well it really hadn't taken much to seduce an archangel....or were you just that good?

“What the bollocking hell is going on?!” John bellows but you don't let Lucifer stop for air as you slip your tongue into his mouth with a soft moan.

Lucifer struggles with you and manages to push you back, his pupils blown wide, “Good gracious...erm, Johnny this really isn't what it looks like. It's the First's fault.”

“And you thought you'd just take advantage?!” John rages.

“I tried to resist!” Lucifer cries, still struggling to keep you at arm's length.

As Amenadiel throws Midnite into a pillar he chips in, “Luci really did try...I mean, for him, he tried.”

“Your anger pleases me, Constantine,” the First chuckles, before picking up his enormous sword again. “How does it feel knowing I can make her do whatever I wish? That I can make her desire your oldest enemy?”

Before you knew it, John had bodily picked you up and was carrying you away from Lucifer.

“Try all you like, John. She is my puppet now,” the First says before casually swinging his sword at
Lucifer who blocks it with his bare hands.

You squirm in John's grip desperately trying to get back to your mission. You needed to seduce Lucifer, you needed to keep him occupied.

“Star,” John says softly, grasping your hand in a way that makes your wrists touch awkwardly. “Remember me, love.”

What on earth was he babbling about? You felt a wave of affection wash over you that felt completely foreign.

“What are you doing to me?” you ask, knowing he was going to interfere. Midnite had warned you in his first orders when he'd been whispering in your ear.

“Helping,” John answers cryptically before you feel an almost overpowering sense of heartbreak.

“Stop it!” you shout out.

“Never,” John hisses fiercely, pressing his free hand to hold your wrists together more tightly. “You're Star. You're my fiancé. Your soul is the colour of sunshine. You love it when I kiss that spot in between your neck and shoulders. You love nothing better than eating pizza and watching terrible movies. You left everything behind for me so I am never going to stop this because you're mine. You bound yourself to me. Remember me, love.”

“Please stop!” You're openly crying now, overwhelmed by the emotions that were pouring into your body.

“The first time you met me it were pissing down with rain and then I broke into your house and made meself a bacon sarnie,” John continues, pressing his bruised forehead to yours.

“You said the key was in the lock,” you whisper back, the memory flooding back to you.

“I lied, bit,” John murmurs. “I just really wanted to see you again. The bacon was a bonus.”

“You fucking arsehole,” you laugh. “So you were a stalker.”

“Gorgeous lasses like you don't just fall into me lap every day,” John smiles. “Welcome back, love and I forgive you for snogging Lucifer by the way.”

“Oh right,” you breathe, looking towards the archangel who was still heavily battling the First. “Shit, I forgot I did that.”

“Not as memorable as ol' Johnny then,” John smirks, his ego stroked.

“How did you do that?!” the First roars, seeing you embracing John. “Midnite! You incompetent fool! You assured me she would be a slave!”

“He shouldn't have been able to break the trance!” Midnite booms, trying to stop Amenadiel from ripping his head off.

“Probably to do with their silly little Chains of Binding,” Lucifer laughs. “You were aware they had melded their souls together, weren't you?”

The First looks almost apoplectic with rage but he stays silent.

“Oh you weren't?” Lucifer continues. “Perhaps you didn't think John was capable of being that...
committed to a woman? I certainly didn't but after that little display I can see why he wants to keep the
girl all to himself.”

“Constantine, you little shit!” the First explodes, the very foundations of the throne room shaking
with the noise. “I will kill you!”

“No you won't mate,” John snorts, wrapping his arms around you protectively. “Remember our little
agreement when you cured me lung cancer? You have to keep me alive otherwise all of the Fallen
will go to war over me soul and rip apart Hell....which now means you have to keep her alive too.
Guessing you've not found a loophole for that yet, eh?”

You hear dark snickering in the corner of the room and look to see the Second and Third gazing
gleefully at their leader.

“Silence!” the First bellows to his kin. “I will not be tricked again by a pathetic Englishman!”

“I make that three times now,” John says casually. “Or did you forget when I made you drink holy
water without realising it?”

The laughter from the corner is getting louder now.

“You pathetic excuse for a mortal,” the First hisses. “You may be bound to the girl but I can still cast
her out into the reaches of time.”

“I'll find her,” John shrugs. “Part of the chains idea, ennit? I always know where she is.”

“You may find her John but it will take years and you might not age but she does,” the First taunts,
trying to ignore the Second and Third's obvious mirth.

“Oh I can soon fix that,” Lucifer chuckles before walking up to you. “Give me your hand darling
and no, before you say it John, this is nothing sexual.”

“Better bloody not be,” John mutters.

From the back of the room a sickening pop catches your attention and you see Amenadiel has
succeeded in decapitating Midnite.

“Who says I am now useless?” Amenadiel proudly announces, coming back to rejoin your group. “I
may not have my wings any more but I can still be worthy of Father's love.”

“Yes yes,” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “Very good, Amenadiel but I’m trying to give Star angelic blood
here.”

“That's forbidden!” Amenadiel cries, trying to pull Lucifer away.

“What, because Dad said so?” Lucifer challenges. “I think you'll find he never mentioned anything
of the sort. That was just a silly rule Gabriel made up to stop the lesser angels playing favourites with
the humans.”

“I...I...,” Amenadiel splutters, trying to think up a counter argument but not coming up with one. “I'll
keep the big guy distracted then.”

“Thank you, brother,” Lucifer smiles, patting Amenadiel on the shoulder. “Sterling work with the
voodoo priest by the way. Now buy me about a minute whilst I do this, would you?”

You turned to John, “Is angelic blood going to harm me? I mean....I've seen my soul. It has a
demonic taint. Wouldn't those clash?"

“No, love. Lucifer's an archangel. If anything it'll erase the demonic taint and keep it out. I won't have condemned you to Hell any more,” John says softly before looking at Lucifer. “Do it, Morningstar.”

The sound of intense fighting erupts behind you but you concentrate on Lucifer who deftly slices open his forearm before quickly slicing yours. You yelp in surprise and grimace slightly as he touches the two wounds together and there's the curious sensation of blood being driven up your veins. It feels horribly uncomfortable and all you really want to do is pull away but you stick it out.

“And...done,” Lucifer announces, drawing back. “Well I must say I didn't expect to have so many intimate moments with you today, Star. I'm really quite pleased.”

“I don't feel any different?” you question.

“You won't darling. It's sort of a background thing, you see. You'll age a lot slower now and you'll find your vitality will always be good,” Lucifer explains. “Now shall we get out of this dreary place?”

“Don't need to ask me twice,” you say quickly.

“Amenadiel, we're done. Let's go back,” Lucifer calls, opening the doorway back to the mortal plain. “Come along, Linda would frankly murder me if I left you down here.”

“Linda's spoken about me?” Amenadiel says, delivering one last divine blow to the First before coming over to his brother. “What did she say? I mean...of course, she would. She's a dear friend.”

“Such denial,” Lucifer sighs before pushing the angel through the gateway. “You next you two lovebirds.”

“Not you?” John says in surprise.

“I have one last bit of business,” Lucifer grins wickedly.

John starts pulling you through the gateway and you look back to see the full fury of Lucifer being unleashed now he knows you're not in the blast radius. The throne room shatters into crumbling rocks that rain down upon the Fallen, burying them beneath the rubble.

“Simply hate what you've done with the place,” Lucifer mutters before placing both of his hands on your arse and pushing you forward.

You fall through the portal into the Chandler household again and straight into John's waiting arms as he hugs you tightly.

“Fucking hell love, you scared me,” he whispers against you. “I thought Midnite had you there.”

“I can't believe I hit you,” you murmur, tracing the bruises and swelling on his face. “I'm so sorry, John.”

“Correction, you beat the living shit out of me,” John laughs. “Remind me not to steal the last slice of pizza when you're around.”

“Is that that then?” Lucifer asks. “Family Man all done and dealt with?”

“Aye, mate,” John nods. “The First knows he can't send anyone after her again because her death is
tied to mine and the Family Man can't go after any more people Star loves. It's over.”

John does something you don't expect. He lets go of you and hugs Lucifer tightly.

“I know we have our differences and I hate how much you flirt with me and me missus but thank you, Morningstar. I couldn't have done this without you,” John says firmly. “She's safe and now she'll age with me which I never expected would happen. Thank you.”

“Erm...” Lucifer says bewildered before he returns the embrace. “It's quite alright, Johnny. You do still owe me a favour though.”

“Yeah I know,” John nods, pulling back. “And thanks Amenadiel. You're not such a wanker after all.”

“Ah...thanks?” Amenadiel says awkwardly.

There's a great crashing upstairs and you hear Renee screaming through the floorboards.

“You fucking bastard! You never told me! We've been married for thirty odd years and you never once said, you lying shitbag!”

“That's our cue to go, love,” John says hurriedly. “I've been around Renee long enough to know you get out of the blast zone as quick as.”

You all hurried out of the house and back to the car where Valentine immediately perked up upon seeing you. You all got in, including Amenadiel who squashed his ungainly large build into the backseat much to his chagrin.

“You made it!” Val grins, hugging you fiercely. “I knew you would!”

“It's over Val,” you smile back. “The Family Man's gone. We're safe.”

“I can go home and not worry?” Val asks hopefully.

“Aye mate, you're free as a bird,” John nods from the driver's seat. “Want me to drop you back home, lad?”

“Yeah...thank you. Thank you all so much,” Valentine babbles. “I won't ever forget this.”

Lucifer chuckles handing Valentine a card with his number on it, “I won't forget this either. Well in case you ever want to pick up where we left off, Valentine....”

“Uh...thanks,” Val flushes.

“You know, that makes practically all of this car I've kissed now,” Lucifer muses.

“Not him?” Val nods towards Amenadiel.

“I'm his brother,” the angel replies tersely.

“Oh....” Valentine drifts off.

“And two of them were under the effects of magic at the time,” John snorts to himself.

“Way to boost the Devil's ego, John,” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “She's a better kisser than you are, by the way.”
“You're just saying that to be spiteful,” John winks. “You weren't complaining much at the time, mate. In fact, I think you were begging me to get your kit off.”

Did you just hear that right? John was flirting back now?! It seems Lucifer was perplexed as well because he gives you a strange look before turning back to John.

It was a strange old world where John Constantine was flirting back with the Devil. It definitely was a strange old world where you had a merged soul, angelic blood in your veins and a raft of magic spells to be fair. Your life was so far removed from what it was a year ago that it wasn't even recognisable any more.

You leaned forward and touched John's chain tattoo and you could feel the loving warmth radiating from him. You caught his gaze in the mirror and he gave you that smile that crinkled the corners of his eyes and made the irises sparkle.

“Hands off, Luci,” you smirk. “He's mine.”

(Fantastic little mock up by ManicManips)

Chapter End Notes

So the prompt was 'hypnotism' which I kind of moulded into Papa Midnite controlling the reader :).

Also Brit translation guide:
- To say something is 'champion' means it's amazing/great
- Get your kit off = get your clothes off
The Book of Revelation

Chapter Summary

In the aftermath of the Family Man and the First, you and John reconnect and Lucifer runs an errand to seek an old foe.

Chapter Notes

Hello! Just dropping another chapter down finally! This is more of a breather from the last three chapters which have been pretty relentless on the action.

Warnings: Smut, heavy (and I mean -really- heavy angst), PTSD

Any comments/prompts/private messages/one shots, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com and I do respond to every email :)

Happy reading!

- TLP xx

(I suck at proofreading)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The relief you feel when you walk back into the warehouse after dropping Valentine off is palpable. You survived. You beat the First at his own game by binding your soul. You got revenge for your mum and Roxy. You can't stop grinning at that fact.

“This is where you live?” Amenadiel queries, looking at the interior of the warehouse.

“Rather quaint isn't it?” Lucifer chuckles. “Sort of a Billy Elliot factory vibe.”

“Billy what?” the angel says confused.

“Your knowledge of films and musical theatre is sadly lacking, brother,” Lucifer sighs.

A pair of hands sneak around your waist and spin you about. John is standing there with the biggest smile on his face. You hadn't seen him this relaxed since you'd gotten out of The Dreaming weeks ago.

“Fucking hell you're gorgeous, love,” he purrs catching sight of your beaming grin. “Come 'ere.”

He pulls you in for a deep kiss and you suddenly discover you don't give too much of a shit about the two angels in the room. All your mind is filled with is John's talented mouth.

*No wonder he's so good with it when he talks all the time.*
“I think that's our cue, Luci,” Amenadiel says uncomfortably.

“No no, wait,” Lucifer hushes. “Give me a minute here.”

Reluctantly John breaks away and sighs, pressing his forehead to yours in a gentle bump before looking over at the other two men.

“Sorry lads. It would've been a crime if I didn't snog her that instant. She looked right perfect,” he shrugs.

“Oh don't stop on my account,” Lucifer chuckles.

“Luci!” Amenadiel coughs. “I need to return. I'm supposed to be meeting Linda for....”

“Oh yes?” Lucifer asks, becoming mildly interested. “What are you up to, you dog?”

“A business dinner,” Amenadiel finishes, looking acutely embarrassed.

Lucifer rolls his eyes heavily, “Brother, you're frightfully boring, you know that?”

“Let's go. I think the Constantines need to reconnect,” Amenadiel coughs awkwardly before standing up.

“Well I'll be taking you back and then staying,” Lucifer announces.


“I do have that favour, Johnny,” Lucifer reminds him. “Plus I need to run an errand of my own whilst I'm here. I'll explain when I get back. You do whatever it is you normally do until I return...which I suspect is each other.”

With that maniacal grin, he grabs his brother and frog marches him out of the warehouse before you hear the curious flap of wings and silence falls.

“Oh fuck, get here now,” John groans, pulling you in for a long kiss and then a bonecrushing hug. “Bloody hell, bit. We did it. We got revenge, the First can't come after us and you're no longer condemned. I'd say it's celebration time.”

There's still things you're dwelling on to be honest and John must have sensed it because he leans back and searches your face.

“What's wrong, love?”

“Midnite,” you admit. “Is that all done and dusted too?”

There's a momentary flicker of grimness on John's face before he quells it, “That wanker...no, that's not the last of him. He's like a bloody cockroach. Never stays dead for long. Don't you worry, Star. He's not going to come near us now our alliance is off the table. He may be skilled in the voodoo arts but he knows he's not a match for me in a head on fight of magic, especially now he knows we've got enhanced abilities.”

“Speaking of enhanced abilities, did you see Renee's face when Chas came back to life?” you start giggling.

“Jesus Christ,” John laughs. “That's a picture I'll never get out of me head in a hurry. She'll calm down eventually but I expect she'll be sending me an itemised bill for her front door at some point
soon.”

“We should probably put in an appearance just to calm things down in the future,” you say.

“Yeah...well...not right now,” John dismisses before stroking your hair. “Right now, I'm just content to be happy with me bird and maybe shag her brains out when the coast is clear of angels.”

“Ever the charmer,” you roll your eyes.

“Not very fair, love,” John pouts in that mock way he always does and flashes you the puppy dog eyes. “I'm romantic in me own way, aren't I?”

“Well proposing and then soul binding I suppose is a grand romantic gesture coming from you,” you tease.

“Oooo you little tart!” John huffs in fake annoyance before he starts tickling you until you can't breathe any more.

“Aright alright!” you cry before jumping on John so he has to catch your thighs whilst you wrap your arms around him. “God, I love you John.”

“I know you do, lass,” John smiles, holding you against him. “I love you too. You know it's funny. Never really said any of this sort of shite to girls before. Always been too afraid but with you...I don't know. It just kinda rolls off me tongue before I can get too embarrassed over it.”

“That just means you're comfortable around me...or you're too old to care any more,” you joke.

“Right, you little madam!” John says, before carrying you to the bedroom and dumping you on the mattress. “You're in for it now!”

The tickle war you have goes on for an age until it slowly morphs into a different kind of need, the need you only get after experiencing life or death situations. First thing is first though.

“John, you need healing,” you say, breaking out of his arms. “Before you try to get in my underwear that is.”

“I'm fine, love, promise,” your banged up Scouser protests but you know better than that.

“Bollocks are you fine,” you say, pushing him to lie down. “You look worse than when you had that bar fight with Sweeney.”

“Shows you how lightly he punched me then,” John mutters, his pride bruised.

“Shut up,” you say, planting a soft kiss on his lips. “Quicker I heal you the quicker we can have fun.”

“Well get on with it, lass,” John smirks, smacking your arse hard with both of his hands. “Lucifer's coming back any moment.”

You start chanting the words once you place your hands on his chest, finding it much easier this time to direct your energy into John's injuries. His bruises fade, his cheek heals where it had split open, his bottom lip sews back together, his muscles rejuvenate and his black eye recedes. You expected to instantly want to fall asleep but curiously all you feel is a slight weakness in your legs and they start shaking as you straddle John.

“Oi,” John laughs. “Making your legs shake is my job, not yours. Lemme show you.”
He deftly rolls you under him and starts placing languid kisses in the crook of your neck, his stubble scraping your skin in a pleasant way. You involuntarily shiver and you can feel his smirk without seeing it. You also feel the hardness in his trousers as he presses up against you, grinding ever so slightly in a way that he knows drives you mad. You can't help but writhe against him to gain some friction.

“I love feeling you react to me,” he husks as he gently nips your skin with his teeth. “Best bloody feeling in the world.”

You look up at John and happen to look past also to see Lucifer staring with intense interest at the scene.

“You're were quicker than we expected,” you say and John lets loose a frustrated huff into the pillow before he gets off you and looks to Lucifer.

“You're timing's shit, mate,” he says nonchalantly, resting one of his arms behind his head.

“I told you before, John, no need to stop on my account,” Lucifer chuckles. “You looked like you were just getting into it. Incredible build up to foreplay and such...”

“Yes well, I like to take me time,” John shrugs.

You know that to be infinitely true. You'd had plenty of quickies with him but they never quite fully satisfied him. He'd fuck you for hours if you could and those were the days you slept like the dead after. John Constantine could be exhausting when he got in the right mood...not that you were complaining.

“And that is very commendable,” Lucifer nods. “Something as exquisite as Star needs proper attention. I certainly realised that after our little trip to Hell.”

You're half expecting John to go ballistic about Lucifer's reference to your kiss but to your surprise he just laughs and sparks up a cigarette.

“Aye mate, that she does. She drives me fucking wild,” John says affectionately, smiling at you.

Even Lucifer is taken aback at the lack of aggression.

“Are you sure you're feeling alright, Johnny?” he asks. “Normally you'd be trying to gouge my eyes out about now.”

“Well...” John says, mulling it over as he takes a long drag. “It's easier not to lose me temper when I'm not stressing about keeping everyone alive. Plus, I've just had the biggest hat trick win in history. I'm happy, pal, I really am. That's why I don't give two shits what me missus did when she was under a spell.”

“Well I never,” Lucifer murmurs before the demented grin returns and he glances down pointedly at John's trousers. “I can definitely see you're happy.”

Still John doesn't rise to the bait.

“Can you blame me?” he shrugs. “There's a beautiful lass in me bed.”

“Can't say that I can,” Lucifer nods. “You know, Johnny, I'm really loving this new casual side of you. It's very relaxed and free.”
“Domesticated life, mate,” John snorts before taking another long drag. “Suits me just fine.”

“Did you need something, Lucifer?” you ask, trying to deflect away from the weird direction this seemed to be heading in.

“Ah yes, my errand. Well, since the First had nothing to do with the Sinnerman...and thanks for the mix up on that by the way John....there might be one person who knows why he's here. He might also know who dumped me in the desert and gave me back my infernal wings.”

“And this person's in England?” you press.

“Was. I'm not entirely sure he's still here now. Last I heard he'd moved up from London and started his own gentleman's club up in the North. Apparently it's easier to buy up vast amounts of land here,” Lucifer continues.

John sits up a little more, leaning forward with a wry expression, “Please tell me you're not trying to find who I think you're trying to find because he's been long dead.”

“You of all people should know death doesn't stick too well with certain individuals,” Lucifer retorts. “I believe he goes by 'The Snob' here.”

Now John's calm demeanour evaporates and he looks pissed off, “Are you seriously telling me Gabriel survived the First and has been living near me fucking doorstep for god knows how long?”

“Well if Amenadiel's information is accurate then yes,” Lucifer nods.


“Put it this way, love. Last time I had a real run in with Gabriel I tricked him into fucking a succubus so he'd lose his divinity. He's not me biggest fan,” John murmurs.

“And how I laughed,” Lucifer chuckles. “Sterling work with that egotistical bastard. I took great joy in seeing him fall from grace.”

“Is there anyone that doesn't want to kill you?” you smirk to John.

“That one,” John points forward to Lucifer. “And I'm hoping you.”

“I only want to kill you on the days where you steal my ice cream,” you smile. “Apart from that, you're safe.”

“As amusing as your domestic banter is, can we get back to Gabriel please?” Lucifer interrupts. “The information I have is that he runs a country club in Cheshire. Now I need you to find it so I can pay my darling brother a visit.”

“Is that your favour then, Morningstar?” John asks, stubbing his cigarette out in the ashtray beside the bed.

“Goodness no!” Lucifer laughs. “This is just my errand. No, Johnny Boy, the favour will be a lot more fun, trust me.”

You didn't really like the sound of that somehow and it appears neither did John because he's frowning heavily.

“So you want me to do some detective work for free, is that it?” John challenges.
“Did I or did I not give your paramour my own blood to keep your little relationship together for longer?” Lucifer raises his eyebrow. “I didn’t have to do that John. Angelic tainted humans are more trouble than they’re worth.”

“Fine, fine. Point made,” John concedes, holding up his hands. “I’ll help you find sodding Gabriel then but I’m not going anywhere near him.”

“Wonderful,” Lucifer purrs. “Well hop to it then.”

The Devil doesn’t apparently see the pillow that’s thrown at full speed at his face because the second it hits, he blusters, his eyes wide.

“Really?! There was no need for that!” he says. “Unless this is some kind of strange bedroom practice you have going on?”

“Don’t get your hopes up, mate,” John snorts, getting off the bed and stalking out into the living room. “Not about to have a sexy pillow fight with the Devil.”

“You’re missing out,” Lucifer croons in a sing song voice.

“Star, make us a brew love?” John calls from the other room. “If I can’t shag you I’m gonna need a good cuppa to concentrate.”

“I’ll even get you a biscuit to go with it,” you laugh, getting up and padding out to the kitchen.

“Ughh, yes, you are fucking magical,” John groans. “I’m definitely marrying the right bloody woman.”

Once you made tea, you bring it out to see John furiously studying his laptop with Lucifer flicking through one of John’s spellbooks. You place the tea and the small tray of biscuits down and John lets out a moan of pleasure at the sight before he pulls you onto his lap and gives you a quick peck on the lips.

“I don’t deserve you in the slightest,” he laughs. “But I’ll bloody take advantage of it.”

You lean in and whisper into his ear, “When Lucifer’s gone you can take advantage of me all you like.”

“Don’t,” John rasps, his tongue darting out slightly to wet his lips. “You’re such a bad girl.”

“I thought you liked that,” you wink before moving next to him on the sofa.

John just narrows his eyes at you and exhales sharply, trying to steady himself. As mean as it was, you loved tormenting him like this and you half expected he enjoyed it too.

“There’s a lot of country clubs in Cheshire, Lucifer,” John says, once he’s gotten himself back on the task. “How am I meant to know which one he’s running? You got a timeline of when he moved up here?”

“It'll be the one for only the very wealthy and elite,” Lucifer says.

“It's Cheshire,” you say bluntly. “There's a lot of wealthy and elite country clubs.”

“Fine,” Lucifer sighs. “It has to be in the last ten years or so from what Amenadiel has told me.”

“See that would be useful information to be told in the first bloody instance,” John huffs. “Would’ve
thought with all the detective work you've been doing you would've picked up a few basic tricks.”

“Now that was a low blow, Johnny,” Lucifer chides. “Perhaps Detective Decker simply doesn't show me these basics because that's her remit.”

“So you're saying you're a jobsworth?” you interject which elicits raucous laughter from John.

“Sorry?” Lucifer says confused.

“Learning the basics is 'more than your job's worth','” you explain, trying your best to suppress the smile forming.

“Oh very funny,” the archangel huffs, before sitting back in the sofa more. “I could go off you very easily you know, Star.”

“No you won't,” you smirk. “You're too curious to know what I'm like in bed.”

Lucifer lets out a small chuckle, “Touché, darling.”

“Are you quite done flirting, lass?” John says with an amused eyebrow. “Or do I need to remind you whose missus you are?”

“Just singing my own praises,” you giggle. “I'm allowed to be egotistical everyone once in a while. I learned that from you.”

“That's me girl,” John says fondly giving you a sloppy kiss on the neck. “Now, I think I've got it. The Cambridge Club. Prick didn't even change the name when he moved it. That'll be where you'll find Gabriel.”

“Wonderful,” Lucifer claps his hands. “I am alright to borrow your car now, aren't I? I don't imagine appearing in the place will do me any favours...”

“Go ahead, mate. Insurance is in some poor random bugger's name,” John shrugs. “Keys are in the visor.”

“Many thanks,” Lucifer cordially nods before standing up. “I'll set off now if you'll write the address down for me and I can leave you to your rekindling.”

“No problem,” John says, grabbing some paper and writing down the information. “Much appreciated if you don’t mention me name to Gabriel as well.”

“John, I have much better things to do than talk about you to other people,” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “Goodbye for now you two lovebirds. I'll return when I have some answers.”

“Later mate,” John nods and you wave Lucifer off as he exits the warehouse.

The second the door shuts, you're toppled over by John who immediately climbs on top of you.

“Now then...I believe a certain someone said I can take advantage,” he smirks.

“Well that didn't take you long,” you laugh. “On the sofa?”

“Hmm, lemme think,” John purrs, running his hands down your body. “Is there a place I haven't fucked you yet?”

To be honest you don't really think there is one left. You and John had practically been in every
corner of your home.

“Not that I can think of, unless there's a way to get on the roof,” you giggle.

John looks like he's seriously considering it for a moment before he pulls you up and puts you over his shoulder, carrying you into the kitchen and setting you on one of the units.

“No roof top escapades but how about we reclaim this kitchen since your mate spoiled it a little...” he says, giving you a raised eyebrow.

“You mean since Lucifer almost had sex in it?” you smirk.

“Yeah, that,” John laughs before he pulls you to the edge of the counter top, his hips flush with yours.

The small roll of his pelvis garners a small moan from you at the sensation and it takes John precisely one second before his hands are digging into your hair and his tongue is snaking into your mouth.

It's not like it's been particularly long since you last had sex with him it's just...well the ritual was an entirely different kind of circumstance and right now all you wanted was your carnal warlock who was currently kissing lower and lower down your chest...

**

John loved those little hitched breaths you did when he mouthed at your skin. God they were bloody addictive! He wanted so badly to rip your shirt off you but he restrained himself to just pushing you back slightly so he could lift the fabric and gently nip at your stomach. That seemed to earn him a small jerk of your muscles and your hands started pulling at his hair.

Fuck.

_Take it slow, Johnny Boy. Draw it out._

It was difficult though. When he painstakingly peeled your top off he could feel the involuntary shudder you did which travelled right down your torso. Sometimes John didn't know how he kept his patience around you. Sure he'd seen your body many times by now but he could never get enough of it.

_I'm the luckiest bastard that ever lived._

With a well practised snap of one hand, your bra was loose and he slowly pulled it off, kissing where the straps had been only moments ago. You apparently got impatient because you pulled him up by his tie into a fierce kiss before you roughly yanked the knot free and threw the scrap of material somewhere.

“Stop fucking about, I need you,” you said in that voice where you dropped an octave, clearly lost in your lust.

“You're gonna have to wait,” he grinned and he took great enjoyment in the small whine that came out of your mouth. “Since you were such a bad girl earlier.”

Bloody hell he loved that little pout you did when you didn't get your own way!
In one fluid motion he deftly undid your jeans and slid them off your legs, leaving you in just your underwear.

“Don't I get a show?” you huffed, as he held both your forearms to stop you from groping him.

“Oh, you wanna see Ol' Johnny naked that badly?” he winked. “Come on then, lass, tell me.”

He watched as you bit your lip, the flush of embarrassment now reddening your cheeks. There was a definite twitch in his boxers which he pressed against you and he could physically see your resolve crumble.

“Strip for me, Johnny,” you all but whispered.

Well he wasn't going to argue with that.

“Since you asked so nicely,” he grinned, unbuttoning his shirt and letting it fall by his feet.

The second it was off his shoulders, you were clutching his waist to bring him closer to you and kissing along the large scar above his heart. For some reason that was your favourite one to trace...well...along with the one just above a certain area...

*God, how is she so good at that?! Fuck me...*

“Can't get me trousers off if you keep doing that, love,” he gently reminded you, to which he felt your fingers unbuckling his belt and the button suddenly release on his trousers as they fell to the floor also. “Bloody hell lass! You're certainly eager, aren't you?”

“I told you,” you said, regaining that cheeky twinkle in your eyes. “I need you.”

“Hmmm, I need to test that statement,” he smirked.

He let his fingers trail over your underwear and felt the dampness soaking through the cotton. Jesus Christ, he had no idea why he had this effect on you but he wasn't going to second guess it. When you subconsciously bucked against his touch, he knew you were beyond ready for him.

“Tell me what you want, lass,” he husked, keeping that teasing touch going.

“John if you don't fuck me right now I'm gonna throw you on the floor and fuck you myself,” you hissed.

*Shit. That's a tempting offer....*

He hooked his fingers into your underwear and tore, the fabric splitting easily.

*Jesus, must be the enhanced strength!*

Once he'd discarded the useless scraps somewhere, he felt you palming him through his boxers, curling your fingers around the shape of his cock. You were definitely eager. Maybe all this bloody flirting around Lucifer had worked you up somewhat or maybe it was a situation like after you'd lost your mum.

“First things first, right?” he joked, placing his hand over your stomach.

The anti-fertility spell. He'd spent a few nights researching that one. It was meant to be used as a get out clause for ritual sacrifice but this was a *much* better purpose for it.
There was a small green glow that settled on your skin before sinking into the flesh and you shifted a little.

“Are you alright, bit?” he asked, watching your face intently for any signs of discomfort.

“Yeah, just felt a little weird,” you admitted.

“Good weird or bad weird?” he pressed. He needed to know if you were comfortable with it.

“Just weird,” you answered, not looking particularly perturbed.

“Just don't want any side effects,” he mumbled, taking his boxers off. “And we don't need any mini Constantines right now.”

_Bollocks! Why did you say 'right now' you fucking bellend?! She's gonna freak out!_

If you'd heard that part you didn't let on as you positioned yourself on the countertop ready, hooking one leg around his waist to pull him back to you.

_Mind back on the task, Johnny Boy._

The second he pushed himself into you all thoughts of his minor embarrassment went out of his head. All he could concentrate on now was how tight you were, the way your head dropped back as he filled you to the brim and the obscene moan that echoed around the kitchen.

“Fucking hell I love that sound,” he grunted.

“Then make me make it again,” you rasped.

_Oh love, you have no idea what you do to me..._

The second he started picking up his thrusts you started moving your hips in a rhythm with him to get him deeper. Something in him just snapped at that and he wrapped an arm around your waist to crush you to him whilst another hand gripped your hair so he could kiss you without interruptions. He needed to be as close to you as possible. He didn't know why but it felt fucking good.

There was a jolt of sensation as you guided his hand from your hair to the back of your neck that almost made him lose it right there.

_What the bloody hell was that?!_

You must have felt it too because you clenched tightly around him in such a way that he had to bite his lip viciously to keep himself steady.

“Was that...” you asked, eyes wide and pupils blown. “Fuck, I touched the tattoos together just now, didn't I?”

So that's what that was. John had experienced a woman's arousal first hand and bloody hell was that strong!

“Let's not do that again,” he laughed. “Fuck me, nearly ended me that did.”

This wicked little smile crossed your face and John instantly knew he was in trouble. He knew that deviant expression all too well.

“What's the matter, Johnny?” you cooed, rolling your hips slightly so you thrust against him. “Can't
take it?"

The challenge got to him and he pulled out of you before scooping you up and putting you on the floor where he pinned both of your wrists down, touching the skin together. Instantly he felt the foreign flood of lust mingling with his own.

“Just needed a change in position is all,” he smirked, noticing how your breathing was getting shallower with the skin contact. “I do hope you can take it after all that mouthy shit, madam.”

“Stop fucking talking,” you panted and John knew he'd regained the upper hand. “For the love of god, just fuck me!"

John laughed to himself. You certainly were no lady when it came to sex. He did have to admit though, he found the string of swearing very attractive for some reason.

He gave you no ceremony as he drove into you roughly again, keeping his hands intertwined with yours. It was taking everything he had to hold back his impending release but he couldn't let it end that prematurely so he let go of one of your arms and found your clit with his fingers. Every jolt of your body as he skipped delicate circles over you, he felt.

Bloody hell, this is the best bloody training I'm ever going to get in how to please you!

He could tell from the sensations he was experiencing exactly how much pressure was needed, how fast and what patterns to trace on you.

“John, move!” you cried, your fingers scrabbling against his arms for something to hold on to.

He knew you were close now and he allowed himself to start thrusting again. His rhythm was sloppy and all over the place but he was too caught up in the fervour to care that much.

Just before he came, he leaned over and kissed you deeply.

“I bloody love you, Star,” he said hoarsely.

Experiencing two orgasms at once was not something John had ever imagined would happen when he first started studying magic. It was overwhelming to the point where he saw the edge of his vision blurring out and darkening and could only hear the echoey breaths of himself and you.

One sentence made it through his haze though.

“I love you, John Constantine. I'll love you forever.”

Just what the hell had he done to deserve you?

Fuck it, I'm marrying you as soon as I can, love. I'm not waiting around for the next ball of shit to drop on us. I mean....everyone keeps calling us 'the Constantines' anyway right?

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You didn't want to move.

Whatever the fuck that was that had just happened you were utterly utterly spent. You were just
lying there with John on top of you, cradling him in your arms as you both regained your composure. You could've happily stayed there for hours, just stroking his hair softly and humming one of your old band songs.

“Love?” John murmurs from somewhere in between your breasts. “Let's sod off to a registry office soon, yeah? Or we can elope to Gretna Green or whatever.”

“Are you that eager to get another ring on my finger?” you laugh. “Not content with owning a bit of my soul?”

“Hey, the soul binding is only a declaration to Heaven and Hell. I need another way to let the other pricks of the supernatural world know you're mine,” he smiles.

“And there's my possessive Scouser,” you giggle to yourself. “I was wondering where he'd gone.”

“Oi!” John says, looking up from your chest. “Just because I'm being lenient with Lucifer doesn't mean anyone gets to have a go at flirting with me bird.”

“You're cute,” you grin, kissing the top of his head.

“I think you'll find I'm extremely handsome and spectacularly sexy,” he corrects you with a cheeky wink.

You just roll your eyes before your mind casts back to something John had said earlier.

“What did you mean by 'right now' anyway?” you ask and immediately he becomes tense. You definitely said the wrong thing. “Sorry, forget I said anything.”

“This is not a good conversation to have with me, lass,” he murmurs.

“It's fine, forget it,” you urge, eager not to bring the mood back down.

John buries his face in your skin for a moment, inhaling the lingering scent of your perfume before he speaks again and he doesn't lift his head back up.

“I always thought it'd be nice to get married someday if I found the right woman,” he starts and he grasps onto your hands for emotional support. “I found that woman in you love but...I never really asked you what your opinion on children was which was a pretty big mistake in hindsight. Kinda a thing I should've known right?”

Your breath stilled in your lungs. John was asking your opinion on having kids?! Was this in a sense of he wanted them or never wanted to have any? You'd honestly never thought too hard about the subject.

“What's your opinion?” you ask tentatively.

“Frightens me to fucking death,” he mutters. “What if my enemies came after them? Perfect bloody excuse to break me...and....and what if I turned into me dad? Some abusive bastard who can't keep his temper in check?”

“John you'll never be your dad,” you assure him and you catch him out of the corner of your eye toying with the cigarette burn marks on his torso where his dad had stubbed them out on him so many years ago. “Look, I'm still pretty young here. I don't know how I want my life to go so if you never want kids, that's ok and if it's a maybe, that's ok too.”
“It's such a mindfuck,” John hisses, squeezing your hands tightly. “I never ever entertained the bloody thought until you came into my life. Domestic life has never ended well for me as you know. I got so jaded with it all I thought it was never even a possibility for me because who the fuck would want to love someone like me when all I cause is death and chaos?”

“Apparently this muppet right here,” you laugh and despite himself John chuckles slightly before kissing your chest.

“God, I want it all with you, Star,” he sighs. “I want marriage, I want the option of a family someday, I want the closest thing to a blue collar life I can get.”

You're genuinely touched by his words. John rarely opens up this much and it must be a really big step for him to admit what he truly wants. You can't also help but feel a pang of sadness for him too that his whole life has been one big war against the evils of the universe. No wonder he practically melts when you cook him a dinner like a regular couple would do.

“Then let's get married soon,” you nod, clutching him tightly. “Step one at least, right? The other stuff can just fall into place as is.”

John finally lifts his head, meeting your gaze and you can see the insecurity plastered all over his face, “Why the hell do you love me, Star? I'm such a broken mess.”

“You're asking me this now after we've melded souls?” you say with a raised eyebrow and he chews his lip anxiously. “You're not broken, John. You're the most kind, funny and roguishly handsome man I've ever been with and the most put together.”

“Fucking hell,” John laughs in slight relief, defaulting to his humour to deflect from his nervousness. “You must have dated some right tossers, love or did you pick your lads straight from the asylum?”

“Oh fuck off,” you smile, ruffling his hair. “Just accept you're not getting rid of me, will you?”

“Aye lass, I can happily accept that,” he grins, the tension leaving his body.

A loud knock at the door startles the both of you and John hurriedly disengages himself from you before rapidly putting clothes on.

“Bet that's Lucifer,” he mutters.

“At least we finished this time,” you joke, standing up and feeling the wetness running down your legs.

John looks at your thighs and this tiny proud smirk crosses his face before he chucks you some kitchen roll.

“You sort yourself out, bit. I'll go open the door,” he says, striding out in just his trousers.

You quickly clean up and redress in record time. The last thing you needed was Lucifer seeing you fully naked.

Yelling quickly catches your attention and you run out to see what's happening, fearful that maybe the First has already found a loophole in his agreement with John.

Lucifer is indeed back but he's not standing there alone. A tall blonde man who just reeks of self importance is almost nose to nose with John as they square off with each other.
“Brother!” Lucifer exclaims, trying to pull the blonde man back.

Brother? Fuck, this must be Gabriel!

“Get the fuck out of my house!” John roars. “You're not welcome here!”

“I think you'll find I have a bone to pick with you, Constantine,” Gabriel hisses and even his voice just riles you up. It's like every obnoxious posh mummy's boy tone rolled into one.

“And you!” John yells at Lucifer. “I told you I wanted nothing to do with it!”

“He followed me, John!” Lucifer protests. “Believe me, I didn't ask him to accompany me!”

“And to think you were just mere towns away from me this whole time,” Gabriel growls. “I could've quashed you years ago!”

“Like to see you bloody try you dewinged twatbasket!” John spits.

“Do not test me, Constantine!” Gabriel says, edging ever closer. “You'll find I'm not the pathetic mortal you think I am.”

“Been stealing magic then, is that it?” John scoffs.

“The lesser of our kind have donated their divinity,” Gabriel smiles and the expression is horrid.

“And by donated you mean you took it by force,” John surmises. “You're so far gone from Heaven you may as well take Lucifer's job.”

You've never seen Lucifer back away but you have now. He moves away from his brother and comes to stand next to you.

“You must believe me, Star. I didn't mean to bring this upon your doorstep,” he says grimly as he watches John and Gabriel argue.

“Did you even get the information you wanted?” you ask.

“No,” Lucifer mutters. “But he definitely knows something. That much is clear. He wasn't even remotely surprised to see I didn't have my Devil face any more.”

“It's you!” Gabriel exclaims as he looks over to see where his brother had gone.

You don't know what he's talking about for a second until you see his intense gaze boring into you.


“You're not supposed to be here,” Gabriel says with wide eyes.

“And where is she supposed to be?” John challenges, coming to stand in between Gabriel and you.

“Her essence, her soul...it's supposed to still be in Heaven,” he murmurs, unable to tear his eyes away from you.

“What the bloody hell are you babbling about?!” John shouts.

“Brother?” Lucifer asks in confusion. “What are you trying to suggest?”

“She is Father's bargaining chip,” Gabriel points at you. “After Constantine blackmailed him, he
created her in case Constantine ever tried that again.”

“You fucking what?!” John cries. “Are you telling me God made me a woman so I’d stop badgering him to fix his shitfest of a creation?!”

“Brother that is highly ludicrous,” Lucifer agrees.

The look on Gabriel's face told you otherwise. He was deadly serious.

“Your soul should not have come to this plain yet,” he says grimly to you. “Least of all being matured to the age you are now....something must have gone wrong.”

“No no no no!” John mutters, needling his temples with his fist. “So this was all a fucking lie? She's just a bloody peace offering from your deadbeat dad?!”

If ever you were having an existential crisis, it was now. How much free will did you have exactly? Were you always supposed to love John or did that happen naturally? The prospect that you'd been living on a predetermined path made you want to throw up.

“How much of it was real?!” John all but practically screams at Gabriel before grabbing him by his suit jacket lapels and shaking him. “Tell me!”

This shit eating grin appears on the archangel's face and your stomach drops, “That's the question isn't it, John? Did she have free will this whole time or was she specifically made to love you? Oh I'd hoped I could beat your arrogant face in when I saw you for what you did to me but this is soooo much better.”

“You tell him right now,” you growl. “No, you fucking tell me right now. Has every decision I've ever made been my own?”

There's a burst of light and you have to shield your eyes. When you can finally see again, Gabriel's disappeared.

“I'm going after him,” Lucifer announces, squeezing your shoulder. “This is not right.”

With a whirl, he's also gone, leaving you and John just staring at each other.

“No no no no,” John keeps muttering under his breath, his expression devastated. “This is not happening...”

You hadn't even realised until now but tears are streaming down your cheeks.

Has your entire life just been a lie?

Did you really love John?

Chapter End Notes

I hate myself for writing this much angst into a chapter but it was necessary!
Also sex from John's POV is not something I've done in great detail so that was new!

I was thinking of doing a one shot called 'Lucifer's favour' which may heavily lean towards the smut side. What do we think?
You've Taken Everything

Chapter Summary

With one sentence Gabriel has destroyed yours and John's world. Will you ever recover?

Chapter Notes

Howdy guys! Shorter chapter here but I'm away this weekend and wanted to get something out :)

Warnings: Heavy Angst

Any private comments/messages/prompts/one-shot ideas, my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com and my tumblr is theliveshipparagon :D

Happy reading!

- TLP xx

(Standard sucking at proofreading disclaimer)

You were both just staring at each other as both of your worlds crumbled around you.

“This is fucking cruel,” John says, choking up.

“He could have been lying,” you offer but you both know in your heart of hearts that what Gabriel said was the truth.

The awkwardness gets too much for you and you make a movement towards John but he steps back quickly, anger and betrayal in his eyes.

Well that fucking hurt....

“John,” you start but he holds up a hand.

“No,” he shakes his head. “I'm not doing this. I'm not entertaining something that's just been false from the start.”

“I'm just something now?” you yell, your temper getting the better of you. “I'm not a fucking human any more, is that it?”

“You're just an artificial soul on a predestined path,” John hisses, grabbing his hair and yanking it in his frustration. “I can't believe I let me guard down this badly!”
You couldn't believe what you were hearing. In the space of two sentences from a dick of an archangel, John had completely turned his back on you. Sure you may have not had a choice in loving John but surely being self aware now meant you could start again from the beginning? There were just too many intertwined emotions to throw away.

“I'm me, John,” you say, your voice cracking. “No matter who made me. I've always been me. Maybe destiny did put us on a collision course but you heard Gabriel, I wasn't supposed to be here. Maybe that means I was in control of myself the whole time.”

“Bloody shut up!” John shouts as he closes the gap between you and shakes you. “You made me fall in love with you, you made me bind meself to you and you're just some heavenly science experiment with all me favourite things blended together! Just a cheap fucking consolation prize from the All Mighty!”

You've never hit John willingly but you can't help yourself, what he's saying is just unforgivable. Your hand leaves a mark on his face as you stare with hatred into his eyes. He looks completely shocked.

“You selfish cunt!” you scream, completely losing it. “It's not all about you! It's not all about the great fucking John Constantine! I'm trying to deal with the fact I may have never made a choice of my own in my entire fucking life but I'm putting that aside to try and work this out! But you....you just want to piss and moan about how life is unfair to you and woe is fucking me and debasing me to nothing more than atoms in a petri dish! Fuck you!”

You turn on your heels and storm out of the warehouse, slamming the door with all the strength you have. It doesn't make you feel any better at all.

You grab the spare car, turn the engine on and drive. You don't have a particular destination but you just drive somewhere. You needed to be far away from John right now. Maybe you'd never even go back. Maybe you'd just disappear somewhere.

Stupid fucking idea. He'll know where you are.

Then again, would he even care to find you?

You end up in some country park, pulling into a little nook where some ramblers start their hiking journeys. Once you kill the engine, you can't hold back the flood any more and you just sob your heart out over the steering wheel.

How could he say those things to you? After everything you'd shared, everything you'd been through....he was just as bad as the other men you'd dated. When things didn't go his way, he turned. And to think I thought you were the one for me.

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The second you slammed the door, John let loose a burst of energy in all directions. The bookshelves were blasted to splinters and pages of spellbooks rained from the air. The TV shattered. The sofa was thrown into the wall where it bounced heavily before settling upside down.

“FUCK!” he roared at the top of his voice before he fell to his knees.
His perfect girl. The girl he'd hopped across dimensions for, travelled the world for. The girl who'd saved his sorry arse more times than he could count by now. The sweet girl who'd curled around him on long nights and held him close as you both watched movies and shows. The insatiable girl who shagged like it was going out of fashion and he could never get enough of. The girl with attitude who never let him get away with too much bullshit because she had an equally smart mouth when she wanted to use it. The girl who shared all of his normal interests despite a massive bloody age gap. The girl he loved....

How the fuck could this happen?

Why the fuck was this happening?

Fuck Gabriel and his poncy fucking face. If he'd of just said nothing John could've lived in blissful ignorance and now it was all fucked.

He couldn't stop himself from saying those things to you. He'd just defaulted right back to his guarded self, afraid of feeling too much, afraid of being hurt. He'd lashed out and you didn't deserve it. None of this was your fault. You were just some puppet in a cosmic game of 'Piss on Constantine'.

*God why did I say those bloody awful things? I've hurt you so badly, Star. I wouldn't blame you if you never came back.*

And thus was the greatest turmoil he'd ever felt. He hated Heaven's grand design and he hated how they'd even concocted this idea in the first place. John was not a fucking diplomat for Earth to be bribed with promises of a happy ending.

*They can all fuck themselves. Self righteous wankers.*

Then there was the other part of his turmoil. Just because he'd learned what he had, it didn't mean his feelings switched off. He still desperately loved you. He still wanted you. The ache in his chest was almost burning since you'd left.

*I deserved that slap and so much more.*

But if you'd lost your temper that much that you'd physically hit him, John knew you were at the end of your rope and he may have just lost you forever. He couldn't take back the words he'd said.

He reflected in on himself, sat on the floor and cast out his essence, seeking where you were. He wasn't quite sure how this process would work given it was all new to him but he needed to know you were at least safe. He knew you weren't dead because he was still kicking.

*I hope you've gone to Valentine's or maybe even Chas'.*

John heard the rustle of leaves, smelt the rain soaked earth and tasted the scent of petrol. In one swift motion he opened his eyes and saw through yours. You were in a forest by the look of it, maybe somewhere on the Pennine Moors.

And then he felt the emotions.

His chest tightened so hard it was painful and he had to steady himself with his hands to stop himself from collapsing.

Despair. That was the overriding feeling. Despair and betrayal.

*John Constantine, Patron saint of apocalyptic fuck ups....even in love. I kept saying I never deserved*
you and I clearly haven't ever. You're better off far away from me, Star.

John pulled himself out of his trance and out of your body before he realised his cheeks were wet with tears. Once he figured out that, he did something he'd not done since he was a teenager. He openly sobbed. He howled for the world that was ripped away from him.

When he had no more tears left to cry, he crawled to the drinks cabinet and yanked a bottle of gin to his mouth, greedily draining it. He'd never drunk it around you because he was too afraid you'd call it a 'girly' drink. It was just the done tipple back when he was growing up and had since been railroaded by hen parties and coarse drunk women.

You'd probably come up with some terrible insult like 'Next you'll be wanting an umbrella', wouldn't you love?

He drank even more. John wanted to get utterly obliterated on booze, then he wouldn't have to think of you...or maybe he'd just pass out quicker. Either way, he kept going.

It was about twenty minutes later when Lucifer popped back into existence in the living room.

“He got away from me,” the archangel mused to himself before he realised he was speaking to no one. “Oh! Where has everyone gone? I swear I-Good gracious! What on earth happened to you?!”

Lucifer was suddenly at his side, although maybe John had blinked and simply missed the movement. Hands were trying to steady him and he didn't like that at all.

“Piss off, Luci,” John slurred.

“Where's Star?” Lucifer asked, actual concern on his face.

“Gone,” John shrugged, taking another swig of gin. “You can go chase after her for all I care.”

“Far be it from me to be the voice of reason, John, but I think you should be the one to go after her. Maybe when you've sobered up though,” Lucifer murmured. “Why has she left anyway? I thought you two were bound in all the ways the universe can think of? The love to end all loves.”

“It was a bloody fallacy,” John mumbled. “Nothing but your dad having a big cosmic joke at me expense.”

“Well that's hardly her fault is it?” Lucifer pointed out. “She wasn't exactly a willing pawn.”

“I know,” John sighed, burying his face in the crook of his arm and hoping that the room would stop spinning for a second. “But I said some things to her Morningstar, things I can never take back. I felt her, I felt the suffering I'd caused her by saying those things. She's not gonna ever come back for me. I've fucked it up, just like I do with every sodding thing I touch.”

“Your pity party is not becoming John,” Lucifer raised his eyebrow. “And your knowledge of women is woefully underdeveloped at times. She wants you to go after her.”

“I can't,” John whispered. “Not until I know. Not until I know for certain that she had free will.”

“Is it really so important to you?” Lucifer asked.

“Of course it bloody is!” John shouted, startling Lucifer. “Would you want someone to love you just because they were told or because they actually felt it and had nurtured that feeling themselves?”

“I see your point,” Lucifer nodded. “The only place you'll find the answer for that though is up
“Heaven,” John said quietly. “The one plain I can never visit.”

“But she can,” Lucifer prompted. “She's angel tainted. Ask her. The worst that can happen is you keep drinking yourself into a complete mess.”

That just reminded John to take another drag on the bottle before Lucifer snatched it away.

“I'm cutting you off, John,” he said firmly.

“Fuck you, Morningstar,” John hissed. “Since when did you get sensible and boring?”

The archangel looked mortally offended, “Forgive me for trying to make sure you don't kill yourself with cheap spirits, and by extension, Star as well.”

“Give it back,” John demanded, lunging for it but he just ended up grabbing Lucifer's shirt instead.

He was so wrapped up in his self loathing and inferiority complex, keen to put the pain of you leaving behind him that he pulled Lucifer down against him. Lucifer protested, trying to push away but John found his mouth, kissing with an urgent need, a need to feel something else other than utter loss.

“For goodness sake, John!” Lucifer exclaimed, pulling back.

“What? You don't want me any more, Luci?” John tried to tease in a clumsy way.

*Christ, I'm such a shit charmer when I'm pissed.*

“I'd rather have a sober John,” Lucifer said bluntly. “Even the Devil has standards.”

“I'll make it good for you, Morningstar,” John murmured, trailing his hand down the length of Lucifer's body and coming to rest in between his legs.

“John, no,” Lucifer said forcefully. “I'll not be your rebound shag when you've not even lost your paramour yet. You're perfectly free to continue this once everything is sorted and-”

John dived forward, knocking Lucifer to the floor before violently kissing him again.

*It's not her. It's sooo not her but it'll do right now. I just need someone to lose myself in. I just need to not be alone....*

Lucifer was an attentive kisser but it was clear he liked being in control. Unfortunately so did John and it became a battle for dominance, all teeth and tongue as they clashed in sheer ferocity. He could feel his arousal spiking slightly and thanked fuck that he could still get it up even though he was drunk out of his skull. That might have been bloody embarrassing otherwise.

“No!” Lucifer declared, pushing John back. “I'm not doing this, John! Stop it!”

Lucifer easily flipped him over, pinning John to the floor.

“Ooo haven't been on the bottom for a long while but I'm game,” John sloppily smirked.

“I hate what you've done to me,” Lucifer sighed. “I feel like a parent and I don't relish the sensation whatsoever.”
“Not really into that ‘Daddy’ shit, mate,” John laughed. “Stop being so bloody square and get back here.”

With one swift clunk, Lucifer struck John across the head with the gin bottle and John fell unconscious.

*S'pose that's better than fucking the Devil, right Johnny Boy?

Before he truly succumbed to the darkness, he heard the faint melody of music. Dexy's Midnight Runners to be precise.

*We danced to this, didn't we love? When we didn't have a care in the world.*

**

The second the song *Come on Eileen* came on the radio you hesitated, remembering a simpler time. You and John doing terrible ska dancing when you’d had a few to drink and John had uttered the immortal line ‘Surely there must be a porn site called Cum on Eileen right?’

And then you found out there was and couldn't stop laughing for twenty minutes.

*Fuck John, why did you have to break my heart like this?*

You switched the radio off and just rested your head on the steering wheel. You didn't know what to do. John had made it clear he wanted nothing to do with you any more. You were essentially kicked out.

You could go back to your flat. The lease was paid for another two months but you wouldn't have any of your clothes or belongings.

*What choice do I have?*

“Are you asleep?” Lucifer called from next to you and you jumped in your seat, heart hammering wildly.

“Fucking hell, Lucifer!” you hiss, holding your hand over your chest. “You scared me.”

“Not my intention,” he nods his head.

Something was off. Lucifer look perturbed, in fact, he looked rumpled. His immaculate suit was all creased and marred.

“What happened to you?” you ask.

“A great many things,” Lucifer sighs, leaning back in his seat. “My darling brother escaped my clutches although I suspect he's run back to his country club and barricaded himself there. Not like he can return to Heaven presently...”

“Did you fight?” you press.
“Hmm?” Lucifer says absentmindedly.

“Your suit, it's mussed,” you point out.

“Ah...” Lucifer says, in a way that let you know you weren't going to like what he said next. “That'll be the other 'many things'. I returned to your home to find it in complete disarray.”

“What?” you murmur, your face falling.

You mentally kicked yourself for worrying about John's wellbeing when he was such a bastard to you.

“Appears dear Johnny Boy had a temper tantrum and shredded the room,” Lucifer says. “And then dove into the bottom of a gin bottle.”

“I didn't even know he drank gin,” you say.

“He drank a great lot of it,” Lucifer nods. “Never seen the man so despondent. So much whining about you, it really was quite abhorrent.”

“Yeah well...he's made his thoughts quite clear,” you say grimly. “Apparently I'm just a 'something' and an 'artificial soul'.”

“He said that did he?” Lucifer asks gently. “Constantine really is a masochist at times. Loves pushing people away so he can flagellate himself with his own guilt. It's a tiresome cycle. I really thought he'd broken that with you.”

“Guess he'll never change,” you mumble to yourself. “And I was stupid for thinking he really cared.”

“Darling he most definitely cares,” Lucifer says, taking your hand and squeezing it. “A man doesn't rip apart an entire room and drink himself into a crying stupor because he's fine with things.”

“He cried?” you ask, trying to probe for exactly how upset Lucifer thought John was.

“Judging by his appearance I'd say he'd been doing it for a while before I arrived,” Lucifer replies. “I mean, he even tried to throw himself on me. That's how I know he was most certainly hurting over you.”

“He what?!” you yell.

“Yes I was surprised as well,” Lucifer muses. “And I was surprised that I turned him down actually. It's not normally like me.”

“So wait, he was full on trying to have sex with you?” you say, not fully comprehending the situation.

“Kissing plus wandering hands,” Lucifer nods.

Why did that hurt so much to hear? It wasn't like either of you hadn't ended up snogging the archangel at some point but to be told John had actively tried to get off with someone just mere hours after you'd left deepened your feeling of betrayal.

“Don't look like that,” Lucifer hums. “Men are funny creatures. The mere fact he tried to get a leg over so quickly shows how deeply you're entrenched in his mind. He wanted to forget his pain. It really does mean he cares a lot.”
“Why are you here?” you question, suddenly doubting Lucifer's motives.

“Well, I may have knocked John unconscious so I most definitely don't want to be there when he wakes up. Secondly, this is my fault. If I had just left Gabriel alone you would have never known. I want to make this right.”

“It probably would have come out eventually,” you sigh. “I don't blame you, Lucifer.”

“Come here, darling,” Lucifer says opening his arms out wide.

Against your better judgement, you unclip your seat belt and lean across. Lucifer's arms envelop you, one hand stroking your hair gently.

“I will fix this. I swear it to you,” he murmurs against you. “I will discover the truth of what you are and who you are.”

“Thank you,” you whisper, burying your face in his chest, catching the scent of designer cologne.

“You're my friend, Star,” Lucifer says casually. “I don't have many of those, not really. I know I'm incorrigible but you've always been friendly to me and I am rather fond of you. I will do everything in my power to make sure your wellbeing is looked after.”

You can't help the smile that pulls at your lips. Lucifer was a complete sexual pest but he had a good heart underneath all the charm and the selfishness.

At least I have one friend who understands.

“Can you take me back?” you ask. “I need to get my belongings and if John's knocked out this may be the only chance I get.”

“Are you sure you want to?” Lucifer probes. “You're not going to severely maim him or something?”

“He's an arsehole but he doesn't deserve permanent disfigurement,” you joke which earns a small chuckle from the Devil.

“I'm still questioning whether you actually were made for John because you're far out of his league,” Lucifer laughs. “But hold tight. I'll get us back quickly. This vehicle is too slow for my liking.”

You grip onto Lucifer's suit and feel the curious sensation of being squeezed from all angles. It's not crushing but it's not pleasant either. When you open your eyes, you're cocooned in Lucifer's wings.

They really are stunning.

You reach out and touch a feather. God, it's so soft! You half expected it to be similar to bird feathers but it's almost silky under your touch.

Lucifer shudders noticeably, “I'm guessing it's not your intention to arouse me, hmm Star?”

“Uh no?” you say confused.

“Wings are a tad sensitive,” Lucifer says through gritted teeth.

“I'm so sorry!” you stutter, pulling your hands away immediately. “I was just curious. They looked so beautiful.”
“You think they're beautiful?” Lucifer breathes in wonderment. “Truly?”

“Of course,” you nod.

“I knew I liked you,” Lucifer smiles. “Come now, darling. We haven't got long. Grab what you need.”

His wings retract leaving you to see the remnants of the living room for the first time. It looks like a bomb exploded. There’s bits of wood, glass and paper strewn in all corners.

And the actual bomb was lying on the floor, twisted in an odd position, a bottle by his head.

“Terrible isn't it?” Lucifer drawls. “Such a waste of a handsome man.”

Despite every instinct in you telling you to just get on and pack, you walk over to John and untangle his limbs to make him more comfortable before you shove the debris of the sofa cushion under his head.

“Why are you doing that?” Lucifer asks curiously.

“Because I can't help it,” you murmur. “Just like I can't help this.”

You bend over and lightly kiss his mouth, a last goodbye. John stirs in his stupor, subconsciously kissing back before he relaxes again.

“Star,” he mumbles in his daze before your real name passes his lips.

Your heart aches at hearing him say your name. It hurts so much.

“John,” you whisper, pressing a soft kiss to his forehead before getting up and starting to walk to the bedroom.

“No,” John whines in an apparent nightmare and you look back to see his head turn quickly and his brow furrow. “Not her. Don't take her away from me.”

“Come along,” Lucifer murmurs, pushing you into the bedroom. He has the strangest expression on his face.

You just catch the last part of his fevered dream.

“I love her, I love her.”

You have to choke back the sob and you steel yourself, shoving your possessions into suitcases. After a few minutes you have everything you want to take. The rest can just be left behind.

“Are you ready?” Lucifer prompts.

“Just need my coat,” you nod, walking out into the living room again.

You ignore the mumbling warlock on the floor and grab your long coat, accidentally knocking John’s trenchcoat to the ground and items spill out of the pockets.

“Shit,” you hiss, trying to pick them back up.

One hellfire lighter, one pack of Silk Cuts, one pack of... cola cubes?! John was such a secret sweet addict...
A small folded up wad of paper catches your eye and you know you shouldn't pry but you can't help yourself as you peel open the page.

On it, you find a poem, no it's song lyrics. He wrote you a song at some point.

*You fucking adorable shit fucking bastard. Why are you making it so hard for me to shut off my emotions?*

“Shining star,” John slurs, so quiet you almost don't hear it.

The words of his song.

You make a decision you really shouldn't, after everything he's done to you.

You walk back to John and start shaking him.

“What are you doing?!” Lucifer cries. “I thought you wanted to get out of here?”

“Give me a minute,” you say before shaking John some more.

Gradually he opens his eyes, squinting as he adjusts to wakefulness. The second he sees you his pupils blow wide.

“You came back,” he sloppily smiles. “You came back for me, love.”

“Listen to me, John,” you say firmly. “I'm leaving and I just wanted-”

“Don't leave me, Star!” John shouts, a look of absolute terror on his face as he grips your arms that are holding his shoulders. “Please!”

“Let me finish,” you growl and John shuts up for once, shaking his head to clear his alcoholic haze. “I'm leaving and I wanted to tell you I'm going to find out why I'm here and I'm going to find out whether I've had free will the whole time.”

“Lemme go with you, lass,” John says, trying to get up but you push him down.

“No,” you say firmly. “I'm doing this alone. You can sit here and think about what you've said to me.”

“Star, I'm right sorry. I'm a fucking disgrace of a man,” John says, his voice cracking and you see tears forming in his eyes. He brings his forehead to touch yours. “Please forgive me. Please. Don't leave me.”

You hate seeing men cry. For some reason it tugs on your heartstrings more than anything else. So much of your mind wants you to hold him close but the rational portion tells you you need to leave him to sober up properly and talk about this at a later point.

“I need to go,” you say, extracting yourself easily from his fumbling grip. “I'm going to the Cambridge Club.”

“It's not safe,” John pleads.

“She'll have me with her,” Lucifer says. “And you know I will protect her.”

“Sleep, John,” you order.
“You're not going anywhere near Gabriel!” John yells, struggling to get up. “You'll die!”

“You,” you say, casting the spell at John who utters foul swear words before he drops back to the floor like a stone.

“Handy little spell that one,” Lucifer purrs in appreciation. “Now, I believe we have an appointment with my brother?”

You grab a blanket from the ruins of the sofa and place it over your warlock, ruffling his wild blonde hair before stepping back towards Lucifer.

“Let's go. I've got a few questions I want answering,” you growl, taking the archangel's arm.

With that, you disappeared from the warehouse, leaving John alone.

Chapter End Notes

John is such a disaster of a human being but we still love him <3

Brit term:
Ska Dancing - A form of dancing where you kick your legs out a lot (See 'Madness' videos)
Get a leg over - Have sex with
Cola Cubes - Cola flavoured sweets/candy

Dexy's Midnight Runners - Come on Eileen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASwge9wc-eI
John woke up with the most wicked hangover he could remember for a long while. His whole head was pounding as he moved to the side, his blurry vision swimming gently before it realigned back in focus.

“Jesus...fuck,” he groaned.

Getting hammered was not one of his better ideas, especially not on gin. He knew what that stuff did to him.

“Love,” he called out blindly. “Stick the bloody kettle on. I'm gonna need a fucking good brew.”

When he got no response he reached to the side of him where you usually slept but was only met with what felt like...carpet.

Shit, had he slept on the floor?

He opened his eyes properly and saw he was indeed on the living room floor, one of the sofa cushions under his head and a blanket thrown over him. He could also see a giant mess.

What on earth had happened last night?

“Star?” he called out again before noticing your coat wasn't on the peg next to his.

You must have gone out for groceries and that was why you'd obviously made him more comfortable. John felt mildly embarrassed that you'd had to take care of him. He must have made a spectacle of himself.

He got up, regretting every inch of his ascent before he swayed unsteadily and clutched onto the
bedroom door frame nearby. From here, he got a good look at the fact the room was utterly trashed beyond recognition.

“What in the bloody hell did I do last night?” he muttered to himself.

He stumbled forward into the bedroom, single minded in his purpose to reach the bathroom where he greedily drank water from the sink tap before splashing his face. It helped him feel mildly more awake.

*Funny how water tastes so good when you're nursing a hangover.*

After cleaning himself up a bit, he walked back out into the bedroom and something made him stop in his tracks. Something was off. He couldn't quite put his finger on it but somewhere in the back of his addled brain, warning bells were sounding.

It clicked when he looked at the clothes rail and saw about seventy percent of your clothing missing as well as a couple of suitcases. The only reasonable explanation for that was....

*Did she leave me?*

Immediately John felt like being sick. The mere notion that you'd just abandoned him made him extremely panicked.

*What the hell did I do to make you leave, Star?*

He really must have catastrophically ruined your relationship because you'd stuck by him through so much other shit previously.

“Ughhh,” he vocalised, pawing at his face, trying to remember what had happened.

There was no use in trying. The gin was a pretty good eraser of memories and only magic could get them back now.

He grabbed the mirror off the wall and laid it on the bed before waving his hands over it and muttering the necessary spell. It instantly become a viewing platform for the previous night and the more John watched, the sicker he felt.

“You're just a heavenly science experiment!” he watched himself say.

Oh fuck.....Jesus fucking Christ.....

*Well done, Johnny Boy. Now you know why she left you...because you're a colossal selfish prick.*

He saw himself decimating the living room and drinking himself into a stupor and almost looked away, the memory clearly over before he watched Lucifer appear in the surface of the mirror and...

“Oh bloody hell!” John groaned as he saw himself snogging the Devil and attempting to get into his trousers. “Christ, I'm such a fuck up.”

Not even an hour after you'd walked out and he was already trying to get someone under him...

*What a classy bastard I am.*

He kept watching, curious to see if anything else had occurred and his breath caught in his throat to see you appear back with Lucifer, packing your things together. You kissed John on the floor and that gave him some hope that you weren't completely done with him yet. That hope intensified when
you spilled the contents of his coat and found the song he'd written so long ago because he saw a slight smile pull at your lips.

*Glad you liked it, love.*

Then you woke him up to tell him you were going after Gabriel and not three seconds later, John was scrambling off the bed and stuffing himself into his coat, the mirror long forgotten.

*Shit shit shit! Why did you go after him?!*

He took a second near the door to steady himself and cast his essence inwards before flinging it out, searching for you. When he opened his eyes and saw through yours, you were seemingly pinned down to the floor with Gabriel grinning above you.

“Oh no you fucking don’t!” John snarled, breaking the link and throwing his remaining energy against the wall to create a portal.

John hated the things to death. They were unpredictable, terrible to travel through and would just as likely close on you, trapping you in the Void but he didn’t have time to worry about the finer details. You were in danger and he was not about to let you face it alone.

After all, he still loved you, no matter where you came from.

**

“I hate this place already,” you grimace as you appeared with Lucifer in a storage cupboard that was bigger than your bathroom at the warehouse.

“Nothing wrong with a bit of opulence,” Lucifer chides. “My brother is not called ‘The Snob’ for no reason, Star.”

“I couldn’t live a lifestyle like this,” you muse, peering out of the door to see if the coast was clear. “Getting anything you wanted? You stop valuing things after a while.”

“Darling, we’re not here for a lesson on ethics and the class system,” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “Now are we going to take action or did you have something else in mind for this cupboard considering you are now mercifully single?”

You look at Lucifer who just chuckles at your bemused expression.

“Only a bit of humour to lighten the mood,” he grins. “Too much angst in one day for my liking. Shall we?”

He takes your arm and loops it through his own before guiding you outside and walking with purpose, like the two of you belong here.

“Mr Morningstar,” the male receptionist coos. “So delighted to welcome you again. You have a guest?”

“She's my plus one,” Lucifer nods to you.

“She is...ah...underdressed for the club,” the receptionist casts his judging eye over you. “I'm sorry
Mr Morningstar but we do not allow...uh...distressed jeans. Part of the dress code.”

“Yes I do understand,” Lucifer says cordially. “Pardon us for a moment if you will and we shall return with something more suitable.”

He walks you out of the entrance before he spots a woman walking in.

“Hellooo,” he purrs, checking her out. “I think I may have found some suitable clothes for you, Star.”

“Oh please don't,” you sigh, knowing what's coming.

“Stay there,” he says before wandering after her.

You try your best to think of anything but what's obviously happening behind the garages but the sounds keep sneaking over your way. You settle for jamming your fingers in your ears to block out the noise.

*God, do all women sound this obnoxious when having sex?*

You lost track of time until you feel a tap on your shoulder and you turn to see Lucifer looking slightly more rumpled with his usually immaculate hair a little more fluffed up.

“Are you quite done?” you say.

“For now,” he winks. “Takes a lot more than one time to satisfy my needs, darling.”

“Spare me the details,” you sigh. “Did you get the clothes?”

“I always deliver,” Lucifer grins, producing a bundle. “Now go change and I'll give her your clothes. Poor mite shouldn't have to suffer in the cold.”

“Fine,” you nod before disappearing behind a pillar and stripping quickly, pulling on the fabrics which you'd term as 'Daddy bought me six ponies' kind of fashion.

Jodhpurs, an angora jumper and a fitted tweed gillet...you bet you looked completely ridiculous. You finished off your little ensemble by plaiting your hair, just to sell the look.

“I'm ready,” you call out and look to see that Lucifer had been watching the entire time. You just shrugged at this point. He'd seen you in less.

He takes your clothes and vanishes for a second before coming back and you attempt your grand entrance again.

“Ah much more suitable,” the receptionist says. “Do go on in.”

You walked with a single minded purpose. You just wanted to reach the social room because you knew that's where a prick like Gabriel would be. You knew he'd want to be on prominent display given the attitude he'd showed you already.

And you were right.

He was sat in a high backed velvet armchair, swirling expensive liqueur and toasting his feet by a roaring fire place, laughing about some inane thing. When he clocked you, his whole posture stiffened for a second before he relaxed and a shit eating grin appeared on his face.
“I would like a private word,” you open with, keen not to make a scene in front of the other patrons.

“Would you now?” Gabriel purrs, eyeing you intensely as he takes a sip from his crystal cut glass. “I'm afraid my time is rather precious.”

“Brother,” Lucifer says in warning.

“Oh don't be dramatic, Luci,” Gabriel rolls his eyes. “You always were such a diva. Dad's favourite son...”

“As much as your family issues are entertaining, I'm afraid I must insist,” you press, beyond the point of caring about your own safety.

“Don't leave the girl waiting, old boy,” one of Gabriel's compatriots chuckles. “I certainly wouldn't leave her wanting if she came up to see me.”

“If I must,” Gabriel protests, rising from his seat and ushering you into a private room before locking the door behind you and Lucifer.

Once inside, Gabriel's whole demeanour changes and he looks positively evil in the gaze he's fixing you with.

“Now now...fate does bless me with some opportunities,” he chuckles. “The thing I need to tear Constantine apart has just willingly walked into my lap.”

You don't let him get another word out, flinging him into the wall with a flick of your wrist and a well placed spell. Gabriel slams against the brickwork, absolutely shocked and outraged.

“You dare to cast primitive magic at an archangel of the Lord?!” he cries.

“You're not an archangel,” you hiss back. “You're nothing. Just a spoilt little brat who doesn't get his own way any more.”

“Star, not the best idea you've ever had,” Lucifer murmurs to you. “Riling him up is not recommended.”

“I don't care,” you state bluntly. “I'm sick of all of this. I want answers.”

“Oh I see,” Gabriel laughs and you hate the sound intensely. “Little miss 'Heaven sent' wants to know why she was released so early and whether pre-determinism comes into play, yes?”

“Something like that,” you nod.

“Can't say I know why your soul was cast here before its time but I can say with absolute certainty...you were made to love Constantine and no other,” he grins in a victorious kind of way.

But wait....

That didn't make any sense? You'd had relationships before John where you'd been in love.

“But there have been others,” you say confused.

Gabriel's smile falters as he tries to study your expression, “No that's not possible. You were meant to be the pliant virgin, existing only for Constantine's needs. You were meant to know no other but him.”
“Definitely not a virgin before I met John,” you shake your head.

“Even I could have told you that, Gabe,” Lucifer says, folding his arms.

Your heart was hammering at this new revelation. You were designed with a clear purpose of being a pure woman for John but that was definitely not how this had happened. That surely had to mean you’d broken your Heavenly design. That surely had to mean everything that led you to John was just coincidence rather than fate and that your love was organic not preinstalled.

Gabriel’s staring at you like you’ve sprouted wings of your own, “How?! I was there when you were created! This is not possible!”

“Looks like you messed up then,” you shrug. “Thank you so much for that information by the way. I thought I would have to resort to more violent means to get it. Lucifer, let’s go.”

“Gladly,” Lucifer nods but the second you turn around, Lucifer is blasted into the desk and you’re being shoved to the floor.

You manage to squirm to look up and wildly lash out with your fist, punching Gabriel across his eye socket.

“You lowly pathetic mortal!” he yells, raising his hand and you are almost blinded by the intense light swirling around it. “I will smite you where you lay for your insult!”

Well this was it....

“Oi mate!” a familiar voice sounds out. “Hands off me missus, sunshine!”

Gabriel barely had time to turn his head before a bolt of electricity surged through him, locking his muscles and forcing him to fall over.

“You may have stolen divinity but you're not completely angelic,” John snarls. “And don't you ever forget it, you poncy wanker.”

“John,” Gabriel says and your stomach drops to hear the tone of his voice. It’s clearly malevolent. “So good you could join us. Yes it's true, I'm not completely divine but there are still things I can do that mortals can’t.”

“Come on then,” John goads, readying himself. “You and me, let's finish this.”

“I'll be finishing it sooner than you think,” Gabriel laughs, standing up and straightening out his tie. “How about a trip to Heaven, John?”

You watch as the remaining colour drains of out John's face and you're scrambling to your feet to stand in front of him.

“Don't you dare,” you snarl, silently wishing Lucifer would rejoin you quickly.

You knew you couldn't take on Gabriel by yourselves. You may have powerful magic but it just wasn't enough.

“Oh, my manners,” Gabriel bows. “Ladies first, of course. You can watch as John dies the second he sets foot in the place and then you'll be locked up there forever. Bonded souls...tricky things.”

“Brother, no!” Lucifer shouts, launching himself at Gabriel, wings unfurled in full majesty.
Before he can connect, Gabriel gives you a wicked grin before flinging a pure bolt of white at you and John which you don't have time to block. It envelops the both of you and you feel that sensation of being squeezed from all angles.

No! This can't be happening!

You felt the rush of wind buffeting you before you dropped face first into some lush verdant grass. Immediately you stood up, looking at John who was motionless on the ground.

“John?!” you cry, grabbing him and shaking him violently.

Was he dead? You couldn't rightly tell. You didn't know if you were dead. Would there be some fanfare about it or was this it?

“John?!” you try again, feeling for any kind of pulse.

Your wrist brushes against his in your haste, touching your tattoos together and he jerks up wildly, grabbing onto you with an iron grasp.

“You’re afraid!” he proclaims, panting and wide eyed. “You’re afraid which means you’re not dead. That means I'm not dead.”

You clutch him to you tightly and he returns the sentiment, almost crushing your ribcage.

“Star,” he murmurs into your hair. “I'm so sorry, love. I'm a massive fucking bastard.”

“Shut up,” you laugh, despite the situation. “I already knew that....we survived, John.”

“I have no bloody idea how,” John admits, pulling back from you and stroking your cheek. “By all rights I should be battling the First in Hell to be put back on Earth. This....I wasn't expecting this. The demon taint should be boiling me alive right now.”

“Maybe we're not in Heaven then?” you venture.

“Well where else would we be?” John asks.

“Cornwall?” you shrug, looking around yourself. “Seems sunny and green.”

“This is not Cornwall, child,” a voice says in wry amusement and you whirl around to see a blond man in white robes that only cover his lower half mostly.

“Who are you?” John questions.

“I am Raphael,” the man pronounces. “I am Our Father's healer and I have healed you of your demonic influence. That is why you are free to stand on the plain of Heaven.”

“You...you healed me?” John stammers in surprise.

“Yes, John,” Raphael nods. “It is the will of Our Father that you learn here today and learn you shall.”

“And what does God want with me?” John asks warily.

“I assume my fallen brother has told you of this woman's purpose?” he points at you.

“You mean that I was created to stop him meddling?” you interject.
“It is so,” Raphael affirms. “Our Father admits this was not the way to win your favour and for you to become his champion on Earth.”

“You're bloody telling me,” John grumbles, standing up and pulling you with him, keeping a possessive arm around your waist.

“Something happened here that released her soul prematurely,” Raphael explains. “Our Father was ireful at the time but seeing how she has developed and how you have both developed has softened his countenance. Follow my lead. You will want to know the truth.”

You give John a funny look before following the angel through the bright green fields until you reach a marble mausoleum. With the shining sun, it almost gleams in the light.

“In there is where you will find the truth of your creation, child,” Raphael tells you before turning to John. “And where you shall find a truth of your own, John. I shall await you outside.”

You both open the heavy wooden doors before walking inside to see just a singular room. On the back wall are chains which link to a woman sitting cross legged on the floor, humming to herself. She looks up when she hears footsteps and a kindly smile crosses her face.

You get an odd sense of familiarity but you feel innately comfortable around this woman, whoever she is. She has a presence that is almost calming.

You hear John shift behind you and utter a word you never would have expected....

“Mum?”

“Hello my boy,” she smiles widely.

Mum...this was John's mum?! Mary Anne Constantine....

“And hello to you, lass,” she says to you and you have to laugh a little at hearing the same words John uses.

“Nice to meet you,” you say. “I didn't really expect this to be possible.”

“We've already met, dear,” she says enigmatically before turning to John. “Oh come on lad, close your mouth. No need to catch flies.”

“Don't think there's flies in Heaven, mum,” John breathes, completely dumbstruck still. “I never....I'm actually bloody seeing you right now....I went back in time once, just to catch a glimpse of how you were but I never expected to actually talk to you.”

“Let me explain son,” she says and John immediately sits down on the floor next to her.

You're studying his expression intensely. It's almost like he appears younger now. The worry lines on his forehead have softened away and there's a gentle gleam in his eyes that you haven't seen for a while.

“I've heard many things over the decades about you, John,” Mary starts. “Not a lot of it is favourable mind. That was until I got curious. I decided to seek out those who knew you up here and they all told me stories about your life and how you were suffering. It broke my heart to know you were so down and so alone. Your father was always a piece of shit so I knew he'd be no help and your sister.....Cheryl had her own problems.”
“Cheryl was a good woman,” John says sadly, fidgeting with his hands. “I'm sorry I couldn't save her.”

“She made her choice,” Mary nods.

John rarely talked about his sister but Chas had filled in some gaps for you. Cheryl had taken her husband's intended place in Hell, receiving the torment meant for him and no amount of pleading from John had changed her mind.

“It was a bloody stupid choice,” John murmurs.

“Not saying it wasn't and I would've hoped she would've taken more after me but seems she got your father's self destructive streak,” Mary sighs. “But you, I know you want to help people, save the world and it's a thankless task. I heard about the angels creating a soul for you to keep you pliant so I...intervened.”

“You did what?” John breathes, his eyes going wide.

“There's a reason I'm in chains, numpty,” she laughs. “I found her soul and released it about a couple of decades back. I thought maybe if she came into your life naturally it might make you happy, even if there was there was a big risk that you'd never cross paths. I wanted it to be real for you.”

“But she was created just for me. How do I know if what she feels for me is real?” John whispers, almost too afraid to ask the question.

“I think the lass has something to say on that,” Mary nods towards you.

“Gabriel told me I was meant to be this pure little virgin girl for you and that I was incapable of loving someone else,” you explain.

“But I'm not your first,” John thinks out loud. “So that means...bloody fucking hell! You had free will! You came into my life by accident and this was all real from the start! Right, mum? It was real?”

“Yes my boy, it was all her own choices,” Mary grins. “And did she? Did she make you happy?”

John looks at you, his eyes brimming with tears before a big adoring smile spreads across his face, “Aye mum. She truly did....at least until I messed it up like I always do.”

He looks to the floor with an incredibly guilty expression before sighing heavily.

“Hey, no moping,” you call out. “I still have this ring on, don't I?”

“That you do, love,” John smiles slightly. “Mum, I'm marrying her as soon as I can. We've bound our souls together too.”

“Then it was worth it,” Mary says. “It's worth the incarceration to know my baby boy is happy. There's still some good I can do from up here.”

“Time to go, John,” Raphael says from the doorway. “There was only a limited window of opportunity for you to remain here.”

“Wait, no!” John protests. “I've only just gotten to see me mum!”

“John, it's alright,” Mary says softly, wrapping her shackled hands around him. “At least we got to talk briefly and now you know about Star.”
“It's not fair,” John says quietly, clinging onto her. “Sixty odd fucking years and all I get is five minutes.”

“Oh John...my Johnny boy,” Mary sighs, stroking John's hair. “That's more than most get here. Know that I love you and I'm proud of you. I'll always be watching over you...well...except for certain times.”

“Oh Christ, mum,” John groans. “Not in front of me bird.”

“Oi, I'm your mother,” Mary laughs. “It's in our maternal code of conduct that we have to embarrass our kids at all opportunities.”

“Constantine,” Raphael calls again. “Come.”

“Goodbye mum,” John says, hugging her tightly. “And thank you. Thank you for everything.”

He gets up and gives her one last longing look before rejoining you.

“Oh and Star?” Mary says as you're about to turn away. “Your mum is proud of you too.”


“She stumbled across this place by accident,” Mary smiles. “We talk. I've been telling her what you've actually been up to and she couldn't be prouder that you're learning to save the world.”

“Thank you for telling me that,” you say, trying to bite back the tears forming in your eyes.

“Take care of my boy, lass,” Mary requests to which you nod. “Goodbye you two. Make it a good wedding.”

“Bye mum,” John says in a strangely strangled voice and you can see he's trying not to break down in front of you.

You can't imagine what he must be feeling right now. He'd never known his mother and here she was in chains for trying to take care of him from the afterlife.

When you get outside and start walking forward, John stops, turning to look back at the mausoleum.

“Will you let her out now? I mean if God isn't angry any more,” John asks the angel.

“She will spend another year there and then yes she shall be released,” Raphael nods. “Time moves quickly up here, she will be free sooner than you expect.”

“Good,” is all John will say on the matter.

“Her actions were selfless, full of love,” Raphael notes. “Our Father has not ignored that. Mary Constantine is a good woman and her choices have made you a better man.”

“A better....what?” John blinks.

“Since you and the one called Star have met, you have become altruistic, righteous even. She has given you the methods to become great.”

“But John's always tried to do the right thing,” you say confused.

“There was always a motive,” Raphael explains. “Or some reward. With you, child, he does these
things with no regard for his life. He is ready to sacrifice himself for a greater cause. In this respect, he is more...holy than before.”

“Are you saying she’s turned me into God’s warrior?” John says warily.

“You have a new purpose, John,” Raphael says cryptically. “Our Father will make it known what that purpose is soon enough.”

“Oh don't speak in bloody riddles, mate,” John sighs. “I've had a belly full of them. What is it God wants of me?”

“As I said, John Constantine,” Raphael smiles whilst waving his hands in some pattern. “All will be clear soon and my child, know that you are featured in this purpose greatly. Farewell. You shall not come here again.”

You have to shield your eyes at the piercing light that's threatening to blind you. John wraps you tightly in his body, holding you close whilst a cacophony of lyre music assaults your ears.

All at once, you're back in the warehouse, just you and John, clutching each other for dear life.

“Is it over?” John asks, his face buried in the crook of your shoulder.

“We're home,” you murmur.

John looks up and around before looking back at you, “Star...do you hate me?”

“What?” you say surprised. “No, why would I?”

“Because I said some right awful things to you, lass,” he mutters. “I could make up some bullshit excuse about being not in me right mind, I could blame it on me past experiences like a victim but I'm not going to. Pure and simple, I was a cunt and I'd understand if you wanted to walk away.”

“I told you in Heaven, John, ring is staying on,” you roll your eyes. “You had a freak out, you apologised, you came to save me. I'd say you learned your lesson on that one.”

“I could have just been trying to save me own skin...what with the souls and whatnot. You die, I die,” John plays Devil's advocate.

“Yeah I'm not buying it,” you laugh. “A man doesn't beg a girl like that for selfish reasons.”

John looks heavily confused, “Beg? What do you mean beg?”

“You don't remember begging me not to leave you?” you ask, raising your eyebrow. “Well...shit, you must have been drunker than I thought.”

John actually blushes and clears his throat, “Alright, alright. Don't kick a bloke while he's down, love.”

“And on gin, really?” you continue. “Where was your cocktail glass and umbrella?”

John burst out laughing and squeezed you tightly in his arms, “Oh fucking hell, Star. I love you.”

“I love you too,” you smile and it feels like a heavy load just releases from your body.

John cups your cheek, stroking it with his thumb before he leans down and kisses you gently. You stay like that for...well you don't really know how long but you end up resting your foreheads
together and just enjoying the embrace.

“Funny sort of a day,” John muses. “Hangover, fighting Gabriel, meeting me mum for the first time, knowing I didn't screw it up with you....”

“You take after your mum a lot,” you say.

“Do you think so?” John smiles widely.

“I can definitely see a lot of her personality in you,” you laugh.

“Oh, love,” John sighs in contentment, caressing your hair. “It's good to hear you say that. Gotta say though I'm still apprehensive about this new 'purpose' we're supposed to have.”

“I'm sure coming from Heaven it won't be too bad,” you shrug. “Whatever it is, we'll face it together.”

“Aye, bit, that we will,” John grins. “Just no more bloody angels for a while, yeah?”

“Not even little old me?” a voice croons from the upper floor and you both look up rapidly to see Lucifer standing there, leaning on the railing.

“Oh hi, mate,” John calls. “You made it back alright then?”

“As did you I see,” Lucifer says, making his way to the ground floor. “Two bloody months I've been waiting! I do have stuff to do, you know! I run a business!”

“Wait, what do you mean two months?!” you squeak.

“That's how long you've been gone, darling,” Lucifer says bluntly.

“Time in Heaven moves differently Raphael said,” John thinks out loud.

“Oh? Raphael eh? How is the old boy?” Lucifer asks.

“Pretty good, talks like a right ponce but...he's friendly,” John tells him. “Said me and Star have a new Heavenly design but wouldn't spill what it was.”

“Cryptic as ever then,” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “Well I shall be taking my leave in that case. If you're in Dad's spotlight, I don't want to be caught in the beam. Besides, I have my own problem to take care of. The Sinnerman awaits.”

“Thank you, for everything,” you say genuinely. “I really appreciate everything you've done, Lucifer. Thanks for being my friend.”

The archangel looks genuinely touched and he holds his arms out expectantly. You give John a small wink before breaking out of his embrace and giving Lucifer a hug.

“I shan't forget this adventure,” Lucifer chuckles. “It's certainly given me the drive I need. Oh come on, Johnny, get over here as well.”

John sighs heavily for a second before coming over and joining the hug. Lucifer places a courteous kiss on both of your foreheads before stepping back.

“Now don't do anything monumentally stupid again, you two,” he chides. “Like breaking up or whatnot. If you do, I'll make it my personal mission to try and date you both so you've been
warned.”

With that, he disappears.

“Not a bad bloke as angels go,” John snorts.

“High praise coming from you,” you laugh. “Fuck, have we really been gone two months?”

John pulls his phone out from his trouser pocket and the second he does, it begins beeping and ringing for an ordinate amount of time.

“Oh bloody hell!” he exclaims, staring at the chirruping phone. “I'd definitely say we've been away, love.”

He begins scrolling through his messages, answering some and telling you what they are. Chas was worried he'd not heard from him in a while, he had a contact who wanted vampire remains and then....

“Strewth,” he breathes.

“What is it?” you ask.

“Ah...you're not gonna like this, lass,” John shifts nervously.

“Spit it out, John,” you sigh. “I'm tired and all I wanna do is curl up with you and get to the make-up sex part.”

“'Fraid that's gonna have to wait,” John says. “I hope Lucifer dropped your bags back off because you're gonna need to pack 'em again.”

“What, why?” you ask, a little alarmed.

“We have to go on a trip. I've got the call. I'm needed,” John babbles, trying to text and talk to you at the same time.

“Needed where, John? We've only just got back?” you protest.

“Gotham.”
You thought you'd misheard him.

“Gotham?!” you squeak. “What on earth do you need to go to Gotham for?”

“Look,” John sighs. “I used to run with a crew over that way for a little while. Save the world, keep folks safe...the usual.”

“So...you're saying you were a superhero?” you sound out, trying to process this new information.

John snorts and you see the small smile start at his lips, “No, love. I'd be the worst superhero imaginable. I was like...superhero support.”

“And now they need your help?” you ask.

“Yeah, duty calls,” John nods as he looks back to his phone. “I'm just sorting out travel details. They're sending a plane.”

“A plane?!” you cry. “Who the fuck exactly is needing your help?! Batman?!”

You said it in jest but the look on John's face was a mixture of seriousness and surprise at your comment. It couldn't be though....right?

“Are you kidding me?” you breathe.

“Star, sit down lass. I guess I've got some explaining to do,” John says, moving to the remnants of
the sofa and sprawling on it, sinking slightly into the damaged springs.

“Batman, seriously?” you mutter as you join him but you subconsciously keep a bit of distance.

Sometimes you felt like you had things all figured out with John, that he'd told you everything about his life but then you kept finding these curveballs and you had to evaluate just exactly how much you knew about him.

“I was a part of a team called Justice League Dark,” John begins, reaching for your leg and squeezing it to keep some contact. “Call us like...the magical division of the Justice League. Everyone had abilities, spell castings or supernatural powers and we fought what the big guys and girls couldn't.”

“That girl,” you say, remembering the Tower of Souls and the woman who looked like a magician. “The one in fishnets.”

“Zatanna,” John nods. “Guessing you've seen her somewhere in me memories. We had a thing back in the day but never went anywhere. Bad for each other we were. There was also Madame Xanadu, Deadman, Shade and the Changing Man. Merry little band.”

“Why have you never told me?” you murmur.

A flash of guilt and sadness crosses John's face, “Because I did some things I'm not proud of whilst I was with them and I'd much rather forget it ever happened to be honest. S'pose I should tell you exactly what's going on because that's another story I haven't told you.”

You're getting annoyed now and he must see it clearly on your expression because he leans towards you and strokes your hair back to placate you.

“Listen, love, if I don't tell you some things it's because they're either too painful, embarrassing or not even worth mentioning. You know more about me than any other bird I've been with and probably on a level with Chas. I'm sure there's some stuff you keep to yourself too.”

“I guess,” you sigh. “Although my life isn't as adventurous as yours and I don't have things that'll catch up with me the same as you.”

“Never said I was a safe man to be with,” John smiles wryly.

“You're lucky you're pretty,” you smirk. “Or I'd be long gone from all this shit.”

“Oh...well...,” John laughs. “Glad I'm a looker then.”

“And you're pretty good in bed too,” you add, defaulting to humour to deal with your impending fear at this new development.

“Only pretty good?!” John cries, looking completely offended. “If we didn't have to go soon I'd shag you silly right now to prove a point.”

You giggle slightly at his expression and he playfully cuffs the back of your head before leaning in and kissing your temple.

“Alright, bit, best tell you what's going on, eh?” he says. “Long long time ago I made a golem, like a construct of a man, and I poured all the worst parts of meself into it so I could stop being such a fuck up....and also to get over a girl as well. The thing animated but I didn't count on it evolving proper sentience and it became twisted. It's become a demonic version of me over time.”
“You made a demon?” you ask with wide eyes.

“I didn't bloody mean to!” he protests. “Just sorta happened. I never got a rulebook for spellcasting, Star. I make this shit up as I go along.”

“So what does your demon self have to do with Gotham?” you probe.

John shows you a text message that's come through and you read the screen.

**Overgrown Bat:** Constantine, we need you. A version of you or something like it is running around Gotham causing chaos. Fix it.

**John:** How quickly can you get me there?

**Overgrown Bat:** Sending a private jet. Will be at Manchester airport in 4 hours. Be on it or I'll come get you myself. Sort this mess out John.

“Why have you got him saved as Overgrown Bat?” you question.

“Because that's what he bloody is,” John says seriously. “Full grown meathead in a bat costume, I ask you...”

“Guessing you don't get on well from the tone of those messages,” you snort, picking out Batman's terse writing style.

“He can be such a wanker sometimes,” John rolls his eyes. “Not like I did this on purpose. Last I knew of it, Nergal'd taken Demon John out but clearly he didn't do the job properly.”

Nergal...the bane of John's existence, even more so than the First of the Fallen. Nergal had given John the demonic taint he had in the first place and caused Newcastle.

“So...Demon John,” you say, sounding the name out like it was the weirdest thing you'd encountered. “Is loose in Gotham and Batman's getting pissy about it? Why doesn't he call in the other members of the Justice League Dark?”

“Guessing he's tried that already, love,” John ruffles his hair in exasperation. “Me magic comes from the dark arts and none a' them lot practise it particularly. Must be giving them a right 'to do' by the sounds of it but then again, Bruce was always bloody dramatic.”

“Bruce?” you ask and you see John's face get gripped by alarm.

“Shit,” he breathes. “Forget you heard that, lass.”

Wait a minute....as far as you knew, Batman didn't have a private jet but John had just mentioned the name Bruce and the billionaire Bruce Wayne would surely have access to flamboyant shit like that.

“Is Batman Bruce Wayne?” you state bluntly, watching John's expression.

“Uhh....uhh....” John stammers. “Ah bollocks to it....You can't tell him I told you, love. He's very particular about keeping his identity secret.”

Well that explained a lot. You'd heard of all the tech and gadgets Batman used and those surely must...
have cost a pretty penny.

“Does he even know I'm coming with you?” you ask.

“Doesn't know you exist is more like it,” John says. “Don't exactly keep regular contact with the moody fucker.”

“Well he's in for a shock then,” you snort.

“You're actually gonna come?” John says nervously. “I mean...I know we've had a major bloody argument in the last day so I wasn't sure...”

“As much as I just want to rest and keep you in bed all day, if you're needed I'm not letting you go alone,” you state.

Truth is you'd come too far to be standoffish with him about the Heaven incident. You could kind of see why he reacted the way he did and he'd apologised for it heavily. John Constantine was firmly rooted in your heart and soul now and where he went, you went.

“I know I say this like ten times a day but I don't deserve you, bit,” John smiles. “After Gotham...after we sort this mess out, I'm getting hitched to you quick as. I want that. I want that commitment with you and I'm bloody serious about it.”

“I know you are,” you say gently, stroking his bristled cheek. “But you owe me a fantastic wedding cake for all this trouble you've put me through lately. I want chocolate, the good stuff, none of this store bought shit.”

“Aye love, that'll be no problem,” he beams at you. “Best get packing, eh? Bruce is very big on punctuality.”

You make to your room and see that Lucifer's left your suitcases on the bed. Funny how you were so ready to leave this all behind such a short time ago. What a difference a day in Heaven makes.

“Love, all set?” John calls to you.

You quickly strip off the country club attire you were still in and throw on a more familiar outfit, namely one of your dresses. You needed to feel comfortable after all if you were going to be flying out to America again.

“All set,” you nod, pulling one of the suitcases off the mattress and wheeling it behind you.

John whistles through his teeth when he sees you again, “God you know I love you in those dresses, lass. I hope we get a private room on this jet so I can show you exactly how sorry I am about everything recently.”

To say you felt a spike of arousal at that point would be an understatement. Your mind travelled to the possibilities of how John could make it up to you....

“Ah bollocks,” John groans, throwing his coat on whilst still looking lustfully at you. “This so isn't fair. Bruce is gonna get an earful when I see him.”

And now your mind was travelling to John squaring off with Bruce Wayne and damn it if that wasn't the funniest thing you could think of.
When you got to the private landing strip of Manchester airport, there was indeed a luxury jet waiting there with the Wayne Enterprises logo stamped on the tail.

“Well bugger me,” you breathe, taking it all in. “He really is Batman.”

“Yeah best not to mention it though, Star,” John warns before walking up to the stairs.

At the top stood an elderly gentleman in a dapper suit. There was something instantly likeable about him. Perhaps it was the genuine smile on his face or the cheeky twinkle in his eye but either way, you couldn't help but smile back.

“I see you have a companion, Mr Constantine,” the man says in probably the poshest voice you've ever heard.

“Yeah, mate, this is me fiancée. I don't go anywhere without her,” John nods to you, wrapping an arm around your waist. “Gonna be a problem?”

“No at all,” the man smiles warmly. “In fact I'm glad to see you're more settled. Come aboard, please.”

John takes both suitcases before bounding up the steps and disappearing into the plane. You follow him but the man holds out his hand to slow you down.

“I will need to do a background check on you, Miss. It's nothing personal but my employer is rather particular about who he comes into contact with,” he says, pushing his glasses up the brim of his nose.

“Oh of course,” you say. “I understand.”

You give him all your information but end it with, “-but everyone just calls me Star. Kind of stuck with my band name for all eternity.”

“Well, Miss Star,” the man says, taking your outstretched hand to shake it. “My name is Alfred. Please take a seat with Mr Constantine and I'll just run those checks so we can get going.”

“I should probably tell you this since it might come up,” you admit, looking to John who was reclining one of the seats as far back as it would go for his own amusement. “I'm a magic user too if that's of any use.”

Alfred's eyes widen for a split second before his face settles into a gentle grin, “I think it will be of excellent use. Master Wayne will be pleased to hear it. Sit, my dear. I shan't be long.”

You join John in the neighbouring seat who pings it back to a normal seated position.

“What was all that about with Jeeves over there?” he asks.

“Just wanted to run a background check,” you shrug.

“Oh for heaven's sake,” John rolls his eyes. “Bruce is such an untrusting tosser. Next he'll be wanting your bloody bra size for 'research'.”
You hit John playfully on the arm to shush him, “I told Alfred I practice magic.”

“Why would you do that?” John says seriously. “That could’ve been our ace card at some point.”

“It's the right thing to do to let Bruce know who he's dealing with,” you say. “Besides, he might feel better knowing two magi are on the case and both are trained in the dark arts.”

“I never trained you in the dark arts,” John shakes his head. “Your magic is strictly light, love. Dabbling in what I dabble in always requires sacrifice and some not very pleasant things.”

“Oh,” you blink.

Well you never knew that. You guess John was trying to protect you in a way. You'd heard the stories about his friends who tried to follow his particular magical route and none of them ever ended well.

“Well he doesn't have to know that,” you say conspiratorially.

John laughs and gives you a quick kiss, “You're becoming as bad as me, bit. Proper con artist.”

“I learn from the best,” you smirk, leaning back into the plush leather seat and sighing as your weary body sinks into the material.

Alfred appears after a time, hands behind his back and he looks every inch the quintessential butler. He clears his throat softly.

“Checks are done. I must say Master Wayne was...surprised at an extra guest but I'm sure he'll discuss that with you once we fly over.”

“You mean he'll sodding yell at me for eternity?” John sighs. “Not looking forward to that, mate.”

“Cup of tea?” Alfred offers knowingly.

“Ooo you bloody legend,” John practically purrs before turning to you. “Alfred makes the best brews.”

“Thank you for the compliment, Mr Constantine,” Alfred smiles.

“Oh come on, Alf, call me John. You know I hate the full title,” John says.

“Very well, John. Two teas coming up.”

**

You had to admit, it was a great cup of tea.

Alfred had shown you into the back room of the plane which actually consisted of a king sized bed. Bruce Wayne sure was flashy. It didn't take long for John to kick off his shoes and make a flying leap onto the mattress but he was surprised when he didn't bounce up and rather sank into it.

“Bloody memory foam!” he cries. “What a load of posh shite...what's wrong with a good bit of trampolining on a bed?”
“You're such a child,” you giggle.

“I didn't mean in that kind of way, love,” John winks suggestively. “Guessing Brucey boy doesn't get much action. Maybe that's why he's such a brooding bastard most of the time.”

“You really don't like him huh?” you smile wryly.

“That's a strong term,” John says, stretching himself out on the bed. “More like, we've butted heads on a few occasions and I was in the right.”

That was John for you, arrogant until the end.

“Because you've never been wrong in your life before?” you say with folded arms.

John flashes you a model worthy pout, “Cheap shot, love. I'm wounded.”

“Boo hoo,” you joke and you half squeal when John springs up and grabs you, pulling you down onto the bed and spooning behind you.

He gently kisses the side of your face and inhales the scent of your hair, a low rumble of contentment passing through his chest. He draws you even closer, caging you in with his arms.

“Fucking hell, am I such a lucky bugger that you didn't leave,” he murmurs in your ear.

“Why, because you'd have to go back to making your own food again?” you tease.

John nips your neck lightly with his teeth, “Don't backchat me, lass, you know what I meant. I know you don't want to me keep wittering on about it but I am truly sorry for being such a cunt about it all.”

You roll your eyes but you know he can't see you. God, John was such a masochist with his own guilt sometimes. You settle for rolling your body slightly so you can look at his face.

“Do you love me?” you ask.

“Without question,” John replies immediately.

“Then shut the fuck up. That's all I care about...and that it doesn't happen again,” you add.

“Aye, bit. I'll keep me gob shut,” he laughs. “Give us a kiss and then we should probably nap. Ol' Brucey boy doesn't do daytime stuff very naturally so we won't be sleeping until the early morning I guess.”

“Fine with me,” you nod, leaning up and kissing him in what you were going to do as a small affectionate one but the second your lips connect, John seems to go into rampant teenager mode and deepens it quickly, his tongue seeking your own.

“Oo fuck me,” he groans when pulls away. “When we get a quiet moment...just you wait.”

“Is this not a quiet moment?” you smirk.

“I'm not shagging your brains out when Alfred is outside. Poor bugger might go into cardiac arrest if he hears us,” John snorts.

“Can't have that,” you laugh and pull John's arm around you tightly. “Rain check then.”
John leans up and kisses your temple, “Sounds good to me. Let's get some kip.”

Considering the time difference between Heaven and Earth, you were probably due some sleep anyway. Having John's comforting presence behind you lulled you into your dreams a lot quicker than you were expecting.

Guess you really did miss him.

**

“John, Miss Star?” a voice calls after several knocks at the door.

“Yeah?” John grunts, still half asleep.

“We've arrived in Gotham city. Shall I fetch your bags and coats?” Alfred asks through the doorway.

“Nah mate, I'm young, I'll do it,” John says, sitting up and rubbing his eyes, his hair sticking up all over the place.

“Very good, sir. I'll meet you on the runway,” Alfred informs you both and walks off.

“Young?” you snort. “You're probably not much younger than he is.”

“Oi! Cheeky mare!” John says in outrage, smacking your bottom. “You're not too young for a good hiding, lass!”

“Promises promises,” you laugh and you swear John's eyes dilate at your words. “Down boy, time to meet the fabled Batman.”

“Time to meet the obnoxious bell-end Bruce more like,” John grumbles, straightening his clothes out.

You both walk onto the runway and are ushered into a waiting car by Alfred. You watch as you drive through the streets of Gotham. It wasn't really like you expected. It had almost a film noir element to it with all the art deco architecture and barely any evident technology on the streets. You half expected to see detectives in long trench coats and trilbys but John was bringing more than enough 40s detective vibes of his own in his attire.

It took some time but you eventually started pulling up by some huge wrought iron gates that protected a winding road up to an enormous manor house. You had no idea houses like this even existed and you suddenly felt very common.

“Ugly place, ennit?” John whispers in your ear. “Bunch of upper class twats picking the decor like 'Oh Rupert, those rugs are ghastly and not organically sourced from Zanzibar'.”

You have to cover your mouth to stifle the budding laugh and John looks incredibly pleased with himself that he made you lose your composure. Alfred looks slyly behind himself as the gates open but he doesn't make a comment. You have no idea if he heard you two or not.

When you get out of the car, you're escorted into what looks like an old fashioned games room with a billiards table in the centre and a chess set up. Two armchairs were placed by a roaring fire and you could see two heavily muscled legs perched in a crossed position but not who they belonged to.
“Master Bruce,” Alfred announces. “John Constantine and Star for you.”

“Thank you, Al. That will be all for now,” a gruff voice sounds out.

The butler gives you a small encouraging smile and leaves. There's a pause where nobody speaks and you can tell John is becoming agitated but seemingly Bruce was making a dramatic gesture because he rises slowly and stands in front of the fire, training his eyes on both of you.

To say Bruce was tall was a vast understatement. You swallowed a little looking up at him. You'd never come across a human who looked like they could easily snap you in two without thinking about it. Then there was his broadness....if you ran into that chest, you would knock yourself out.

“So...you came,” Bruce says, no emotion playing on his face.

“Didn't have much of a bloody choice, did I?” John grumbles.

“This was your mess to begin with, John,” Bruce growls and you could see his fists clenching.

“Just because the ol' lot can't handle a few dark arts spells,” John rolls his eyes.

The rush of muscle barrelling past your face left you completely shocked as Bruce grabbed John by his shirt collar and yanked him up, slamming him onto the wall.

“Listen here, you fucking moron,” Bruce snarls, ignoring John's attempts to squirm out of his grip. “A lot of good people have died because of your mistake so you're going to fix it. Do I make myself clear?”

“Get bent,” John spits. “Never made an error before or is Bruce Wayne too much of a golden boy that he shits strawberries and pisses champagne?”

“Do I have to punch you again to make you see sense?” Bruce says, drawing one hand back threateningly.

You don't know what in the world possessed you to do it but you grabbed Bruce's arm and yanked him back as hard as you could. The extra strength from the soul merge helped enormously but your own muscles were straining with the effort of pulling him off.

“Get the hell off of him!” you shout and Bruce looks at you as though you're the craziest thing he's ever seen. “We're here to help you out and this is how you host us?!?”

That seemed to get through to him because you saw the shame in his face and he dropped John to his feet, backing away. You thought you'd successfully intervened until Bruce strode across the room, getting so close to you you had to crane your neck up to look him in the eye.

“And who are you exactly?” he says, a lot more quietly than his outburst. “I have files on your previous career, your family....no woman should be able to pull me back like that. Are you gifted?”

“Not particularly,” you say. “But touch him like that again and you'll regret it.”

Bruce turns to John, one eyebrow raised, “Never expected you to go for the strong type.”

“I do surprise people,” John shrugs, grabbing a cigarette from his coat and sparking it. “Be careful round me missus. She's got more than a few tricks up her sleeve.”

“Really?”
There's genuine interest in Bruce's voice and you can't help but feel it was the wrong thing for John to say because he starts studying your features like he's doing research. The second he reaches out to touch the tattoo on your wrist, John barges in-between the two of you, creating distance.

“And you should know to be careful around me,” John warns. “Don't you dare touch her. She's not one of your experiments.”

“I want to know about her and I always find out. I always get what I want, John,” Bruce says in a dangerously low voice.

“Like that isn't completely rapey of you,” John snarls. “Stay. Away. You know you fucking interrupted me and her sorting our wedding out?”

“Oh I'm sorry,” Bruce says in mock apology. “I should have asked your clone to hold off on blowing up the GCPD because John Constantine is getting married and needs a few days respite.”

“You bloody tosspot wanker!” John roars. “Not like you're doing anything about it, eh?! You're fucking useless! Sorry this case isn't all psycho clowns and steroïded luchadores!”

“That's where you're wrong, Constantine!” Bruce shouts back equally as loudly. “Your double has teamed up with all the criminal underbelly of Gotham and is working with the Joker! I've been doing my part to fix your mistake so you'd better goddamn well pitch in!”

“Oh my,” comes the timid voice of Alfred. “I guess you'll want to hold off on the afternoon tea?”

Bruce's demeanour changes in an instant. Now before you is the gentle giant who turns with genuine affection to his butler and shakes his head.

“Not right now, Al. Sorry for the shouting.”

“That's quite alright, Master Bruce. Just remember your blood pressure,” the older man smiles warmly before bowing out of the room.

Bruce takes a deep breath before running a hand down his face, “I apologise. I let my temper get the best of me but I'm frustrated John. I've never encountered something like this and I can't keep my people safe. My city is suffering.”

John sighs loudly and rubs the back of his head, “I get it, mate. I do. I thought me demon self was dead and buried but life has a way of grabbing me by the bollocks lately. I'll stop him.”

“Thank you,” Bruce nods courteously and looks at you. “I also apologise to you about my behaviour but I am genuinely curious about the woman John has chosen to marry. He-”

You hold up a hand, knowing what's coming, “Yeah he was a complete male tart, I know.”

Bruce chuckles at that and John gives you a look like 'I'm not gonna argue with that'.

“Please, you must be exhausted,” Bruce says, finding his manners again. “Alfred will show you to your room and then we can sit down for dinner and discuss this a bit more...civilly.”

“Aye, sounds good. I'll grab the cases,” John nods, turning to you and giving you a peck on the cheek. “Back in a bit, love. Play nice.”

John leaves to help Alfred and you're now alone with Bruce. You still feel slightly on edge but you bury the feeling, knowing he will sense the weakness.
“Which deity did you annoy to have to suffer with Constantine?” Bruce smiles wryly.

“Actually I was specially created by God for the purpose,” you throw out there and you watch Bruce blink in confusion. “Don't worry, it was a mind melter for me too.”

If Bruce is genuinely stumped, he covers it well because his next question is off the topic, “Alfred says you can do magic?”

Your favourite little trick of conjuring a fireball comes into play but you also open your other palm and create a large snowflake that rotates as you curl your fingers. Bruce looks at your hands in abject fascination.

“You know John never uses his abilities much,” Bruce muses, running a hand under his grizzled chin. “Nice to see something like this up close. Impressive.”

“Thank you,” you smile, extinguishing the fire and ice.

“And what is the tattoo for?” Bruce asks, pointing to your wrist that he nearly touched a while back. “Decoration or actual use?”

“Uh...” you stammer. “Product of merging souls together.”

“I'm sorry?” the billionaire says in utter bewilderment.

“John and I...we merged souls together,” you explain. “Bound for life.”

“I didn't know that was possible,” Bruce murmurs. “I certainly didn't expect Constantine of all people to do something like that. The man is inherently selfish.”

“Not to me he isn't,” you shrug.

“You interest me,” he says bluntly. “I'll be curious to see what you do here.”

“Uh...thanks?” you say uncertainly.

You didn't really know where you stood with the man. He was so mercurial in his moods and so honest in what he was saying, it was really throwing you off. This wasn't the Bruce Wayne you'd seen on TV with his charming suaveness, this was the real person behind the facade.

“I would ask more questions but I expect you're tired so I'll hold off,” Bruce nods but before he goes back to his chair, he comes up close to you again and almost stares you out.

You don't want to seem timid you stare him out right back. After a few seconds, he laughs in a throaty rumble and moves back, folding his giant frame neatly into the dainty armchair.

“You definitely interest me, Star.”

When John returns, he sees your perturbed look and makes to go talk to Bruce but you pull him back and shake your head silently. John gets the hint and wraps his arm around your shoulders.

“Come on, lass. Let's get you settled,” he announces, a bit louder than was necessary.

You reach the guest room which was the size of your entire flat that you had before John came into your life. Four poster bed, huge TV, mini kitchen...Jesus fucking Christ this was opulent, more so than Lucifer's penthouse.
“What in the bloody hell happened?” John asks, taking your face in his hands. “You looked right scared when I came back down.”

“He's just...very all over the place,” you mutter. “One minute he's joking, the next he's angry and the next he's being slightly creepy.”

“Creepy?” John probes.

“Said he'd taken an interest in me,” you shrug. “Whatever that means.”

“Oh fuck me,” John groans. “That usually means he wants to study you. Did the same with me when I first came across the pond. Don't worry, love. I won't let him do anything untoward. I'd rather flamethrower his head off than have you being upset.”

You giggle slightly at that and John gives you a tender kiss.

“Just what have we jumped into, John?” you sigh.

“A whole pile of shit from the looks of it,” John murmurs. “Nothing of what Alfred told me on the way up is good. This is going to be one shitstorm of a mission. Hope you're prepared, Star.”

“Am I ever prepared?” you laugh nervously.

“Guess not with all the adventures we've had,” John acquiesces. “Demon John...fair warning, he looks exactly like me and talks like me too.”

“Wait, so I could legitimately mix the two of you up?!” you squeak.

“Nah, lass,” John smiles warmly. “I'll give you a codeword so you'll always know it's me. If you ever get confused, I'll say Cola Cubes. Got it?”

“Alright,” you say, not feeling very confident about this.

John scoops you into a tight embrace, making sure you nestle your head in the crook of his neck, “We'll get through this, love. I promise. Then I'll tell Bruce to sod off and leave us to get married. Deal?”

“Gonna tell him exactly like that?” you tease.

“Oh you know it,” John smiles. “I'll even chuck some colourful swearwords in too for effect. Don't worry, nothing is gonna come between us again.”

You heard the words, you heard the conviction in his voice but your own brain was telling you that it wasn't likely true. You never got off lightly when it came to fighting the supernatural and the demonic. All you could hope for is that you and John made it out alive.

“And if Bruce touches you, I'll punch his stupid expensively moisturised face in,” John adds, a possessive smirk on his face.

One day you'd just like to do something normal like go to the cinema or out to a pub....just once....was that too much to ask in John Constantine's world?
Brit slang translation guide:
Kip = Sleep
A good hiding = a harsh spanking

So my Bruce is more based on the Frank Miller run, the slightly angrier Batman. I think it plays well off of John's youthful arrogance.
Bat out of Hell

Chapter Summary

Bruce calls a meeting of his council

Chapter Notes

I suck at a regular writing schedule, I know.
Got a lot of home life issues right now so things have been all over the place. On the bright side I did actually meet Matt Ryan last weekend which was awesome! I'll link to a pic down below of something.
Warnings: Angst, Violence, Shades of Non-Con
Writing prompt from flamefeatherdraws and happy birthday for tomorrow! The prompt will be further explored in the next chapter!
If you wanna send my any private messages/prompts/one shot requests my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com / tumblr: theliveshipparagon
Happy reading!
-TLP xx
(I still suck at proofreading!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Miss Star, John,” a soft voice comes from the door after a curt knock. “Master Bruce requires your presence in the dining hall.”

“Hall,” John scoffs. “Because it’s too bloody big to just be a room. Posh twat.”

You smack him playfully on the arm to shut up him. Sure you agreed with him that this mansion was way too opulent but for some reason, you couldn’t abide John being rude around Alfred.

“Alright, alright,” John holds his hands up. “Let’s go play tea party.”

Alfred leads you down to a huge room that was bigger than the main living area of the warehouse. A massively long oak table stood proudly in the centre with many chairs and many occupants who turned to look at you curiously as you entered. Bruce was sat at the far end, at the head of the table, fingers tented and lost in deep thought. You saw a brief glimmer of interest when he looked at you but that was quickly replaced by a guarded intensity.

Your eyes roamed over the guests and you found you barely recognised anyone from what you knew of Gotham. The only one you’d come across apart from Batman was Nightwing who was idly twirling what looked like batons and flashing you a million watt grin.

But wait...that was the magician girl from John’s memories and the Tower of Souls!

The woman took one look at John’s hand intertwined with yours and stood up abruptly, marching
with beautiful grace in her ridiculously high heeled boots until she stood in front of you.

“Zee,” John nods. “Been a long time.”

“You brought a woman,” she states matter of factly. “This isn't the place for your conquests, John.”

“Oo bit harsh,” John frowns. “She has every right to be here.”

“And why is that?” Zatanna folds her arms.

“Reckon she could give your magic a run for its money,” John shrugs. “Plus she's me missus and she ain't going anywhere without me.”

Zatanna narrows her eyes and turns to you before speaking some words, “Llet eht hturt.”

Wait, was she speaking backwards?! What kind of magic was that?!

You feel quite funny, like an uncomfortable feeling that settles down to your bones. There's the vaguest sensation of itching.

“Oi!” John shouts. “How bloody dare you use magic on her!”

Zatanna ignores him, “Tell me who you are and why John has brought you.”

“My name is Star,” you say before you can stop yourself. “I'm John's fiancée and it's true that I can use magic.”

“Fiancée?” she breaths in absolute shock, turning to John. “Are you joking?”

“Nah,” John smirks, looking at you fondly. “Never been so serious in me life, Zee.”

“You poor woman,” Zatanna sighs, looking at you balefully. “He'll break your heart you know, or get you killed.”

“Nearly died a couple of times,” you shrug. “Went to Hell twice. I'm used to it.”

Zatanna looks like you've doused her with ice water. No doubt she was perturbed by John's sudden change of heart on commitment and your blasé attitude about the whole thing.

“Oh and by the way?” you continue. “Parere!”

You were going to give her a dose of her own medicine. You didn't appreciate being used a leverage tool. The obey spell was not one John had taught you, in fact you'd found it in one of his dusty old books when you went researching.

“Go sit back down,” you order and Zatanna obeys without a second thought.

“You little minx,” John grins at you, squeezing your arse covertly. “You did some secret swotting up, didn't you?”

“What can I say, I'm studious,” you smirk back.

“Oh love,” John whispers so only you can hear. “All I can picture now is you in a sexy librarian get up. Please say we'll do that when we get back?”

“Find me a cute pair of glasses and done,” you wink before walking to the empty two seats next to
Zatanna laughs as you pass by and she offers her hand out to you in a handshake, “Very nicely done, Star. I like you. Make sure he doesn't step out of line.”

“Oh he's well trained,” you giggle, shaking her hand.

Clearly now she'd seen your magic first hand she was a little more receptive to you.

When you sat down, Bruce leaned forward and stared directly at you before muttering, “Fascinating.”

In this room of superheroes, you felt very over analysed and you shifted uncomfortably a little. It was only John sitting next to you and placing a comforting hand on your thigh that steadied your nerves slightly.

“Quiet everyone,” Bruce announces, standing up. “Introductions are in order since one of our party is new here. This is Star, another magus from England and associate of Constantine-”

“You mean she's me bird. Don't put all flowery language on it,” John interrupts, his hand moving from your thigh to around your shoulders in a display of ownership.

Bruce's knuckles tighten on the table to the point of them turning white but he carries on as if nothing was said, “-Fiancée of Constantine. From this side we have Nightwing, Oracle, Jim Gordon of the GCPD, Jason Blood. On the other side, Zatanna, Deadman and Robin.”

“Shade, Xanadu and the Changing Man couldn't be arsed I take it?” John asks jokingly.

“They're dead, John,” Deadman says softly.

Instantly John's face falls and a flash of sadness passes over his eyes, “Oh...I didn't know that. Fuck...I feel like a right bastard now.”

“A lot has happened since you left,” Deadman nods.

“So this is your ragtag bunch of supernatural hunters huh?” the man identified as Jim Gordon says to Bruce.

“Finest in the world,” Bruce nods.

“Good,” Jim says standing up. “Now listen here, all of you. I lost good men and women in that explosion and I want some goddamn revenge, you hear me?”

“It's okay, dad,” Oracle says soothingly. “They'll make it happen. I have faith in them.”

So a father and daughter combo huh?

John leans into you and whispers in your ear, “She was the original Batgirl before the Joker got to her.”

You take in the girl's wheelchair and wince internally. If someone that horrendous had control of demon John....you had no idea what kind of carnage they might be causing.

“Forgive me if this is out of turn but what have you done already as preventative measures?” you ask the room.
Silence falls immediately and you're regretting speaking out but you had to know whether they were at least trying to contain what was going on.

“Nightwing, you can report,” Bruce orders, leaning back in his chair and crossing one leg over the other.

“Aww come on, I can do it!” Robin waves from the other end of the table.

“Tim, enough,” Bruce warns. “You'll get your moment shortly.”

Tim...Robin pouts a little but ultimately shrugs and leans back in his chair with his arms behind his head.

“So one week ago, we got reports that Constantine was in Gotham and that he was seen blasting a bar to pieces with his bare hands. We tried to put a track on him and contact Chas Chandler but Chas seemed to say that John, as in you, you were currently missing, last known going after...umm...an angel?”

“A wonderful piece of dog shite called Gabriel yeah,” John nods. “Got stuck in Heaven for a while.”

Nightwing blinks in surprise but recovers himself well, “Okay then. Well anyway, then we realised this wasn't actually you and then it came to light this other John was associating with the underbelly of Gotham, namely the Joker, Harley Quinn, Poison Ivy and the Riddler. They've started working together and used this John's magic to plant magical bombs in the GCPD.”

You briefly look at Jim who looks absolutely broken. Oracle comforts him by taking his hand and squeezing it.

“After that we asked the Justice League Dark to go after him,” Nightwing continues. “But it wasn't enough. Then we all joined forces but it still wasn't enough.”

“I asked Etrigan to find out what was happening,” Jason Blood pipes up. “Said it was a demon but one you'd created, John.”

John cringes slightly, “Didn't bloody mean to. Was an accident. Thought the fucker got killed by Nergal but clearly not.”

“Can you stop him?” Jim asks directly. “I hear a lot about you, Constantine. Can you stop him?”

“Aye, mate,” John nods. “I can, especially with me missus in tow.”

“I'll hold you to that,” Jim mutters.

“Thank you, Nightwing,” Bruce nods. “Tim, show us what you've found out about this new alliance the demon Constantine has.”

“Right!” Tim jumps up enthusiastically and brings a tiny remote out of nowhere, pressing a button where a TV descends from the ceiling at the far end of the room and flickers into life showing a dilapidated apartment block. “They're calling themselves Reckoning. They're occupying this disused block that was meant for dismantlement but using it as their headquarters. I got a drone to follow Harley, she's not too observant really.”

The picture flickers to a grainy photo of a man in a green suit, a redheaded woman wearing...shrubbery? There was also a red and black suited woman along with a purple suited man with the palest complexion you'd ever seen, showcasing his luminous green hair. To the left of
them...well...your stomach did a flip flop to see John's face, his expression more deviant than you were used to seeing.

“That's their little group but don't underestimate them. Each is horrific in their own way. Riddler loves sadistic puzzles, Ivy can kill you in the blink of an eye with her affinity for plants, Harley is surprisingly tough and can beat a man to death with her bare hands and the Joker...the Joker...” Tim tries to continue.

“The Joker killed the last Robin,” Bruce finishes bluntly. “Just kept hitting him with a crowbar whilst he laughed.”

“Oh god,” you murmur. “Alright, I get it. They're all insane.”

“And they have a double of your partner,” Deadman sighs. “Of all the evil twins...had to be John right?”


“Enough!” Bruce shouts, banging his fist on the table so loud it reverberates around the room. “I'm tired of your attitude Constantine. Shut up like a good boy and listen and perhaps you can fix the mess you made.”

“Oh cock off!” John snarls. “Nothing wrong with a little humour you sad bastard. Go ahead, Tim, on with your presentation lad.”

Sitting in between the two men you felt slightly suffocated by the sheer amount of ego and the thickening tension. It was surely just a matter of time before they were trading blows again.

“Okay then,” Tim shakes his head, putting a cheerier expression on. “Now, here's the blueprints of that apartment complex. The weak point is the roof. Now, I propose we send Constantine in posing as his demonic self to infiltrate. If we can incapacitate the more human members of Reckoning then we stand a chance at taking Demon John down.”

“Fair game,” John nods. “Get me on the roof and I'll do the rest from there.”

“The rest of us will be around the building for back up. If you need assistance...I don't know...got any magical flares?” Tim asks.

“How about I make it rain flowers?” John smirks. “That's weird enough to catch attention right?”

“Oh...” Tim trails off, not sure if John is joking or not. “Sure?”

“Oh and one change to your plan mate,” John sits up straighter. “Star's coming with me.”

“No she's not,” Bruce interjects. “We need her as back up in case you fail. She'll be outside with us.”

“Bollocks to that,” John growls. “You just want to study her. Not on my watch. She'll be with me.”

“This is not the time to be possessive, John,” Zatanna says softly. “Think about the logistics.”

“Fuck the logistics,” John hisses. “Nearly lost this one and I'll be thrice damned if I leave her side now.”

“Can we just let her go with him?” Nightwing sighs to Bruce. “It'll be easier than all this shouting. We're wasting time.”
“Then I'm entrusting you to get them on the roof,” Bruce says coldly. “Dick, a word.”

You’d laugh at Nightwing's name if you weren't so apprehensive about what was coming. You had a feeling this was not going to go well.

The rest of you fidgeted in silence whilst Bruce and Nightwing discussed something privately outside the room. It was only Alfred entering and passing out drinks that made you feel marginally better.

“Something for you, Miss Star,” he says, putting a tiny plate down next to your tea cup.

On the plate was a chocolate teacake. You'd say this was fairly normal except for the fact you noted the chocolate looked richer than anything you'd come across. You were willing to bet this was some artisan recreation with expensive ingredients.

“Oi, where's mine?” John asks, looking jealously at your treat.

“Forgive me, John,” Alfred says with the merest hint of cheekiness in his eyes. “This was the last one and the tradition is the lady receives it in that case.”

You try to hide your massive grin but you do a rubbish job at it. Alfred notices and beams at you as you mouth 'thank you' to him. With that he exits the room.

“Bloody favouritism,” John huffs, swigging back his tea without letting it cool down.

The second you bite into the teacake you're ruined. Nothing will ever compare. You do hold out enough willpower to give John half though which gives him an adorable sparkle in his eye as he looks at you affectionately.

“Guess what I'm gonna say, lass?” he grins.

“That you don't deserve me?” you guess.

“Got it in one,” he winks.

“I've never seen you this happy,” Deadman remarks, his eyes managing to be warm against his corpse pale face. “Love suits you, John.”

“Cheers mate,” John nods, beaming widely and giving you a big kiss on the cheek.


“I'm getting on, Zee,” John laughs. “I'm heading for me mid sixties.”

“Wait, what?” Oracle says in surprise. “But...”


Oracle mouths a small 'oh' before falling silent. The lull in conversation is broken by the clanging of the door as Bruce forces it open with more effort than necessary. Nightwing follows in tow looking a little chastised.

“We move tonight,” Bruce announces. “Everyone prepare. Star I need a word with you...alone.”

“Look mate, we've had this discussion,” John starts.
“It’s fine really,” you smile at him, squeezing his hand. “You do what you need to do. I’m a spare part here anyway.”

“If he does anything weird, shout for me,” John mutters, touching your tattoos together so you feel his wave of apprehension.

“I’ll be fine,” you repeat, kissing him lightly on the nose before getting up and following the hulking man out of the room.

Bruce takes you to a grandfather clock before turning the hands to 10:47pm and you hear a soft click before he pulls away a section of wall that showcases some ominous looking stairs.

“It’s alright, I won’t harm you,” Bruce says, noticing your reticence. “This is just the entrance to where I keep...well my alter ego let’s say.”

You descend the stairs and feel the musty smell of damp along with a rush of a breeze. Surely this couldn’t lead out to the bay could it? As you get further down, the stairs open into a cave and you see a raft of expensive looking equipment like computers, medical tables, gadgets and...the Batmobile!

“Holy shit,” you murmur to yourself.

“I take it you're impressed,” Bruce smirks, his cockiness shining through.

“Much more high tech than a shelf of dusty books,” you nod.

“Perhaps I'll digitise Constantine's magical documents sometime,” Bruce shrugs. “If he ever sets aside his pride for a moment which I don't reckon is likely.”

“I think he'd be worried about someone stealing the information,” you explain. “Not all of what John has should be open to the world.”

“Are you saying my technology is easily hacked?” Bruce says with such a sternness that you falter in your tracks.

He comes right up to you, making you look up. You realise that it's his standard trick to make others feel small. One huge hand comes to cup under your chin, holding it at just the point of uncomfortable pressure.

“Well?” he prompts.

You refuse to let him intimidate you again so you square your shoulders a little, “All technology can be hacked. It's a matter of being smart enough.”

Bruce stares at you for a second before releasing you and laughing so loud it echoes in the cave, “Lucius would like you. Come. There is something I need to do.”

You follow him to what looks like a futuristic booth before he ushers you to get inside. You feel incredibly nervous as the machine starts whirring but you try to brush it off.

“Er...what are you doing?” you ask, feeling acutely exposed in this contraption.

“Making sure you're medically fit to be out,” Bruce answers. “Standard. Don't need anyone fainting or dying on a mission.”

“That's complete horseshit and you know it,” comes that Scouse accent from the bottom of the stairs. “I fucking knew you'd be analysing her.”
“Don't start, Constantine. It was necessary,” Bruce growls.

“Necessary my backside,” John spits. “Get her out of there right fucking now or you and me are gonna have a problem mate.”

“I'm not your mate,” Bruce snarls. “And I shall do as I please. The scan is nearly done. I like to know who or what I'm dealing with.”

John deftly sidesteps around Bruce’s body and runs for you, hand outstretched to pull you out of the machine. He's not quick enough though because a hand snakes around his waist, yanking him backwards and throwing him to the ground.

“I said, I'll do as I please,” Bruce repeats.

“You fucking bellend,” John hisses, flames spouting out of his hands as he scrambles to his feet. “Let her out or I cook your face to medium rare standard.”

One solid punch and John was back on the floor, skidding across the polished surface. You make to get out of the machine but Bruce's enormous frame blocks you in. He gives you an unsettling smile.

“Almost done. Just another thirty seconds,” he informs you as he delivers a swift kick to John who was leaping towards him.

Not a moment later, Bruce's suit jacket goes up in flames and he quickly shrugs out of it, stamping on the floor to extinguish the fire.

“Aww seems I've ruined your designer threads,” John says mockingly. “Now let her out before I barbecue the rest of you.”

“Alright, she can come out,” Bruce smirks and John barges past, scooping you in his arms and bodily carrying you out, even though you could've just walked out of the thing.

“Did he hurt you?” John asks hurriedly, checking you over.

“No he didn't,” you reassure him. “I just got...err...scanned that's all.”

“Tell me one good reason, Bruce. Just one. A reason why I shouldn't fuck off home and leave you to deal with my demon after this,” John spits in pure anger.

“Because the results are fascinating,” Bruce sighs in almost wonderment as he stares at the massive screen of his computer. “Did you know she wasn't completely human?”

John blinks, you blink.

“Er what?” he blithers.

“She's got an unusual blood type and DNA strands,” Bruce continues. “Definitely not completely human.”

“That must be the angel blood,” you say to John although Bruce catches the exchange.

“Angel?” Bruce says in genuine astonishment.


“Well it's altered your genetic structure,” Bruce informs you, studying the readout. “The strands are
self replicating. I assume this gives you a long life span. There's also protein molecules that appear to be...odd. These ones are to do with your appearance and metabolism. Truly remarkable. May I—"

“No you may not,” John interrupts. “No blood samples, no tissue samples, no psychoanalysis. Me bird is not a lab rat.

“Fine,” Bruce concedes through gritted teeth. “At least I know this much. I can assume if you're the product of archangel tampering then you're on our side.”

“Not that you couldn't figure that out already without all the cloak and dagger testing,” you roll your eyes.

Bruce casts his eyes downwards in embarrassment for the briefest of seconds before he composes himself, “Yes, well...let's prepare.”

“Oh and Bruce?” John says, tapping him on the shoulder as he passes so Bruce looks the other way. Quick as a flash, John punches Bruce in the face, barely staggering him but hurting John's hand quite a lot by the sound of the impact.

“Fuck me!” John cries, cradling his hand. “Is your head made of bloody concrete or summat?”

“Not bad,” is all Bruce says before walking up the stairs.

“That's it,” John spits when he's sure Bruce is out of the Batcave. “I'm fucking you on his stuff.”

“What?!” you stutter, unsure you just heard that correctly.

John picks you up despite your protests and lays you on the console of the Batcomputer, hitching your dress up.

“Woah!” you object. “He's definitely got cameras in here!”

“Good,” John smirks. “All the better to see us with. If that prick wants to mess with you, I'll mess with his stuff and have some fun with you whilst doing it.”

“We can't,” you babble as John starts stroking up your thighs.

“Just relax, love. Enjoy it,” John whispers against you, the stubble of his cheek brushing lightly on your skin.

But you couldn't relax. If this was anyone else's house you wouldn't give it a second thought but Bruce Wayne...Batman...he was just as likely to beat you into a bloody pulp for ruining his tech. He wouldn't see the playful side.

“John, stop,” you say firmly. “I can't.”

“Glad one of you has a preservation streak,” Bruce calls from the top of the stairs, his figure silhouetted in the light. “Now get off my computer. Now.” With that, he twirls dramatically on his feet and leaves.

“Bloody bellend wanker fucking bastard twatface,” John strings curses together as he sets you back down. “I'm not done with you, lass. We're getting him back for doing that to you.”

“What about him punching you?” you add. “That was uncalled for.”
“Exactly!” John cries. “Moody cunt...I wish I’d never brought you here.”

“We need to save people though John,” you sigh. “Do it for them. Not for Bruce.”

John exhales loudly before pulling you into a hug where he rests his chin on the top of your head, “Fucking hell, love. Tell me something nice before I explode. I can feel me temper bubbling away.”

“I love you,” you offer, kissing the underside of his jaw softly. “And we can have some fun in that four poster later.”

John relaxes a little, “Jesus bit, you know exactly what to say to calm me down, don’t you?”

“Known you long enough,” you laugh. “Come on, let's get on with this heist.”

“Ooo a heist,” John grins. “Sounds much better when you say it like that.”

You both walk out of the Batcave but not before John gives your arse a cheeky smack.

**

Being rappelled up the side of an art deco townhouse with crumbling walls was not John's idea of a good time.

Clinging onto Nightwing was also not what he had in mind although the lad certainly worked out from the feel of the muscles working underneath the kevlar suit. Wasn't all bad then. Could be worse, he supposed. John would rather cling onto Nightwing than Bruce...

When they reached the top, Nightwing boosted John up over the lip of the roof and took a moment to catch his breath.

“Damn, you Brits are heavy,” he jokes.

“All the stodgy food with the shit weather mate,” John snorts. “Makes us sturdy folk. Me missus is lighter though so you can look forward to that. No copping a feel though, okay?”

“What?” Nightwing says in confusion.

“Oh never mind,” John sighs. “Just bring her up.”

“Sure thing,” Nightwing smiles before hopping over the ledge and disappearing from view.

John sparked up a cigarette, smoking quickly in his nervousness. This really wasn't how he planned this excursion would go. He expected to get this over with pretty sharpish and not have to delve too much back into his old life, let alone start working with more of the Bat Family as he called it.

Why was life just continually twisting his nads? All he wanted was to get married to this stonkingly gorgeous lass who stayed with him despite what a incompetent prick he was. That wasn't a lot to ask for and yet the universe kept throwing more and more obstacles in his way.

The sound of your giggle caught his ear as you were apparently not far from the top now. John couldn't help the small bit of jealously that raged in him.

*You'd better not be chatting her up you spandex clad tart.*
Oh John knew all about Nightwing’s past history….sometimes he thought he was trying to rival John’s own with the amount of notches on his bedpost. Did Nightwing have to be so inherently charming?

John’s insecurities were coming back full force now as he ran over the possibility that you might be flirting. Not that he would blame you. He was an old bloke, complete fuck up and smoked like a chimney. Hardly the stuff of romance novels. Nightwing was dashing, a cop by day and superhero by night and had charmed the knickers off many a young woman. Clearly the obvious choice.

As you appeared over the edge of the roof, you automatically reached out for him and something primal stirred in his soul as he hoisted you up deftly and into his arms. You were the one that initiated the kiss but John was happy to continue it.

_Thank fuck for that. Stop being such a psychotic emotional wreck. It's not in the slightest bit attractive._

Nightwing popped up briefly, “All good here I assume? I'll be rendezvousing with Bats now so good luck you crazy kids!”

With that he was gone again.

“Kids?” John snorted. “He does realise I could be his dad right?”

“Stop whinging,” you laughed. “Let's get this over with. I'm not that keen on hanging around on top of a villain's lair.”

“Villains lair,” John chuckled. “You watch far too many movies, love.”

“Says the person who keeps his car keys in the sun visor,” you quipped back.


Slowly he opened the fire escape door and moved down the stairs, using magic to muffle your footsteps. The sound of voices was faint at first but grew ever louder as you both walked further down. The unmistakable New York twang from Harley sounded out the loudest.

“Aintcha gonna use him no more puddin'? We gotta blow up the mayor's office right?”

“Harley Harley Harley....” a male voice with an edge of malevolence to it said. “This is why _I_ make the plans. We need Mr Constantine, oh yes, but the mayor's office is so small! Think big! Go nuts! Why not wipe the Wayne Industries Tower completely off the map! Think about the chaosssss, think about the drama! Oh I live for it! Gotham's economy will sink overnight! Boom! Bye bye!”

“Economy?” another male voice, a little more composed than the other one. “We're doing all this to wipe some stocks out?”

“Don't you trust me?” the other male says and there's the undercurrent of a threat there. “See....take the money away and the poor of Gotham will riot! Think of the anarchy in the streets, dear Riddler! We can get away with anything! Batsy won't know where to go!”

A loud series of stilted cackles wends up the corridor and it makes the hairs on John's arms stand up. Nothing good was in that sound. He'd heard it many times in Ravenscar. The laugh of pure insanity.

He turned to see if you were just as disturbed as he was but his eyes fell on an empty stairwell.
What. The. Fuck.

You were literally right behind him and hadn't made a sound...

Right, think you fucking muppet. You put a muffling spell on her.

Bollocks. He had no idea where the hell you were. He was hoping you'd retreated back up to the roof but his gut instinct was telling him otherwise.

Slowly he crept back up, checking room after room but they were all empty. Even when he got to the top he still saw nothing. He went all the way around the roof until he came back to the door and whammed headlong into...something.

“Watch where you're going handsome,” a sultry voice spoke to him. “Bumping into strange woman doesn't end well.”

“Just who do you think you are?” John spluttered as he regained his bearings but the second he looked in the direction of the voice, purple dust was blown into his face making him hack and wheeze.

He could feel it burning in his lungs and knew he'd made a rookie error. This was a trap and he'd bulldozed right into it as per usual. The dust was invading his body. Potent herbalism for sure but there was a twinge of something...voodoo in there.

Shit. This was a slave making concoction and he had no way of counteracting it.

Well done, Johnny Boy....stellar work as ever.

“My friends call me Ivy,” the woman smirked. “You may call me your goddess.”

“My....my goddess?” John questioned as his will became more and more depleted and his memory grew fuzzy. He barely knew where he was any more. “What about...Star?”

“Forget her sweetheart,” Ivy cooed, stroking back an errant hair from his face. “Come play with me instead.”

And was John really going to argue with that? Not when there was a voluptuous redhead in front of him. Oh no. John Constantine was not about to let that opportunity pass him by.

**

You heard a crying sound from another room but John didn't seem to be reacting to it. The more you listened, the more it sounded like a child. Jesus, were they keeping kids as hostages?!

You surmised John would be okay if you left him for two seconds just to investigate. After all, you were hidden by the spell and could move silently. You weren't going to attract a lot of attention like that.

You backed up the stairs and into a dimly lit room with graffiti all over the walls. To be honest the content of the paint disturbed you a lot. It read like the ramblings of pure madness.
A shiver of fear runs down you and you try and shake off the feeling. This was not a good place to be in and you wanted to get out as soon as you could.

Scouting around, you couldn't even see any hint of a child. Maybe your mind was playing tricks on you or maybe there was a ghost somewhere in the building. Either way, you'd lingered in here too long.

A hand on your waist makes you almost shriek in terror as you wheel around, fireball primed to see John's shocked face.

“Woah there lass!” he says in alarm. “Calm down, just me! You ran off.”

“Shitting hell,” you pant. “You scared me.”

“Oh aye?” one eyebrow quirks up. “Being a damsel in distress are we?”

“Oh piss off,” you shove him. “This place gives me the creeps. Let's just do what we need to and get out of here.”

“Hmmm,” John rubs his bristled chin. “Pay the toll first, then we'll carry on.”

“Right now?” you say in surprise. “You really are incorrigible.”

“You wouldn't have me any other way love,” he smirks.

He kisses you like he's been starving for the affection. His lips are more devouring and his hands wander more than they have done in a while.

“Fuck me,” he murmurs under his breath. “Christ I want to shag you so badly right now.”

“Focus,” you smile, unwilling to admit just how much he'd calmed your nerves. “We need to incapacitate Reckoning and put the signal out there.”

“Right right,” John nods but you hear a low growl coming from somewhere in his chest. “I'm taking you later though. No arguments.”

You chalked it up to John's need to be the dominant male in every room he was in. With Bruce around, John's ego had taken a severe battering and it was no wonder he was being extremely sexual to try and fix that.


“I'll lead the way,” John announces, twirling on the balls of his feet so his trenchcoat splays out.

You both went downstairs and John practically burst in the room, blowing your element of surprise. Maybe he was just really impatient to get you back to Wayne Manor? Either way the plan for him to pose as his demonic twin was up in smoke.
The members of Reckoning looked completely blindsided as John cast magical nets from his fingers, snaring Joker and Riddler.

“You goddamn brat!” Harley screams, grabbing a giant hammer and leaping towards you, swinging violently.

You freak out at the speed of her attack and blast her backwards into the dry wall where she disappears in a cloud of plaster. John is not far behind in pinning her to the ground with another magical net.

“Where is Ivy and Demon John?” you ask, watching the struggling villains warily, not trusting that they wouldn't have something up their sleeve.

“Possibly scarpered,” John shrugs. “Least we got a few, eh bit?”

Something felt a bit off but you pushed it to the back of your mind. Demon John was the real target here so if he'd disappeared...maybe he knew you were coming.

“Send the signal then,” you sigh, shocking Joker with lightning when he tries to rip the net.

“Do it again!” Joker cackles. “Please, Sir, may I have some more? That is what you Brits say right? What a hoot! Truly electric!”

Joker's blasé attitude really was setting you on edge. You'd never come across anyone who seemed to actually enjoy being tortured like this.

“Signal signal....right. What were the signal again?” John says scratching his head. “Me mind's gone right swiss cheese about now.”

“Something about raining flowers, I don't know,” you shrug. “You were the one who was being facetious around Bruce.”

John sniggers to himself, “Tulips or daisies?”

“Tulips,” you wink. “Maybe Bruce will crack a smile.”

“Doubt it,” John snorts. “Wanker hasn't smiled since Catwoman sat on his face last.”

“Seriously?!” you cry. “Catwoman?!”

“She ain't nothin' special!” Harley shrieks from the floor, fighting with her bonds. “Overgrown kitty cat!”

John just rolls his eyes and crosses to the window, yanking it open and in the next ten seconds you see a hail of brightly coloured tulips descend from the heavens. It makes for a pretty sight against the stark dreary colour palette of Gotham.

“Tick tock, tick tock, who comes when Gotham knocks?” Riddler mutters to himself, prompting a fit of maniacal laughter from Joker. "Only the sane stop and smell the roses, right?"

Why did you have such a bad feeling about this? Was it because it seemed easy? Maybe it was easy because most of the Reckoning didn't have magic abilities.

*Keep yourself together. The others are counting on you.*

A window behind you bursts into tiny shards as the flowing cape of Batman fans out behind him as
he lands on the floor, shortly followed by Robin and Nightwing.

“Bats!” Joker coos. “So glad to see you! I would say hi but I’m a little tied up with stuff at the moment! HA!”

“Quiet,” the modulated voice commands.

Holy shit that voice was terrifying! You didn't know how everyone was so calm about it. Bruce had a deep voice normally but with the added distortion it was almost demonic. The imposing nature of the suit didn't help either now you saw it on him. You decided internally that Bruce did in fact scare the living bejesus out of you....

“Round them up,” Batman orders to his protégés who swiftly descend on the tangled trio. “Ivy and Demon John?”

“No sign, mate,” John shakes his head. “Must be out.”

Bruce growls in frustration, “Fine. It'll do for now. Let's hand these few over to Arkham and then return to base.”

“Not gonna argue with that pal,” John nods, crushing you to him. “Not in the slightest.”

**

You'd barely made it into Wayne Manor before John was yanking you up to your room. On the way you passed Alfred who looked mildly bemused.

“Need anything, Mr Constantine?” he asks.

“Nope, not a thing,” John hurriedly speaks as he drags you up the stairs and into the large bedroom before slamming the door and pressing you up against it. “Got what I need right here.”

“Are you really that eager?” you laugh.

“You have no idea what you do to me,” John purrs and before you can stop him, he rips your borrowed combat top clean off.

“Jesus!” you giggle. “Calm down!”

“No,” John rumbles, pinning your arms above your head.

His kisses are still harsh and you're sure he's leaving marks on your neck. He definitely does when he bites down hard in the groove of your collarbone leaving you to openly gasp at the sharp pain. You can feel the smile on his lips at your skin.

He adjusts himself so he's holding your wrists with one hand whilst the other mauls at you, digging into the soft flesh, raking down your side. All the while he's still hungrily kissing you. You take everything that he gives you, lost in his unbridled lust, keen to feel him close again after the Heaven incident.

He raggedly pulls your zipper apart in your trousers and his hand dives down, unkind fingers pressing hard into the skin. The sensation makes you jolt back.
You're sure he's never been this rough with you before. The pain is falling on the wrong side of pleasurable and you're uncomfortable with it.

“John, be gentle,” you urge him.

His response is to tear your trousers away leaving you in just underwear, unbuttoning his fly and pushing his own suit pants down.

“John. Enough,” you say, beginning to worry that he wasn't going to stop his brutal motions.

“Shut up, lass. Let me enjoy it,” John snarls in a tone you've never heard him use before.

He tries to pull your legs apart but you won't budge them. Even when he puts his feet inbetween yours and forces his body closer you still put up a fight.

“Stop!” you yell. “Stop it now, John or else I'll-”

The words die in your throat as John's hand comes up to throttle your neck, choking the sounds back into silence and the occasional breathy gasp.

“Not gonna tell you again,” John smirks. “Unless you'd like me to get more physical or maybe you'd prefer it unconscious.”

A spark flickers in your brain. The off feeling you've been having....fuck. It was John all along.

“Say the fucking code word,” you manage to spit out with unnatural pitch.

“You what?” John says confused. “Oh bollocks to that, love. Stuff your codeword. I'm busy here.”

Oh shit!

This was bad.

This was really really bad.

You'd taken home Demon John.

“You're not him,” you struggle, looking up at the arm pinning your wrists.

You stupid fucking moron. This one doesn't have the Chains of Binding! How could you be so idiotic?!

“What a smart bird you are,” Demon John says mockingly, the briefest glimmer of black pooling around the colour of his irises. “What gave it away, hmm? Were it the fact that Saint Johnny Boy would never touch you like this? He's a right fucking choir lad I bet. You know you want it, love. I can bring all those little dark desires to life. The ones you think about that make you feel dirty. Embrace them. I'll do anything you fucking like, lass. Nothing's off limits.”

“Let me go,” you growl, your head forced back against the wood of the door.

Slap!

Your skull bounces to the side as you're backhanded. Already you can feel the burning sensation on your cheek.

“That's right fucking boring,” Demon John laughs. “Make it interesting or I'll choose how this goes
down, sweetheart.”

Your brain goes into overdrive thinking of a way to get you out of this. You had no hope of overpowering him clearly and you're sure if you tried to magic your way out he'd kill you quicker than you could say the spell. You may know some magic but John was a master at it and Demon John didn't have the same moral hang ups about killing so to speak.

“You like games huh?” you try, still desperately wriggling against his grip.

“Ooo I bloody love them,” Demon John purrs. “Tell me little prey. What games do you have in mind?”

This was the worst idea you'd ever had but if it could get you to the others...you'd try just about anything.

“Chase me,” you offer.

The demon's eyes flicker to a mixture of red and black and he inhales sharply, “Ohhhh I do like the sound of that. Tell you what, I'm feeling...generous. You get twenty seconds to run. When I catch you...oh, the things I'm gonna do to you....”

He lets you go and you breath in a massive gulp of air to steady yourself.

“Twenty...” he starts and you bolt as fast as you can out of the door, almost flying down the corridor in your haste.

“Ten,” you hear from the room and you're cursing at yourself to run faster, to reach downstairs where you have a chance of bumping into someone, anyone.

“Five.”

*Shit shit shit! Move!*

You jump on the bannister rail and slide down, landing in a heap on the polished floor just as a final booming proclamation rings out upstairs.

“One....time to play!”

Chapter End Notes
'Constantine, Hellblazer: The Family Man'

you know the
6656 of last our
cheer

Constantine

[Signature]
I'm just so happy right now!
(I met him in cosplay for reference and name blurred for obvious reasons)
The Edge of Madness

Chapter Summary

How could you have taken Demon John back to Wayne Manor?!

Chapter Notes

Again, so sorry this has taken ages.
Life is everywhere right now.
But here is a super long chapter to make up for it exploring more of flamefeatherdraws prompt of 'magic to lure John away'.

Warnings: Mental Health triggers, Violence, Threats of Non Con, Drugged Non Con, Swearing
(This gets super dark, you have been warned)

Email: theliveshipparagon@gmail.com | Tumblr: theliveshipparagon . Send me prompts/messages etc!

Happy reading guys

- TLP xx

(My proofreading still sucks)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You'd never scrambled to your feet so quickly.

You heard the almost leisurely pace that Demon John was setting as he sauntered down the corridor above you. It was almost like he was purposefully drawing it out, like he knew you wouldn't get far. It just made you even more terrified.

Sure you were trying to look for Gotham's greatest heroes but would any of them really stand a chance against enhanced Dark Arts magic? Would they really? Zatanna may be able to help but you couldn't see anyone else having the know how.

“Getting closer little girl...” coos that Scouse accent which you're trying so hard to disassociate from John's voice.

You pick up your pace, barrelling yourself through a set of antique double doors into the meeting room you'd been in before. A dozen sets of eyes take in your terrified face and your state of undress and a ripple goes round the room.

“Is he really playing sex games with us all in the manor?” Zatanna huffs, clearly annoyed.

“Something's wrong,” Bruce announces, standing up immediately. “Look at her, Zatanna, she's
frightened.”

Nightwing expertly leaps over the table and puts his jacket around you to preserve your modesty. You gratefully zip it up before blurting out, “It's not John.”

“Shit,” Bruce hisses, shrugging his business jacket off and rolling his sleeves up. “Everyone get ready for a fight.”

“I don't understa-” Oracle starts but Bruce cuts her off with a wave of his hand.

“It's Demon John, Barbara. We've been tricked.”

Footsteps approach the door and stop just outside. Christ, Demon John was certainly dramatic...

In one motion, the door bursts open and everyone launches themselves forward but in one flash of light, they're all frozen in place. You can see their eyes still moving, confused about what had happened.

Demon John just casually walks in between the static bodies towards you and you back away until your thighs hit the table. All the bravery you'd accumulated during your relationship with John went out of the window. This was unlike anything you'd ever faced before and it was wearing the face of the man you loved deeply.

“Now now, lass,” Demon John chuckles. “Did you really think this merry band would save you? I thought you were smarter than that. Tsk tsk tsk.”

“What are you going to do?” you squeak out, almost climbing backwards over the table but thinking better of it. He would definitely know how scared you were.

“I promised you I’d do some things...and oh they will be deviant things....” Demon John smirks and you see the glittering malice in his dark eyes. “You know, I were toying with the idea of showing you off in front of them but I just had a better idea. How about I take you to lover boy?” John.

“Would you like that, love?” Demon John whispers in your ear and you feel his hands wandering down your sides. “To see goody two shoes Johnny Boy?”

“Mmhmm,” is all you manage to get out before Demon John grips your chin hard and forces you to look up at him.

“Oh then we'll see him alright but then I'm going to ruin you for him. You'll never want him again after some time with me, bit.”

Were you not absolutely shit scared you would find it amusing that both Johns held possessive traits. That gave you an idea though. If you stroked Demon John's ego enough maybe it would buy you time to search for John through your soul merge. You'd never tried it, not really, but it was the only way you could know for sure where he was. John was the only person who could save everyone right now.

“Is that so?” you challenge the entity in front of you. “Awfully confident about that fact.”

You see the very human emotion of pride flitter across the face you know so well and for a moment you can almost believe it is John in front of you.
“Trust me, lass. Nobody walks away from me unsatisfied,” Demon John growls, tightening his grip on your waist.

“Gonna need some evidence to back that up,” you taunt. “Don't quite believe you. I'm a difficult girl to please.”

Demon John inhales through his teeth, “Oo you bloody vixen. You're gonna be screaming me name soon. Let me just get you started eh?”

From that point you knew you had mere moments. Demon John was roughly kissing at your neck and pawing your legs and the soft skin of your thighs. He was distracted for now but it wouldn't last long.

You switched off your emotions, your senses, just like you had been taught to do and then went through the curious sensation of casting your essence out to find John. It was like you just connected in an instant because you saw through his eyes and heard through his ears.

Before you/him, was a redheaded woman you knew as Poison Ivy. It was evidently clear what had just happened between the two by the lack of clothing and the sheen of sweat on her skin.

He'd slept with her.

So much rage boiled up in you and you were screaming so internally loud in your head that John must have sensed it because you saw his body jerk suddenly and he seemed surprised.

“Star?!” he calls out in utter bewilderment and you don't know why he is so caught off guard by it.

“No, look at me,” Ivy commands. “I told you to forget her.”

“Oh my god,” John breathes and you can even feel his heartbeat hammering and the sick feeling in his stomach. “What the fuck have I done? What did you do to me?!”

“Hush,” Ivy snaps, clearly irritated at the line of questioning. “Just listen to my voice and breathe deeply.”

“Piss off,” John says, scrambling away and you feel the genuine disgust in his soul. “I'll fucking kill you for this.”

“No you won't,” Ivy yawns, almost bored.

“You took me bloody mind!” John yells. “You made me fuck you!”

“And you enjoyed yourself, didn't you?” she shrugs.

“Never,” John hisses. “You're not me missus. You never fucking will be. I-”

He doesn't get any further in that sentence because he's assaulted by glittering dust that seems to instantly calm him.

“Come back to bed, baby,” Ivy coos and you watch as John follows obediently.

A sharp pain you can't ignore pulls you back into your own body and your eyes refocus on Demon John who's choking you, his fingernails dug tightly into your skin.

“Oh that's how it is, hmm?” he snarls. “Play me off so you can check on Johnny Boy? You're more devious than I gave you credit for, love.”
“Let go!” you spit, absolutely furious about what you saw.

Demon John studies your face for a time before bursting out into laughter, “Oh well this is just too bloody perfect. You saw him with her, didn't you? That's why you're such a spitfire now. I can see the betrayed look in your eyes, lass. Gonna cry for me?”

You summon your strength, concentrating your magic around your fist before punching him squarely in the jaw. He lets go, rocking backwards and flying across the floor before getting up, laughing hysterically.

“I think I'm in love,” he grins. “Not hard to see why Johnny Boy claimed you as his. Now I'm gonna claim you as mine.”

You don't get more than two steps to your left before he's behind you, holding you tightly in a vice grip. He snaps his fingers and the heroes around you unfreeze, some falling over, some whirling around immediately.

“Get off her!” Tim yells, leaping forward and reaching out his hand for you.

Demon John just winks at Bruce who looks like he was going to break his own jaw with the amount of clenching he was doing and then the world around you shifts as you're pulled backwards off balance. A sensation of being squeezed even tighter grips your senses and then suddenly you're cast onto a basic single bed, bouncing slightly with the impact.

“Where did you take me?!” you demand, getting to your feet.

“That would be telling,” Demon John smirks. “Can't have you relaying that information to the Addams, I mean, Bat family.”

You're acutely aware you're in what looks like a cell. The walls are white and slightly padded, the bed is bolted to the floor and there's a basic toilet. In fact, this reminds you of some of the rooms in Ravenscar.

“It's an asylum, isn't it?” you say.

“Clever girl,” Demon John chuckles. “Oh I'm going to have so much fun with you, but first, let's properly introduce you to the team.”

In one flick of his wrist and a murmur so fast you can't decipher it, beams of light wrap around your hands. They twist until you're unable to move them and a cord of energy links up to Demon John's hand where he pulls it, making you walk forward a little.

“You're going to pull me around like a fucking pet?” you snarl before beginning a chant to free yourself.

“Ah ah ah,” Demon John warns. “Unless you want me to silence that pretty little mouth, I suggest you don't try that. Unless of course...you want me to silence you in a fun way.”

You visibly shudder despite yourself and that really seems to please him. You keep quiet, afraid you'll be forced to do something. Part of you is still screaming that you need to grow a spine and fight but part of you knows you would die very quickly against the might of his full magic.

“Good choice, lass,” Demon John nods before yanking the light cord and leading you out.

This was definitely an asylum. The cries and howls coming from behind the doors was
unmistakeable. You were walked past several rooms until you came to a large common area where everyone you'd been trying to take down was casually seated. Joker, Harley, Riddler, Ivy and...

“John,” you breathe,

Your John looks at you as though you're a stranger. So much hurt flares in your chest but you saw what happened. John had never willingly cheated on you. The real person you should be mad at was Ivy who, the second she saw you enter, had draped herself across John and he was stroking her hair lovingly. You can just about handle that until she leans up and draws him into a long and passionate kiss and they look every inch the quintessential lovers.

Then you just lose it.

You rapidly spell your way out of the bonds Demon John has you in and conjure a perfectly formed icicle which you throw at her head. Your John casts up a shield at the last possible second before it kills her and he stands up, a bolt of lightning wending towards you which you deflect into the TV which flares to life briefly before exploding into sparks and static.

“Now now, ladies,” Joker giggles. “There are two Johns and that's more than enough for everyone don't you think? Just share!”

“I want my John,” you snarl. “What the fuck have you done to him?”

“I did nothing,” Ivy shrugs. “He came to me, darling.”

“Liar!” you yell, throwing small fireballs which your John blocks quickly. “I saw you do something to him! The dust!”

Her eyes widen for a second and she looks to Demon John, “How did she know that?”

Demon John freezes you to the spot and yanks Nightwing’s jacket off you before presenting your Chains of Binding tattoo.

“This one bound her soul to Johnny Boy. She can always find him and see what's happening,” he explains. “Bloody waste of good skirt if you ask me. Especially wasted on that miscreant.”

Joker turns to Harley and grins heavily, “My my, I have an idea!”

“I'm sure it's gonna be great, puddin'!” Harley preens, looking lovingly into his eyes.

“Oh it is, it is,” Joker giggles. “Mister Constantine? Would you say this young lady would be...an asset to us?”

“She does magic and she does it well for being taught by that bell-end,” Demon John answers, letting his fingers trace your collarbone. “I reckon she would be a good fit.”

“Gooooood,” Joker croons. “Break her mind, break her spirit! I don't care how but do it! Drive her to the edge of madness and ooooh the fun we'll have! HA HA!”

“Perhaps if I may suggest?” Riddler cuts in. “This bound soul? Well exploit that. Clearly she has a violent reaction to anyone coming near the original John.”

“Got a better plan, mate,” Demon John smirks before leaving your side and walking to your John, pulling his coat and shirt sleeve back to expose the tattoo.

He mumbles a few choice words and you watch in horror as the same lines and patterns start
bleeding onto his skin, forming an exact replica.

“Now she won't know which John is which,” he chuckles darkly.

“I'm not sharing mine,” Ivy huffs to which a click of a gun sounds out and Joker has a revolver pressed to her head.

“Then I have no use for you,” he grins. “I like team players! Are you a team player, my dear?”

“Y-yes,” Ivy stammers.

“Excellent!” Joker draws back, laughing maniacally. “Then it's settled. This one won't know which John comes to her.”

“And whenever Ivy takes one of the Johns, make her watch through her magic,” Riddler adds. “Fastest way to break her.”

Fuck. You were so fucked.


**

How many days had gone by?

You looked at the small tally you'd been scratching into the wall but you could swear you'd etched in more lines than that. Had they been erasing some of the marks to mess with you? You couldn't tell any more.

You were clinging onto the shreds of sanity by your fingernails. It was so hard keeping it together. You were subjected to forced daily viewings of John having sex with Ivy which damn near drove you to tears every time you had to watch. The first person view made it so much worse.

Then you were visited by whichever John they sent and you could never trust yourself to go near either of them so you huddled yourself in the corner and set up defensive barriers so they couldn't get near you.

Demon John was becoming excellent at hiding his nature. The first few times he came in something always gave him away but he appeared to have studied your John and now you really couldn't tell them apart.

“Hey, lady!” Harley calls through the door. “You gotchya morning visitor!”

She opens the door and a dazed John walks through, collapsing on the floor. Your natural instinct is to help him but you keep yourself behind your magical walls. You can't trust anything.

When John looks up, tears are staining his face, “Fuck...Star....what have I done? I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry, love. I never....I would never...I didn't want to.”

Oh this was cruel. Making it seem like John had his free will back. You weren't going to be suckered
into this one.

“Whatever,” you shrug, looking disinterestedly up at the wall.

“Forgive me, please,” John continues, coming to the edge of your shield. “I only want you. She's using voodoo magic. You know I would never...I would never betray you like this. I love you, Star. Please...please look at me.”

God that voice was so hard not to listen to.

“Please...” his voice cracks. “I love you.”

You can't handle it any more. You look at him. You look at his distraught face. Fuck...this had to be your John.

“Help me get out,” he pleads. “I can't lose me fucking mind again. I can't keep doing it. I need you, Star.”

If you could just reach out, touch him...it could be okay.

Your defence barrier falters and John reaches through, grasping at your arm and sobbing openly against your torso. There was no way this could be Demon John. You'd seen John at his worst like this before and it would take Oscar level acting skills to pull this off.

Despite your gut telling you to be wary, you place a hand in his hair, stroking gently. It's almost automatic the way you comfort him. You always hated to see him upset.

“Save me,” John whispers against you, clutching you tightly.

You let your defence barrier fall completely away and he half climbs into your lap, clinging on. Whatever Ivy was doing to him had clearly broken him...she was going to pay dearly for that.

“I've got you,” you murmur softly, rocking back and forth with him. “I'm here.”

“Please, love. Don't ever let me go.”

In one swift motion he's angled your head down to kiss him and it's like you can feel the anguish through the movement. You lose yourself in it, just too hopeful that somehow you can get back to a slight sense of normality.

“Christ, Star, I love you so much,” he mutters in between fervent kisses.

“I love-” you start but when your fingers skip over the tattoo, you stop.

Fuck.

How could you have been so stupid?!

In that instant when your fingers connected with the pattern, you felt nothing. That was precisely the point. If this was your John you would feel every single emotion running through him.

“Get away from me,” you growl, shoving the man off your lap. “How dare you!”

Demon John chuckles, wiping his eyes on his shirt sleeve, “Almost had you there, lass. Gotta admit it were a bloody good performance, right? Fuck me, you kiss so well...”
You forget all sense of self as you launch yourself at him, punching, kicking, biting...anything to do him harm. You don't care what happens to you any more. You just can't take another second of this torment.

“Oh pipe down,” Demon John rolls his eyes, pushing you backwards with ease. “You ain't gonna hurt me that way.”

You take his cue and blast him against the wall as hard as you can muster. When he gets up to his feet, it's almost like he enjoyed it. That scares you more than you'd care to admit.

“Little girl wants to play, hmm?” he croons. “My turn then.”

With one sequence of hand gestures you're in the worst pain you've ever experienced in your life. Every nerve ending is on fire and you drop to the bed in abject agony, just screaming.

He doesn't stop until you're almost passed out.

**

John shook himself awake.

It was night time and he appeared to have been left alone. Ivy had gone god knows where.

Without the influence of her magic, John could think clearly for the first time in a long time. How long had he been here? Days? Weeks? He didn't quite know any more. All he knew was that he'd done some terrible things.

No.

John needed to accept it, he'd had terrible things done to him. He'd been forced to have sex against his will and to denounce you. He felt dirty. He felt used.

Strewth, was I dreaming that she came here? Did she really try to rescue me? My Star...

He decided to risk searching for you whilst no one was around. He settled himself into the bed and cleared his head before reaching out for you spiritually.

What he saw almost made him punch the wall. Demon John stood above you, using magic to torture you.

“Fucking prick,” John hissed to himself. “I'll fucking kill you.”

He felt a muted version of the pain in your body and the hoarseness of your throat from the screaming. He tried his best to block out the sound but it just buried itself in his head.

Come on, love. Try and show me where you are right now. Look around, please. I need to find you.

He waited for what felt like an age until you turned your head to stop looking at Demon John's face and he saw you must be still in the holding cell that he vaguely remembered from his drugged haze.

He withdrew immediately and bolted for the door in only his boxer shorts. One thought was clear in his mind. He had to save you.
John managed to stumble out into the corridor before haring down towards the cells where you were kept. He hoped that he wouldn't encounter any of the Reckoning on his way because he was in no fit state to put up much of a fight. He wanted to save that energy for Demon John.

*You bloody fucking bastard. I'll show you what happens to people who touch me missus.*

A sound caught his attention as he wandered down. It was the sound of a female screaming. It was the sound of you screaming. He took off towards the door it was coming from and shoulder barged it in, not caring about the pain it caused him.

“Well well,” his counterpart grinned, leaning over your half naked body that was covered in sweat and trembling. “Finally broke out of the spell hmm?”

“You get the fuck away from her right now,” John hissed.

“She's not yours to play with any more, Johnny Boy,” Demon John grinned. “You've got your own bird to sort out I believe. She's now mine.”

“The hell she is,” John snarled. “I should've killed you when I had the chance.”

“You should've never made me in the first place, you incompetant wanker,” Demon John fired back, rounding on him. “Poor little Johnny Boy...so scared of his darker emotions that he magically removed them. Well now you reap what you sow. Star's mine to play with and fuck me if she isn’t a fantastic kisser by the way. Does she shag that well too?”

He knew he should've kept control but John just saw red at that point. He released the warding tattoo on his forearm and summoned demonic energy. If he hit his other self with it, it would drain the life out of the demon instantly.

Demon John pouted, “Are we really that possessive? You'd kill me over a girl? You've had hundreds of girls, John....hundreds of men too. You won't miss this one.”

“I'd miss her for eternity,” John spat back. “Last chance, get away from her.”

He saw a brief glimmer of fear in his demonic self's eye, almost like he hadn't really expected John to be so fiercely loyal about you. The fear was quickly replaced by a slight widening of the eyes and a grin.

*Well that can't be bloody good.*

“Time for you to get back to your own missus,” Demon John smirked, nodding past John.

He knew he only had seconds left, Ivy was probably standing right behind him. He let loose the energy ball in his hand and flung it forward. It grazed Demon John’s arm and the flesh withered instantly but to his horror, Demon John just revived the skin in front of his eyes.

Fuck. Not accurate enough to be a kill shot. He'd failed you.

“You're a bad boy,” Ivy said sternly, before encasing him in the glittering dust.

As John succumbed back to the magic, he took one last look at your broken form, committing it to memory.

*I will break free, Star. I will come for you. I promise.*
John's face loomed over you but you didn't know which one it was.

“Please, just leave me alone,” you cry, unable to take it any more, unable to even summon the energy to shield yourself.

“I think you're ready love,” John smiles, pulling you to your feet.

He yanks you out to the corridors, practically dragging you down the hallway until he deposits you back in the common room.

“She ain't lookin' so good,” Harley muses, getting up and walking around your body as you lie motionless on the floor, just staring at the tiles. “You ain't gone too rough on her, huh? Don't want no droolin' gal on our team.”

“Oh she'll be just right,” whichever John it is laughs. “She's in that...malleable stage.”

Riddler gets up, squatting down next to you and lifts your face up. You can't even focus on him, you're so tired and so defeated.

“She's ready,” he proclaims, rolling you over and looking deep into your eyes. “Tell me girl, would you like the pain to stop?”

You just nod dumbly.

“A favour then?” Riddler purrs. “And if you work out my little...verse, you won't need to be in pain any more. If you fail.....”

“Oh Mister J, can I smack her one? Pretty pretty please?” Harley says sweetly to Joker who just giggles.

“I'm feeling generous, Harley. If she doesn't get the right answer....you can break something on her. Not the face though, that's far too pretty and we need a spokeswoman who looks...'normal'.”

Harley gives a giant harrumph at you being called pretty and grabs that hammer, twirling it in her fingers, “She ain't that pretty.”

“Star?” Riddler calls to you and you nod in response. “Very good. Now...riddle me this...Poor people have it, Rich people need it, if you eat it you die, what is it?”

God you couldn't believe your life depended on this! You didn't trust Harley not to go overboard and beat you to death. She seemed extremely jealous and volatile.

*Think, think!*

A slight moan caught your attention and you looked up to see the other John lavishing kisses on Ivy's neck. Fuck...maybe it would be better to just give up and die.

*John would never give up on you.*

“Tick tock, tick tock,” Riddler smiles, certain you're going to fail.

The answer...the answer....if you could only just think but you were coming up with nothing.
Wait...

Nothing!

“Nothing!” you croak out. “That's the answer.”

“Ooo you clever bird,” one of the Johns muses.

“Correct, my dear,” Riddler nods. “You live another day.”

“Bullshit!” Harley shrieks. “You ain't givin’ her hard ones.”

“It takes time to break a mind, Harley,” Riddler says in a dangerously low tone. “You should know that.”

She opens her mouth a few times before shutting up. It doesn't even seem to phase Joker and he appears to lean back, wistfully reminiscing about some memory.

“Those were the days,” he grins.

You lie there on the floor, making yourself as small as possible. Maybe if they believed they'd broken your spirit, you could plan an escape. Maybe you could send word to Bruce.

There was a spell that you read to enter someone's mind and speak to their conscious thought but John would never let you try it on him. He was always too afraid of you seeing his memories, even though you'd walked through them physically in The Dreaming. Perhaps if you could just....

While the members of the Reckoning were distracted, you started muttering the spell so quietly that you barely heard the words yourself. You pictured Bruce in your mind and held the image there as you whispered.

“Star? Is that you?” Bruce asked, when the connection struck. “I can feel you in my head. How is that possible?”

“Bruce, help us. We're in an asylum. Ivy's done something to John. I can't break him out of it. I'm close to breaking myself.”

“Are they all there? The Reckoning?”

“Yes. I don't have much time left. Hurry.”

“Wait!”

You broke off the link, afraid of lingering too long. Your eyes focused back and you looked up to see the faces of both Johns staring down at you, scowling.

Oh shit. They'd caught you.

“And just what do you think you're doing?” one asks.

“Bloody spellwork behind our backs?” the other continues.
“Ooo hooo!” Joker laughs. “She is a devious little one, isn't she? Not quite as broken as we were lead to believe. I'm sure you can...change that though.”

“No...” you plead, backing away from everyone. “No more, please.”

“But you've been such a bad girl,” one John pouts. “Can't let that go unpunished love and I do so enjoy you screaming for me...in whatever context.”

With two warlocks inflicting pain on you, you barely stood a chance. Within seconds you passed out.

**

You woke up still in the same position you had been in before. Everything ached down to the bone and you had to peel your face from the dried pool of saliva under your head where you'd lost control.

“You're awake,” Riddler remarks. “Fascinating to see such resilience.”

It feels like the walls of the room are hemming in on you. All you can suddenly think about is....what if you killed yourself? Then John would die too and you'd both be free from this nightmare. Maybe you could escape Heaven and maybe John could escape Hell.

*God is this what losing your mind feels like? I'm thinking about fucking suicide like it's a viable option.*

“I don't understand why I can't just spell her,” Ivy rolls her eyes. “Works with Constantine.”

“She's got too much spirit,” one of the Johns answers. “She'd break out of it quick enough. She needs to properly go mental to be moulded to our side.”

A delicate hand pulls your face around and you look into the corpse white skin of the Joker. You'd never been this close to him and you were completely horrified. Tears started rolling down your cheeks.

“Now now, hush,” he coos, producing a handkerchief from his pocket and dabbing at your eyes. “No tears, little one. You'd like to be free, wouldn't you? Free from pain?”

You nod, unable to stop crying.

“Let Mister J set you free,” he smiles and strangely it's warm. “Will you come with me, Star?”

Anything was better than being left with the Johns so you accept his hand and he pulls you to your feet. You're unsteady though and almost topple over but he catches you and lifts you into his arms, carrying you out of the room. You're glad Harley doesn't seem to be around because you're sure she would've tried to kill you for allowing Joker to be so intimate.

He carries you down a flight of stairs into what appears to be a basement level. His heavy footsteps echo on the metallic gangway. You can't help but wonder how many levels this asylum is built on.
“Are you alright my sweet English muffin?” Joker croons to you. “See, we're not so bad, are we? We are capable of caring....even affection.”

Somehow you doubted that but you kept your mouth shut. Clearly Joker had taken an interest in you that may just get you out of this terrible place. Maybe you'd have to play at being the devoted servant.

“Yes, Mister J,” you parrot in a Harley-like fashion.

An honest to god shiver runs down the man that you feel through the arms carrying you. Jesus...was he getting off on this? He must like completely broken women.

He stops at the edge of a balcony that overlooks a vat. Some nondescript liquid was swirling in it, the colour of every biohazard you'd ever seen in media.

Shit! Was he going to dissolve you?!

“Be still, my dear,” Joker purrs in your ear. “Wouldn't want to...DROP YA!”

He loosens his hold on you for the merest millisecond and you scream, clinging to his suit for dear life. His howls of laughter mercifully cover up your embarrassing sobs.

Fuck...you really were going to lose your mind soon.

“What...can't take a joke?” he says, suddenly very serious and he deposits you onto your feet, cornering you into the railing.

He grasps your chin in his hand and comes up close until he's almost nose to nose with you.

“How would you do anything for your John?” he asks, searching your eyes, grinning all the while.

“Yes,” you murmur, very very afraid.

“If I told you I'd force Ivy to let him go...would you take the leap?” he continues, turning your head so you can see the yellowing acrid mixture below you.

“I don't trust you,” you whisper.

“Oh, well....” he says, putting his other hand over his chest and gasping. “I'm so wounded! What is it Demon John always says so succinctly? Hmm....oh yes! 'I swear on me mum'. Such a quaint phrase! I swear, Star, I will release your John from his entrapment....all you need to do is jump.”

“What happens if I do?” you ask meekly. “I die?”

“Nothing so crude!” Joker giggles. “You'll live but you'll live as one of us.”

He uses his body weight and intimidating height to push you back so you're practically bending backwards over the bars.

“Decide,” he chuckles.

God, were you really entertaining this idea? You had no way of knowing if Joker would keep his word. You had no way of knowing if you would survive the fall into the vat.

“Unless you'd like to go back to the two Mister Constantines' method?” Joker grins, knowing he's presenting only one way out for you.
You turn your head to look down again. All you had to do was jump. You didn't need to stay in there...If it was acid then at least John would be cast to Hell and you know he'd escaped there many times. You'd both be free.

_Fuck...I think this is the best option._

“I'll do it,” you say quietly.

“Wonderfullllll,” Joker purrs, moving away from you. “My dear, do me a favour? Try a flip! It's much more fun that way!”

You grasp onto the railings, climbing over and holding on. You had to take several deep breaths. If it was acid then this was going to be a really painful way to die.

“DO IT!” Joker screams, causing you to let go in surprise.

The vat rushes up quicker than you expected and you feel an impact. You briefly wonder if you'd died hitting the side of it or something but a rush of air told you otherwise.

“I've got you,” the modulated voice of Batman says as he grips your trembling body.

You swing with him back up to the rafters and chance a look at Joker who seems absolutely furious.

“Bats! Always spoiling my plans! She was so beautiful when she was falling!”

“Run,” is all Batman says and that one word is terrifying.

Joker gives a small titter before fleeing the room, the laugh echoing down the corridor as he goes.

“Are you alright?” Batman asks.

“No,” you admit. “I will be soon though.”

You extradite yourself from his grip and begin marching down the corridor.

“What are you doing?” he asks, slightly confused.

“Going to get payback,” you hiss.

“You're in no fit state,” Batman growls, pushing you against the wall to slow your progress. “You'll get yourself fucking killed and then that's on me.”

“They tortured me for days!” you yell, trying to push back against the huge wall of muscle. “They took John's mind and Ivy raped him! I don't give a flying fuck what you think Bruce! I'm going after them!”

Even under the cowl you can see his expression softening. Then he does something you never expected Bruce Wayne to do. He hugs you fiercely.

“I'm sorry I couldn't find you both sooner,” he says quietly. “We came here a week ago but Demon John must have cast an illusion over everyone. I...I failed you.”

“You didn't,” you whisper. “And please don't fail me now. Help me save John.”

“Alright,” he nods, stepping backwards. “Stay behind me and I'll draw the brunt of their attack. Then do what you need to do.”
If there was one thing you didn't expect, it was that Bruce would be so secretly caring. He was so abrasive and rude in normal life but thinking about it, he had such a large network of friends and family that he obviously cared for deeply. Maybe being gruff and brooding was his coping mechanism for all the shit that happened in Gotham.

He leads the way, cape flying out in the rush as you both run towards the common area. The sounds of fighting slowly come into earshot and you enter into what looks like a mass brawl.

Riddler is flung across your field of view by Nightwing and Robin is grappling with Harley to try and stop himself being beaten with the hammer.

You feel the charge of magic and barely have time to knock into Bruce, pitching him forwards so a spell misses him.

“Oh bravo, lass,” one of the Johns laughs. “I'm impressed. Not many folks get the nuances of magic. Now...stop all this bloody fighting and get back over here.”

“Fuck off,” you growl.

“Wrong answer,” John smirks. “Although I will bloody love putting you back in your place now.”

He's about to cast another spell when a high heeled boot catches him in the face and you hear, “Og ot peels!”

Zatanna’s unique brand of backwards magic.

Whichever John it was drops to the floor instantly and you waste no time running over to him.

“What are you doing?!” Zatanna cries in alarm.

“Seeing which one he is,” you explain. “They've made themselves identical in every way.”

You touch your tattoo to his and feel nothing.

“This is Demon John,” you tell her. “Make sure he doesn't get back up until the fight is over.”

“Oh a chance to rough a version of John up? I won't say no,” she winks at you. “Go find him. I'll keep this one contained.”

You don't have to look very far as your John appears to be shielding Ivy in a corner of the room. You tap into elemental magic and drag the flagstones up from the floor, polishing them into pointed shards of stone and flinging them at Ivy. She shrieks in terror but your John casts up defences, deflecting them all around.

Shit. You were going to have to get creative.

You aimed a sleep spell at John who ducked out of the way before quickly trying a fireball. He was too quick for you.

“Oh little darling,” Ivy laughs, realising she's safe and protected. “Must be so hard to see him fight to the death for me.”

That familiar touch she places on his cheek sends you into a rage. You can't get close enough to hurt her and John's magic was just too powerful to break through.

“Your magic is strictly light love.”
John's words come back to you full force. You weren't making progress because John used Dark Arts magic when in combat.

*Forgive me for this.*

John never knew you'd found his stash of Dark Art occult scripts. There was a set of loose floorboards under your bed that you'd found when cleaning one day. You never meant to read them so thoroughly but it was fascinating. You certainly never tried to use those spells though because you were afraid of what they would do but....desperate times right?

“*Gladiī ex sanguis,*” you hiss, using one of the pointed flagstones to open up your arms and blood flowed freely down them.

The Blades from Blood.

All Dark Arts magic comes at a cost and this was your own life essence. The rivulets rise up into the air as you continue the chant and elongate to form ruby red swords that hover around you.

John's eyes widen in fear as he realises what you're doing but he's not quick enough to throw himself in front of Ivy before you launch the blades forward. They whistle through the air, piercing the protective barrier John has set up and in one sickening thunk, they bury themselves in Ivy's body.

She stutters for a time, looking down at the mess of her torso before collapsing to the side. John seems to be distraught for ten seconds until he blinks in confusion, looking down at the corpse. Then relief floods his entire form before he looks around and spots you with blood running down your forearms.

“Bollocks! Tell me you didn't!” he yells, diving for you.

“It was the only way,” you say weakly, swaying on your feet. “Only way I could save you.”

“You bloody fucking idiot!” he says, tears in his eyes. “I never wanted you to use Dark magic!”

“But you're free,” you smile. “That's all I care about. I'm sorry, John.”

You remember seeing his concerned face and the slightest touch of the Chains tattoo. A feeling of fear invaded your senses as well as tremendous longing and guilt.

Then you fell.

**

Oh fucking hell!

John almost went crazy with panic. You were bleeding out heavily on the floor. You may have found the spell and how to wield it but you'd never studied how to save yourself afterwards.

“You stupid girl,” he hissed, trying not to freak out.

If you died he'd never see you again. Sure he'd find a way out of Hell but you were always Heaven
bound and he doubted Raphael would let him into the fields of Eden again any time soon.

He channelled his energy into the healing spell, watching as the wounds on your arms knitted back together. He kept a careful watch to make sure no one came near you whilst he did this as chaos was erupting all around you.

“Oh god, is she dead?” Zatanna asked horrified as she came over.

“No,” John said firmly, gritting his teeth. “And I won't let her be.”

“Why did you teach her Dark Arts magic?!” Zatanna yelled.

“I didn't!” John shouted back viciously. “She must have found me bloody spellbooks I hid.”

“Laeh,” Zatanna spelled and more healing energy poured into you until not even a silver scar was left.

“Cheers, Zee,” John nodded. “Where is he?”

“Who?” she asked confused.

“That fucking bastard. My demon self.”

“Oh, I put him under a sleep spell and he's right.....” Zatanna was saying but she trailed off as she pointed to a bare and empty corner of the room. “Damn.”

John sensed it before it hit and he pounced at Zatanna, pushing her out of the way of the blast. He felt the echoes of demonic magic barely miss him. Thankfully it skipped over your passed out form too.

“I'll kill you!” John roared, rounding on his demonic counterpart who just laughed openly in his face.

“Good luck,” Demon John snorts. “You've not got the stones, mate. So after I get rid of you, I'll be taking your missus and finishing what I started.”

One wave of Demon John's hand and all John could hear was your screams and anguished pleading from an earlier memory. It filled his head and overwhelmed him.

No way was he letting this prick anywhere near you again. This ended now.

He released the warding all over his body this time. If he was going to take this demon down, he needed full capacity. Dark Arts magic required nothing less than your all.

“Disperi! Morere!” John yelled, feeling the horrid prickle of Dark magic scraping through his veins as the fatal bolt of energy roared out of him.

It hit Demon John in the face and the skin melted away in a horrendous bubbling motion revealing just how different the two were underneath. The eyes turned mottled green, not even the whites visible any more, the skin gave way to angry red muscle and the lips dissolved away into a pointed sneer.

“Fuck me, you're one ugly bastard,” John hissed, readying himself for another volley.

“I'm just you, Johnny Boy,” the demon grinned and Jesus was that an awful sight.

He was far too distracted by the horror show in front of him to anticipate Demon John leaping at him
in a physical takedown.

“Fucking hell!” John cried as he fell backwards, scrapping with his counterpart.

Blows were traded, each man rolling onto the other to get the upper hand. There was nothing pretty about it. It was visceral and John could feel the bruising already starting. He was sure his lip was split too.

He just caught the flash of metal arcing through the air and put his hands up, blocking the knife that nearly buried itself in his neck. There was a struggle of strength where John poured his magic into fortifying his muscles and in one inelegant headbutt he managed to stun Demon John enough to grab the blade from him.

John swiped across hard, feeling the steel bite into the melted flesh and was doused in a deluge of demon blood. It flooded his open mouth and blinded his eyes but he kept stabbing upwards. Maybe he hit the chest, he couldn’t tell but he wasn’t going to leave the job half finished.

Christ, he had to swallow the blood to stop himself from choking. It was bloody disgusting, like drinking raw sewage.

Well congrats, Johnny Boy. You've reinfected yourself with a demonic taint. Maybe you should learn to keep your gob shut when fighting.

He felt the weight on his body fall away and he took the opportunity to wipe his eyes. Finally he could see again and he looked at the dying demon next to him.

“Fuck you, you cunt,” John spat, prepping Hellfire in his hand. “See you never.”

The fire spread throughout the body and with Demon John being incapacitated, he was not able to stop the inferno. He burned, barely making a sound except a low hiss.

Hellfire was quick and it was deadly. Soon all John saw was bones and ash and the golem pouch that rested in the dust. He picked it up, fondling the small bag, a reminder of a time where he’d been incredibly bloody stupid.

“John?” Zatanna prompted him and he knew he must have been staring for a while.

“M’alright, Zee,” he said quietly, burning the pouch to nothing. “It’s finally over.”

He brushed past her, immediately scooping you up in his arms and caressing your face.

“You really are in love with her, aren't you?” Zatanna said softly.

John laughed gently, “If I believed in soulmates I would say this was it.”

“I'm happy for you,” she smiled. “Good to see the con man does have a heart after all.”

“I'll try not to be offended by that,” John snorted, ducking slightly as Joker was flung over his head into the wall.

“Is it done?” Bruce asked, his voice low and rumbling through the modulator.

“Aye, mate. Demon me is no more. Made fucking sure of it,” John nodded.

“And are you alright?”
The question caught him off guard. Bruce had never asked about John's welfare, not once. Maybe he was growing on the old sod.

“No,” John admitted, looking at you so as to not give the full extent of how fucked up he felt.

Bruce just grunted then turned to Nightwing who had tied Riddler up in the rafters, “Dick, time to move out. Grab Star and let's go. Tim, you too.”

“Nah,” John protested. “I'll carry Star meself.”

A huge hand patted down on his shoulder, “You're not in a state to do that, John. I'll carry her.”

John thought about it for a moment. He felt old and he felt broken. Probably would be right embarrassing to fall over with you in his arms.

“Allright. Take care of her,” John sighed.

Bruce picked you up with ease and John appreciated that he cradled you like you were made of glass. You looked so small and delicate in that moment and John felt his chest tighten in pain that you'd had to endure so much.

He got up and took one step before his leg started wobbling. Before he could pitch over, Nightwing slid under his arm, supporting his weight.

“Come on, John,” the lad smiled. “Let's get you home.”

As much as John wanted to save his pride, he just let Nightwing help him along and out of the asylum.

He turned his head briefly to look at the wrought iron gates.

Arkham Asylum

“Bruce?” he called out to the hulking man in front of him,

“Yes, John?” Bruce replied, turning to look at him.

“Thanks.”

“You're part of the family now, Constantine,” Bruce smirked. “And I never leave family behind.”

Chapter End Notes

Brit translation guide:

Good skirt - Attractive woman (pretty vintage saying, around the 70s/80s)
Only time can heal the wounded

Chapter Summary

You deal with the post traumatic stress of your time in Arkham

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait!
Just got back from the USA so haven't had a chance to write for a long while.
Warnings: Heavy angst, smut, major feels.
Any private comments/prompts/messages my email is theliveshipparagon@gmail.com |
Tumblr: theliveshipparagon
Happy reading!
- TLP xx
(Likely to be proofreading errors)

You woke up in a bed but it was definitely larger than a single.

It took you a while to remember what exactly had happened. I mean...did it even happen? Maybe you were just going to wake up in a different room in the asylum. Who knew?

Tentatively you opened your eyes and saw a John leaning over you. You couldn't help but openly whimper at this point, scrambling away.

“Ah bollocks,” you heard him say in a strained voice. “Shit, you're afraid of me now.”

You peered through your fingers to see him sitting on the edge of the bed, cradling his head in his hands. He looked miserable and ashamed.

“You're afraid of me? What have I done to make you afraid of me?”

“Christ, I'm so fucking sorry,” he mumbles. “I'll go.”

Before you can say anything, he half bolts out of the door, slamming it behind him.

You don't know what to feel in this moment. You're still half afraid this is all an illusion and you'll just get paraded out in front of the Reckoning again. You don't think you could take much more.

You sit there silently and pull the duvet up and around yourself, making a cocoon like you used to do when you were little.

God I just want things to be normal again. I want my John...I want....I want to be back to how it was.

**
John just fled. There was no other word for it.

He ran like a coward away from you because he couldn't handle the rejection, not from you. You were the only thing keeping him going in that bloody awful place and now he might have lost you.

In his fevered plight, he turned a corner and slammed straight into Bruce's chest making him bounce backwards and nearly lose his footing.

“Careful, John,” Bruce rumbled.

“Ah...fucking sod ya,” John hissed, trying to push past but Bruce held out a huge arm, stopping him in his tracks.

“What's wrong?” Bruce asked.

“Noht I wanna tell you,” John said snappily.

Bruce didn't deserve his shit mood but he was the only one around to take it out on other than himself. John wished at times like this that he was a little less fucked up.

“Constantine...” Bruce said warningly. “Talk to me. I realise we're not best friends but you're part of this team and I can see you're not well in yourself.”

John sighed and thought it over for a minute. Maybe getting it off his chest could be good. Bruce had certainly been through his fair share of tragedy and messed up situations so perhaps he would have an insight.


“This way,” Bruce said, looking left and right before depressing a wooden panel in the wall which opened a secret door with a click.


“It comes in handy,” Bruce shrugged. “And I'm surprised you read something other than skin magazines.”

“Charming,” John huffed. “Just because I'm not posh doesn't mean I don't have culture.”

“Like a petri dish has a culture,” Bruce muttered but John chose to ignore that, stepping through the door.

Inside seemed to be a hidden lounge area. Two sofas and one big coffee table with two further recliners. In the corner was a globe that housed a drinks cabinet.

“Like the décor,” John mused. “Give us a drink eh?”

“Still a gin and tonic man?” Bruce asked, moving to the globe.

“Fuck that, need the stronger stuff. Scotch if you have it.”

“Don't insult me, John,” Bruce chuckled before bringing two crystal tumblers and setting them down on the table, pouring neat units into the glasses. “This is the finest scotch and worth more than you could ever afford.”
“Oh....well, I'm honoured,” John said dramatically, taking the glass and carefully sipping at the contents.

Well he wasn't an animal after all. He was upset sure but he wasn't going to knock expensive scotch back like he was a fresher in university.

“Now...what's going on?” Bruce asked again. “You're distressed, I can see that.”

John took a deep breath, “It's Star.”

“Did she...end it?” Bruce said tentatively.

“May as well have done,” John bemoaned. “Caught one glimpse of me when she woke up and bloody ran like I was the First of the Fallen. She's afraid of me, Bruce. I don't blame her. It were me own sodding mistake that led to this in the first place.”

“She won't come near you?”

“Nah. Saw it in her eyes. She's terrified. I've only got vague memories of what they did to her...what I was made to do to her. I don't think she'll ever come near me again.”

“She needs time,” Bruce said wisely, sipping from his tumbler. “Trauma takes a while to process.”

That made John inexplicably angry for some reason and he slammed the glass on the table.

“How much fucking trauma does she need to process before she decides it's not worth it...that I'm not worth it....Fucking hell, Bruce, she's been through the mill since she met me.”

“And she's still here and she's still fighting for you,” Bruce said sharply.

“That woman has fought things she never should have, been to Hell twice, almost died countless times and been kidnapped by crazed bloody gods. I think this is it. This is the straw that breaks the camel's back.”

Bruce abruptly stands up and walks over to John, forcing him to look up, “That woman cares deeply for you, John. I think she'd weather any storm you put her through.”

“I've failed her,” John continued, almost babbling now. “I keep failing her, over and over again. She was tortured because I was too bloody stupid to defend myself against...well let's face it, basic sodding voodoo magic. I'm a fucking joke.”

“Then shape up,” Bruce growled. “Star didn't give up in Arkham and you shouldn't give up now.”

“She...she didn't?” John asked, feeling a small bubble of hope in his chest.

“She was willing to jump into a biohazard vat to save you,” Bruce recounts. “She shouted at me when I tried to stop her going after you and she almost killed herself to set your mind free. She never gave up on you John. She was adamant she was going to rescue you. I've...never seen that fierce a loyalty before. In all honesty John, and this stays between us...I'm jealous. It's something I've never found before...a woman who will throw everything away for love.”

“Wait,” John blinked. “You're jealous of me?”

“Not the point, Constantine,” Bruce huffed. “The point is, she'll come round. Once she realises she's safe and Demon John is dead, she'll be alright. She's a tough girl. If I wasn't sure that you weren't going to take her back to England immediately I might have asked her to join the team.”
“Fuck off,” John hissed. “She's had enough for one lifetime. She'd play the bloody heroics card to perfection and get herself killed.”

Bruce just smiles wryly, “This is why I said 'might'. Do you feel better?”

“Maybe,” John answered cagily. “I just...ah bollocks this is gonna sound right poncy...it just...hurts when she runs away from me.”

“Give it time,” Bruce said, holding his hand out so John could pull himself to a standing position. “She's had the worst of Gotham try to break her and she resisted. She can work her way back to normal.”

“What, like you do?” John challenged. “With your costumed orphanage?”

“Exactly like I do,” Bruce murmured and John felt bad at seeing the momentary flash of past trauma cross his face. “We're quite alike I sense, her and I.”

“Bollocks,” John snorted. “She's chirpy for a start.”

Bruce just cuffed the back of John's head at that remark.

“Go to her, you fool,” he said. “She needs you. You don't need to force your presence but just let her know you're there.”

“Aye, alright,” John sighed, rubbing the back of his skull. “If you gave up the batsuit sometime you'd make an alright therapist.”

“Oh a compliment from John Constantine,” Bruce laughed. “The world is definitely changing.”

John chose not to reply but walked back out of the room after downing the last of the scotch for Dutch courage. He reasoned with himself that it was going to be a hard road to repair the damage that had been done to you both but if you were fighting so hard for him, you might just get through this after all.

**

A knock at the door startled you.

“It's only me, Miss Star,” Alfred's voice said through the keyhole. “I thought you might like some tea and I snuck some Battenberg cake from Master Wayne's personal collection. May I come in?”

You fought with yourself heavily. One part of your mind was saying you were safe and Alfred really was trying to sort out your welfare. The other part said Demon John was casting a mass hallucination and really you were probably in a bleeding and drooling mess on that common room floor.

“I understand if you'd rather be alone,” Alfred says after a time. “I can leave it outside the door for you.”

“No, wait,” you blurt out, your voice sounded scratchy and hoarse. “Please...”

The door knob turns and you secretly ready a spell, just in case. The kindly butler pokes his head around the door and smiles at you.
“I can leave it on the dresser and go,” he announces.

“Can you...stay?” you ask, pulling the covers around you tighter. “It's nice seeing a face that wasn't used as torture.”

Alfred looks incredibly pained and shuffles quickly, placing the tray on the dresser next to the bed. He sits down next to you and adjusts his glasses, seemingly picking his choice of words.

“I'm...I'm awfully sorry about what happened to you. I wish I could've stopped it from happening. I had the strongest inkling Demon John took you to Arkham but Bruce insisted you weren't there.”

“Demon John cast an illusion to make it look like we weren't,” you explain.

“Damn and blast them,” Alfred swears. “What horrible entities. I wish I could make this better somehow. This may be overstepping our boundaries but if—”

He's starting to hold out his arms in an embrace and for some reason you just dive into it. There's something so comforting about Alfred's nature that you can't help but seek it out. He doesn't seem surprised, in fact he seems happy you're interacting and he holds you, trying to soothe you by rocking gently.

“I used to do this with Master Wayne in the early days, though he wouldn't care to admit it now,” Alfred laughs. “He was much more sensitive then. More emotional about failures, about loss.”

“So you ever get pulled into it all?” you ask quietly. “The fighting I mean.”

“Oh frequently,” Alfred sighs. “I've been shot, stabbed, tortured...you just carry on with it all. It's part of the mythos of the Batman and I have my role to play in it. Gotham is so much safer with Bruce's work that who would I be to step back because it got a little dangerous at times?”

That made a lot of sense to you. Thinking about it with the emotion removed, John was the first line of defence against all the evils of the supernatural and demonic worlds. He would never escape that duty because the whole world would fall to ruin. You couldn't begrudge him when things caught up and got chancy.

And you....you were marrying him. You had magic of your own. You were now becoming an addition to that magical front line. You needed to suck it up and accept your responsibilities, along with any peril that came with them. You needed to see John and touch the Chains tattoo. Then your mind would be at ease.

“I take it I'm making some sort of sense,” Alfred says.

“Yeah,” you nod. “I understand it now. I can't let this defeat me because there's still important work to be done.”

“Precisely, Miss Star,” Alfred nods. “You're a veritable force to be reckoned with so don't you ever forget that.”

“Thank you Alfred, truly,” you smile, the action feeling foreign after all this time.

You sit up, straightening yourself out. You're a little embarrassed to become aware that you're in ragged clothes with blood stains down them. You were sure you were ruining Alfred's pristinely washed sheets.

“I think I need to clean up,” you announce.
“I'll lay some clothes out on the bed for you. Go on, you'll feel better once you're showered,” Alfred nudges, getting up and moving to your suitcase.

You might be shy normally about a man going through your clothes but Alfred just gave off a comfortable vibe so you half skipped into the ensuite, throwing yourself into the shower wholeheartedly.

It felt good to wipe away the grime, dust and blood. Who knows how long you were in that place? They certainly didn't let you bathe in the asylum.

You had a hard time detangling your matted hair but after a few yanks of a shower brush that brought tears to your eyes, you managed to restore it to order. Gradually you started to feel normal.

When you stepped out and saw your reflection in the mirror, you barely recognised yourself. You looked so thin. Your cheeks were slightly sunken and your eyes hollow. Suddenly the promise of that Battenberg cake was very inviting.

You dressed, stuffed a slice into your mouth and washed it down with tea. You didn't stop until the plate was empty.

*Blimey, I must have been hungry.*

Another knock at the door catches your attention and you freeze a little to see John hovering awkwardly in the frame.

“Mind if I speak, lass?” he asks and when you don't reply, he shuffles uncomfortably before continuing. “Fair do's, I'm gonna do it anyway. I just....I wanted you to know I'm here. I'm here for you...when you're ready that is. Sorry for running off. I just wasn't expecting that. Kinda hurt and all...Not that it was your fault! I mean...balls...er...”

“Come here,” you say quietly, trying to keep your nerve.

“Are you sure?” he questions nervously.

“Please.”

He moves towards you slowly, as if afraid he'll spook you. You close the gap, almost jamming your wrists together and you feel the flood of apprehension, guilt and self loathing from him. It's almost overwhelming and you have to step back before you start crying.

“Jesus,” you pant.

“Shit, are you okay?!" John half yells, panicking completely.

“It's really you,” you say, looking into his stricken face. “We really made it out.”

“Aye love, we did,” he says, still wary and keeping a distance.

“We made it out,” you repeat, laughing uncontrollably. “Tell me you got him.”


“I don't care,” you say, recovering yourself.

You rush him, throwing your arms around him and holding him so tightly he starts squirming.
“Star?! What are you doing?!”

“Hugging you, fuckwit,” you reply. “I've been so unsure what was real and now I can finally piece things together.”

You catch John completely off guard by pulling his face to yours and kissing him. You want to erase all the past...however long it's been. You want to erase Ivy from his mind. You want him back. You hold off though, careful not to overpower him with emotions when he's probably just as fragile as you are.

“God you are bloody amazing,” he whispers. “After all that, you still come near me?”

“Of course,” you say surprised. “Why would I blame you? You had your control taken away, someone else was doing the torturing with your face. It wasn't you. It never was. I remember you...you tried to save me when I fought back against Demon John. You never gave up on me so I'll be fucked if I give up on you.”

“Shit,” John sniffles. “I swear I never cry usually.”


“Only around you,” he smiles slightly, wiping errant tears before they can roll down his cheeks and crushing you against his chest. “Jesus fucking Christ, you scared me to death when you did Dark magic. I thought that was it.”

“I'm sorry I went through your spellbooks,” you say seriously. “I just...it was the only way to get through your defence shield.”

“I get it, love, I do,” John says, stroking your hair. “Doesn't mean I wasn't right terrified to see you bleeding out.”

“I was just terrified generally,” you admit and to your surprise, tears start rolling down your face which you can't seem to stop.

“Oh Star,” John sighs, looking incredibly pained. “I should've broken her magic sooner. I should've....it doesn't matter now. I've got you.”

You start shaking and you don't know why. It seems all your bravery has just left you because you find yourself crying more heavily. John pulls you closer and moves you to the bed where you both lie, wrapped in each other's embrace, tattoos touching which is a familiar comfort.

“Christ I've never really seen you cry like this, lass,” John murmurs against you, his chin resting on the top of your head. “It must have been really bad. I'm sorry.”

“Look at the pair of us,” you laugh through your sobs. “Who needs a reservoir in Gotham when you have our waterworks.”

“You're not funny, love,” John snorts. “Leave the humour to me.”

“Piss off,” you say, headbutting him gently in the chest. “You wouldn't know humour if it bit you on the arse.”

“ Plenty of things have bit me on the arse, Star,” he chuckles. “Where do you wanna start?”

“How about from when you hung around the gig hall when we first met,” you smile to yourself.
“Let's start from there and see where we go.”

“Hmm,” John muses, stroking your back with soft motions. “Could lead anywhere. Could lead to marriage....could lead to merging souls. Who knows?”

You look up into his intensely reflective eyes. You can see the emotion change from deflective humour to genuine affection as he looks back. There was no mistaking your John this time.

“I love you,” you whisper, the words bottled in your heart for a long time.

“I love you too,” he smiles back. “Christ...with all this shit going on, all that happened to us in there...when I'm holding you like this...it just melts away. I feel safe, as bloody stupid as that sounds.”

“I get it,” you nod. “I feel the same.”

“Us against the world, bit,” he says, kissing your forehead. “You and me til the end.”

“John and Star Constantine, defenders of the world against magical shite,” you giggle.

John squeezes you tightly, “I'll have to make new business cards. You called yourself Star Constantine....”

“Yeah?” you shrug. “Scary?”

“Not at all, love,” John grins. “Made me right happy actually. If I didn't think Chas would lamp me one, I'd say let'selope to the nearest registry office right now.”

“Yeah, he definitely would be pissed,” you smile. “He's been working on his best man speech and everything.”

“Oh can't deny the old bastard the chance to humiliate me, can I?” John rolls his eyes. “Seriously Star, I wish you didn't have to go through everything with my world.”

“I’ve come to realise it's part of the package,” you say, looking up at him and intertwining your hands together. “I can never begrudge you for saving people John, not even if my life is in danger. What you do is important...necessary even. I love you and that means dealing with whatever comes with that.”

“Fuck the feathered twats in the Silver City. You're truly my angel, Star,” John says squeezing your hand.

“Part archangel at least,” you joke.

John laughs loudly, “The part archangel and the part demon. One for the great romance novels.”

“John?” you ask. “This is going to sound weird but...all that stuff with Demon John replicating your tattoos....do you think maybe...could you get a new one? It might help me process a bit better if I have a freakout. You know...just to ground me in reality.”

“Anything for you, love,” he smiles. “Tell ya what, grab a pen and draw on me. I'll get that done then. It'll be your mark by your own hand.”

“What if it's not good?” you query.

“Don't give a shit,” John shrugs. “Got worse ones on me body right? Could be a demented drawing
of a Jaffa Cake for all I care. The point is it'll help you.”

“You can do one on me too then,” you nod seriously. “It'll be our thing. Our therapy thing or whatever.”

“Or just a show of love,” John snorts. “I'll ask Alfred if he has a felt tip or something.”

He gets up and leaves, returning a couple of minutes later with a pen. He gives it to you in a slight flourish, deliberately being overdramatic to make you laugh.

“On we go, Da Vinci,” he says, taking his shirt off to expose his torso. “Try not to make it a Picasso.”

“No pressure then,” you huff, poking him in the chest.

He leans back into the pillows after lighting a cigarette and tucks one hand behind his head. You straddle him, wondering where you'll place your little mark and settle for just above the scar on his heart.

“Tell you what,” he interrupts. “I'll close me eyes if you feel self conscious.”

He closes them, occasionally taking drags of his cigarette whilst you set to work. You manage to not fuck up spectacularly drawing a Celtic knotwork star and you're even a little pleased at the intricacy once you sit back.

“Done?” he asks.

“Yeah,” you affirm.

He opens both eyes and looks down. It takes approximately one second before his face splits into a beaming smile.

“Good choice and good placement. I'll wear it proudly,” he says, waving his hand and you watch as the ink settles into the skin, permanently marring the flesh.

“Hey, why couldn't you have done that when I got my runes done?” you question.

“Ah...” he trails off sheepishly. “Just wanted you to hold me hand at the time...sorry about that. Thought it would be a bonding experience.”

“You're lucky I don't hit you with a pillow,” you huff.

John chuckles deeply, puffing the last of his ciggie and then stubbing it out in the ashtray. He quickly reaches for you, rolling you under him and kissing you gently before pulling back.

“My turn,” he smirks. “Top off, lass.”

You're suddenly regretting this decision but you shuck out of your t-shirt and it seems he's going for the same spot.

“Eyes shut now. I get nervous,” he implores you and you slowly comply.

It feels weird with the pen stroking at your skin and you're very tempted to open your eyes because it feels very elaborate. You're half convinced he's just squiggling the ink all over for fun.

“Do you trust me love?” you hear him ask and you instantly feel worried.
“Uh...yeah,” you say after thinking about it for a long time.

“Then you can look,” he says.

You look down and then back to him in surprise. He's chewing anxiously on his bottom lip, waiting for your reaction.

“Is it...is it alright?” he asks.

He's drawn his own signature over your heart and framed it with ornate angel wings. The level of artistry frankly amazes you. You'd never known John could draw so well.

“Why didn't you tell me you were an artist?” you question.

You watch as John's face works through bewilderment and then amusement.

“Ah I'm just a petty scribbler, lass. Nowt special. Drawing precise occult symbols gives a man a lotta practice.”

“I don't imagine wings were part of that,” you laugh.

John blushes, the colour reaching up into his hair, “Oh shush you. Do you hate it?”

“Of course not,” you shake your head. “Explain it to me.”

“The angel wings are because you were Heaven made and archangel tainted. The wings surround my signature because you're a part of me, literally and I'm a part of you. If you think it's a bit territorial or some bollocks I'll scrub me name out and-”

“Jesus Christ John, stop babbling,” you giggle. “Do your thing. Make it permanent.”

“It's not too forward? You're still...happy with me?”

“We've been through so much. You think I'm just gonna chuck it in now? I already told you, I'm working through it,” you explain. “And I'm going to help you because I know you won't admit you're suffering as well.”

John doesn't even try to deny it. He just hangs his head and stares at the duvet cover.

“It made me feel dirty...in my soul. I felt like scum, Star, absolute scum,” he trails off. “I didn't want it, any part of it. I-”

“I saw,” you say gently. “I used our soul merge to try and find you. When you broke out of it, you called for me immediately. You've got nothing to feel ashamed about.”

“Christ it feels bloody fucking weird to admit it. It shouldn't happen to guys, it-”

“It does,” you interrupt. “All the time. Most are just too scared to speak out about it. I'm here for you.”

John blinks back more tears before looking upwards and taking a deep steadying breath, “Did Demon John do anything to you?”

Your mind falls back to all the times Demon John would maul you when you were bound to that medical bed in the asylum whilst he forced you to watch your John and Ivy. The way he would taunt you, asking if it got you off, whether you wanted to join in...
“Oh fuck, he did,” John whispers, searching your face. “Please tell me it wasn't that.”

“It wasn't,” you say quickly. “He just groped me occasionally and pretended to be you to kiss me.”

“I should've made his death longer...the fucking bastard,” John hisses. “How bloody dare he touch you.”

“He's dead, John,” you say softly, taking his bristled cheek in your hand. “It's over. Let's just concentrate on us.”

“Aye, love,” he sighs, looking older than you've ever seen him. “We should.”

“Make this a tattoo,” you order, pointing at your chest and laying back into the pillows again.

John waves his hand again and you feel a mild burning sensation as the ink settles. Now on your chest lies his tattoo, as perfect as if a professional artist had done it themselves.

“Much nicer than the last time,” you remark and he snorts, leaning over you slightly to inspect his work.

You end up placing your hands on his chest and you feel the minor wince and the slight draw back. It makes your heart ache to see how much this has affected him.

“Bollocks, I'm sorry,” he instantly utters. “I don't know why I did that.”

“I do,” you whisper in a small voice. “I'm sorry I could've save you sooner John.”

“Oh please don't do that,” he hisses, screwing his face up. “I'm the twat that got blindsided by basic magic.”

“I did too,” you reassure him. “I heard a kid crying in that building, that's why I wandered off. I bet Demon John just conjured the sound to split us up. I should've told you about it. I'm an idiot.”

“No you're not,” John shakes his head, touching his forehead to yours. “You've got a big heart and you want to help people. You've got a hero's heart.”

“Fat lot of good it did me,” you joke.

“You killed a person to save me,” he says bluntly. “That takes real stones, Star. You're a hero whether you believe it or not. You're everything I should be and you make me want to strive for that. You make me want to be a better man for you.”

“I want to ask you something and don't agree to it out of principle okay?” you start. “No agreeing just because you feel like you should. Think it over.”

“Alright, lass. Ask away,” he says warily.

“I want to erase her for you, I want to erase Demon John for me. Make love to me John. I want to be close to you again.”

He instantly goes tense and you internally berate yourself for being so forward. Of course he was not ready, of course this was much too quick. You were just being selfish now.

“Fucking hell, I didn't think you would want to...for ages really,” he mumbles.

“If you're not ready-” you start, completely flustered.
“Oh I'm ready,” he sighs, rubbing his nose slightly against yours. “I'd give anything to hear those little noises you make again, those noises that are just for me. I'm sorry I flinched love. I just weren't expecting it. Sure you're alright with me touching you?”

“Yes,” you nod confidently. “Let's not let them win by driving us apart.”

John smiles incredibly warmly at you, “Aye, that I can wholeheartedly agree with, bit. You are bloody perfect. Right, I'll go slow for both of us. If it gets too much just say. I'll do the same if it gets too much for me.”

You interlace your fingers with his so the Chains of Binding touch. It's your way of keeping yourself grounded and also to reassure John.

“How did an old cad like me get someone like you to love him?” John laughs to himself, clearly feeling the affection running through you.

“By breaking into my house and making me breakfast,” you smirk.

“Oh well if that's all it took,” he smiles. “Gotta do that more often then.”

“I don't think-” you begin but he cuts you off by leaning down and kissing you.

He finally lets some of his body weight rest on you as he clearly loses himself in the moment. His kisses are hungry, eager, like he was starved of the action for years rather than days.

The more aggressive he gets with it, the more you match him. He ends up hurriedly unclasping your bra but always making sure to carefully remove it from you. You think back to the stark contrast of Demon John ripping your clothes off. Your John was considerate and caring, even in the intense throes of passion.

“Fuck me you're gorgeous,” he husks, kissing every inch of your bare chest and leaving an extra long one over your new tattoo. “Say you're mine, love. Please.”

“I'm yours, I'm all yours John,” you say through laboured breaths.

You hear him mumble something against your skin which sounds like 'oh fuck'. You get the impression he's reminding himself of every inch of your body. He's taking too long though for your liking so you tug slightly in his messy overgrown hair to pull him back up to you.

“Don't like it lass?” he asks, studying your expression.

“No foreplay,” you shake your head. “I just want you.”

“Gotta love a sexually forward woman,” he smirks, removing the rest of your clothes as gently as he could before shedding his own.

His hand dips down in between your legs, checking you're aroused enough so he doesn't hurt you.

“Somebody's ready for ol' Johnny,” he chuckles to himself.

The motions, the language...it's all so familiar to you and it's comforting to have that again. It's like nothing happened, nothing changed. You can delude yourself into that fantasy.

“More than ready, Scouse boy,” you challenge, nipping his shoulder to get your point across.

There's that feral sound that he always makes when something turns him on. He practically dives on
you like a hormonal teenager and easily slides himself into you. It feels like the tightest fit after so long without him but you push past the slight burn and let the wildness overtake you.

So much for going slow. The both of you were fucking like the world was going to end, like you'd never see each other again.

When you hiked your legs up to change the angle, a stream of expletives were almost spat out by John.

“You keep doing that and I ain't gonna last much longer love,” he growls.

“Don't care,” you manage to say.

He lets the rumble rip through his chest as he processes what you've said. In a fluid motion, he's placed one palm in between you, lying directly over your clit. Seems he's going to take the cheating way to make you cum but you really don't give too much of a toss right now. You're just happy to be close to him.

When the spell sinks into your skin you all but scream as the orgasm barrels through your senses and it's a good job John stifles your cries with his free hand because you're sure Bruce would've come running thinking something was wrong. John finds his own release a moment later, chanting your name almost like a prayer.

He eventually settles, resting on his forearms with his head pressed to yours, still inside you.

“This is home,” you hear him say, oh so quietly. “She could never take that away from me.”

**

Bruce let you stay for a couple of weeks whilst you recovered. Of course he was often out fighting Gotham's criminal underbelly but he made sure you were both provided for and Alfred was more than helpful about helping you heal.

The nights in those weeks were tough. You would find, on occasion, nightmares would ruin your sleep, nightmares where Demon John was torturing you again. Whenever John would shake you awake, automatically you searched for the tattoo you had drawn on him. That was really the only way you kept sane about it.

John had his nightmares too. He would wake up thrashing in the bed covers, pushing something unseen away. You knew what the unseen thing was though. Ivy.

Sometimes he would mutter in his sleep over and over again 'Let me go', 'You can't take her away from me', 'Stop it'. It damn near wrenched your heart to listen.

Gradually though, the nightmares faded away and you both peacefully made it through the night without incident.

“Think we should head back to Blighty?” John asks you, holding you close to his chest on the bed. “Feel like we've been away ages. Chas is probably kicking off by now.”

“He'll be fine,” you giggle. “He knows what happened so he shouldn't be trying to parent us too
“Ah Christ,” John wrinkles his nose. “Don't ever say that again. I never want the image of Chas being me dad figure.”

“I think having Renee for a maternal figure would be worse,” you laugh. “I don't really care where we go. I've had enough of Gotham for one lifetime though."

“Me too,” John sighs. “Let's not go to Metropolis either, just as bad for supervillains.”

“So shall we go home or head somewhere else?” you ask, propping yourself up to look at him.

“I reckon if we headed back I wouldn't let you out of the warehouse for days,” John smiles. “Just you, me, the telly and a fuck ton of pizza...but I know you get antsy staying indoors all the time."

“Think we've done enough of that lately,” you point out. “Even if this manor is like its own mini town.”

“Aye,” John nods. “Tell you what, I know a lass around Indiana/Missouri way. Runs a bar. Saved her arse a few times from wayward supernaturals. I think you'd like her place.”

“Why?” you ask.

“The décor is pretty special,” John laughs. “What do you say? Fancy a trip to somewhere all American where the worst thing we'd have to deal with is an errant werewolf?”

“You know, that sounds like bliss after the month we've had,” you smile. “Sure.”

“Lovely,” John says, kissing your forehead. “I'll see if Bruce will let me borrow one of his cars.”

“Good luck with that,” you wink. “He's very precious about his toys.”

“Don't I know it lass,” John rolls his eyes.

**

To your surprise Bruce agrees to give you one of his more unflashier cars.

“Not a scratch,” he growls, handing the keys over to John.

“Scouts honour,” John swears, holding his hand over his heart.

“So you'll be leaving us for a time,” Bruce continues, eyeing the both of you warily. “Sure that's wise?”

“Me missus needs a break from being in here,” John explains. “I think it would do us both good frankly mate. Feel like I'm just hiding away right now.”

“I understand,” Bruce nods. “You do what you need to. We'll be here when you get back and I'll arrange for you to get home again. Do you need money?”

“Oh nah,” John says quickly, shaking his head. “We'll be alright. I don't do extreme charity.”
“You're a stubborn man,” Bruce chuckles. “Take care of yourselves. I took the liberty of programming my tech into your phones so you'll be able to reach me if you need help.”

“How wonderfully creepy. Wouldn't expect anything less, Bruce,” John snorts.

Alfred comes into the room with two bags, handing one to each of you.

“I took the liberty of preparing refreshments for you Mister Constantine-”

“Oh bloody hell, Alf,” John sighs. “I've told you, call me John.”

“Force of habit,” Alfred smiles. “Miss Star, you have a surprise in your one. Do take care of yourself won't you?”

“Always try to,” you smile back.

“Good luck,” Bruce nods, before ushering you to the garage.

You both climb into the car, waving as you go as you drive off into the Gotham night.

**

Somewhere around Columbus, Ohio you open your bag.

You find Alfred has packed sandwiches, cakes, chocolates and expensive fizzy drinks. There's also a piece of paper neatly folded up which you unfold and begin reading.

Dear Star,

Forgive me if this is forward but I just wanted to let you know I will be keeping an eye on you for a while on your trip. I know the last few weeks have been hard for you and I'd rather you had no more unpleasantness.

Bruce doesn't know I'll be doing this so please keep this as our little secret.

I've attached my personal phone number in case you need assistance or simply a chat.

Be safe,

Yours sincerely,

Alfred.

“What's that?” John asks, noticing you reading.

“Alfred left me a note saying he's going to keep watch on us,” you explain.

“He's really taken a liking to you,” John smiles. “Loveable old bugger.”
“God knows why,” you say, spotting Alfred had placed your favourite chocolates in a compartment at the bottom of the bag.

“Alfred cares...a lot,” John tells you. “I reckon he probably treats you like he would his own kid. He's a good man.”

“He certainly is,” you smile fondly.

After a few more hours of driving, you hit a point around Indiana on a long stretch of freeway.

“Nearly there,” John announces.

The food long since decimated, you sit back watching the changing scenery around you. You're still curious as to why John would want to show you a bar but you hold your questions. It was just nice that he trusted you enough to show you things from his past.

Slowly a place loomed into view from a dirt road you'd taken.

“This is it,” John nods, parking up and getting out.

You stare up in fascination. This just seemed like an average run of the mill dive bar. Was John pulling your leg with this or was the inside somehow completely different?

“Jack's Crocodile Bar,” John says with a flourish. “Come on, love, let me show you around.”

The second you enter you see why it's so unusual. The bar is placed within a giant crocodile's mouth that you're not sure whether it's a sculpture or some real monstrous creature. The scales seems to glitter with a sheen only a true living creature could have possessed.

“Is that-” you trail off.

“Locals think it's just quirky but it were a bugger to kill,” John informs you.

“It's real?” you whisper.

“Told you this place were right interesting,” John smirks before walking towards the bar unit.

“Jack?” he calls out but is met by silence.

There are a few patrons around, most hidden away in booths. Seems this place isn't too frequented during the day time.

“She's not here, my good man,” a voice says, rich and deep with an edge of gravel. “She's somewhere in the back taking care of a...wayward soul.”

“Sounds like Jack alright,” John laughs, turning to the source of the noise.

You both look into one of the booth areas to see a man with deep set wrinkles, slicked back dark hair and the most unusual eyes you'd come across. One was blue, watery even, the other seemed almost ghostly in its light green hue.

“Don't often meet Englishmen in back water country,” the man smiles, genially enough.
“Just seeing an old friend,” John replies politely.

There’s a great crash from the bathroom as the door bursts open. There’s a gigantic flurry of red and plaid before the whirlwind of a man settles on the bench opposite the man you're talking to.

“I ain't fuckin' doin' it,” that familiar voice snarls and you turn in surprise.

“Sweeney?!” you exclaim.

Sweeney's eyes go extremely wide as he spots you and John.

“You know each other?” the man remarks. “Small world isn't it?”

“Yer, I do,” Sweeney says quickly, standing up and half pushing the both of you out. “And they're just leavin'.”

“Sweeney don't be rude,” the man chides, standing up as you're being ushered out forcefully.

“Cock off, Wednesday,” Sweeney hisses and everything in you clenches.

Shit. Mr Wednesday.

You look at John who figures it out at the exact same time. You both allow yourself to be shoved out of the door by the frantic leprechaun who turns on you the second you're outside.

“What tha fuck are ye doin'?!?” he snarls. “Walkin' straight to Mr Wednesday?!”

“We didn't know,” John growls back. “I just took her to meet Jack.”

“Feckin' bloody shite,” Sweeney swears, running a hand through his wild mohawk. “This is really bad, lasslin'. If he figures out who ya are...”

“We'll go,” you say quickly, trying to pull John to the car. “Thanks for warning us.”

You’re about to reach for the car door when a crash of lightning echoes above you. The sky had turned grey in an instant and the clouds raged above you.

“He knows,” you heard Sweeney mutter.

The doors burst open and the seemingly placid man called Mr Wednesday stands in the frame, his hands neatly crossed in front of him.

“I believe Mr Nancy told you I wished to speak with you, young lady,” the god says. “Why don't you come back inside and we won't have any fuss now.”

Maybe you should have gone back to England after all...
John was livid.

You could tell from the soul link and the tight grip he had on your arm. He was angrier than you'd ever felt him but it was mixed with shame. You half wondered why.

“You stay the fuck away from her,” John growls.

“Now now, that's no way to speak to me. I've been nothing but polite, have I not? I'm simply asking for a moment of her time to talk,” Mr Wednesday says imploringly.

Had you not have know his true nature as Odin, you could see him as just an enigmatic old man. He didn't look particularly threatening and he didn't give off a vibe of power. If anything he gave off a conman vibe. You got the feeling he was a fairly smooth talker.

“Bollocks, I know what you want from her,” John spat. “I won't let you have it.”

“You're not in a position to barter,” Mr Wednesday rolls his eyes. “I prefer to do this the civilised way but if you will insist on being a thorn in my side I'll have to utilise Mad Sweeney over there.”

“Just do what he says,” Sweeney hisses quietly. “I don't wanna beat ya pretty blond face in again. Lasslin' over there would never fuckin' forgive me.”

“Shut your bloody gob!” John cries, mortally offended. “For the last time, she ain't going with you. Full stop, no fucking arguments.”

“That's a shame,” is all Mr Wednesday says before nodding to Sweeney.

“Ah Jesus shite!” Sweeney curses, turning around and readying his fists in a boxer's position. “Can
John lets go of your arm and begins the fingerwork necessary to cast a blasting spell but something odd happened when he tried to let it loose. You saw the sparks on his hands and felt a mild rush of wind but nothing happened.

“What?!” John shouts to himself.

“What's going on?” you ask, nervously, trying to put yourself in between John and the leprechaun.

“It's not working,” John hisses, trying the spell once more.

“Performance issues?” Mr Wednesday smirks to himself.

“Cock off!” John snarls, obviously frustrated when the spell fizzles out again.

“Lasslin', get outta the way,” Sweeney says quietly. “I gotta do this.”

“No you don't,” you whisper back. “You tried to help me, please help me again.”

Sweeney takes your shoulders in his giant hands firmly and you remember exactly how tall he is when you have to crane your neck back. You can practically smell the alcohol rolling off of him.

“It's too late,” Sweeney says and you can see the sadness swirling in his gold coloured eyes. “He's got me. I'm his fuckin' puppet now. Tell yer man to stand down.”

“What does he have over you?” you ask but Sweeney just hangs his head in shame and bodily picks you up, setting you to one side whilst he advances on John who's still struggling to make an active spell.

“Fucking hell!” John shouts in annoyance and goes for an uppercut instead.

Sweeney reels backwards a little and John rushes for you, grabbing your hand and pulling you back to Bruce's car quickly. You're about to dive in when a bolt of lightning hits the vehicle, arcing off in forked jets.

“You think my son is the only one who can control the elements?” Mr Wednesday laughs softly. “I'll ask you again, talk with me.”

“John, I'll do it,” you say quickly, trying to free your hand from his desperate grip.

John looks pained and incredibly panicked, “No love, please. Just run with me. I'm not getting you into any more fucking situations. I can't keep you safe, I'm failing you.”

You're sure he didn't mean to spill that last sentence, judging by his wide eyes and terrified expression. That must by why he felt shame. He'd landed you in another dangerous position so soon after Arkham.

Sweeney came sprinting over, hand at the ready to punch John back but you grabbed his fist and pulled it down to his side.

“It's alright. I'll talk,” you say to the grateful leprechaun who steps back immediately.

“Star-” John starts.

“You're not failing me,” you say firmly. “This is just part and parcel of who you are John. Trouble
follows you always. I'm prepared for that. I've accepted we're never going to have a peaceful life and I don't care because I love you. That's the point. I take the bad with the good.”

John bit his lip savagely before pulling you into an embrace, turning you round so he had his back to Sweeney and Mr Wednesday before whispering in your ear, “Why are you so bloody perfect? Why do you stay with a fuck up like me? I'll never understand that.”

“You give me more purpose than you realise,” you admit. “I've never been happier with anyone before, despite the shit that gets thrown at us.”

“Oh love,” John squeezes you tightly. “You're my bloody world. Alright...I trust you, we'll do this your way. My way only gets us into more trouble.”

You plant a soft kiss on his lips, before hearing the gentle 'ahem' of Mr Wednesday who is getting impatient. You lean into John's ear and whisper, “Follow my lead.”

You take his hand and walk up to the door of Jack's Crocodile Bar again.

“Wise choice,” Mr Wednesday nods. “There was no need for violence. Not that your man could've done a lot anyway given his...unfortunate mishap.”

“Saying you've always been perfect in fighting?” you challenge. “Because from where I'm standing, you're the one that needs my help right now.”

“Very astute,” Mr Wednesday smiles before turning to Sweeney. “I like this one, she has fire. Come my dear, let's get a drink and talk.”

You follow him back into the bar, settling down in the booth. John insists you sit on the outside so you're able to run more easily and you don't fight him on that.

“What can I getcha?” a woman says, coming over with a small notepad before she locks eyes with John. “Oh you fucking son of a gun! John Constantine! Well I never!”


“Ah so you're the fabled John Constantine?” Mr Wednesday says, his eyes lighting up and you really don't like the expression. “I was wondering. Mr Nancy has spoken a great deal about you.”

John ignores the god sitting opposite and addresses Jack, “No more river monsters giving you gyp?”

“Not unless you count my ex-husband,” Jack snorts.

“Drinks for my friends, Jack,” Mr Wednesday motions to everyone.

“Everyone but deadly red over there,” Jack says, pointing at Sweeney. “He's had enough.”

“The fuck I have!” Sweeney protests.

“By my count, you've gone through twelve SoCo's and cokes. Bar is closed, sweetie,” she says sternly.

“Ah fu-”

“None of that!” Jack shouts before turning to the both of you. “Now, for you John? I don't have any
gin in lately.”

“Whisky will do fine, lass,” John nods.

“And for...John's lady I'm assuming?” Jack says slyly, the ghost of a smirk on her lips.

“John's fiancée,” he corrects her and she slaps her thigh and laughs.

“Good God! The drifter settling down, well ain't that a hoot!” she continues laughing before wiping her eyes. “You must have the patience of a saint, sweetheart. I'll get ya something strong just for that reason.”

“Surprise me then,” you grin.

“Usual, Wednesday?” Jack asks.

“Of course,” Mr Wednesday nods and watches Jack go over to the bar before he speaks again. “Now, my dear Star. Mr Nancy was quite excited when he discovered you on that plane. He said you have an affinity for belief in the old world?”

“I enjoy learning about it sure,” you shrug. “It fascinates me.”

“And killing the gods of them?” he prompts.

“What....what do you mean?” you stammer.

“Word travels fast when you're collecting gods,” Mr Wednesday says, his good eye flashing briefly. “The British contingent fear you. You killed one of their own.”

“Sulis Minerva?” you ask to which he nods. “We just stopped her killing innocent people. We never killed her.”

“Oh,” is all you could answer.

“It were the right thing to do,” John chips in. “Her power was being abused.”

“And that meant she had to die?” Mr Wednesday raises his eyebrow. “Oh my dear Star, you didn't know what you'd done, did you? I'm sure you learned the value of belief when you encountered Mad Sweeney here. You summoned him, correct?”

“I did,” you nod warily.

“He says you went out of your way to make a perfect offering. That's the kind of devotion we need. Let me tell you-” he abruptly stops as Jack sets down the drinks before walking off again. “Let me tell you that a war is coming, between the old gods and the new. It could wipe our very existence away.”

“Who are the new gods?” you ask.

“Technology, Media, the Internet,” Mr Wednesday spits, clearly annoyed. “These are the gods of the modern world, my dear. They take more of our followers every day and we grow weak.”

“Why don't you just announce your presence to the world?” you shrug. “I'm sure you'd get more
believers if you were filmed performing... I don't know, godly things?"

“And Media would spin it that it was a trick of the camera, that is was... CGI,” Mr Wednesday counters. “Preachers and priests get dismissed as 'wackos' and 'charlatans'. Even the Big Five gods are failing to draw their crowds these days. You should see how the Jesuses are fairing.”

“I'm sorry, Jesus plural?!'’ you cry.

“There are many interpretations of what Christ is and looks like,” Mr Wednesday laughs. “Therefore, there are many Jesuses.”

“But only one God and one Devil thank fuck,” John cuts in. “New Testament is a load of bollocks, love. Old Testament is where it counts.”

“Precisely, God's warrior over there is correct,” Mr Wednesday nods.

“Piss off am I his warrior,” John snarls. “Prick never did me any favours.”

“Gods are fickle, John,” Mr Wednesday shrugs. “Even the main one.”

“So you need my belief in your kind to give you strength?” you ask, trying to sort this out in your head.

In truth, it was quite overwhelming. It seemed like God, Lucifer and Heaven and Hell were permanents but the gods of ancient cultures had sprung up in addition. Or were you getting that wrong?

“We do,” Mr Wednesday nods.

“What does that involve?” you say warily.

“A trip to The House on the Rock and a lot of my kind that are keen to meet you,” Mr Wednesday smiles. “Tonight you'll stay at the motel down the road. Sweeney will watch over you both so you don't run. Then we'll turn the tide of this war.”

“Oh he's not staying the room with us!” John protests.

“I don't like it any more than you do, blondie,” Sweeney fires back. “No fuckin' hanky panky either.”

“Agreed?” Mr Wednesday says, ignoring the two bickering men beside him and stretching out his hand.

You think it over. With John's powers going haywire, this was probably your best option. You'd just do the brunt of the spellwork if they tried to sacrifice you or something.

“Agreed,” you nod, shaking his hand.

There's an odd tingle when your flesh meets his and he is clearly surprised by it too. He studies you intensely before downing the last of his drink.

“You're more than meets the eye, Star,” he proclaims. “Get some rest.”

With that, he leaves after whispering something in Sweeney's ear that makes him go paler than he already is.
“What a bloody load of bollocks this is!” John huffs, knocking back his whisky. “Can't go one sodding month without supernatural shit happening.”

“It's fine, we'll get out of it soon,” you reassure him.

“Nobody walks away from Wednesday,” Sweeney says grimly. “Ye should have never have come here.”

“Bit late for that now, ginger,” John hisses. “Suppose we'd best get to this motel before the All Father decides to electrocute us.”

“On one condition,” Sweeney says. “Buy me a fuckin' drink for the love of Eire!”

**

Here you were, stuck in a motel room with John and Sweeney. It was heavily booked for being in the middle of nowhere so they had no choice but to give you a double bed room and say someone had to sleep on the floor.

Sweeney didn't protest. He was more preoccupied that he'd been bought a bottle of Southern Comfort and was drinking it like it was nothing more than orange squash.

“This is fucking mental,” John sighs, holding you tightly on the bed whilst Sweeney unplugs the TV and throws it in the cupboard, mumbling something about 'Media is watching'. “We should've gone home or stayed at Bruce's. What the hell was I thinking?”

“That you wanted to show me some of your history,” you shrug. “What's done is done, John.”

“Why did my magic fail?” John continues like he hadn't heard you. “That's never happened before.”

“Maybe Wednesday did something?” you venture.

“Nah love, would've felt it,” John shakes his head. “The problem lies with me somehow. Maybe I need to be one of those sad bastards who needs a performance boost. Magical Viagra.”

“Oh shut up,” you hush him, bopping him on the nose. “You'll be fine. It was probably a one time thing.”

“I hope so,” he says kissing the top of your head.

“Oi!” Sweeney drunkenly staggers towards you. “No hanky panky, I said!”

“Mate, if you think this is hanky panky you're gonna be well shocked if I-” John sniggers.

“Stop it the both of you,” you sigh. “Sweeney get some sleep. We should too. We don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.”

“A festival o' boring bastards whining about being forgotten,” Sweeney snorts. “They always want more than what they have.”

“And you don't?” John challenges.
Sweeney sits up from the floor, “I'm fuckin' content. I live my life day to day. Sure I was a fuckin' king but I was a cunt of a king and I didn't deserve a followin'. Then I was a god and I didn't fuckin' deserve that either. Not gonna lie, lasslin's offering made me feel powerful again but it ain't the fuckin' be all and end all. Am I makin' sense or am I talkin' shite?”

“No that actually makes sense,” you nod. “You don't crave the power a follower gives you, right?”

“Fuckin' right,” Sweeney gives a thumbs up before collapsing back on the floor.

“Which means you're going to be fought over by a bunch of attention seeking beings,” John whispers. “You probably know more about these gods than I do. Scares me that I'm going in blind to this.”

“Follow my lead,” you repeat again. “Trust me. Maybe this is the time I shine for once.”

“You always shine,” John smiles. “You're my star after all.”

“You smooth fucker,” you laugh.

“I may be magically impotent but I can still talk your knickers off,” he smirks, letting his hand wander up your leg.

“John not now,” you whisper, afraid of Sweeney sitting up again.

That's when the snoring started. It sounded like a train was going past.

“Well fuck, I can't get in the mood with that racket going on,” John rolls his eyes. “Raincheck for later, eh love?”

“Raincheck,” you nod, kissing him and settling down into the covers. “Night.”

“Night, my love,” John says, bundling you into his arms so you can sleep on his chest.

Despite the loud snoring and the impending worry of tomorrow, you still fell asleep.

**

Something wasn't right.

You woke up but it was still quite early judging by the light shining through the tired curtains.

You felt something stir behind you which was unusual because you were currently still on John's chest. Then the brush of a beard came against your neck and a huge brawny forearm encircled both yours and John's bodies.

“John,” you whisper, trying to wake him up.

You were ninety percent sure Sweeney was behind you and probably drunk out of his mind. At least he wasn't snoring any more.

“John!” you hiss more forcefully and he blinks his eyes open, looking at you and then looking presumably at who was behind you.
He takes a second to process and then looks back down at the arm across him.

“Never took him for a cuddler,” he stifles a chuckle before pushing Sweeney gently over until he’s facing away from the two of you. “Is it a habit of yours to end up between two men in a bed, love?”

“Clearly,” you say dryly. “Apparently I’m just magnetic to supernatural creatures.”

“Maybe you are,” John shrugs. “Angelic creatures are always alluring to other species.”

“So you’re saying I’m only attractive because I’m Heaven made?” you challenge.

“No, you’re attractive because you’re bloody gorgeous,” John teases, tickling your side. “Now behave, you know I think you’re fucking spectacular.”

“Make me,” you poke your tongue out.

“Oh now that’s a declaration of war if ever I saw one,” John smirks, rolling you under him. “Do I have to show you how much you turn me on, lass?”

“Think I can feel that just fine,” you smile, feeling how hard he is against you.

“I think you need to feel more than that. Just so I can get my point across of course,” John says, ghosting his lips against your neck.

A sudden movement from Sweeney makes you both freeze, bringing you out of your reverie.

“Shit, probably shouldn’t right?” you say, trying to hold in the giggle forming in your chest.

John makes a frustrated sound then whispers against you, “Not like I wouldn’t want him to see how much I can make you scream.”

“You bad man,” you smile.

“Your bad man,” he counters. “If we get out of this I’m definitely keeping you in that warehouse and I will find a way onto that roof so we can complete our sex room bingo.”

“Promise?” you ask.

“Promise,” he says, kissing you deeply. “Christ, getting to sleep is gonna be difficult now.”

“Just think of cuddling Sweeney, I’m sure that will help,” you snort.

“Ooo you cheeky minx,” John inhales through his teeth. “You’re a right wrongun sometimes.”

“Your wrongun,” you parrot his words.

“Aye love, that you are,” he smiles before settling back into the position he was in before.

**

You woke up later and Sweeney was back with his arm around you both.

“Christ’s sake,” John mutters, getting annoyed. “Sweeney! Get your fucking hands off of me and me
missus!”

The leprechaun awoke with a start, realised he was spooning you and flailed as he moved away. You tried to hold in the laughter watching his brawny limbs fight to stay on the bed.

“I didn't do nothin’!” Sweeney protests.

“Thought you'd cuddle me girl and me by extension, hmm?” John raises an eyebrow.

“Look...I get fuckin' lonely sometimes and I was pissed out me arse,” Sweeney tries to defend himself. “The floor is fuckin' cold, blondie. Can ye really begrudge me a bit a' human warmth?”

“I can if it's me missus,” John says sternly. “Don't think I didn't see your ugly mug buried in her neck just now.”

“What can I fuckin' say? She's bonny, alright? She's a stunning lasslin' but she doesn't want me so I don't go there. Get that through yer Scouse head!” Sweeney retorts before getting up and trying to rub the wrinkles out of his trousers. “I ain't tryna get in her small clothes!”

“Fine,” John concedes, weary of the conversation. “Just get up and let's get this gods meeting over with.”

“What do you call a gatherin' a' gods anyhow?” you venture and John almost chokes as he tries to suppress the laugh.

“A twattery?” you ask and John almost chokes as he tries to suppress the laugh.

“I like that,” Sweeney grins lopsidedly. “A twattery a' gods. Come along, lasslin', Mr Wednesday is a fuckin' impatient cunt.”

**

You didn't bank on having to drive to bloody Wisconsin but here you were, taking turns with John along the sections of interstate.

Sweeney was making his own entertainment, singing Gaelic drinking songs and adding rude words to them now and again. You felt lucky he had a good voice on him, otherwise you would’ve strangled him hours ago for being annoying.

You come up to an unimpressive wooden building.

“Is this it?” you say, peering out.

“Aye, lasslin', this the House on the Rock. Fuckin' weirdest piece a' shit place ever,” Sweeney tells you.

“Are we expecting trouble?” John asks.

“Fuck knows,” Sweeney answers honestly. “Been ages since I seen these cunts around. They may have gotten softer or they may be fuckin' bastards still.”

You watch as Mr Wednesday opens the door to the House on the Rock, having clearly been waiting
for you to arrive.

“Well, time to put on the big girl pants,” you mutter and John squeezes your arm reassuringly.

You walk forward and Mr Wednesday extends his arms in a grand gesture.

“Well, my dear. Glad to see you favoured being reasonable over a half baked escape attempt. I see why Mr Nancy likes you so much. You have determination in spades.”

“Maybe I would’ve been a warrior in your time,” you shrug.

“My dear, I thought you already were one?” Mr Wednesday smirks.

_Fucking smooth bastard. Don’t you try that shit with me._

“Only on the weekends,” you quip before peeking your head inside.

The outside gave absolutely nothing away to the sheer lunacy that was the inside.

The House on the Rock certainly had surprises. You felt like an eccentric billionaire must have designed the décor because it was absolutely bonkers. You saw a dangling shark, bizarre ornate statues, a tree growing through the floor, stained glass windows and a water feature just dripping from the ceiling.

“What on earth?” you murmur.

“It is more than it appears,” Mr Wednesday smiles. “It is a popular roadside attraction which means it is a place of power.”

“You mean it's like a modern temple?” you ask.

Mr Wednesday's eyes light up, “My my, you are clever indeed young Star. Are you sure you've never had a past life?”

“I was-” you begin but think better of it. He didn't need to know your particular origin story because he might never let you go if he found out you were Heaven made and Archangel blessed. “I was always curious about that sort of thing myself but I suspect it is more for the Hindu followers.”

“Other cultures have some allusion to being reborn,” Mr Wednesday tells you. “It's a common thing for man to wish to live on in some way.”

“Jesus, this place is mental!” John says from behind you, finally looking inside. “Reminds me of Jerry's house.”

Jerry, the man who got dragged into a fucked up fairytale land and left John to encounter the Family Man. You often heard John speak about his hoarder tendencies and the amount of bizarre stuff in that house.

“It only gets better,” Mr Wednesday laughs. “This way.”

He leads you through to a long glass corridor that seems to go on forever until you accidentally slam into a solid surface. Appears the length was only an illusion with clever mirrors.

On you wend, past an old mill house, an exhibit called The Streets of Yesterday until you hit one of those old fortune teller booths with the animatronic puppet.
Mr Wednesday motions to Sweeney who hands you a coin out of thin air and then promptly makes a shower of them before they disappear into his other hand.

“Bloody show off,” John mumbles.

“I'm a fuckin' leprechaun, blondie,” Sweeney rolls his eyes. “Ain't gonna be much use havin' no fuckin' gold.”

You ignore their pissing contest and slide the coin into the slot. The machine starts whirring with ancient clockwork stutters. It's a little sinister if you're honest with yourself. The paint has worn off some of the dummy's face giving it an eerie horror movie vibe.

Your reverie is broken when a ticket comes shooting out of the contraption.

“Let us see what Skuld has in store for you,” Mr Wednesday says, regarding you curiously.

“Are you telling me that's one of the Norns?” you say bewildered.

“A representation,” comes the cryptic reply.

“Love, what's a Norn?” John whispers to you.

“Like the fates. Skuld is the future seer,” you whisper back.

Almost not wanting to, you turn over the crisp but faded card to see the old lettering.

Union made, union bound, lost to time, once again found

“I don't like that,” you hiss, dropping the card like it had scalded you. “What bullshit.”

Mr Wednesday picks up the card, widening his eyes, “Appears you will be more useful than I thought. Let's not tarry then. The meeting is set.”

He grips your arm, pulling you on with the strength of someone a quarter of his age. You can feel John bristling behind you, running to keep up.

You walked for what felt like miles, your shoes pinching at your feet as you wended through rooms of discordant music boxes, all slightly out of tune but playing their melody so proudly. You wended through a room of broken toys, antique in their nature. You passed through a curtain of beads and finally you understood where Mr Wednesday was leading you.

A giant carousel, larger than anything you'd ever seen spun in whirls of neon lights, the animals bobbing up and down in steady unison.

“Blimey, not like the ones at Blackpool, eh?” John remarks.

“Little more spectacular,” you agree.

“Here begins our meeting,” Mr Wednesday gestures.

“On the carousel?” John asks. “Not being funny mate but that's a weird place to have it.”
“There is purpose to everything John Constantine,” Mr Wednesday replies, walking over and stepping onto the moving platform.

You watch as he selects a golden wolf, sitting boldly astride its back. Sweeney selects a tawny bear, lazily straddling it.

A strange flash happens and another person joins the gods, perched on top of a magnificent lion.

“Mr Nancy,” you breathe.

“Long time no see, Star,” he grins with those needle like teeth. “Hop aboard.”

“We can still make a run for it,” John murmurs to you, holding your hand tightly.

“That won't do any good,” you say, looking deep into his eyes. “We're too far down the rabbit hole now. Let's meet some gods and show them exactly who we are.”

Your determination must have sparked something inside John because he falters for a second before the cocky smirk returns full force.

“Aye love, the Constantines are going to sort this twattery of gods out.”

You wink at him, earning a stupid grin before you both clamber onto the platform.

John selects a griffin, proud and noble in its bearing, the long wings protruding high. You sit on top of a mighty Pegasus, rearing in an eternal leap, that was next to him.

Nothing happens for a time. You just spin on the carousel, the seats dipping and rising, all to the tune of the Blue Danube Waltz.

Strangely you start to enjoy the sensation. You could almost pretend that you and John were on a normal kind of date. Just two lovers out at a funfair.

John reaches out across the gap and holds your hand, his confidence slowly returning.

All of sudden...

Nothing.

The world went black and silent.

That strange squeezing sensation happened and you were flung into the backstage of reality once more, the twinkling lights of the carousel still above you. The animal you were sat astride came to life, moving with purpose towards a hall in the distance.

It looked vaguely Nordic in nature. Perhaps Valhalla? Odin's hall?

“This is bloody weird,” John says in alarm, gripping onto the griffin's feathers as it deftly marches forward.

Once you reach the hall, Mr Wednesday, Sweeney and Mr Nancy dismount so you do the same.

There's almost a sort of dramatic pause until Mr Wednesday opens the double doors and you see them. You see the gods of old in all their reverent glory.

“Fucking hell,” John swears in awe.
Fucking hell indeed.

Chapter End Notes

Geez, the history of gods and belief is a hefty subject right?
I do have a real soft spot for Sweeney <3

British slang translation:
Gyp - Giving you bother

The prompt is: John losing his magic

The House on the Rock is an actual place and it looks as bizarre as what I've described!
Some gods you didn't recognise.

You figured a lot were barely holding onto existence by how pale and faded they looked. Some were more recognisable and burned brightly against the dull pallor of the drinking hall.

“Our guest of honour,” Mr Wednesday gestures to you.

Forty or so gods stood up, leaning to get a better look at you. A few made their way over and attempted to circle you.

John put a possessive arm around your waist, glaring at those who came close. You appreciated the gesture immensely because as much as you'd been brave walking in here, seeing exactly how many gods were surrounding you was daunting to say the least.

“Phobus, Ishtar, Eros sit down,” Mr Wednesday barks. “Do not frighten the girl.”

“I'm not frightened,” you state, burying your true feelings.

“Lies,” one of the gods with curling blonde hair down to his shoulders says. “Do not lie to the God of Fear, little one.”

“Fine, I'm a little bit frightened then,” you huff. “But only because you're treating me like a commodity.”

“Our apologies, sweet maiden,” a bright young man with dark lustrous hair says, deigning to take the back of your hand and kissing it courteously. “We mean you no terror. We are simply curious how such a divine creature will help us.”

“Piss off Eros,” John snarls. “She ain't bloody interested.”
“Must you stake a claim in every person you see, John?” Eros rolls his eyes.

“Done more than that with this one, mate,” John says aggressively.

Eros leans in slightly and inhales your scent. It's a strange thing but he doesn't linger too long before his eyes widen and a look of surliness replaces the youthful optimism.

“So I see,” Eros says curtly. “What a tragic loss.”

With that he sits promptly down, arms folded like he's sulking.

Of course John had met Eros. It seemed a stupid notion for him not to have. Maybe John got some of his seductive charms from the god at some point.

The other two take that cue to sit down as well and Mr Wednesday sighs deeply before taking a space at the head of the table, leaning on his hands and looking at all the deities before him.

“Now that you're quite finished with overwhelming the poor woman,” he begins. “Here lies our saviour. She has a well of belief unlike anything I have seen in a good two centuries. It is that belief that will allow us to win the war against these fraudulent gods.”

“One person is not enough!” a heavily bearded man with gold jewels woven into the hair shouts.

“Belus, it's better than nothing right?” Wednesday holds out his hands. “I've already set in motion the tools for another follower.”

You catch the slight motion that Sweeney makes. It's a motion that says he's uncomfortable and maybe ashamed. This was probably the leverage that Wednesday had over him right now.

“So you'll create an army of believers, All Father?” Belus mocks. “Will you introduce parlour tricks to bring them on side?”

“This one already believed,” Wednesday shrugs, nodding towards you. “There are some mortals out there who still do. We need to gather them.”

“How do you propose to do that when fucking Mr World is monitoring our only method to do so?” a hugely built man with greying hair and a stained wife beater vest snorts. “There isn't a fucking chance.”

“Czernabog, hush. Have I ever failed you before?” Wednesday almost bats his eyelashes.

Czernabog lets out a low laugh before draining the alcohol in front of him, “You want me to answer that in front of your new friends?”

“Friendly rivalry,” Wednesday tells you.

Bickering starts between some gods at the back of the room and it slowly travels up to the front. They're all failing to see how you could help. Some think you aren't enough, some think your belief is not strong enough to support them, some think Wednesday is wasting their time, some don't even want a war.

In that time you get a text message to your phone and you turn to John, feigning like you're hugging him so you can look.
Unknown: Hello, sweetie darling! I can hear those wretched old timers blathering on. Don't fancy joining me for champers do you?

You look in bewilderment and John reads the text, looking surprised himself.

“Who the bloody hell is that?” he asks.

Unknown: A friend. Maybe a drinking partner.

“Send me a picture of who you are,” you demand, trying to keep your voice as low as possible whilst the gods got into a screaming argument.

A beep sounds through and you open up the attachment to see the face of...Patsy Stone from Absolutely Fabulous?! No...wait...it's a video and she's blowing you a kiss, holding up a newspaper with today's date on it and smoking heavily.

“I think I'm going mad,” you murmur to John.

“No love, I see it to,” he says. “Since when did Joanna Lumley get your phone number?”

It clicks into place then.

Nobody should be hacking your phone right now and especially not understanding what was happening around you. Mr Wednesday had spoken about the new gods and Czernabog had mentioned they were monitoring everything.

This had to be the new gods, one who was impersonating the actress...or the character.

“So which one are you?” you hiss into the phone. “Mr World, Media or the Technical Boy?”

Unknown: Oh very good, darling. You are astonishingly clever for being pretty. I'm Media.
“Is that why you're posing as Patsy?” you ask.

Media: I can take the form of any pop culture idol. I thought this one might appeal to your British roots. What's say we talk more, sweetie?

“Bad idea,” John mouths.

Media: Ignore the conman. Girl to girl, technology makes your life so much easier right? I've seen you on your Netflix binges, we've watched you do your research on monsters. You need us.

Another picture comes through of Patsy winking.

“She makes a fair bloody point actually,” John hesitates. “Killing the new gods will wipe their usefulness from the world.”

“And the old gods deserve to die for it?” you ask.

Media: The old gods were offered a chance to be reborn. We franchised some and they have their new followers now. Mr Wednesday just wants to return to a time of blood and sacrifice where -all- worship him. We've tried to co-exist but he just wants war. Bloody poor show isn't it?

“I kind of believe that,” you murmur, looking back to the All Father of Norse gods who grips the table in annoyance at the chaos erupting around him.

Media: We can get you out of there. Get you home. Get you away from him. Get you back to your days on the sofa with a bottle of Bolly.

Another video of Patsy drinking directly from a champagne bottle, a cigarette dangling from her fingers.

“Can't believe I'm saying this but I trust that more than them,” John whispers to you.

“As much as I hate to admit it, if they've had a chance to co-exist and thrown it back in their faces then maybe they don't deserve to carry on. Sweeney doesn't crave a massive group of priests and sycophants and he's doing just fine.”
Media: Oh that leprechaun! So brawny! So handsome in a kind of 'rough' way. We have yet to offer our franchising to him.

A video of Patsy saying 'phwooooar' comes through with a lewd tongue gesture.

“What are they doing?” Eros calls in annoyance, and you quickly shove the phone into John's trenchcoat pocket.

“I'm comforting me missus if you bloody fucking mind,” John spits back. “Forty odd gods baying for her attention is a bit much.”

“SILENCE!” Wednesday roars, slamming his fist down on the table and everyone goes quiet. “Now then. Let me explain how Star will help. I—"

“She's not going to help,” Eros snorts. “She can't give us her belief.”

“Why the fuck not?” Wednesday growls, his charming demeanour falling away.

“What is this fucking pipsqueak saying?” Czernabog hisses, readying a giant sledgehammer.

“It belongs to one person and one person alone,” Eros rolls his eyes before pointing towards John. “Him.”

The room goes deathly silent as you feel the glare of many eyes upon you. Reflexively you step in front of John who tries once again to ready a spell but it dies in tiny sparks on his hands.

“Bugger,” he spits.

“Explain,” Wednesday commands in a low voice that sends the hairs on your neck standing to attention.

“They're soul merged,” Eros sneers. “Could smell it on her. She's devoted herself to him.”

The sound of Sweeney cackling with laughter rings around the quiet room. He doubles over, almost hunched as he wipes tears from his eyes.

“Did I not fuckin' say, lasslin'?!?” he screams in amusement. “That ye worship the altar of Johnny Constantine? Didn't realise it was fuckin' true!”

“You've brought us tainted faith, Grimnir!” Belus bellows as he stands up, sword unsheathed and ready.

“Now hang on,” Mr Wednesday says, returning to that smooth talking tone. “Anansi was the one who brought her to my attention.”

“Preservative as ever, Odin,” Mr Nancy smiles, his eyes glittering. “When I met the young lady she wasn't bound in soul, though perhaps through emotions.”

“And she's got a fuckin' ring on her finger ye stupid cunts,” Sweeney continues roaring in giggling fits. “Blind all a' ye.”

“Did you know Sweeney?” Mr Wednesday growls, picking the leprechaun up by the scruff of his
braces. “That she was tainted?”

“Oh aye,” Sweeney smiles in that lopsided way. “Thought you’d be clever enough to see it yerself but guess yer a fuckin' idiot.”

There’s an almighty crash as Sweeney is flung against the back wall. Clearly Mr Wednesday was stronger than he looked.

You break away from John, rushing over to see if Sweeney was alright. He had a small lump on his forehead where he'd connected with the wall but he seemed to be okay otherwise. He gives you a mischief filled wink to let you know he was fine and you try and hide your smile from John who comes up behind you.

“How mildly embarrassing,” Wednesday notes, addressing the gods. “It appears I have traitors here. No mind. There is always the Plan B.”

“And what plan B is that, All Father,” Phobus says, his eyes wide. “I can sense apprehension on you.”

“You mistake my excitement for apprehension,” Mr Wednesday smiles. “Plan B has been in the works for a good year now. I've sent one of my pantheon in to get the job done.”

“The Liesmith?” Belus scoffs. “You trust a snake like that.”

“I do when it's my son,” Mr Wednesday fires back. “Shadow Moon is most definitely untainted and will help us more than this unfortunate harlot will.”

“Harlot?!” you cry.

“Oh too fucking far,” John snarls. “Don't you ever bloody insult me missus!”

“What will you do? Put on a tiny fireworks display?” Wednesday chuckles. “Your magic is useless John Constantine, I've seen that for myself. You can't even be of use to us because you have faith in no-one.”

That was it!

John's magic was failing because he didn't even have faith in himself right now. He'd already spilled to you that he was afraid he couldn't protect you any more.

“John you can do this,” you say to him, trying to give him some confidence back. “Believe in yourself. I know you can save us.”

He turns to you like you're mad but you grasp his arm, touching the Chains tattoo together and he feels your determination, your trust in him and a small smile begins playing on his face.

“Really don't deserve you, love,” he smirks.

“Kill them!” rings out the cry from Belus who leaps onto the table and charges towards you, weapon at the ready.

You keep your grip on John's wrist, willing your own magic to bolster his and his eyes turn completely blue as he begins chanting in that strange Angelic language you've heard one before.

“Con man!” Mr Wednesday bellows at John, urging his fellow gods to stand up and fight. “Deceiving us to believe you were weak!”
John doesn't reply, only picking up speed in his recital. You feel the air crackling around you and you concentrate hard, pushing your own energy into his spell.

“-calistarna estrugus!” John finishes and it appears the very power of God himself crashes through the ceiling of Odin's hall.

It hits the table and spears out at the gods foolish enough to try and attack you. The bolt of divine light seems to cook them from the inside, their eyes popping and melting down their faces, their hair bursting into flames and the screams dying in their sunken throats.

Unfortunately Mr Wednesday had flung Ishtar in front of the bolt meant for him. You didn't stick around to see what he'd do next.

You yanked John away, pulling Sweeney up as you ran and you all fled down through to the lights of the Carousel once more. Sweeney seemed to know where to go so he soon took the lead, guiding you back to the House on the Rock.

You flung yourself through to reality once more, almost winding yourself on one of the carousel animals before you sped off to the car park. You didn't know if the gods were chasing you or not but you weren't going to chance catching your breath.

You dived into Bruce's car, John slamming on the accelerator as you peeled away, probably breaking a few speed laws but you didn't care. You needed to be as far away from Mr Wednesday as possible.

The skies over you darkened and lightning flashed followed immediately by booming thunder. You reached across to John's coat and dug through it, finding your phone.

“Get us out of here!” you shout into the speaker.

“Are ye mad?!” Sweeney says bewildered. “Don't trust her!”

Media: Take it you've seen how ghastly they are. Not to worry darling. Help is on the way. Sit pretty now.

All the breath is stolen out of you as you were impossibly squeezed into your own phone, along with John, along with Sweeney, along with even the damn car.

You blink to find yourself in another corner of the backstage of reality, one where a very prim Patsy sits on an upturned wine barrel, smoking away.

“Darlings!” she coos. “So glad you accepted my help.”

“Media I take it,” John murmurs.

“Quite, sunshine,” she winks. “Now then, Odin is a complete bastard is he not? Do you see why it is important he doesn't win this war?”

“I do,” you nod and Sweeney bristles behind you out of age old contempt. “There are some gods there who didn't want to fight. Reach out to them. Help them too.”
Media brings a flute of champagne to her lips, draining the contents with an impressive gasp, “That, sweetie, is what we've been trying to do for three decades now.”

“People don't like change,” you shrug. “Not even gods.”

“Yer fuckin' right there,” Sweeney curses. “Just wanna get on with me life.”

“Then let us drop you back in Ireland,” Media offers. “Away from the All Father's bloody meddling.”

You can see Sweeney's eyes widen like he wants to take the offer but his pride is killing him too much to accept.

“Suibhne,” you say softly and he shudders like he did back when you last left him. “It's alright. You can say yes.”

“I killed someone lasslin’,” he mumbles, his bottom lip quivering, sending his mane of russet facial hair into an autumnal shiver. “That's what he has over me. I killed an innocent fuckin' woman for his Plan B. I can't go with ye.”

“I'm sure you've killed people in your time Sweeney,” John says gently. “Let it go, don't be a thrall to that bloody megalomaniac.”

“I have to set it right,” Sweeney says with determination whirling in his golden eyes. “I may not fuckin' look it but I'm a man of honour. I'm gonna fix it.”

“Who was she, Suibhne?” you ask.

“Laura. Laura Moon. The wife of his Plan B. She was a fuckin' cheatin' cunt but she didn't deserve getting thrown through a fuckin' windshield.”

You can see he's not going to be swayed and John realises that too.

“Then save his Plan B from whatever he was going to do to me,” you say firmly. “That's how you'll redeem yourself.”

There's a glitter in his eyes as the flecks of pure gold shine brightly, “You charge me with this quest, lasslin’?”

“I do,” you nod.

“I happily accept,” he nods graciously and you see some of the bearing in his movements from when he was a king.

Media gives a small titter from behind you, almost falling off the barrel. You assume this was quite dramatic to her given the reaction.

“Then I bid you the fuckin' fondest of farewells,” Sweeney grins, gathering you in his huge frame and planting a firm kiss on the top of your head and whispering in your ear. “You could have been my Queen in another lifetime, lasslin’.”

He pulls away and does that stupid crooked smile before moving to John who seems alarmed at the speed in which he is walking.

“Don't think you're getting away without one too, blondie,” Sweeney laughs, crushing John into a bear hug and giving him a kiss on forehead too.
“Anyone would think you're starting to like me, you mad bastard,” John says, wriggling out of his grasp.

“Ye ain't as much of a cunt as I thought,” Sweeney snorts. “Take care 'a that one or I'll fuckin' swoop in and steal her right from under your Scouse nose.”

“Duly bloody noted,” John grumbles, smoothing his coat out.

With that, Media waves her hand and Sweeney disappears.

“Sterling work, Star,” Media claps. “If Sweeney disturbs the plans for Shadow Moon then we have less chance of all out war and that is something to drink to, darling.”

“I didn't do it for that but fine,” you sigh, weary of this game.

“And where shall I set you down again?” Media asks, wobbling on the barrel precariously as she ingests more champagne.

“Wayne Manor,” John answers for you. “Gotta return a car first. Then gonna skip back to England and be on our chuffing way.”

“Excellent, bloody splendid,” she laughs. “May I recommend, when you get back, a series called Designated Survivor? Oh it is binge worthy! I look forward to seeing you two in front of my altar again soon. Ta ta for now!”

She blows you a sloppy kiss before finally falling from her perch and the world enlarges at an alarming rate to deposit you right in the living room of Wayne Manor, car and all.

Bruce yells in surprise and some woman you don't know with short dark hair does a backflip off of his lap and extends a long whip.

“John?!” Bruce gawps, looking at the car now sat in the middle of the room with you two in it.
John climbs out, cockily lighting a cigarette, “Not a scratch, as promised.”

“How the fuck am I supposed to get it out of the room?!” Bruce growls.

“We'll sort it,” you say, clambering out. “It's...it's been a long couple of days.”

Bruce looks at your weary expression and knows something happened, “I didn't think you were in trouble. Your cellphones were still transmitting perfectly that you'd gone to some tourist trap in Wisconsin.”


“Gods?” Bruce quirks his eyebrow.

“There's more shit out there than you know mate,” John winks before winding a protective arm around you. “I'll explain it later. I see you have...company.”

The woman straightens a little, aware the bottom of her dress is mildly crumpled. She walks forward, a natural seductive swing to her hips and waves nonchalantly.

“This is Selina,” Bruce introduces.

“Catwoman I'm guessing,” you state.

“Well someone's done their homework,” Selina smirks, her voice akin to melted chocolate. “I'm guessing you're Star. Everyone's been going crazy about you since the Reckoning collapsed.”

“They have?” you query.

“Criminal underworld is scared of you,” Bruce explains. “You resisted the worst torture they could put you through and killed one of their own. That's something that not even I could do. They're frightened you'll stick around Gotham but I'm not going to tell them you'll be going back home.”

He smirks conspiratorially and you find yourself laughing despite the horrible circumstances that led to you being hero number one in Gotham.

“Guess I'm more famous than you now,” you say to John who gives you one of his signature pouts.

“It's a sad day when the pupil outranks the master,” he says dramatically. “Bruce, can we charter a plane for two days time back to Blighty?”

“Of course,” Bruce nods.

“Cheers mate,” John nods, flicking some ash into a nearby ashtray. “Had enough of America if you don't mind for a good while. There were a reason I left in the first place.”

“Too dark for you?” Selina laughs.

“Not dark enough, lass,” John says mysteriously and you bite your lip to stop yourself from laughing and spoiling his magus vibe. “Gotta stop the ghoulies and ghosts and there's just more in Europe.”

“Seems dark and brooding runs in your friends too Bruce,” Selina chuckles, running a light hand over Bruce's shoulder. “Maybe not that one though.”

“Star's always been an optimistic girl and incredibly resilient,” Bruce nods. “I enjoy it. It's a change
of pace.”

“Careful, that almost sounds like a bloody compliment,” John sniggers to himself.

“Just get going, Constantine,” Bruce rolls his eyes. “I'm sure you have a guest bedroom to spoil.”

“Try not to match our pace, eh?” John smirks, leading you out of the room. “Wouldn't want to give Alfred a headache with the noise.”

You blush horrendously and even Selina stutters a little but John just walks you up to the room which has lovely fresh sheets in it. You make a flying leap into the bed, happy to not have the stale smell from that awful motel any more.

“That eager?” John laughs.

“Shut up,” you roll your eyes. “Just happy to be back.”

John kicks off his shoes and crawls up your body, “You are so brave, love. It continually surprises me. I woulda run away from half the shit you stand there fighting.”

“You're no coward, John,” you frown. “You just don't have my pigheaded stubbornness to see things through sometimes.”

“Oh and stubborn you most certainly are, young lady,” John tickles you before rolling off to the side and pulling you against his chest. “You're so stubborn you refuse to give up on an old washed up codger like me.”

“Because you're not a washed up codger,” you smile. “But you are old, I'll give you that.”


“Oi!” you lightly shove him. “Behave!”

“Bloody well will not,” John sticks his tongue out. “Sides, can't behave when you're this close to me.”

“You never behave, I mean you've just cockblocked Batman,” you burst into giggles.

“Oh fucking hell, I have, haven't I?” John starts to laugh. “This is a better end to the day than I thought it were gonna be.”

“John?” you ask, looking up into his affectionate gaze. “I can't fucking wait to get home.”

“Me neither, bit. Me neither,” John says, kissing you sweetly before the two of you curl up for a long nap.

**

The two days were well needed to adjust back to something normal. It gave your brain time to process how you'd pulled off yet another escape by the seat of your pants.

Media didn't message any more.
In fact, all of the texts and photos were gone from your phone when you went to look. Clearly she was pleased you had rejected Mr Wednesday and his cohorts.

You did feel a small pang for Sweeney though and you hoped he was okay. You did think it was foolish for him to try and save this...Shadow Moon, when Wednesday considered him a traitor. You just prayed internally that he'd make it out alive.

Sweeney was crass, blundering and a hothead but underneath that was nobility, honour and kindness. Someday you would have to repay that.

As for John, he was immensely more confident now he'd figured out what the problem was with his magic. The arrogant grin, the cocky walk and the sexual innuendos were all back in full force.

You could almost say you'd both buried the time in Arkham and The House on the Rock deep into your minds. It probably wasn't healthy but you were starting to adopt the same coping mechanisms as him. If he could get through it then so could you.

The fear of Demon John had long since faded with your John's loving words and careful comforts. Wednesday you never truly feared. He was just another supernatural obstacle in your path for a peaceful life.

“Ready to go, love?” John says, hefting the suitcase to the front after magicking the car in the living room to its proper spot in the garage.

“God yes,” you groan. “Give me shitty weather, suspect greasy food from the local kebab shop and run of the mill monsters.”

“Mancunian magus through and through aren't you?” John tuts, smiling brightly. “Cheesy chips and a big fuck off garlic bread pizza?”

“You know how to charm my knickers off, don't you?” you laugh.

“I can do that without bribing you with food,” John winks, giving you that look he does that starts heat flushing through your body.

“Smart arse,” you mumble, picking up your bags and stuffing them in the limo.

“Not like it doesn't work both ways, lass,” John grins. “Come on.”

Alfred and Bruce drove you back to the airfield where your bags were loaded onto the plane. You were about to turn to give Bruce a handshake when Alfred hugged you fiercely, startling you completely.

“It has been so good to meet you, Miss Star,” Alfred smiles. “I hope you will visit us again sometime.”

“As long as it's not for work purposes,” you laugh. “And feel free to visit us.”

Alfred looks like you've just told him he's invited to a royal wedding. His eyes tear up a little.

“I certainly shall sometime. Occasionally I do need a holiday from looking after Master Bruce.”

Bruce gives Alfred an affectionate smile before clamping one of his huge hands down on your shoulder, “Maybe I can take that offer as well?”

“If you don't expect the bloody Ritz then yeah,” John answers, cutting in on your hug with Alfred.
“It ain’t right fancy our place but it’s home.”

“The manor is just material things inherited from material people,” Bruce waves. “I have no objections to somewhere less fancy. I don’t even have objections to English breakfasts.”

“Ooo now there’s a surprise,” John teases. “Sure Star can tell you I make a good bacon sarnie.”

He gives you a comedy wink and you can tell Bruce doesn’t get the hidden meaning behind it but you sure do. You aim a tiny kick at John’s ankle who just laughs it off before coming next to you and wending his arm around your waist, kissing your cheek.

“You certainly picked a good one, John,” Bruce nods, a rare smile on his face as he watches the loving exchange. “Happiness suits you.”

“Aye mate, really does,” John grins. “Now if you don’t mind, I’m gonna get this one back so I can get her hitched and then she can’t run away from me. Ta ra and all that bollocks.”

“Bye Bruce, bye Alfred,” you wave before getting back on the plane and watching the door close.

John takes your hand in his between the seats and squeezes it affectionately.

“Fucking home, at last,” he sighs, making himself comfortable. “Can’t wait for a decent G&T and a sausage roll.”

“Living the dream I see?” you jest.

“The dream would be for all of that and you with your pretty mouth around my cock,” John snorts.

“You dream so small,” you laugh. “Could be fucking you like that instead.”

“But I’d spill me drink!” John chuckles. “Fuck me, lass. I do love you and your weird sense of humour.”

“Love you too, you muppet,” you smile back.

The both of you just happily sit there as the plane takes off into the sky and ferries you back home.

**

Several hours later, you’re picking up the car from the Manchester airfield, driving back in the familiar grey weather until the old sight of the warehouse looms ahead.

You have wonder whether everything will be covered in dust when you get in but as John turns the key and pulls back the huge door, it’s spotless. In fact, there’s sweets, tea and crisps lined up on the bar counter in the living room.

“What the fuck?” you let out. “Who’s been here?”

John walks over and grabs what appears to be a note on the counter, reading it quickly and then his face softens. He hands the note to you and you see why.
John/Star,
Thought this might be nice to come home to with the shit that's been going on lately. Take a few days off when you get back. I'll cover for you. Don't care if Renee screams at me. It's the least I can do.

Let me know when you're back

~ Chas

“He is adorable,” you say, looking up from the paper. “Does he know then?”

“Aye he does,” John says, leaning against the counter and ripping a bag of Magic Stars open, stuffing a few into his mouth. “He's me best mate. I tell him everything, even when he doesn't wanna know.”

“Nice to have a friend for so long,” you remark.

“Hey, you're my best mate too,” John points out. “Just me girl mate is all, who I love to death.”

“Well blow me, John Constantine being romantic,” you laugh, before pinching a few Magic Stars for yourself.

“I'll show you just how romantic I can be, love,” he waggles his eyebrows, picking you up and carrying you into the bedroom.

**

Staring at the familiar pipework on the ceiling, John lying naked next to you, you felt an odd sort of peace.

This was right, this was home.

You sincerely hoped you'd get a few days reprieve from more adventures but in John's world that was incredibly unlikely so for now, you'd just savour the down time you had. You watched John sleeping peacefully, brushing errant strands of hair out of his face and occasionally kissing his forehead.

“I love you,” you whisper.

“Love you too lass,” comes the reply you weren't expecting. “Now stop staring and get some sleep.”

He rolls you over onto your side so he can spoon into the back of you, face buried in your hair and arm cupping around your stomach.

“Mmm perfect,” he murmurs against you before you hear the steady rhythm of his breathing again.

You settled further, letting the tendrils of sleep take you further in restfulness as you wondered
exactly what was going to be in store next but for now, you'd just enjoy being safe and being in John's arms in your own bed again.

Chapter End Notes

I do have a massive soft spot for Sweeney here <3

It was quite fun doing Media's voice in the style of Patsy Stone. She's quite an iconic character here in the UK. The TV show she's from is Absolutely Fabulous.

Curious to know but how do you picture Star/yourself in this story?
Which Witch?

Chapter Summary

John, you and Chas investigate rumours of a local witch

Chapter Notes

Well hello again!
It's nice to be writing back in the traditional Hellblazer story remit again. Expect some good ol' British references (I'll explain some in the chapter notes at the end because boy is there gonna be some Brit slang in this chapter)
I just figured out I've been writing this story for a solid 8 months now :o ! Holy crap that's the longest run fic I've ever done! I'm so happy this has reached 3,000 hits and I hope you're still enjoying!
Warnings: Smut
Currently transferring the story to Tumblr : theliveshipparagon
Happy reading!
- TLP xx
(Also might be proof reading errors)

God this was perfect.

The sun was beating down on your face and bare body, heat licking at your skin, the breeze was just nice enough to be cooling and John's face was buried deep between your legs, making your entire form shiver.

“Come on, lass,” he grins before swirling his tongue in that divine way that makes your body arch.

“Sing for me. Sing for Johnny Boy eh?”

No one was around for miles. Fuck it.

You openly moan loud as he alternates between broad licks and fast movements, driving that pressure to build more and more.

“Fuck I love the way you taste, love,” he groans, picking up his pace even more.

You're practically shaking as your muscles tense, the crest of your orgasm building until the knot breaks and you're screaming, one hand clutching the lip of the roof, the other grasping John's hair. He doesn't stop until you're a twitching mess.

“Be-bloody-eautiful,” he remarks, taking in your spent body with a mixture of fondness and lust.

“Now let's have some fun together, eh?”

He snakes up your torso until he's resting above you and you pull him down for a languid kiss where
his tongue slips into your mouth.

“Christ you are one bad girl, aren't you?” he husks. “Always wanting more.”

“Then give it to me,” you smirk. “Don't leave a girl wanting.”

“Never do, bit,” he grins before easily sliding into you, savaging his bottom lip as he does so. “Fuck me, you're so tight. Feels incredible.”

He takes it slow, keen not to overwork either of you in the summer heat but it feels intense all the same with his precise movements.

You take in the sheen of sweat on his body, making the muscles glisten as he fucks you gently and you openly ogle him before looking up into those eyes that burn with passion.

“God I love you,” he murmurs, touching his forehead to yours as he starts driving deeper, more force behind his thrusts.

“I love you too. Fuck,” you breathe, clutching onto his well developed shoulders as you lose yourself in the movement.

With a particularly hard rut, John finds his release, pushing so deep into you that you can't help but twitch around him, earning that low primal grunt.

“Rooftop. Done,” he half laughs. “Full house.”

“Worth it,” you giggle, as he kisses you softly before rolling off to the side and pulling you to lie on his chest.

“I knew I could find a way up here,” he grins. “Good spot for a sunbathe too.”

“In that rare instance we get sun,” you point out.

“Aye, lass. Rare indeed,” he nods sagely, taking a long contented breath. “Fucking loved these last few weeks with you.”

Since you'd got back to England, you'd taken Chas' advice and kept out of trouble. You'd done normal couple things like grocery shopping, walks in the park, singing bad songs to each other and curling up with films.

It had been absolute bliss after everything that'd happened.

You'd never felt closer to John than having this small slice of domestic life. It left you both immensely happy and it warmed your heart to see him smile and laugh so much, especially after Arkham.

“There's only one more thing that could make this perfect,” you sigh.

“Oh aye?” John asks.

“Ice cream,” you smirk.

“Oh..well...I think I can help with that,” John winks before conjuring two Cornettos into his hands. “Had some still in the freezer.”

“Now it truly is perfect,” you laugh. “Sun, fantastic sex and ice cream.”
“Mind blowing sex,” John corrects. “Come on, love, stroke a guy's ego a bit more occasionally.”

“I'll stroke something else if you like?” you wink at him.

“Oo you're such a nympho tart but I love you for it,” John laughs. “A man needs a break though. I'm getting old, lass.”

“Pensioner,” you grin.

“Millenial,” John fires back.

“Cradle snatcher,” you retort.

“Care home robber.”

You burst out into laughter which John joins in with until the two of you happily descend into comfortable silence just eating ice cream and baking under the summer sun.

**

You awoke the next day to the sound of hammering and voices coming from outside.

John wasn't in the bed next to you so you slipped on some clothes quickly before padding out to investigate, the words of a spell on the tip of your tongue just in case.

You poke your head outside to get a real treat of a sight.

John and Chas are both working shirtless doing some DIY project.

You really shouldn't stare but it was kind of hypnotic watching them going at it with hammers and nails whilst joking about something you couldn't quite catch.

“You gonna perv much longer, love or do you wanna see what we're doing?” John calls, that shit eating grin on his face.

“Ladies don't perv,” you huff indignantly.

“So what do they do?” Chas laughs, wiping sweat from his brow.

“They appreciate,” you smirk before walking up to them.

“Well come appreciate this, lass,” John says, winding his arm around you when you get close.

You see exactly what is is they've been doing and you have to bite back some emotional tears that form in your eyes.

They've erected a placard on the front of the warehouse.

**The Constantines**

“Shit, don't you like it?” John panics, noticing your looming waterworks.

“Calm down, John,” Chas grins. “She's happy. Can't you tell?”
"I love it," you whisper. "I really do."

The brightest smile comes on John's face and his eyes crease up with genuine happiness, "Glad you like it, Star. Been meaning to put it up for a while now. Felt like the right time."

"You two are nauseatingly cute," Chas rolls his eyes. "Like Hallmark card levels of cute. Never thought that would happen around you John."

"Oi!" John scowls. "I can be bloody romantic if I wanna be. Cock off."

Chas just throws a cleaning rag at John's head in response before turning to you.

"Anyway, you two going to come back out into the field again soon?"

"Yeah, I think we will," you look to John and smile reassuringly. "Though stick to the easy stuff first and build up, yeah?"

"It has only been easy stuff for a while," Chas muses. "Ghosts, the odd vamp and a newly bitten werewolf. I'd say England's calmed down in the last couple of months."

"That usually means a shit storm is coming in one way or another," John grimaces. "Supernaturals tend to go below ground when a big bad is gonna rear its ugly head."

"Or you've got rid of most of the nests around the area," Chas challenges. "I did take out that changeling nest near to the Derbyshire border. Not heard a peep since."

"Well now you're just making me look bad in front of me bird doing me job better than me," John pouts. "Stop being so bloody good at it!"

"As opposed to your unique brand of fucking everything up even more?" Chas snorts. "Sure. Look there's a witch needs flushing out near Pendle way. You guys in?"

"A witch?" you question. "Like...a traditional one?"

"Not quite," Chas shakes his head. "This one has been giving out curses rather than blessings and by all accounts she's one mean bitch. Villagers are scared of her but they keep visiting."

"Not exactly baby steps, mate," John points out. "You don't have to say yes if you don't want to, Star. We can do an easy exorcist job if you need to ease yourself back in the game."

"Well I'm curious now," you shrug. "I wanna see what a witch looks like."

"Technically you can look in a mirror," John laughs. "But I get your point. If you're ready for it then we'll do it."

"I'll come with you guys," Chas pipes up. "Keep an eye on you and all."

"You're not me bloody dad," John rolls his eyes.

"Then stop acting like a brat and get on with it," Chas winks before putting his tools away. "And get me a beer whilst you're at it sport."

"Bloody cheeky tosser," John mumbles before darting inside to gather drinks.

"He seems relatively chipper considering," Chas remarks once John is out of ear shot.
"I think having a month off did him the world of good," you smile.

"You okay?" Chas asks.

"Yeah, actually," you admit. "I thought I'd have more....I don't know, mental trauma? But I feel just fine and the break's helped me a lot too."

"John's stubbornly resilient and he squashes his emotions down," Chas laughs softly. "Bet you've adopted the same habit. Just know I'm on the end of a phone if you need to vent. I don't judge and I don't let Renee read my messages either."

"That you know of," you point out and Chas gives you a dirty look. "But thank you."

"Any time, Star," Chas smiles warmly.

"Alright you lot, who's for some cold brewksis?" John announces, carrying several bottles with snacks wedged into his cargo shorts.

The three of you chat well into the afternoon, just enjoying the sun and good company.

**

It felt almost nostalgic being on the road again with Chas.

The three of you sang along to old punk songs as you wended your way to Pendle, swigging from Irn Bru bottles and occasionally pitching sweets at each other. It was a nice return to normality.

In all honesty, you were awed out. After seeing Heaven, the world of Gotham etc, normality was something you craved, if only to get your mind back into a sensible state.

"Did you do that research?" Chas asks as you cross the Lancashire border.

"Erm...sure?" John says in a less than convincing voice.

Chas looks at you via the rear view mirror with a raised eyebrow, "Did he just watch a film instead?"

"Hey it had witches in it," John interrupts. "Counts for summat, right?"

"Why the fuck do I bother?" Chas rolls his eyes. "Star, I'm assuming he left you to do the leg work then."

"Well I made him fetch me food for the trouble," you laugh. "But yes, I did do the leg work. Town's got a history of witches right?"

"Yeah, seems like it was our version of the Salem witch trials at various points," Chas nods. "You think they'd be more scared of them rather than trying to approach them for favours."

"It's a modern world, mate," John sighs, flicking his cigarette ash out of the car window. "Nobody believes what's right in front of 'em until it blows up in their bloody faces. Probably some kids wanted to make fun of the legend and ended up regretting it in the worst way."

"Pretty much," Chas affirms. "By all accounts one boy ended up in the town boundary wall...in
“Nasty way to go,” John wrinkles his nose. “How many dead?”

“Seems like five of them that are obvious,” Chas recounts. “Could be more. What's the plan when we get there?”

“Find the nearest boozer and talk to some locals,” John says. “Best way, ennit?”

“Or if there's curio shops they usually know a lot of local town history without any of the tourist nonsense,” you add.

“Smart girl,” John says, turning to wink at you. “We'll do that too, after a good pint.”

“Really?” you quirk your eyebrow up.


“I'm with John on that one,” Chas nods fervently. “Got a mouth like Gandhi's flip flop here.”

“Oh you two,” you roll your eyes. "Fine but I'm getting one as well.”

“Deal,” they both say at the same time before cracking a smile.

There was no denying John and Chas had been friends for decades at that point.

**

If there was one thing John hated about doing this kind of recon it was the deadly silence whenever he walked in a pub.

Lots of beleaguered eyes turned to him, assessing his attire and his look. It was a look that said he didn't belong there. Truthfully he only ever seemed to fit in around the London boozer scene.

“Flasher eh?” someone pipes up from the bar area, nodding to his trenchcoat.

“Nah, just some kind of jessie fashion,” another snorts.

“Fucking hell, jessie, really?” you folded your arms, annoyed on John's behalf. “What is this? The 90s?”

“Meant no harm, lass, pipe down,” the original man grins in a stupid kind of way. “Don't often get Southern folk up here. 'Specially not in country pubs like thissun.”

“Not a Southerner, mate,” John snorts. “Bloody offended now.”

“Scouser ain't much better,” the landlord bursts into laughter. “No nicking me peanut supply now.”

“Woulndn't dream of it,” John winks in that debonair charming way. “You'd stick me in the mines quicker than I could say 'the Royal Liver building’.”

That elicited raucous laughter and you seemed to relax your tense stance a little. Chas was just
facepalming next to him.

Chas never understood the finer nuances of building rapport with folks for information. He was a bloody good guy but a complete honest fool on occasion. Definitely didn't know how to build his own contacts in the supernatural world.

“What can I get you two?” John asks, rubbing his hands together in anticipation of that sweet cold pint.

“Lager,” Chas pipes up as you announce, “Shandy.”

“Consider it done,” John bows dramatically, feeling like he's back in the game again.

Fucking hell it was wonderful to be on something so simple rather than a world changing event or a drugged up memory from his awful past. This is what John did best. Keeping the ghosts, ghoulies and other supes out of the UK.

Once you're all drink in hand, he casually starts a conversation he knows the locals won’t be able to resist joining in on.

“Gotta check out Pendle hill, yeah?” he says to both you and Chas. “Hear it's got some history behind it.”

You cotton on immediately and it makes John insanely happy that you can get on his level of con artistry. For such a sweet girl you definitely had surprises.


Ooo you beauty. What a perfect hook to cast for bait. Now to wait for....

“'Ent no rubbish, girlie,” an older man says from the table across. “Witches always been a part of Pendle life.”

“So are they hubble bubble toil and trouble types or more Harry Potter?” you snort.

John just stares in amazement at how wonderfully you're working this scene. You're clearly riling the man up because he squares his shoulders and gives his best glare. Maybe he could learn a thing or two from you sometime. He would never have pulled that off without sounding aggressive and would have probably started a pub fight by now.

“Listen here little'un,” the man growls. “You go see ol' Jack Corrigan up by end of the street and he'll set you straight. You wanna know the real history of this place, he's your man. Guarantee you won't have that attitude after.”

You give John a funny look which he interprets to be an act but Chas puts his hand on your shoulder in a protective way, mistaking your expression for fear.

“It's alright, mate,” John whispers, coming round so no one can hear. “She's just practising for Hollywood.”

“You are?” Chas says, bewildered.

“I had to pretend to life a rock n' roll lifestyle,” you shrug. “Acting comes naturally.”

“Give her the trenchcoat now, John,” Chas laughs. “Clearly she's a better you.”
“Piss off you giant bastard,” John scowls before shoving Chas' hand off of you. “And get off me bird.”

“I don’t know why you put up with him,” Chas grins to you. “You must be as mad as he is.”

“We're all mad here,” you giggle, quoting Alice in Wonderland.

Certainly seemed an apt description. John definitely thought you had to be mad to willingly continue doing this kind of job but hey, someone had to right?

“Drink up then you loony bunch,” he announces. “We've got a Mr Corrigan to find.”

**

Corrigan & Son – Antiques and Curios

You guessed this must be the place.

“Looks like you were right, love,” John points out. “Antique shops are handy after all.”

“You seem surprised by me being right,” you poke your tongue out playfully.

“Oo don't you start backchatting lass,” John winks. “It'll be a long ride back with a sore arse.”

“Please...don't,” Chas holds up his hands. “Don't bring your bedroom shit to work.”

“Yes darling, not in front of the kids,” John sniggers in a posh voice to which you thump him on the arm to shut him up.

When entering the antiques shop the smell hits you instantly. It's a smell you've always loved for some reason, the scent of old things. It was somehow homely and curious at the same time.

“Can I be of any help today, lads and lass?” the owner, an elderly gentleman in a thick jumper and horn rimmed glasses asks.

“Looking for Mr Corrigan,” John smiles warmly, putting on his polite demeanour which, if you're honest, always melts your heart a little to see.

“That'll be me,” the man smiles back. “Anything you wanted to see me about?”

“I got told by someone in the pub that you were the man to speak about witches with?”

“Oh...” Mr Corrigan's eyes widen. “That would certainly be me. What would you like to know?”

“What are they like?” you ask, unable to contain your curiousity.

Mr Corrigan gives you something of a mischievous expression, “Very different to what the telly says, young'un. Up here in Lancs, our witches don't make potions, they're not inherently evil and they don't have pointy hats and broomsticks.”

“So what do they do?” John probes.
“They influence the environment around them...for better or for worse,” Mr Corrigan explains. “To anger a witch is to guarantee disaster for your family and perhaps the whole village. To have one on side, they’re truly a miracle to have around.”

That didn’t sound so bad. It was pretty much just a person who had extra magic like yourself but could be swayed to use it in different ways.

“Got any more info, mate?” John questions. “We're heading up to Pendle Hill and I'd love to know more. Tourist board is so bog standard and tells a lot of shite.”

Mr Corrigan laughs warmly, “They sure do. Lemme get the old book if you're that interested, lad. Gimme a moment.”

He disappears into the back and you take the opportunity to look through the shop. It's filled with old china, brass instruments, period furniture, porcelain dolls and silver keepsake boxes.

You wander to the far side, marvelling at the items as you go until your eyes land on something that shouldn’t be there.

No...that's impossible....

The fortune teller machine from the House on the Rock was right there.

This wasn't just some mass manufactured thing. The detailing was exact, all the same worn away paint flecks, the same lettering, the same puppet form.

You could faintly hear John behind you talking with the owner again about the contents of the book but you were too distracted to go back.

How was this here?!

With trepidation, you recalled how Sweeney plucked a gold coin out of the air and handed it to you before whispering something only you heard.

“Imagine the hoard, pull it from there.”

You thought of the leprechaun and the scent of the forest and old earth he gave off before imagining a pile of gold coins in a trove, buried underneath a mossy nook. Your fingers stretched up before closing around cold metal and you surprised yourself to see you'd managed to do the exact thing Sweeney did. A golden coin was now in your fingers.

Automatically your hand moved to push the coin into the slot and you watched as the puppet moved in jerky fashion before yellowed paper shot out of the opening again.

It started the same as last time:

Union made, union bound, lost to time, once again found

Then you noticed the addition underneath it:

Lover lost, lover's past, time is now running out fast.

“What is this?!?” you hiss, brandishing the fortune at the machine. “Why are you scaring me like this?!”

Did you really expect the machine to answer?
“Love?” John calls and you whirl around.

“The machine,” you babble before looking back to see only an antique bureau where it once stood. “What...”

“You look like you've seen a ghost,” John notes. “Everything alright?”

“That fortune telling machine. From the House on the Rock. It was right here,” you mutter.

“Are you sure?” John asks, checking around himself.

You look down at the card in your hand before passing it over and John goes slightly pale.

“Shit,” he murmurs. “You said it was one of the Fates right? This can't be good.”

“I don't want any more trouble,” you mumble. “Just wanted a quiet job.”

“I know, lass, I know,” John says, pulling you into a tight hug and kissing your forehead. “We'll get through it. We always do. I'll make sure of it.”

“Everything cool?” Chas asks daintily, seeing the change in behaviour from both of you.

“Just another cosmic 'fuck you' that's fated down the line somewhere,” John laughs bitterly.

“Can't catch a break, can you?” Chas tries to lighten the mood. “Come on you two. We have a witch to catch.”

You dutifully step in the car but your mind is racing as you try and process what just happened. The Fates had stepped in to give you a warning. Clearly the first time meant nothing to do with Mr Wednesday. That had to mean something was going to go disastrously wrong soon.

“Enough of that,” John says, watching you from the front seat. “I know you're an overthinker.”

“Can't help it,” you frown and John reaches behind him to squeeze your hand.

“I know, love, I do. It'll be okay.”

The rest of the drive is mercifully short up to Pendle Hill. You pass the small cottages and the farm houses until you reach a more ramshackle building with a homemade feel about it.

“This is the place the guy said,” Chas announces. “I'm not wholly convinced he's not just sacrificed us for the good of the town's harvest.”

“It's not the bloody Wicker Man,” John snorts. “Get out of the car, you great wuss.”

“If Christopher Lee appears, I'm running,” Chas grumbles before killing the engine and stumbling out.

You all tentatively walk to the front door before John smartly raps on the wood.

“Who is that?” a woman calls from the other side.

“Mr Corrigan told us to mention him,” John replies.

You hear a great amount of crashing before the door bursts open and....

Well your expectation of a short, slightly warty woman with a big nose was promptly squashed as a
stocky woman with dyed blonde hair and clothing from Marks & Spencers pops into view.

“Did he now?” she says with a raised eyebrow. “Come to stare, have you? Come to point fingers and laugh?”

“No,” John says puzzled. “Why would we?”

“Everyone wants to see the Pendle Witch,” she continues with major sarcasm. “Young’uns with the internet clouding their mind, bloody goths who think it’s all sacrifices and blood worship, tourists who get disappointed very quickly.”

“Don't give a shit about that, lass,” John shrugs. “Just wanna know why you been killing people.”

“None of your fuckin' business,” she snarls.

“See, it is my fucking business,” John presses, sauntering up to the door frame to intimidate her slightly whilst you and Chas close in behind him. “My business is making sure supernaturals and magic users don't get outta line.”

“Magic police, is that it?” she rolls her eyes.

“Not quite,” John smirks.

“Get off my property or there'll be consequences,” she hisses. “You're only alive at the moment because you've got a pretty face.”

“Oh, well that's alright then,” John laughs, turning to you and winking. “And I'll only leave if you guarantee to never kill indiscriminately again.”

“I'll do as I damn well please!” she shouts. “Now-”

“What's your name?” you interject and she gives you such a withering look that you're positive for a second she might have shrunk you.

“Alice,” she answers finally.

“I'm Star,” you say. “I'm a witch too, I guess?”

“You?” she outright bellows with laughter. “You're naught but a sapling, lass!”

She changes her tune when you make her begonias in the front garden grow by three feet.

“Trying to usurp me, eh?” she casts a wary eye at you.

“No!” you blurt out. “Just saying you don't have to feel so alone about it and lash out.”

“Are you fucking stupid, girlie?” Alice cries. “I'm not thick enough to think there aren't other witches about but I'll be fucked if one of them steps on my patch. Away with you before I decorate the hill with your bones.”

“You fucking dare and you'll have me to deal with,” John growls.

“And who are you? Her familiar?” Alice says with indifference.

“I'm a fucking magus, love. Dark Arts user. I'll show ya if you keep being a bloody brat about it.”
She looks from John to you before settling on some unseen but horrid conclusion. You can tell by the odious smile that crosses her face.

“Lovers eh?” she nods between you. “Well let's just sort that situation out since you're cheeky enough to come to my home and tell me how to live my fuckin' life.”

“NO!” John roars, leaping backwards and trying to knock you out of the way.

You fall back in the rush to escape the whirling energy Alice is producing, slamming into Chas' chest who instinctively winds his arms around you to break your fall.

“Try being separated,” Alice giggles. “I'm sure that'll teach you a lesson.”

In a flash of light and a sensation where you feel like a hook is being pulled forward from your navel, you're blasted from country surroundings to urban cityscapes. You land with a heavy thud in an alleyway with Chas underneath you, still gripping around your waist.

“Well that could have gone better,” Chas bemoans, pulling the two of you up to a standing position like you weighed nothing.

“Where did she drop us?” you ask, brushing yourself off.

“Not sure,” Chas murmurs, trying to get his bearings. “Let's get out onto the street. Might be able to tell better.”

He puts a hand on your shoulder, leading you out into the busy city.

**

John had the witch pinned against the wall and was burning any part of her he could.

“Bring them back!” he yelled.

You and Chas had just vanished into thin air and he had no clue where Alice had sent you.

“No,” Alice replies smugly. “Worth it to see entitled fucks like yourself get taken down a peg or two. Dark Arts user...fuckin' really?”

“Fine, I'll search me bloody self,” John hisses before trying to look through the soul merge bond.

He sees cars, he sees tower blocks, he sees shitty newsagents and bookie shops.

“They're in London,” he laughs, happy he's managed to figure it out so quickly.

“Yes...and no,” Alice grins. “What year?”

John's face drains of colour, “What do you bloody mean, what year? *This* year.”

“Is it?” she answers innocently. “Good luck on your search, whoever you are.”

John grips her by the throat and squeezes, “John Constantine. That's who I am.”

To her credit, the name must be familiar because she goes wide eyed and almost looks fearful.
“Yeah, thought so,” John sneers, keeping up this bravado act. “Now what year are they in?”

“I...I don’t know,” she stammers.

“What year?!” John roars into her face and she grimaces.

“I only know the decade!” she yells. “Please, I swear! I didn’t know who you were! I wouldn't have done that otherwise!”


“The 80s,” she choke out. “They're in the 80s. I can’t bring them back. I don't know how. I never found the return spell.”

John barely gives a second glance before blasting her back into the house, sealing the doorway and setting the place ablaze.

“You wanna be a horror story? You wanna be a local legend?” he says through the door, ignoring the pounding coming from the other side. “You wanna kill? You wanna be a stereotype? You can burn like one then.”

He walks away, fluffing the collar of his trenchcoat up and pausing briefly to watch the inferno. He wondered if Alice would be smart enough to figure out that he never locked the rear door. He wasn't a stone cold killer after all. He left her that option to escape, he left her that chance for redemption for surely she wouldn't try her 'Pendle Witch' routine after this scare.

His hand briefly closed on the fortune card in his pocket that you'd given him earlier and it all made a horrible lot of sense now. You were fated to be torn away from him across time. He held onto that small glimmer of hope that 'once again found' meant he'd get you back, that he'd get Chas back.

Fucking hell, London in the 80s...

Like there was a worse point in time she could've sent you and to a worse place. He was sure you'd come across his younger self. His younger self always found trouble.

*God I was such an arrogant little shit back then. I hope you don’t see me at my worst, love.*

He spends another minute watching the house to see the silhouette of Alice stumbling out of the back door before getting into the car and driving off.

*Guess I’ve got some time travel spells to read up on.*

**

“This looks like London,” you say, scanning the buildings and seeing some traditional tourist like placards.

“I think it is,” Chas agrees. “Must be Hammersmith from the looks of it.”

“Guess it's one long train journey for us then,” you sigh. “Least I'm not alone.”

“You know, I'm glad I caught you,” Chas laughs. “Makes this bit more bearable, the slinking back to
“Happens often that you get dropped in a different city?” you raise your eyebrow.

“Couple of times,” Chas shrugs. “Usually not so far away though. More like a town over.”

“Let’s go pay a horrendous amount to return home then,” you start walking towards the tube station sign. “I’m sure John can deal with that Alice girl.”

“Awful little cow wasn't she?” Chas muses. “Never knew witches were that bitchy.”

“I think she's just bought into her own hype a little,” you think. “Taking on the legend of the Pendle Witches. Probably just wants to feel relevant.”

“There's relevant and there's being a murdering psychopath,” Chas points out. “Sticking kid's bodies into mortar and brick is taking legends too far.”

“Certainly is,” you nod.

You walk a little further before something feels very off to you.

Sure this is definitely London but....

You take a proper look and see some long coats, pompadour hairstyles, perm hairstyles, garish fashion colours...

“Is there a parade going on?” you ask, pointing out the people around you.

“Huh..” Chas murmurs.

“Like an 80s one?”

“If it is, they're damn good costumes,” Chas says. “Much more accurate than neon legwarmers.”

You really take a look around now, spotting a Laura Ashley fashion shop, Safeway mini supermarket and a Woolworths.

“Chas,” you get his attention. “Aren't all these stores....gone?”

“Fuck me, I've not seen a Safeways in years,” Chas says in amazement.

“Something's not right,” you murmur and Chas senses your uneasiness.

“There's been a few retro shops popping up briefly lately,” he reasons. “Could be that. They brought back Woolworths online not so long ago, right?”

You lead him to the nearest newsagents and just stare in dumbfounded horror at The Sun headline on the billboard outside.

Gotcha!

- Our Lads sink gunboat and hole cruiser

Underneath that was a picture of the Argentinian warship The Belgrano sinking.

“No way!” Chas exclaims. “That's from the Falklands War! Why is that being shown? Some kind of
You look at the date in the window on some of the other newspapers...

May 4th 1982

It couldn't be...right?

“Chas?” you point at the date. “I don't think this is some kind of history thing. I think we're in history.”

Chas looks around himself sharply, taking in the street and then looks to you.

“Shit. Renee's going to fucking murder me.”

Chapter End Notes

Brit translation guide:
Cradle snatcher - Dating a much younger person
Care home robber - Dating a much older person
Waterworks - Crying
Brewskis - Beer
Bevvie - Alcohol beverage
Mouth like Gandhi's flip flop - Thirsty
Jessie - Soft, Wuss, Wimp (often associated with people from the South of England)
Royal Liver Building - Landmark in Liverpool

So no pressure or such but if you feel like you wanna give a small donation to keep me going on this epic fic quest, my Ko-fi link is: ko-fi.com/theliveshipparagon
It will more likely go on tea more than anything haha.
Holding Back the Years

Chapter Summary

You're stuck in 1982 with no way back. At least Chas is there to help you!

Chapter Notes

Howdy folks!
Sorry for the delay.
I did just post a one shot for this fic called 'Lucifer's Favour' if you're interested in the pure smut aspect.
Without further ado, off we go!
- TLP xx
Prompt by Flamefeatherdraws
(Proofreading errors possibly)
Also I'm messing about with the Hellblazer timeline a little bit but it's for dramatic effect.

John threw several dusty tomes onto the floor in frustration.

“Bloody fucking hell!” he cries, kicking at an almanac of Native American spells.

He'd been pouring through all the books he had trying to find time travel magic. He knew he'd collected at least one page relating to that but he was buggered if he could find it right now. Of course he'd lose the fucking thing when you were in danger.

“Jesus,” he mutters, needling his temple and knocking back some black coffee.

If he couldn't find the damn page then the only chance he had of bringing you and Chas back was for you to find him in the 80s and hoped he had the page then.

“Shit,” John curses.

He sincerely hoped Chas would look after you. London in the 80s was bloody dangerous. He'd encountered so many horrid things during that time and he didn't want you to be exposed to that.

Oh fuck...what if you come across me when I'm with her....

**

“What the hell do we do?” you grasp your hair, still trying to adjust to the unfamiliar yet familiar world around you.

“We need to find John,” Chas says grimly. “This timeline's John.”
“Is that...I mean are we not...is some great butterfly effect going to happen if we do?” you stammer, trying to wrap your brain around it.

“Not a clue,” Chas shakes his head. “But he's the only magic user with the strength to get us back. Shit...I really don't wanna take you to him though.”

“Why...” you ask warily.

“To put it bluntly, John was a cunt about now. I think around this time I'd stopped talking to him because he insulted Renee, pretended to be dead and laughed when I gave a eulogy at his 'funeral' and then he called me thick.”

“Jesus, is that really the same person we're talking about?” you say.

“He changed a lot during the 90s,” Chas grits his jaw. “Started taking more responsibility and realised he was allowed to have feelings. I'm not very comfortable showing you how he used to be.”

“Chas, I'm in love with the man he became,” you point out. “Who he was is irrelevant. Can't be any worse than Demon John right?”

You watch as Chas winces. He's been incredibly tentative about bringing your Gotham trip up since you got back.

“It's fine,” you reassure him. “Do you remember where he was around this time?”

“Yeah he had a flat nearby,” Chas nods. “Just one second though.”

He dives into the newsagent and comes out a minute later with the biggest grin on his face, clutching a chocolate bar.

“What on earth?” you raise your eyebrow.

“Fry's Five Centre,” Chas smiles widely. “Can't get this stuff any more. Just had to, you know?”

“John doesn't deserve a friend like you,” you laugh at his boyish enthusiasm.

“Oh don't I know it,” Chas winks before biting into the chocolate bar. “The little shit that he is.”

“Was he really so bad in this decade?” you sigh. “Just want to know how weird it's going to be.”

“Very,” Chas face darkens slightly. “If it's before a certain girl then he'll be arrogant, incredibly sexual and very brooding. If it's after...he'll be a fucking disaster.”

“And what if it's during?” you say quietly.

Chas gives you a very awkward look before sighing, “Has he ever told you about Kit?”

“I've heard the name, why?” you ask cautiously.

Chas guides you to a bench on the street and sits you down. Your stomach tightens a little at the behaviour. Whoever this girl was, you probably weren't going to like what Chas had to tell you.

“Kit was...before you arrived on the scene, she was always 'the one that got away' to John,” Chas starts delicately. “They dated for a while, lived together but John couldn't just quite give up his habit of leaping into deadly situations and Kit wasn't having any of it. She left him and he never got over that until....”
“Oh,” you mouth in realisation. “That's who he was trying to get over when he made the golem, wasn't it? The one that became Demon John?”

“That's the one,” Chas confirms. “So...I really hope this is not during because I don't want you to see that.”

“I'll be fine,” you reassure him. “Can't really get upset over his past, can I? Considering I'm his future and all.”

“You're more understanding than Renee would be,” Chas snorts.

“Anyone is more understanding than Renee,” you laugh. “It takes a lot to get through to her.”

“Sure does,” Chas rolls his eyes. “Marriage is fun and all but it's hard work at times.”

“That's the point,” you smirk. “Now let's go find this apartment and get this show on the road before I lose my nerve.”

“Alright, I'm right here with you,” Chas smiles, giving you a brief bear hug before standing up and leading you further into Hammersmith.

**

“We're here,” Chas announces, looking at a set of stairs that lead up to a flat above some shops. “Sure you're okay?”

“I think so,” you mumble. “Not sure yet.”

Chas squeezes your shoulder affectionately, trying to give you some support.

“Give me a kiss ye bastard,” you hear a lilting Irish voice and turn to see an absolutely gorgeous raven haired woman wrapping her arms around a John that only looks a tad younger.

Shit. She was so much more attractive than you were. You felt an incredible pang of insecurity as you watched John deliver a passionate kiss to her before breaking off, casually slapping her arse as she left.

“Get you later, you little minx,” John calls after Kit before turning round and walking forward with a big grin on his face.

“Shit. This is during...keep it together, Star,” Chas whispers to you, sensing that you've tensed up enormously.

“Fuck me, I would've gone for someone like her myself,” you try and inject some humour into it.

“God you're a perfect match for John's deviancy,” Chas rolls his eyes. “Think with your brain, not with your knickers.”

“Twat,” you nudge him in the side.

“Yep, you're a female John alright,” Chas snorts.

“Oi oi!” 80s John yells out upon spotting you both. “Bloody hell Chas! Where have you been,
mate?!”

“Away,” Chas answers cryptically.

John catches up and you see that fake swagger he uses to make himself feel more confident. He rakes his eyes over you, taking in the fact you’re wearing an old punk t-shirt, Dog’s Breath and the K-9s. In fact, it was one of John's that you’d robbed. You see a tiny glimmer of interest starting in his eyes before he appears to quash it.

“Who’s the bird?” John asks, not taking his eyes off you.

“A friend,” Chas replies.

“Finally got rid of Renee eh? Well done, mate. You've punched so far above your weight it's in the fucking stratosphere. Nice t-shirt by the way, love. Top band that is.”

“She is my friend,” Chas says snippily. “This is Star, she needs—”

“Star?” John laughs. “Guess you're in a band, lass. Lemme hazard one...guitarist?”


Shit, you'd settled immediately into flirting territory. You needed to remember this wasn't your John. This John belonged to that stunning Irish girl.

John's eyes glimmer with mischief though and you're sure he seems interested. God this was incredibly tricky.

“Scouse boy eh?” John muses, lighting up a cigarette. “Rich talk from a Mancunian. Now why are you back Chas?”

“Star needs your help,” Chas crosses his arms. “Best talked about inside though.”

“Alright mate, be bloody mysterious then,” John rolls his eyes, walking past and opening up the apartment before dramatically bowing and ushering you in.

You catch his eye as you enter and see that he's watching the movement of your arse. It was incredibly confusing to know you were getting his attention like this when he was meant to be happy and loved up.

“Eyes up here, scoundrel,” you lay down the line.

“Even if a man is taken he can still appreciate, love,” John pouts. “ Doesn't mean I'm gonna jump on you.”

“That's assuming I'd let you,” you sass.

John comes up right behind you, not quite touching bodies but there's the barest inch of air between you. He whispers into your ear.

“Trust me, lass. You'd be a challenge I'd love to crack. You'd be screaming me name by the end of it.”

Fuck.

He was bound to notice the way your breathing completely stopped just then. From the way he
flashed you the most shit eating smirk imaginable as he passed, he definitely did.

“Sit the fuck down you sex offender,” Chas growls, eager to get John away from you.

“So you're still pissed off?” John snorts.

“Too damn right,” Chas huffs, using his acting skills. “So you're going to do me a favour and help Star out and I might think about forgiving you for being such a colossal bastard.”

“Fair,” John holds his hands up. “I said some right horrible things to you. What does she need? A good time?”

“JOHN!” Chas bellows, standing up immediately. “Stop being a little shit and just listen!”

“Alright, alright!” John says in alarm. “Fucking hell, what's gotten into you lad?”

“Your attitude,” Chas says fiercely and you're starting to wonder just how much of this is a performance.

“Jesus, fine. What's the issue?” John runs his hands through his hair.

“Okay first up,” Chas starts. “I'm not your timeline's Chas.”

John's hands stop their progress and his cigarette almost dangles out of his mouth, “Sorry, what?”

“We're not from this year.” Chas repeats himself. “Neither me nor Star. We need your help to get back to our timeline.”

“Nice prank but not falling for it,” John snorts. “Get out, mate.”

“I'm not kidding,” Chas says grimly, fishing out his phone. “This is 2018 technology. I'm not fucking about here. We were on a mission with you in Pendle when a witch cast us back here.”

“2018?” John muses, taking a long drag. “Bloody specific I suppose. So who's she then?”

“A fellow magus,” Chas answers, not giving away that very vital bit of information that you and John were together.

“Oooo magic bird eh? Give us a show,” John grins, whirling around to face you.

There was just something about this version of John that equally grated on you and got you flustered. You decide to conjure a flaming hand that flicked him the V's.

John bursts out into laughter, almost hacking as he inhales too much smoke.

“No wonder I end up associating with you. Stunning bit of skirt that does magic and has a wicked sense of humour?” John smirks.

“Alright, stop that now,” Chas interrupts. “Don't you perv on her.”

“I'm just appreciating,” John holds up his hands in defence.

You end up laughing at the fact you've said those words before and the John before you gives you a strange look, not catching the joke some 36 odd years in the future.

“Shit, she's not your future daughter is she?” John freezes, the horrible thought crossing his mind.
“What? No,” Chas blinks. “She’s our friend. Can you just believe me on that?”

“Fine,” John concedes. “You got a place to stay?”

“Nah,” Chas shakes his head.

“Take the sofa then,” John waves his hand before coming up behind you again. “As for you. If I were a single man, you’d be sleeping in my bed tonight.”

“Awfully confident about that,” you fire back.

“Never had any complaints, lass,” John laughs before walking to the bathroom.

Chas comes over to you rapidly, “Are you okay? I told you he was bad in this decade.”

“It’s like meeting him for the first time all over again,” you sigh. “The flirting is relentless.”

“Just rise above it,” Chas urges. “Don’t engage in it. I know that’s difficult but if you get too involved in this timeline, you have no idea what will happen in the future.”

“You try it then,” you hiss. “Hard not to be the same when this has been all you’ve known for about a year.”

“I know, Star, I do. Stay strong,” Chas implores you, giving you that almost paternal look. “I’m here for you. I’ll corral him in when it gets too far.”

“Thank you,” you murmur, sitting down on the sofa and watching the last dregs of the sun setting. “Shit this is going to be an awkward night.”

“Buckle up,” Chas sighs.

**

You’re on the sofa whilst Chas is sharing the bed with John.

You’re in the midst of REM sleep when something stirs you to wakefulness, the feeling of someone tracing your wrist. You jerk back in alarm, pulling your arm into your body and kicking out at the unseen assailant.

“Bloody fucking hell, lass!” John swears, reeling backwards. “What did you do that for?”

“You were touching me and I didn’t like it,” you say warily.

“Your tattoo,” John says, scrambling back up onto his knees. “I’ve got the same one in the same place. That’s a right coincidence....”

“It just enhances Assyrian and Arabic spells, you should know that,” you say pointedly.

“Knowledgable bird,” John muses. “Like it. Nice to not have to deal with incompetent twats who think magic is just candles and crystals.”

“Satisfied?” you spit.
“Not nearly enough,” John growls, leaning over you and boxing you into the sofa so you can't escape. “Just exactly who are you to me? It's more than what Chas is telling me. He's a bloody shit liar.”

“Nothing special,” you mumble. “Just a friend.”

“Bollocks are you,” John leans further down until his nose is practically touching yours. “You wear the same tattoo, you arrive with Chas but Chas is still with Renee, you're wearing the same band t-shirts I have because nobody should know that obscure band unless they were born in Reading, so who the hell are you?”

“I can't tell you,” you almost whisper.

John slams the side of the cushion near your head, “Tell me now!”

“Please trust me that it's for your own safety that I can't,” you say.

John looks utterly confused, staring into your eyes and trying to discern the truth, “Why do you care about my wellbeing? I've never had friends that last long. Fuck, I'm surprised this thing with Kit is going so long....so what are you to me? A relative?”

“No,” you half snort at the ridiculousness of the idea.

“Ah,” John grins wickedly, gripping your chin. “So not family then. That means you're fair game, love.”

“You have a girlfriend,” you hiss. “Stop it.”

“She's gonna leave me,” John says sadly. “I've already seen her moving little things out when she thinks I'm not looking. Don't blame her. My life is a bloody shitshow.”

Oh no. You'd hit during his relationship with Kit but right at the end of it. This was surely the worst time you could've been dropped in. He was going to be an emotional wreck.

“So please...just tell me there's something good in my future,” John continues in a whisper. “Because I don't think I can bloody take much more of this.”

Automatically your hand reaches up to cup his face, thumb stroking his bristled cheek. He seems surprised by the motion and you're cursing yourself that you got too affectionate. Surely he was going to guess now.

“There is something good,” you say quietly. “It may be mixed in with a ton of shit but there is good.”

“Am I...am I happy?” John continues, leaning his face into your touch.

“Yes,” you breathe. “Yes you are.”

Nose to nose, it takes him no movement at all to find your lips and it's familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. You really shouldn't have but you kiss him back until you hear a door clang and push him away quickly.

Kit is in the doorway, looking absolutely livid.

“Figures,” she hisses. “Things go a little wrong and ye get into some tart's knickers already.”

“It's not what it seems,” you protest, getting up. “I'm not from this time.”
“I've heard some shite in my time but that takes the cake,” Kit snorts, folding her arms. “Time travel is it?”

“Yes, time travel,” you press, showing your phone and playing video of the Irish coast you'd taken.

She stares at you weirdly for a time then to your wrist, then to John.

“Then where am I?” she demands. “Where am I in this future as ye call it?”

God...this was a dilemma. You knew with the next sentence you were going to break her heart.

“I don't know,” you answer honestly. “Only future John knows that.”

She comes up to you, gathering her fists in the front of your shirt before running you backwards and slamming you into the wall, “And just who the hell are ye to him? His future flavour of the week?”

“Why the fuck do you care?” you spit back. “You're going to leave him right?”

Her eyes blow wide and she steps back, looking at John who appears incredibly broken and angry. She makes an odd sound before storming into the bedroom, obviously startling Chas who shouts out before grabbing the last of her stuff and walking back out.

“Fuck you, John Constantine,” she hisses. “You're a bounder and a cad and nothing will ever change that.”

Just wait 36 years, I'll change it.

“Get out if you're going,” John says viciously and you know he's being self destructive.

“Bastard,” Kit growls before slamming the door closed and going into the night.

“What the fuck is happening?” Chas blinks, bleary eyed.

“Kit just left me,” John mumbles.

“Shit, I'm sorry,” Chas' face screws up in sympathy.

“Been on the outs for a while but I've been ignoring it like I always do,” John sighs. “Although kissing her was probably the final nail in the coffin.” He points to you.

“You did what?!” Chas exclaims. “What happened to keeping cover?!”

“Oh fuck off, mate,” John grumbles. “I'm not bloody simple. She's my bird in the future. Not hard to work out. She's got me tatts and she's wearing me t-shirt. I know that one's mine because of the rip in the shoulder.”

“Oh,” you trail off. You thought you'd hidden it better.

“No use lying to a con man right?” Chas quirks his eyebrow up.

“Too bloody right,” John says. “So what's the ring about then, lass?”

“You know too much already,” you shake your head. “This is going to affect the future enough as it is.”

“Memories can be wiped,” John shrugs. “Humour a heartbroken man will you?”
“Chas, you tell him. He might not believe it coming from a virtual stranger,” you offer out.

“Alright if you're sure,” Chas straightens his t-shirt out. “She's your fiancé John.”

John blinks a time before spluttering, “You fucking what? I'm getting married to her?!”

“Actually you've been trying to for a while but apocalyptic scenarios keep interrupting,” Chas smiles wryly.

John looks at you incredulously, “So I'm getting married to some magic using, punk rocker with wicked flirty banter? Bloody hell, no wonder I'm more happy. Roll on 2018 then. Christ...me getting married...”

“I didn't believe it either when you first told me,” Chas laughs. “But there you are.”

John slumps onto the floor, his energy seemingly giving out at last, “36 years I have to wait....”

“35 actually,” you point out.

“A year is it?” John asks, before nodding. “Still can't wrap my head round it. I'm happy, I proposed to someone...feels like you're telling me I won the Olympics.”

“It's not been plain sailing,” Chas says, coming to sit on the sofa. “There's been a lot of supernatural forces trying to drive the two of you apart but you've stuck with it.”

John gives you a very curious look, “And why do you stay with me when no one else will?”

“Because I take the bad times with the good and we have a lot of good times,” you explain. “Defending the world against magical shit is part and parcel of who you are and you trained me in magic to help you. We fight side by side.”


“You really love this girl John,” Chas says softly. “I've never seen you so devoted to a person. So you may feel like shit now but good things are coming your way eventually.”

“I can't process this,” John needles his fists into his head. “I need air.”

He jumps up, rushing out of the flat before you had a chance to say anything.

“Well that could have gone better,” you murmur and Chas just groans before flopping full length across the sofa.

“If we get out of this timeline, you'll really need to wipe his memories. We've fucked up quite spectacularly here.”

“I'm sorry,” you wince. “He'd already worked it by the evening.”

“I don't blame you,” Chas notes. “John's always been a clever shit.”

“Should I go after him?” you ask.

“I don't know,” Chas sighs. “I honestly don't know what's best right now. Breaking up with Kit destroyed him the first time round. I don't know if your presence is going to help or hinder that.”

“I'll go after him,” you decide. “Because if he's anything like the John I first met, he'll try to run away
from everything and we need him to get home.’’

“Good point,” Chas nods. “I’ll stay here in case he comes back. He used to go to the Lamb and Flag pub down the road when he was feeling sorry for himself.”

“Got it,” you nod before pulling on your leather jacket and exiting into the night.

**

In 2018, John practically screamed as his memories twisted and knotted.

You were in his past. You'd caused the final break up with Kit. You'd kissed him.

It felt like hot pokers were being inserted into his brain and then scrambling it. The timeline was messing up and if he didn't do something quickly, he'd know who you were when he first went after the Asphodine Contract. That couldn't happen. He couldn't already have knowledge of you because that would screw everything up.

“Bloody fucking hell,” John winced at the intense pain before grabbing his phone and calling someone he really didn't want to.

**

Papa Midnite Calling....

**

You walked into the Lamb and Flag with little expectation. Thankfully no one gave you a second glance and you realised your clothes probably fit in better than you thought.

You scanned the bar stools, the fruit machine area, the tables and then started looking into the booths. There you saw him...with Kit.

He appeared to be trying to smooth things over with her but she wasn't having any of it and was desperately trying to push him away without making too much of a scene.

“Love, please,” John begs. “I can't lose you.”

“But it's perfectly fine for you to jump on your missus from the feckin' future,” Kit spits. “What kind of shite is that anyhow? Do you regularly have your lovers pop up in your past?”

“I have no idea,” John murmurs. “I don't know how she got here. I don't know anything about her. Please, Kit, please don't go. I had a moment of weakness because I knew you were slipping through me fingers.”

Well ouch that kind of hurt to listen to but you reminded yourself it was playing out exactly how it should have done, albeit without your presence.

Kit suddenly looks up and spots you, her eyes narrow, “That moment of weakness is following you.”

John turns to you, his eyes ringed red as though he'd been on the verge of tears, “Go away, lass. This doesn't concern you.”
“It concerns me when my only ride back to 2018 runs off,” you say pointedly. “I'm not getting stuck here. I want to get back to my John.”

Kit finishes the last of her wine angrily before stating, “You're welcome to this one, girlie. You're welcome to his recklessness, his cheatin' ways and his sheer arrogance.”

“I know what he's like,” you shrug. “He's a disaster but I still love him for it.”

Kit looks like she's swallowed glass and John is completely blindsided by your declaration.

“You love me for it?” he repeats.

“Just like you love me for being slightly suicidal on missions and trying to save everyone,” you continue. “We've all got flaws.”

“You poor bitch,” Kit sighs. “This one will rip you apart in the end.”

“That's what Zatanna said,” you snort and John's eyes blow wide at the mention of his former flame.

“Goodbye John,” Kit shakes her head. “I hope this one gives you the peace you need because Lord knows I sure can't.”

With that, she gathers her coat and walks out.

Immediately John is grabbing you by the arm and pulling you out of the pub and down the street.

“What are you doing?!” you cry.

“Just shut it,” John hisses before opening up a private garage and pushing you in.

A solitary chair sits in the middle with ropes and shackles attached to it. On the wall are nondescript vials and tinctures.

“Look I'm not up for kinky shit right now,” you protest.

“This ain't kinky shit lass, sit down,” John growls, shoving you so you end up stumbling onto the chair.

In a swift motion, he's shackled you to the wood and try as you might, the cuffs...whatever they are....aren't succumbing to present day John's usual escape trick.

“What the fuck are you doing?!” you squirm. “Let me out!”

“Nah,” John says grimly, pacing back and forth. “Stands to reason...this is exactly the kind of shit the First would pull to make me go mental.”

“Are you kidding me?” you roll your eyes. “You think I'm making this up?”

“Wouldn't be the first time it's happened,” John shrugs, squatting down in front of you. “So I want to make sure because if you're gonna fuck me life up this much right now, I want to know it's bloody worth it 30 years down the line. I don't want this to be some 'piss on Constantine' trick.”

“It's not a fucking trick, Johnny Boy,” you grit your teeth, hoping the use of his nickname will tell him at least something about you.

“Verithea,” John commands, tapping into his magical energy.
You snort loudly. A truth spell wasn't going to work on you. That was pretty basic magic in comparison to what future John had been teaching you. You'd learned a defence against this ages ago.

“Try again,” you quirk up an eyebrow.

“Bugger,” John swears. “Powerful little shit, aren't you?”

“I'll try not to be offended by that considering you had your tongue in my mouth an hour ago,” you hiss.

“Just business, lass,” John shakes his head. “Gotta know for sure. You get it, right? Would you believe some bird who said she was from the future?”

“Jesus Christ, John, just ask me anything about your past and I'll tell you. The stuff you don't tell anyone. I know it all,” you sigh, tired of his stupid little game.

God, this John was extremely paranoid and mercurial. You find yourself pining for future John's mental stability and good natured humour. This was positively oppressive being in this room with this much tension and angst.

“Magic may not work on you but I got some mates that owed me like. Sodium Pentathol up in those vials. We'll find out the truth soon enough,” John clenches his jaw.

“For God's sake!” you cry out, struggling against the chains. “Just ask me like a civilised person rather than drugging me up! Can you just listen to me, John?!”

“Gotta know it's real,” John murmurs over and over to himself as he prepares a syringe and draws some liquid out of a bottle.

Fuck.

This was going south really fast.

You thought John believed you when you said you came from the future but clearly the stress of losing Kit had driven him over the edge and he was doubting everything.

“Don't you come near me with that!” you snarl, shirking away as best as you could in the chair. “I fucking hate needles!”

“Gotta know it's real. Gotta be worth it,” John continues muttering, grabbing your hair by the root and yanking your head to the side before jamming the needle in and depressing the plunger.

“You fucking bastard!” you yell, completely angry. “How dare you!”

John says nothing but steps back and squats on his haunches, eagerly watching you. The intensity of his gaze is equally as disturbing as his actions.

*I'm glad I met you in 2017. I would've run far away from this version of you....*

You felt drowsy, slow even. Your brain had started crawling rather than whirling and it was hard to focus. This was like the worst kind of being drunk but with a full body effect. You couldn't even get the signal down your limbs to wiggle your fingers and toes.

“Who are you?” John asks.

“Who are you to me?”

“Fiancé, lover, soul bound.”

“Sorry, what?” John blinks. “Soul bound?”

“Bound souls,” you start slurring, head incredibly heavy to keep up. “Ritual. Angelic I think.”

John almost dives on you, searching your face and squeezing your thighs impossibly tight, leaving tiny bruises forming already.

“The Chains of Binding?” he rasps, the words sticking in this throat. “I did that with you?”

“Uh huh,” you nod clumsily. “Sex ritual. Padlock. Your soul is pretty. Even the dark bit.”

The last remaining colour drains out of John's face as he processes what you've told him.

“I...I bound meself to you? I proposed to you?” he whispers.

“Yeah,” you giggle. “Cute day in Ireland. Not so cute day with the binding. Family Man wanted me dead.”

“Who's that?” John says confused.

Ah right. This was at least 8 years before that would happen.

“You'll see soon enough,” you try and fix your gaze on him. “Spoilers.”

“Tell me something I've never told anyone then,” John says fiercely. “If you're this big bloody important thing in me life, I'll have told you something private, yeah?”

“Fuck the obvious one,” you spit. “Newcastle. Everyone knows that. Ravenscar. Your doctor was Dr Huntoon. Warden Chambers hurt you a lot.”

“Common knowledge if you know where to look, lass,” John says grimly. “Not specific enough.”

“You cast a withering spell on your dad using a cat as an anchor point. Got cold feet, preserved the cat. Buried it in the back garden,” you try. “Pissed off because he burned some spell books. Put cigarettes out on you as punishment.”

John visibly winces, the memory a lot rawer for him in this time.

“'Spose that's more like what Chas knows,” John mumbles. “More specific. If you're so special to me, what is something that not even Chas knows?”

“You were a twin,” you blurt out.

God this was something John had once told you when blind drunk and in a terrible down mood. His twin that he'd unknowingly killed in the womb, the action that led to Mary Constantine's difficult and ultimately fatal childbirth. He'd made you swear down never to speak of it, too guilty to even discuss it once he was sober the next day.

John Constantine carried many a burden.
“Fuck....” John breathes. “I've never.....strewth....I told you that?”

“I held you all night,” you reminisce. “You wanted to release some of your guilt. I said I'd help you, so I did.”

Shaky hands cup your cheeks, steadying your head and you look with fuzzy eyes into his blown wide brown ones.

“I want to believe so badly,” he murmurs, stroking your cheeks with his thumbs. “That device you have...does it hold anything of us on it?”

“Untie me,” you implore. “Please.”

Immediately John does so and helps you fish the phone out of your pocket where you ungracefully unlock the screen, swiping with beleaguered movements until you find the picture of you two in bed.

“Take it,” you tell him. “Can't hold it out. Arms are so damn heavy.”

John takes your phone and audibly swears when he sees the picture.

“Why do I look so happy?” he says in the smallest voice, like a lost child. “I'm so happy in this picture.”

“Move it to the left,” you direct him.

The intake of breath tells you he's just stumbled on the proposal photo.

“I'm even more happy in this one,” he says amazed. “Shit, the ring is there. Was this...”

“You proposed,” you affirm, slumping in the chair slightly. “Just fucking believe me John and get me out of here.”

Tears start spilling down his face and full on choked sobs rend their way out of his mouth.

“I'm fucking happy,” he half laughs. “It works out. Fucking hell it works out. All this shit, all this tragedy...it'll count for summat. I get a girl and...oh fuck, I'm so sorry love. I drugged you. Shit. Please, please don't think any less of me for it.”

“Future John is a lot more stable,” you involuntarily giggle. “Get me the fuck out, I'm gonna...”

Whatever was in the syringe finally takes over fully and you feel your eyes roll in the back of your head as complete and utter unconsciousness rides over you.

_Believe me, John. Get me home._

**

“I didn't expect a call from you,” Midnite's smooth voice came down the line.

“And I fully expected you to find a way back to the land of the living you bloody cockroach,” John hisses. “You never stay dead long.”

“Why are you contacting me, John?” Midnite sighs. “You made a big display of saying our alliance was over, yet here you are, wanting more favours or am I wrong?”
“I want a big fucking favour considering you brainwashed me missus and tried to kill me,” John snaps. “You owe me.”

“I owe nothing,” Midnite laughs. “I died and did my duty. Your little one broke out of it well enough so what is the issue? Your rabid angel tore my head off. That's retribution enough.”

“Fine, do it for Star then since you toyed with her free will,” John says angrily. “Owe her one, not me.”

“What trouble is she in?” Midnite guessed astutely. “She's clearly away from you somewhere that you can't reach. Another dimension?”

“Another timeline,” John answers. “Some cunt of a witch sent her to the 80s without a return ticket. Me mate Chas got sent back too.”

“I have no quarrel with Francis Chandler,” Midnite says magnanimously. “He's a good man. I see, so you want me to bring them back? I can't, is the simple answer. I only have the spells to send backwards not bring forwards.”

“Bloody fucking hell,” John swore. “I do have a spell somewhere to travel forwards...maybe if I go back I can get it.”

“You wish to go back in time?” Midnite asks carefully.

“Yes,” John says resolutely. “The converging timeline is fucking with me head. I need to sort it quickly. Send me back.”

“One day I will stop answering the phone to you, Constantine,” Midnite sighs. “Consider it done.”

“Yeah well, one day you won't need a Scouse warlock to save your sorry arse when your Voodoo shit fucks up,” John counters. “Get me to me family. Now.”

**

You woke up in a strange bed and briefly jerked, expecting some danger to befall you.

“Star, calm down, it's me,” Chas says, almost relieved. “Fuck I'm glad you're awake.”

“He fucking drugged me!” you groan, clutching your head which was throbbing uncomfortably.

“Oh he's already paid the price for that,” Chas smiles secrectively before handing a glass of water and a painkiller over. “Get that down you. You'll need it.”

“Cheers,” you mumble, swallowing everything down and grimacing at the powdery aftertaste.

“What do you mean he's paid the price?”

Chas just grins widely before turning round to call, “John, she's awake.”

You realise exactly what's happened when a rather sheepish looking John shuffles into the room, sporting a large black eye.

“Er...sorry lass. Didn't mean to go so overboard,” he fiddles with his hands. “Must a' been right scary
and I apologise. I'm not usually that..."

"Emotionally fucked up?" you finish for him to which he nods. "Oh trust me, you are. You just
express it differently in 30 years."

John starts savaging his bottom lip and you see just how long that habit really is. You want to
smack the living shit out of him for hurting you like that but you just can't bring yourself to do it.

"Thanks for defending my honour, Chas," you smile at your friend.

"Any time," Chas winks. "Told you I wouldn't let this prick get away with anything whilst we're
here."

"Oi!" John cries. "I'm not that bad! Fucking hell, how golden boy am I in the future?"

"Oh you're still a prick but less of one," Chas snorts.

"I could very easily stop being your friend, mate," John grumbles.

"No you won't," Chas smirks. "You need me. You've always needed me."

John just says, "Aye, it's true. These last few months haven't been the same without you."

"Then no more drugging your future wife when you could've just asked her questions," Chas rolls
his eyes. "Jesus it's like parenting all over again."

John comes up to Chas, placing a hand on his shoulder, "Would you mind running to the shops to
get me some ciggies mate? Wanna apologise to the lass properly and it's right embarrassing doing it if
you're here."

"Alright," Chas sighs. "But if you've got her chained to the floor in a devil's trap you're going to look
like a raccoon by the time I'm done with you."

"Point made," John stuffs his hands in his trouser pockets. "No funny stuff. Don't fancy being on the
receiving end of a Chandler hook special again. Once was enough."

"Be safe," Chas says to you before leaving.

John warily approaches the bed, sitting on it and looking to you with complete guilt written all over
his face, "I really am sorry. That was way too far."

"It was," you say sternly. "That was horrible."

John grimaces before staring at the ceiling, "If you know me in the future, you must know how
damaged I am. I don't trust anybody and I never let anyone in."

"You let me in," you counter. "And you're not damaged, John. We went back to Ravenscar and you
held your own, I've walked through your bad memories in The Dreaming and you still saved me."

"Jesus Christ, sounds like we have some right adventures," John laughs softly. "Awful that a man
has to wait so long to find something so precious though."

His hand moves to cover your own, experimentally squeezing it. You let him. Seems like he needed
the reassurance right now.

"Forgive me, Star," John murmurs quietly. "You've come across me at probably the lowest point in
Before you know what you're doing, your fingertips begin trailing the back of John's neck and up into his hair, doing soothing massage motions that you always do with future John. You visibly see John relax into your touch before he leans over you, pressing his forehead to yours.

“I feel it already,” he proclaims.

“Feel what?” you ask in confusion.

“The pull, the attraction, it goes deep already. Fucking scares me if I'm honest.”

“Scared you 30 years in the future too,” you wryly smile.

“I bet it did,” John laughs softly.

“Want to see something?” you ask.

“Oh aye,” John's suave demeanour comes crashing back. “Is it you in just your birthday suit?”

You roll your eyes, pushing him slightly back before pulling your t-shirt down so John can see the tattoo his other self had drawn.

“Shit, that's me signature!” John cries. “Bugger me, I like to put me mark on things don't I?”

Before you know what's happening, John's leaned down and pressed his lips to where the ink patterns lie on your skin.

“A bird worth waiting for,” he mumbles against you. “I want to...”

And there he was kissing you again. You really should stop this. It wasn't right in the timeline but everything about him was still John down to the smell of stale cigarettes and aftershave.

There's a gust of wind that picks up in the room and a split second flash.

You yelp, jumping up and wobbling precariously as you ready a defensive spell.

“Shitting hell, lass, only me!” the voice of another John says.

“You fucking what?” the first John blinks in surprise.

Oh this was giving you horrible flashbacks to Arkham with two Johns again. You half collapse back onto the bed, trying to steady your breathing.

“John. Arkham. Tattoos,” you manage to get out in the midst of your panic attack.

One John quickly strips out of his clothing and comes up close, bearing your mark for you to see before scooping you up in his arms and rocking you gently.

“It's alright love, I've got you,” he says softly, kissing the top of your hair. “I ain't letting you go.”

This was definitely future John.

“Bloody hell, you gave me a right scare,” your John continues. “Thought I'd lost you. Had to make a shitty deal to find you again.”

He lifts your chin up to plant the biggest kiss on your lips before running his hands gently through
your hair, “I love you, Star. Thank fuck I found you again.”

“Strewth,” comes the soft voice of the younger John. “Look at me, I'm smitten, I'm selfless.”

“Aye mate, that you are,” the older John says to his past self. “And I'll be taking me missus home now and Chas... wherever he is.”

“What do you need?” the younger John says resolutely.

“Just a simple page,” older John smirks. “Fancy helping out?”

“Saving me own future?” younger John laughs, the air of arrogance creeping into his mannerisms. “Not gonna say no to that. Let's begin.”
Confronting the Past

Chapter Summary

Young John and your John start devising a plan to get you home but it's not going to be a smooth path.

Chapter Notes

Hi guys!
Sorry for the delay! I've been working hard to get this chapter out because I'm going to be away for a few days at comic con again.
Warnings: Some heavy angst, life decisions etc
I've included a little sketch I did (with the help of templates) as I was asked about Star/reader's tattoos in this story so I'll put that at the bottom of the fic!
Happy reading!
- TLP xx
(Proofreading errors ahoy!)

It was decided you would begin the search for the page in the afternoon. It was still technically early morning after all.

Older John was quite bossy of his younger self, confining him to the living room with Chas despite many protests.

“Why have I got to go?” younger John pouted. “It's me own bloody flat!”
“I'm not letting Star sleep on your pile a' shit sofa after you've just drugged her up,” older John huffs. “I mean...fucking really? I'm so glad I grew out of the crippling paranoia.”

“I've bloody apologised to the lass!” younger John cries. “Let it go! No reason I can't be in the same bed as you both. I do end up with the girl after all.”

“Yeah but you're not copping a feel.”

“She's me bloody missus for pete's sake!” younger John tried to argue.

“She's my missus. I'm not about to start the weirdest bloody threesome in living memory. Bore off, lad.”

Finally you were cuddled up to your John who was stroking your hair soothingly whilst you heard younger John and Chas drinking in the front room, discussing how weird the whole situation was.

“Are you alright, love?” your John asks, intermittently kissing your forehead. “Must've been fucking horrid to go through that with that prize twat.”

“That prize twat is you,” you point out.

“Not me any more,” John mumbles into your cheek. “Didn't realise how much you've changed me as a person until I came face to face with me past self. Gotta say, bit, you're a bloody miracle worker to make such a disgrace of a man somewhat human again.”

“You weren't a disgrace,” you roll your eyes. “You saved a silly girl from many demons in those first days.”

“You were never silly, Star,” John laughs softly. “Completely stubborn maybe but that was fucking attractive.”

“Deviant,” you snort.

“Aye, you love it though. Don't deny it,” John smirks, tipping your chin back to kiss you. “Strewth, I was so worried about you.”

“What happened to the witch?” you ask and watch as his face slightly darkens. “Did you...”

“No,” John shakes his head grimly. “Gave her the fright of her life though, I expect. Burned her house down.”

“That's very...medieval,” you muse.

“Fucking cow deserved it,” John hisses. “Taking me bird and me mate away from me. Dumping you in this shithole timeline....”

“How did you get here?” you ask, tracing your tattoo on his chest with light fingers.

“Midnite,” John sighs. “Knew the bastard would be alive by now. Guilt tripped him into getting me here. One way ticket though. I need to find where that page is and I can't bloody remember how I got it.”

“We'll figure it out,” you assure him. “At least we're together.”

“Aye, love,” John kisses you. “Get some sleep now, lass. I'll watch over you.”
It doesn't take you long in the familiar comfort of John's chest and arms to fall asleep.

**

You awake to a giant crash and Chas yelling.

Instantly you spring up, feeling like you've only had an hour's sleep. John jerks awake too and you both scramble into the living room to see younger John completely swaying and obviously drunk, giggling on the floor like an idiot. Chas is in the far corner of the room, wiping his mouth furiously.

“What in the bloody hell is going on?” older John asks.

“You!” Chas points an accusatory finger. “You were a fucking prick when you were younger!”

“What did he do?!” you say bewildered, looking to the younger John rolling around on the floor with tears streaming down his face.

“Oh god,” Chas groans, not answering you but now scraping his tongue off with his sleeve.

“Not attractive enough for you, mate?” younger John manages to get out.

You look to your John, “Can you remember what you did?”

“Not a clue, love,” comes the reply. “Midnite made it so the two timelines wouldn't blend in me head. Keeps me sane that way.”

“He fucking kissed me!” Chas shouts. “Your drunk self is a fucking sex offender!”

“It were the beard, mate,” younger John winks. “Suits you and you know, never tried it on with you so why not, eh? Must be shite shagging Renee for thirty odd years.”

“If I didn't know you were going to turn out alright, I'd batter you six ways from Sunday,” Chas snarls.

“Is that your idea of foreplay?” younger John grins. “I'm game if you are.”

“Oh Jesus Christ,” older John mutters. “I'm sorry, Chas. Fuuuuck this is such a wake up call for me.”

“Come onnn,” younger John starts cracking up again. “I've got to be a better kisser than Renee, right? She was fucking shite.”

“Wait, what?!” you blurt out, turning to your John. “You've kissed Renee?!”

“Shagged her actually,” younger John smirks sloppily. “Twice. Fuck was she awful.”

“Not proud of it,” older John mutters. “This was before she got with Chas. If I think about it, she were probably using me to get to him. I'd shag anything with legs back then and she was quite slim in those days.”

“Shut up,” Chas sighs, jamming his hands over his ears. “I don't wanna hear this again. Take your waster self into that bedroom before I beat you out of existence by mistake.”
“Alright, mate,” older John says with intense weariness. “What a dog’s dinner this whole thing is....”

Older John forcefully grabs his younger self, hoisting him over his shoulder and carrying him into the bedroom, leaving you with Chas.

“What are you okay?” you ask.

“Traumatised,” Chas huffs. “Never thought this case would end up with my best friend’s tongue down my throat.”

“Oh no,” you sigh. “He went full destructive mode I take it?”

“Was aiming for my jeans before I shoved him off,” Chas says grimly. “He should know I’ve never been that way and have no inclination to.”

“You know what he was like though,” you reason. “A hot mess. Pretty sure he was after affection in any kind of way even if it was done in the worst way possible.”

“Can you not just....you know,” Chas nods towards the bedroom.

“You want me to pimp myself out to past John to keep him focused?” you raise your eyebrow.

“Fuck, that sounds horrible when you say it like that,” Chas grimaces. “Sorry.”

“I'll see what I can do,” you murmur. “Get some sleep.”

“Thanks,” Chas mutters. “For coming to my rescue, I mean.”

“Any time,” you smile at him before taking a deep breath and re-entering the bedroom.

There you see both Johns fighting with each other, the younger clearly not wanting to be put to sleep. It reminded you of a parent and child and you couldn't help but put your hands on your hips and completely let them have it.

“Would you two fucking sort it out and PACK IT IN?!” you shout, startling them both. “I'm fucking tired, still drowsy and I'm not in the mood to put up with this infantile shit! Get in the bed, the pair of you!”

Two grown men suddenly looked very guilty and both stripped down to their small clothes and hurriedly scampered under the covers. You would laugh if you weren't so done with it all.

“Sorry, love,” older John says sheepishly. “Come 'ere.”

Younger John had placed himself to the side of the bed, facing away and he seemed incredibly embarrassed. You just ignored his discomfort and settled in the middle, resuming your spot on older John's chest, tracing the tattoo a few times just for peace of mind.

“Now fucking good night,” you mumble to everyone.

**

You awake with a heavy pressure on your body.
You're slightly confused by the sensation considering how you fell asleep and you go to move your hand but find there's soft hair underneath your fingers. You can't resist but open one eye experimentally.

What in the world?!

You must have rolled onto your back in the night because you had older John's head resting in the crook of your body, face laying on your chest. That wasn't the only thing though...younger John was curled up against you too, head resting on your stomach and it seemed to be his hair your fingers were twined in.

Shit.

You didn't know what to do.

As much as this situation was completely bizarre, you couldn't help but pet both of their heads. John Constantine as a man always needed that affectionate reassurance and why should you deny his past self the same minor comfort? He may be the embodiment of arrogance and self loathing but maybe you could set some building blocks to help him become the man lying on your chest.

_Fucking hell this is the weirdest train of thought I've ever had._

“Christ that feels divine,” younger John murmurs. “Do you do this to me all the time?”

“Yes,” you answer. “Helps you relax. Especially this.”

Your fingers move to massage near the base of his skull and you can feel him melt against you, a low purr rumbling from his chest.

“Oh god,” he moans. “Why do I like that so much? Strewth, you know me better than I know meself.”

“Yeah well when you've spent most waking moments together for the past year you learn a few things,” you smile.

“And do I learn stuff that you like?” younger John asks, a lot more quiet than before. “Or am I a selfish twat like I usually am?”

“You're anything but selfish,” you look down affectionately at older John, kissing the top of his head.


“There's just something about her,” younger John mumbles, not making a move. “Magnetic, you know? Like I feel....safe. Sounds right stupid.”

“I'm right here,” you huff.

“Sorry, lass,” younger John apologises, sitting up. “Booze has a nasty habit of making me spill me guts out to people.”

“Look,” older John sighs. “I'll tell you this anyway because I'm gonna wipe your memory before we get back. When I met Star, I was retrieving a demonic artefact. The plan was to charm her mate but when I got a proper look at her...all I wanted to do was get to know her better, especially after she ripped me a new one and called me out on me lies instantaneously. There's always been an
underlying pull and that's never faded. As for feeling safe? She is safe. She's my home. She's my family.”

You're absolutely overwhelmed by how candid John is being. This is the man who was more action than words and he called you his family. If you weren't trying to keep your appearance up here you'd probably tear up a little.

“You know,” younger John fluffs his hair. “Never would've believed in a million years what you just said two days ago. Woulda said it were a load a' right bollocks. Now, now I can see it. You adore her, she adores you. John Constantine gets his happy ending.”

“Wouldn't say that completely,” older John snorts. “Every time I make plans to get the wedding stuff sorted a bunch of apocalyptic shite crops up. Beginning to wonder if I shouldn't just ordain Chas and have done with it.”

“Oh shit,” younger John murmurs with a horror stricken expression. “Chas...I....fuck. I'm never gonna live that down.”

“No, I'm never gonna live that down,” older John sighs. “I'll be in me bloody eighties and he'll go 'remember that time you snogged me?’”

“Fuck, I'm such a mess,” younger John draws into himself, knees against his chest and head buried in his hands. “Pretty girl dumps me and I throw meself on me best mate.”

“If it makes you feel any better when we had trouble he threw himself on Lucifer Morningstar,” you giggle.

“Yeah actually that does make me feel better,” younger John cracks a slight smile. “Least future me ain't all perfect.”

“Never said I was,” older John huffs. “I still make mistakes and I'm still a disaster but less of one and I'm trying. I'm trying for her sake.”

Younger John considers that for a moment, “I suppose that's just being human, right? And what makes a man good is his desire to try and be better.”

“Aye some such bollocks like that,” older John yawns, sitting up. “Sounds like some shite God would say though.”

“I meet God?!?” younger John blurts out, completely shocked.

“Actually you tell God what a wanker he is and his creation is a shitfest,” comes the reply as older John redresses. “And still the old bugger wants to save me immortal soul in the end. Couldn't make this shit up if I tried.”

“I need a brew,” younger John blinks. “A strong one.”

“I'll make it,” you offer. “Think you two need some alone time.”

“Cheers love,” older John kisses you.

You hop out of the bed and hear two simultaneous wolf whistles as both Johns appear to be checking out your arse. You just ignore it, going through and finding Chas splayed in an awkward position on the sofa, his baker boy cap shoved far down his head.
Poor guy.

You set to work making tea and Chas' insane coffee with his three spoonfuls of instant roast. You often wondered how he wasn't constantly awake all the time or on the edge of a heart attack but being immortal must have its benefits.

You wave the coffee under Chas' nose and he slowly opens his eyes, blinking in the daylight.

“That for me?” he asks.

“Yep, extra strong,” you nod.

“John's right, you are an angel,” Chas laughs, taking the cup. “Definitely need this after last night. How are they doing?”

“I woke up with both attached to me like limpets,” you chuckle.

“Sounds about right,” Chas rolls his eyes. “He'll never admit just how much of a softie he is. Thanks for corralling them both. You'd make a good mother, you know that?”

You almost spit your tea out, “Don't let present John hear you say that. He'll freak out.”

“Bollocks will he,” Chas snorts. “That twat would jump at the chance for a kid. I saw how he was when Trish was born, barely left us alone. He was really good with Rich's boy too. He's just scared that his lifestyle would be dangerous.”

“Well it would be,” you point out.

“Yes but don't ever think he wouldn't want children with you because he's told me otherwise...although that stays between us,” Chas nods sagely.

You blanch completely and he bursts into a wide grin.

“Are you fucking with me?!” you squeak out.

“Nope and it's damn glorious to see your reaction,” Chas guffaws, clapping one of his huge hands down on your shoulder. “Seriously that boy is more romantic than you think. He's just never had the chance to attain normality before.”

“Do you just have a habit of dropping big info like this before cases?” you huff, folding your arms.

In truth, it was beginning to make sense now why John was referring to you as his family. You would never had dreamed a year ago that the cocky flirt you met at that gig hall was such an intense traditionalist and the love of your life.

You think back to the time you lay on the kitchen floor where you first discussed children and John letting all his fears out. Then and there you made a pact to try and give him the most normal relationship you could. If he wanted a suburban white collar lifestyle, you would try your damnedest to give it to him.

“I just like dropping a proverbial hand grenade occasionally,” Chas grins. “Keeps me young. If you do have kids, just saying, I'm expecting godfather privileges.”

“Shut the fuck up!” you hiss, turning red.

“You're so easy to wind up,” Chas begins uncontrollably laughing. “God bless you, I love having
you as a friend.”

“I would love being your friend a lot more if you weren't a colossal arsehole sometimes,” you roll your eyes.

“Who's a colossal arsehole?” older John pokes his head out.

“I'm just teasing her,” Chas pulls himself together. “Gotta have a sense of humour after all that shit last night right?”

“Christ, I'm right sorry about that,” John blushes.

“Not angry at you, pal,” Chas notes. “Star, you should probably take tea to the sex pest.”

You end up dishing out the remaining cups and all four of you settle into the living room. You don't mean for it to happen but it becomes you, older John and Chas sat on the sofa with younger John sat on the floor.

“So, plan...” younger John starts. “Do you have any vague idea of where we picked up this page?”

“I just remember spending a lot of time with Rich and then I just kinda had it,” older John scratches his head, trying hard to remember. “Bollocks, wading back thirty odd years in me memories is hard graft.”

“I can use the remembrance spell?” younger John offers. “It'll only offer a vague idea but it's somewhere to start.”

“Alright, let's do it,” older John nods.

You watch as both Johns sit together, one's hand on the other's head as they chant quietly between themselves. They seemed oddly at peace with how bizarre the situation was.

“Got it!” older John cries. “It was to do with Rich! I need to get there.”

“I'll grab me coat,” younger John makes to move but is stopped by older John using the sleep spell.

“Is it even worth asking why you did that?” Chas rolls his eyes.

“Can't have two of me running around London,” John shrugs. “Would be right offputting and I need complete focus here. Plus it's less memories to wipe when this is all said and done.”

“I get it,” you sigh. “At least put him in the bed rather than on the floor.”

“Aye, lass. I'll do that. Get your jacket on. We're finding that page.”

**

You were walking towards Fulham with John and Chas.

You still felt quite guilty about leaving younger John strapped to a bed but you suppose it was for his own good. You got the feeling this timeline's John was quite reckless and probably would've interfered a lot.
“Think it's round 'ere somewhere,” John murmurs, poking his head down the street to a row of dilapidated terraced houses.

“Oi oi!” comes a loud voice. “It's fuckin' Con Job!”

Con job?!


“Fighting the fucking patriarchy mate!”

You look around properly and see what you would describe as a punk desperately clinging to his youth. All the clothing was there but the mullet was greying and the earrings were starting to sag in his ears.

“Why is he calling him Con Job?” you ask Chas surreptitiously.

“Because he was an expert con man,” Chas explains. “You've seen him at work sometimes. Can talk the hind legs off a donkey and charm his way out of any situation.”

“Most situations,” you smirk.

“Stop flirting you two,” John gives you a reproachful eyebrow as he turns around. “We've got work to do.”

You stick your tongue out at him and he gives you a cheeky smirk before turning back round to Rich.

“Keeping well?”

“As well as anyone keeps under the Thatcherite regime,” Rich scoffs. “Alright, Chas? Who's the fit bird?”

“Me missus,” John nods to you. “That's Star.”

“Well done mate!” Rich smiles widely. “Nice to meet you, Star.”

You shake his hand and note the heavy grip and calloused knuckles. This guy got into a lot of fights it seemed.

“Where's your missus?” John asks conversationally, sparking up a cigarette. “Ain't seen her in a while.”

“Ah she's at her mam's,” Rich nods. “Not doing too good in health. Left me with the little'un.”

“Where is the sprog?” John looks around himself.

“He's....ah shit!” Rich cries, whipping his head around and panicking. “He was right behind me! Syder? SYDER?!”

His kid was called Syder?! You felt sorry for him having to go through the school system with a name like that, although maybe he wasn't in the school system.

“Syder?” John and Chas call, looking for the boy as you all look down separate alleyways.

You walk down one ginnel, checking behind the bins and the general detritus that had been fly
tipped down it. Nothing. John came after you, worry furrowed into his brow.

“Anything, love?” he asks.

“No,” you shake your head. “Though I don’t know what he looks like.”

“Maybe I should try summat,” John muses, pulling a paper pouch of Cola Cubes out of his pocket. “Syder! Got sweets!”

There’s a loud bang to your left and a lilted giggle. You look at John incredulously.

“Kids love sweets,” John smirks, moving towards the noise.

It’s a small metallic shoddy bike shed in someone’s garden. A hole in the fence told you exactly how the kid had gotten in. John ignored the hole and deftly hopped over the panels and you peek your face over.

John hunches on the floor, “Coming out Syder?”

A rapid blur races before your eyes as it launches itself on John, “Uncle Con job!”

“Nah, it’s Uncle Johnny, lad. Not Con job,” John laughs.

The inquisitive little boy scratches his head for a second before nodding furiously, “Uncle Johnny.”

“There we go,” John smiles. “Time to get you back to Daddy. Here’s a sweetie, don’t tell him I gave you one.”

Syder eagerly stuffs the Cola Cube in his mouth before making grabby hands and John picks him up, cradling him against his body whilst the kid relaxes, hand curling in John’s trench coat.

You see it.

The briefest of John’s pure genuine smiles.

He looks at the boy with the most veritable affection and your heart melts. Chas was right. John was a bigger softie than you thought he was.

John suddenly looks up and catches your expression, going beetroot red before coughing slightly, “Come on, kid. Let's get you back.”

He holds Syder to him with one hand and makes the jump back over the fence with more ease than you’d give him credit for holding a toddler. John refuses to make eye contact with you as you walk back.

“Jesus Christ!” Rich exclaims upon seeing you both exit. “You found 'im!”

“Hello Daddy,” Syder burbles, waving lazily as he’s passed over from John.

“Cheers Con Job,” Rich smiles. “Shelle would've killed me for that.”

“What she doesn't know doesn't hurt her,” John says sagely.

“Come with us, you lot,” Rich urges. “Was gonna take the sprog to the pub for some Sunday dinner. Company would be good. Could talk about the old days.”

You fall into step behind Rich who's holding Syder's hand tightly now. Chas puts his arms around both you and John, a deviant grin on his face.

“Cute little family you made for ten seconds there,” he sniggers.

“Oh fuck off you great twat!” John hisses. “You fucking told her, didn't you? That's why she's bloody staring at me weirdly. Thanks for frightening me bird off.”

“I wasn't aware I was frightened,” you say pointedly. “But you're right, he is a twat.”

“My work here is done,” Chas chuckles, speeding up so John can't hit him.

“Since when did he become the joker in this friendship?” you murmur.

“Probably since me younger self traumatised him like that,” John says. “Chas was always a weird one when he gets a bee in his bonnet.”

You walk for another few minutes in silence, listening to Chas talk to Rich before John nervously pipes up, “So you're....not afraid of it?”

“Why would I be?” you shrug.

“Comes to mind I never got to hear your opinion that day before Gabriel interrupted,” John prompts.

“Do you want kids someday John?” you ask bluntly.

“Er...fuck...I....” John flusters, clearly not expecting a direct question. “Yeah...but it terrifies me as I told you. I've come to accept that it won’t happen so don't feel pressured or 'owt, lass.”


John grabs for your hand, intertwining his fingers and squeezes them, “Oh love, makes me bloody happy you'd think that. I know I'm nobody's first choice for a partner so the fact you'd even considering having me kid someday makes me smile.”

“Just shut up and kiss me, John,” you demand. “I will give you everything you think you can't have or don't deserve because I think you're worth that effort. Even if we're doing baby duties by day and demon hunting by night, I don't care. You deserve a chance at a normal life.”

John pulls you fiercely into his arms and hugs you tightly. You can hear in his voice he's desperately trying not to cry.

_Yep, you're just one big softie hiding behind a mask of ego._

“I bloody love you, you certifiable woman,” he laughs, biting back the tears before kissing you gently. “Jesus I'm gonna need to rough someone up soon to feel manly again.”

You can't hide your unladylike snort and John gives you his trademark cocky grin.

“Can rough me up if you like,” you murmur close to his ear.

“You're not gonna walk for a week after I'm done with you when we get home,” John whispers back. “Maybe I'll see just how many orgasms you can take in a day.”
“You're on,” you nudge him and you hear the tiny rumble of lust in his chest.

“Come on slackers!” Rich calls back to you. “Nearly there!”

**

Pubs really hadn't changed in thirty years. The only thing you could notice was that people were smoking all around you. That was quite novel.

Syder was being entertained with John's card tricks and was happily giggling and clapping his hands. Rich was trying to talk to you about living under Thatcher but it was very hard to keep up when you'd technically not even been born yet so you had no idea how life really was.

“I know she's a bird n' all but she's a fucking bitch,” Rich hisses. “Enemy of the working class.”

You excused yourself to go to the bathroom and just stared at yourself in the mirror. You'd been here an hour and you weren't sure exactly how this was helping John find the page. You knew you couldn't rush it though. If he'd seen this set of circumstances in his memory, he had to play them out, down to the normal domestic routine.

When you exit, you bump into John lurking around the side entrance.

“What are you doing there?” you ask. “Thought you were supposed to be reliving the timeline?”

“And I didn't realise you were into bondage, lass,” John retorts, stuffing one hand into his trouser pocket.

Oh.

This was younger John.

“You got out then,” you say nonchalantly.

“No thanks to you lot,” younger John huffs. “Could've just bloody asked me to stay behind. Rude.”

“Would you really have stayed?” you cross your arms defensively.

“Maybe not,” he admits. “But it's nice to be asked rather than spelled to sleep.”

“Look, just stay out of sight,” you implore him. “The more people see two Johns, the more memories we're going to have to wipe.”

“I'll stay outta sight if you give me a snog,” he smirks.

“You're really trying your luck there huh?” you raise an eyebrow.

“Can't blame a lad for trying,” John shrugs. “Fit bird that I end up with. Might have got a teensy bit addicted to kissing you already.”

I mean you'd already kissed him twice by this point and it was still John.

“Fine,” you sigh. “Just a quick one. I've got to get back to the others.”
“Oh come on, lass. Bit more lively than that,” John pouts. “Like you're kissing me in the future.”

Dealing was two Johns was exhausting, you declared to yourself.

You walked over and his hands readily slid around your waist, pulling you close whilst he looked intently into your eyes. It was almost overwhelming how attentive he was, like he was afraid you were going to run if he didn't keep your gaze. The insecurity was plastered all over his expression.

You lean up, willing your mind to forget which timeline’s John was which for a moment and just go for it. The enthusiasm was evident from him as well as the slight possessiveness as he pulled back a little to nip at your bottom lip.

“Stay with me,” he whispers to you.

“What?” you blink.

“Don't go back with him. Stay with me. Live out thirty years with me before you see him again.”

“That'll break the universe,” you fluster. “Things need to happen in time order.”

John presses his forehead to yours, “I can't wait that long to be happy, bit. It'll be fucking torture. I don't care if you're fifty and grey by the time you met me again. Stay with me.”

“I wouldn’t age that way anyway,” you laugh slightly. “Archangel tainted and besides, your memory will be wiped. You won't remember you're waiting.”

“Some part of me will know,” John says seriously. “Maybe that's why I become obsessed when I see you for the first time, because I've met you before but I can't remember.”

“John don't do this,” you urge. “You know I need to go back to my own timeline.”

“I don't want you too,” he says stubbornly, kissing you again until you softly push him back.

“John, please,” you implore him. “Thirty years down the line you're sitting in this pub, waiting for me to come back having just had a discussion about having kids someday. Don't take that away from your future self.”

“You're lying,” John says automatically, searching your face. “I'd never want kids.”

“I'm not lying,” you shake your head. “You want them but you're afraid demonic forces will come after them or that you'll turn out like your dad.”

John looks like you've doused him in cold water, “Shit. I...go on then, lass. If I'm in that much of a better place that it's a topic of discussion then I won't try and ruin that. Me as I am now, I can't give you that. I'm not...”

“You're not ready,” you finish the sentence for him. “And that's fine. Just take comfort in the fact one day you will be and that you'll have this mouthy girl who utterly adores you.”

John smiles sadly before giving you a chaste kiss on the forehead, “Go back to him...me...whatever. If you need help, come find me.”

You're about to walk back when you see a now familiar streak of 3 foot mischief barrelling past you and John out of the side pub door.

“Syder?!” you call after the boy. “Shit!”
You and younger John chase after him and you're soon joined by older John and Chas who sprint behind you.

“What the bloody hell are you doing here?!?” older John shouts as he catches up to younger John.

“Not gonna miss the party, old timer,” younger John smirks. “Now let's catch this sprog before he ends up under a truck.”

The two Johns put their issues aside briefly as they hare after the little dashing blur with you in hot pursuit.

The kid suddenly makes a wild left into Eel Brook Common and the park area, yelling “Treeeeeees!”

You wondered briefly how Rich had managed to not lose him before hand if he was this prone to escaping. Maybe his girlfriend was better at wrangling the unruly toddler.

“Get back here, Syder!” Chas calls, his long legs putting him far in front of everyone.

Another sharp turn and you're avoiding trees and branches until you finally stumble out into what looks like a medieval township.

Syder's sitting in the middle of the crossroads, staring at everyone going past, just content to be still finally.

“Where the hell is this?” you ask. “I don't remember this being in London.”

“It's not London, love,” both Johns say exactly at the same time which makes your head spin.

“Where is it then?”

“This is Abaton. You can only get here by not directly looking for it,” younger John starts, looking around himself.

“I still don't understand,” you shake your head, trying to take in the fact you're not in the city any more.

Older John takes your hand, “This is where British folklore hides away. Robin Hood, King Arthur, all that legendary bollocks. It's all real and they live here out of sight of England.”

“Holy shit,” you breathe and you hear Syder giggle and try to emulate your words.

“Star,” older John announces. “I remember. This is where I found the page.”

“Well come on then you lollygagging dole scroungers,” younger John winks. “Let's get you all home and out of my life so I can have a pint in peace.”
'STAR CONCEPT' ROCKABYE
HELLBLAZER

PROTECTION RUNES

CHAIR OF BINDING

POIT
ARKHAM
TATTOO
Knights of Hammersmith

Chapter Summary

You go searching for the spell to get you home and bump into some legends you didn't think were real

Chapter Notes

Sorry this has taken me a while guys, life has been uber busy.  
Warnings: Smut  
Contact details:  
Email: theliveshipparagon@gmail.com  
Tumblr: theliveshipparagon  
At the moment there are certain fics which will be winding down soon so I have a post on my Tumblr about 5 new story ideas I have if you want to check them out.  
Happy reading!  
- TLP xx  
(Very likely to be proofreading errors)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Can have a pint in there if you want one,” older John points to the tavern. “Reckon I started there last time. When you're completely out of your depth-”

“Look for the nearest boozer,” younger John finishes and both men start smirking.

“That is really fucking creepy guys,” Chas shakes his head, bending down to pick up Syder. “Come on then. Sooner we get that page the sooner I get back to Renee.”

“Oh aye?” younger John snorts. “Got your balls in a vice grip still has she? Little Chas-y better come home on time?”

“Prick,” Chas mutters and you hear Syder burble, “Pwick.”
“Stop swearing around the kid,” you prompt.

“Trust me, he'll forget the word until he's a teenager,” Chas assures you. “I forgot my language around Geri all the time.”

“Trust the parent in this group,” younger John nods. “He'll keep the lad safe. Now let's make sure the rest a' ya are alright.”

You walk into the tavern and it was everything you imagined a fairytale pub to be. Dark thick wooden benches, gnarled tables, low hanging candle chandeliers, flagons and people vaguely singing. There was something intensely homely about it. You couldn't help but immediately relax.

“You alright, love?” your John asks, tracing a soothing line down your back. “You seem right calm about everything.”

“It just feels so...peaceful,” you search for the word.

John gives you a funny look, “This place is anything but peaceful. Wonder why you feel like that?”

“Because she's salt of the earth English, good fellow,” a voice crops up from in front of you and a man with a shock of blond hair and an even blonder beard turns in your direction. “Abaton is made for our descendants and legends.”

“But I'm not....I was specifically Heaven made. I'm not a descendant of anyone,” you stammer, trying to wrap your head around the conversation.

“Robin, shut your gob, you're confusing me missus,” your John sighs.

“Not a descendant, future legend,” the man known as Robin says cryptically.

“I've had enough of this kind of prophecy shit,” you say, carding your hand through your hair. “Can anyone just speak plainly these days?”

“What he means is, you're saving England from horrid things,” John explains. “When you die, you'll have a space here if you want it. Think of it like Valhalla but for Brits.”

“So that's...” you point at the blond man who stands up and bows so low his hair nearly touches the floor.

“Robin Hood, m'lady,” he introduces himself. “I see you're John's beloved. Might I have the honour of your name?”

“Star,” you answer, not knowing whether you should bow, curtsy or shake his hand.

“A beautiful name for a beautiful woman,” he pronounces.

You feel both Johns bristle behind you.

“Enough a' that,” one of them says sharply.

“Forgive me, that was too forward,” Robin places his hand over his heart. “You are a lucky man, or should I say men? Pray tell what's happened that two of you stand here in Abaton?”

“Time travel issues,” younger John replies. “Apparently I find a page of a spellbook here that allows this one and his bird to get back to the future.”
“That will be the remit of Myrrdin,” Robin nods wisely.

“Oh bollocks,” older John sighs.

“What?” you and Chas ask at the same time.

“He’s not me biggest fan,” John answers.

“Who is?” you snort.

“Oi!”

“Just saying you seem to piss off most of the magical and supernatural community,” you shrug, a wide grin on your face.

“I'm going to tan your hide when no one's looking,” John mutters darkly in your ear.

“Make sure it's not a love tap then,” you wink and he instantly flusters, not expecting you to be so direct.

“As much as it's interesting to watch you two flirting..” Chas says dryly, holding the squirming toddler aloft. “Let's do what we came here for.”

“Right right,” John shakes his head although you note he shifts his trousers a bit awkwardly.

“So...Robin,” younger John sits down next to the fabled legend. “And it feels bloody weird to say that by the way. Where do we find Myrrdin?”

“As the crow flies, where the water meets the stream,” Robin answers in what he thinks is a very helpful manner.

“Yeah mate, looking for something more specific like?” younger John wrinkles his nose.

“Under the Widow's Willow, through the Faerie door,” a man in full plate armour with a luscious mane of dark hair cuts in.

“Cheers Gawain,” older John nods before turning to Chas. “Myrrdin ain't no picnic. Syder's not gonna be safe going that way.”

“You want me to stay behind and look after him?” Chas asks.

“I wouldn't normally ask it of you,” John grits his jaw. “But this one's a right bastard and doesn't think twice about who he kills. Keep the kid safe, please.”

“You're getting soft,” Chas grins. “You wouldn't have given a shit twenty years ago.”

John smiles shyly, “Aye, old age and love will do that to a man.”

“I'll stay,” Chas nods. “The free ale is a great incentive too.”

John claps Chas on the arm warmly before waving you and younger John to stand next to him.

“Right, I got a vague idea where this Widow's Willow is but I'm gonna need you to be on guard. This is heavy level stuff and he's pretty much the biggest sorcerer out there.”

“Just who exactly is Myrrdin?” you ask.
“Merlin is the adapted name,” John explains.

“Oh shit,” your eyes widen. “So all the Knights of the Round Table are here too?”

“Most,” John sighs. “Arthur's long buried waiting for his resurrection time and Lancelot's been wiped from the plain of existence. Myrrdin's a tricky wanker, highly manipulative and very volatile.”

“I think I can handle an old duffer like that,” younger John laughs.

“I barely escaped when I went up against him last and lost my lower two ribs,” older John says seriously. “Pack it in with the bravado.”

“Keep your syrup on,” younger John mutters, sparking a cigarette up. “I'm sure two of me and another magus will be ample bloody back up.”

“I suppose that's better odds than I had last time,” older John concedes. “Let's get a wiggle on, yeah?”

**

Tramping through marshland in your biker boots was not your idea of a fun time.

The mud was threatening to spill over the lip of your shoes and creep into your socks. Never mind the fact that every time you moved a step, it took so much strength to pull your leg forward.

The two Johns were absolutely miserable in front of you.

Their shoes were normal dress shoes and had long since been stained and swallowed in the mud, along with marring their suit trousers.

“Who the bloody fuck would go camping? This is shite!” younger John cries as he almost loses his shoe.

“At least when we were living in the commune we didn't walk into sodding bogs,” older John points out. “Myrrdin is fucking with us right now. This were a field when I was last here.”

“Pretentious cunt, I hate him already,” younger John snarls as he almost trips forward.

“How you doing, love?” older John calls back over his shoulder.

“Feel like I'm back on the Duke of Edinburgh award,” you snort. “Least I don't have a two ton backpack with a tent in it.”

“Aww can just imagine little you in your pigtails and fluffy fleece tramping around the great outdoors,” John chuckles.

“Not quite the innocent schoolgirl,” you laugh. “I smuggled vodka and rum on the trip.”

“I knew there was a reason I loved you,” John winks. “Right rebel, through and through.”

“You know it,” you smirk back, catching the eye of younger John and blowing him a little kiss.
The dynamic between you all had settled since you started the journey from the town to the Willow. Younger John was no longer actively trying to get you to stay and seemed to be happy just flirting good-naturedly. Your John wasn't even minding it. Sometimes he'd join in with the banter, even going so far as to joke about the two of them teaching you a lesson when you got too lewd.

It was also weird to see younger John almost looking up to his older self as a mentor figure as they swapped tricks about spellcasting and rituals. It was cute in a way.

“There!” older John cries, pointing at an impressive willow tree that reached high into the sky above and dripped catkins down its length.

“Shit!” you swear as you're completely wedged into the bog and can't pull your foot up. “I'm stuck!”

“Stay there, lass,” younger John tells you, wading back through the swamp before he picks you up, struggling against the pull of the mud.

In one soft pop, you come loose and he sets you down, only to twist around and yank you into an impromptu piggyback.

“But your coat!” you protest.

“Had worse things than mud on it, love,” John laughs. “Hold on tight now. Gotta keep moving quickly or it'll get us.”

You wrap your arms around his neck and you can feel the tiny vibration of a purr at the contact before he sets off hurriedly, racing against the pull of the bog until you reach some solid ground. He puts you down gallantly before imitating Robin Hood's bow which makes you giggle.

“M'lady,” he says poshly and older John cracks a grin.

“Good job you did that lad,” he laughs. “I'm an old bloke. Probably would've dropped her by accident.”

“You calling me heavy?” you tease.

“Calling you gorgeous as fuck,” John notices your game. “Saying I've got a back like a pensioner is all.”

“You are a pensioner,” you snort.

“Top quality banter, lass,” younger John grins, shaking off his trenchcoat. “No wonder I went for you.”

“Should've seen the attitude she gave me the first time we met,” older John remembers fondly. “It makes the shag so much more special.”

“You two are incorrigible,” you sigh. “Right ahead, yeah?”

“Aye,” both Johns nod.

You reach the tree and have to duck and weave through the hanging catkins, pollen and dust sticking to everything as you barged through. At this point you were already dirty so what was a little more mess?

When you got to the centre, you notice a faint outline of a door shape with one big gnarled knot protruding outwards.
“Guess that's the handle,” your John says before trying to push and pull it open. “Oh bloody hell! Faerie doors are supposed to work for any one! What is this bollocks?!”

Younger John tries but also fails.

“Shit,” he hisses. “You mean I've tramped all this way and ruined me best threads for nowt?”

“Let me,” you say, pushing past them both and placing your hand on the knot.

As you attempt to pull, nothing happens but when you push, you're not expecting it to actually work. You end up pitching forward into swirling rainbow mists as the door gives way and slams shut straight behind you whilst the two Johns shout your name over and over.

You fall for a time, unsure if you're just going to smack into the bottom of this hole or if something was going to stop that first. The colours of the mists were becoming brighter and brighter until it almost hurt your eyes how vivid it was.

Just as you thought you were about to hit the bottom, your descent was slowed, almost to the point you were floating down until your feet touched the soft moss below you. You chanced a look back up and only saw the mist get denser until it became of ceiling of vibrant colour.

“What the hell?” you mumble, getting your phone out of your pocket.

Stupid. Of course there was not going to be any mobile service here. Didn't mean you couldn't hope though.

“Child of Albion, step forth,” a gruff voice says from your left, causing you to whirl round in shock.

“Who's there?” you ask but get no response. “I'm not moving until you say who you are.”

“Oh little girl, don't be so tiresome,” comes the strained reply. “If I wanted you dead you would be dead. Make no mistake about that.”

“Because that makes me feel better,” you mumble.

“You're trying my patience. Come here,” the voice says more directly. “Don't make me regret giving you an invitation.”

You take a deep breath before walking through a tight doorway that seemed to open up into a large chamber. Books littered the walls and dancing firelight in the centre cast a warm glow on the stonework.

As you took one more step, a sudden deluge of green glittering water was dumped on you, completely soaking you to the bone.

“The fuck?!” you cry, spluttering through the liquid.

“Just a precaution,” the voice says again. “It wipes away any enchantments, just in case you were sent here to kill me...not that you could.”

“Awfully confident about that,” you snarl into the air.

“I sense your magic, child. It is strong but not strong enough. I have centuries of age on you.”

“Alright, I'm getting very tired of this so why don't you stop being rude and show yourself,” you huff, trying to ring out your shirt.
“As you wish,” the voice says from right behind you and you whirl around, shards of ice poised to fly out at the unknown man.

Before you is not what you would've expected. Maybe you were too sold on the artwork of medieval lore or influenced by the Disney film but Myrddin...Merlin, definitely wasn't wizardly looking. He was dressed in a suit with slicked back auburn hair and a neat beard. The only thing that belied his true identity were his eyes which just seemed older than you could possibly fathom.

“Have you had your fill?” he quirks up a bushy eyebrow.

“You're....not what I was imagining,” you admit.

Myrddin scoffs, “Long beards are hardly practical when spellcasting. They'll burn in the braziers or collect potion ingredients.”

“I suppose,” you mutter.

“Now tell me, why is John Constantine knocking at my door? No, actually tell me why two of them are here.”

“How do you know him?” you ask, puzzled since John wasn't supposed to have come across him yet.

“You think I can't see the future? Oh child, he has taught you woefully inadequately,” Myrddin sighs. “You require something from me, yes?”

“A page,” you nod. “A page that lets me and John get back to our timeline.”

“Time travel is a tricky beast,” Myrddin smiles and it's not a comfortable sight. “Very well, you may have it.”

“Just like that?” you question, not quite knowing what to do with yourself.

Within seconds, Myrddin has boxed you into the wall and places a studying hand on your jaw, “Your future holds something of great importance and it's imperative you return.”

“Why?” you ask suspiciously. “There's got to be something in it for you.”

“Oh there is,” he grins. “But we cannot know our own destinies until they unfold. I'll give you the page with the knowledge I will see you again and you will give me the key to everything.”

“Why does everyone speak in riddles?!” you hiss. “What great fucking plan is there for me? You say it, Robin Hood says it, fucking God himself says it.”

Myrddin produces a roll of parchment, stuffing it into your jacket pocket before glaring at you, “What have I told you? You cannot know.”

“Tell me!” you roar, having just about enough of everything in the universe keeping secrets from you.

“Insolent child!” Myrddin spits as you push him backwards with such force he sprawls to the ground. “I could obliterate you where you stand!”

“Do it!” you challenge. “But then whatever it is you need dies with me too.”

“Not if I maim you,” Myrddin smirks horribly. “You can still fulfil your purpose.”
Shit.

This was going south super fast and you had absolutely no way of outmatching the greatest living wizard in history.

BOOM!

The entire chamber shook and rattled, loose books falling off the shelves, jars smashing as they pitched from the tables.

“What was that?!” you say, more to yourself than anything.

Myrddin waves his hand and on the only wall not covered in apothecary items, you see a projection of the outside of the tree.

*Almost like magical CCTV.*

Both Johns are combining their spells to try and blast the door open. You see them co-ordinating their hellfire blasts until....

BOOM!

The chamber rattles again and you see the determination plastered all over the Johns faces as they ready themselves again.

“They really are insufferable,” Myrddin mutters. “Perhaps I shall maim them also. They do not need to be fully mobile for your glorious purpose.”

Rage just boiled inside you. You'd always been a little impetuous, impulsive even but after a good few months of cryptic words, riddles and prophecies about your future, you'd just snapped.

You'd never really planned on punching the fabled Myrddin/Merlin in the face when you got up this morning but your arm moved without your brain thinking it through.

To say Myrddin was incensed seemed a grand understatement. The shock on his face told a story that he was not used to people fighting back and actually landing a blow.

“YOU!” he roars. “YOU HEAVEN WHORED WENCH!”

He raised his arm and stars seemed to burst around his hand, exploding in sequence as he steadied his aim at you.

Oh fuck. You'd really done it now.

Just as the killing blow was about to smack into your body, a brawny forearm encircled your waist, pulling you out of the way and lifting you up off the floor so he could run with you.

“Rí Buile!” Myrddin screams, his voice cracking on the top note.

Wait. That was Gaelic. You'd heard the term 'buile' before when researching....

“Sweeney?!” you manage to choke out.

“Did you miss me, lasslin’?” comes that heavy accent. “Jesus fuckin' shite you get yourself into some trouble, don't ye?”
“How are you here?” you ask, as Sweeney manages to get into the entrance chamber to Myrddin’s home.

You notice he’s not wearing his usual attire of a wifebeater vest, suspenders and trousers. Instead he has a long flowing cloak, tunic and a simple but prominent crown around his shock of russet hair.

“This is Faerie,” he proclaims, setting you down and slamming the door shut behind you. “I’m a leprechaun, lasslin’. Work it out.”

“You were with Mr Wednesday though?”

“Ah fuck, not really the time to explain this but fine. I can exist on two plains at once, ’specially if I hear a prayer.”

“I didn't pray to you,” you say confused.

“Ye prayed to me before though,” Sweeney waggles a finger in your face. “I hear my followers when they're in plight, ’specially since yer in my domain.”

“Is that why you look so....”


“I was going to say regal but fine,” you laugh, until the top of the door is blasted into tiny splinters.

“Shit, no time,” Sweeney gathers you up. “Gotta get ye outta my realm. On ye go, lasslin’. Next time I have to save that beautiful arse yer gonna owe me and I ain't talkin' flowers.”

You were about to protest but he just gives you a cheeky wink before, what you can only describe as, throwing you up into the air with such speed your eyes start streaming.

It was a curious sensation shooting upwards but once you pass the barrier of rainbow mist the whole world revolves 180 degrees on its axis making you feel incredibly ill. Now you were falling down and away from Sweeney who just gives you a light hearted wave before vanishing a shower of gold coins, just as the door finally gives way to Myrddin’s attack.

You're thrown out of the willow tree and hit the grass, skidding backwards in the mud. Your John sprints after you, throwing himself bodily in front of you, stopping your progress just before your head gets dashed on a boulder. He wraps his arms around you tightly.

“Bloody fucking hell, I need to get you a sodding bell if you're gonna keep disappearing on me,” he jokes but you can tell he was terrified.

“Burn the tree,” you say urgently. “Close off that route from Faerie now.”

“Oh aye?” John asks. “Got someone tryna follow?”

“Myrddin,” you nod. “Do it quick. I'll be fine.”

John gives you a desperate kiss on the forehead before jogging back to his younger counterpart and relaying the message. There's a look of understanding shared between the two before they target the branches, the catkins and the roots of the tree.

From the looks of it, the door to Faerie had nearly buckled under their combined attack. They were definitely close to coming in and trying to save you.
Glad you didn't make it in the end, boys.

The flames roar as they spread through the tree and both Johns don't waste another moment of time before coming and checking on you.

“Are you alright, love?” your John asks. “He didn't do anything to you, did he?”

“Just the usual with these supernatural pricks,” you muse. “Threats and prophecies.”

“How in the everliving fuck did you escape Myrddin and Faerie?” younger John asks. “Took me bloody months to find an exit last time I got stuck there.”

“Helps when you have a guardian leprechaun,” you sit up.

“Sweeney again?” older John quirks up his eyebrow. “Jesus he really has taking a liking to you. 'Spose it is his realm as such being a King n’ all.”

“Certainly comes in handy when you've punched a sorcerer in the face,” you nod.

“You fucking what?” younger John laughs. “You punched Myrddin?”

“He pissed me off,” you shrug. “Sick of everyone talking like they're from Macbeth.”

“You are bloody amazing,” younger John says as older John states, “You're bloody stupid.”

“Which am I?” you ask. “Amazing or stupid?”

“Both,” your John nuzzles your hair. “I were a bit put out that Sweeney had to be the one to save you but I’ll shake his damn hand if he got you out of that situation...one you caused it seems.”

“You're rubbing off on me,” you smirk. “Now I'm pissing off magical things.”

“Of all me characteristics, that’s not the one I wanted you to have,” John snorts.

“Oh and...” you say, diving into your jacket and pulling out the roll of parchment.

“You're tea leaf that?” your John asks, mildly impressed.

“Kinda,” you half tell the truth.

I mean you were supposed to get the spell in exchange for giving up something in your future but you weren't going to go into finer details.

“Ugh, you're stunning,” John kisses you softly. “Come on, let's set this timeline right.”

**

After finding a way back from Abaton, you dropped off Syder to a very distressed Rich. Seems barely any time had passed since your little excursion into other realms which was good in a way. At least Rich wasn't left to fret about his son for long.
Now you were back in John's flat as both men drew the appropriate symbols and set up the spellcasting ingredients.

“Good job on the page,” Chas claps you on the back. “I really appreciate it.”

“I said I'd get us home,” you smile. “Can't promise Renee will be amused at how long we've been away.”

“She knows I'll be alright,” Chas grins. “Especially since she discovered my little secret.”

“I guess that would ease anyone's mind,” you muse.

“All done,” younger John announces. “Now I suppose...time to forget you all.”

Older John steps back to let him say his goodbyes. Younger John hugs Chas in a way that he obviously wasn't expecting, then John moves to you.

“Look after me, lass,” he implores you. “Seems like you're good for me.”

“Works both ways,” you point out.

“Until we meet again then, or some such bollocks. I'm not good with romantic send offs,” John shuffles awkwardly.

You reach up and kiss his cheek before pulling away, catching that he touched his face where your lips had met his skin.

“Goodbye,” you smile.

You all stand in the centre of a circle bar younger John and your version starts prepping the memory wiping spell.

“Oi John,” the younger self says to the older one. “Don't fuck it up with her, lad. Don't fuck up your friendship with Chas either. In this time, right now....friends and family are all I really want.”

“It's all I want too, mate,” older John nods. “Oblivisci dēlē!”

There's a haze which mists up younger John's eyes as his body starts going slack.

“Come on, we ain't got much time,” your John says, chanting the words of the spell from the page. That curious sensation starts again of you being squeezed until you're thrown onto what appears to be the warehouse sofa.

“Bullsye,” John laughs. “Exactly when I left, looking at the clock n' all.”

“Thank fuck for that,” Chas mumbles, getting his phone out and wincing as it blasted into life. “Shit I'm so in the doghouse now.”

“You'll be fine,” you reassure him. “I'm so glad to be home though.”

“Me too,” both boys say in unison before chuckling away.

“I'm off,” Chas announces. “As much as I've loved being trapped in the past with you guys, I've got some grovelling to do.”
With that, he leaves quickly, no doubt seeing some texts from Renee that were less than savoury.

John's on you in a second, pouncing almost as he draws you in for a very sloppy kiss.

“You're gonna drive me insane if I have to keep bouncing through time and space to rescue you,” he mumbles into your neck. “Come 'ere.”

The protective arms he winds around you feel like home. It was hard to describe the difference when younger John had done the same thing but there was an assurance, a fierce protectiveness to the action that was a wholly contrasting experience.

“I don’t plan it like this you know,” you point out. “Maybe I'm following this shit destiny everyone keeps telling me I have.”

“I don't like it,” John says firmly, squeezing you a little. “Feels like we've got things breathing down our necks until whatever it is happens.”

“Exactly,” you agree. “But I suppose we'll just have to take the small victories and hours of peace where we can right?”

“Oh love,” John sighs, breathing in the scent of your hair. “If all we have are stolen moments of quiet then hang on because I'm gonna fuck you silly right now before the next disaster happens.”

That was not the reaction you were expecting from him and he clearly knew it as you could feel his mouth at your neck quirk into a smile.

“What?” John challenges playfully. “You think I'm not gonna take care of me bird now we're out of that ego fest?”

“You mean now your younger self isn't here?” you clarify.

“And Sweeney and even Robin bloody Hood,” John growls. “Drives me sodding mad and I need to make you understand that you're me lass and mine alone.”

From the sounds of it, John had really been reining in his possessiveness during your escapade. You thought it was adorable he was so jealous sometimes.

“Am I now?” you smirk and you know from the tiny groan he makes that you've struck the nerve.

“Cheeky little tart, aren't you?” he pulls back from your neck, eyes glittering with mischief. “Whatever will ol' Johnny do with you, eh?”

“Break in the new bar you built,” you wink.

John grabs your legs unexpectedly, hiking them around his waist as he walks forward, depositing you on the counter of the small bar area he'd built during the quiet month.

Your clothes were shed faster than you realised and you saw the splotches of mud and grass that were stuck to your skin.

“Dirty girl,” John chuckles.

“Says you,” you laugh, looking at the grime on his lower body.

“Let's make it dirtier,” John rumbles as he draws you in for a long kiss whilst positioning himself between your legs.
He slightly grips your neck, steadying your chin as his already hard cock teases your entrance.

"Don't torment me," you rasp, trying to use your legs to hook him further forward.

"Ah ah ah, lass," he smirks. "That's not how I play and you know it."

With one hand still holding onto your neck, his other dips down and finds your clit, circling softly and prompting you to moan into his kiss.

"Fuck I adore you," he says almost breathlessly. "Let Johnny hear those lovely noises."

It was maddening having the barest touch and the slide of his cock against your slickness. All you wanted to do was cant your hips forward so he could fuck you but he was determined to tease you relentlessly.

"John, please," you beg unashamedly. "Don't make me wait."

"It'll be worth it, love," he bites gently at your collarbone.

After another few minutes of this, you're almost wild in how much you want him. He seems to sense how much more urgent your kisses are becoming and how much your back is arching to try and gain friction.

"What do you want, Star?" he whispers to you. "Tell me."

"Fucking hell, just fuck me, John. Fuck me until I can't stand up."

"You are bloody divine, lass," John praises before he applies more pressure with his dancing fingers.

Without warning he presses forward and glides into you with ease, completely filling you and you feel the twitch of him once he's fully inside you.

"I've missed you," John says seriously before starting a languid rhythm of fucking you whilst still playing with your clit.

"I've missed you too," you cling onto him. "Oh fuck, that feels so good."

"Does it now?" he chuckles darkly before thrusting hard against you, almost causing you to draw blood as you rake at his back. "And now?"

"Shit!" you exclaim, your head falling back. "More!"

"Someone's vocal today," he grins. "Can't keep a lady waiting when she begs for it."

He picks up his pace in every sense and you soon feel the pressure building in your core. He can sense it of course, he's gotten good at reading your expression and your body language.

"Come on, love. Fall off the edge for me," he kisses at your neck.

You don't argue with that. The wave of pressure snaps and you're just clinging onto him, shuddering through your orgasm as you try and regain some sense of reality. You feel John thrust for about a minute more before he pushes as far as he can go, spilling into you as he fiercely kisses you, openly groaning.

"I will always find you," he murmurs, pressing his forehead to yours. "I'll never let you go, Star. I love you."
“I love you too, John,” you wrap your arms around his neck, stroking through his sweat soaked hair. “I always will.”

**

“It has begun,” Raphael announced to no one in particular as he viewed the expression of love between you both from the plain of Heaven. “Father's plan is now in motion.”

Chapter End Notes

I think having a guardian leprechaun would be pretty funky. Rí Buile means 'King of Madness'

Brit translation guide:
Keep your syrup on - Keep your hair on (syrup is a slang term for toupee)
Duke of Edinburgh Award - A program where you do camping, charity work etc as a teenager
Albion - Old term for England
Tea leaf - Steal (Cockney rhyming slang Tea Leaf - thief)
John didn’t like it one bit.

It had been two months since you got back from the 80s and nothing was happening. When John meant nothing, he meant *nothing*.

This was not like the time you and he had had a break for a while and left Chas to pick up the slack, there was literally no monsters to kill, no ghoulies to cast out and no demons to wreak havoc. It was quiet. Too quiet.

*Something’s bloody up. Something big is coming soon.*

He wound his arms around your sleeping form tighter, feeling suddenly protective. There had never
been a moment in his life when activity had stopped for this long and he felt on edge all the time. He couldn’t settle, he couldn’t get back into a normal routine and he was sure you’d noticed.

You hadn’t said anything of course. That wasn’t your way. You just tried your best to support him more and left him alone when he was in one of his moods that would’ve given Bruce a run for his money. You were used to him by now and how he worked and he was so bloody grateful. He honestly couldn’t remember how he’d functioned before you came into his life.

Oh wait, yeah I did. I saw it in me 80s self. The complete fucking mess.

He felt unrecognisable from the man he was and he was actually…proud of that fact. John had liked to delude himself into believing he was a good man but that had never really rung true until you appeared. He was certainly more mentally stable that’s for sure.

You stirred a little, brow furrowing as though you were having a bad dream and John automatically kissed your forehead, humming softly until you became still again.

He really thought after this long the honeymoon phase would’ve died down but his heart still burst with emotions around you and that lovesick feeling had never really gone away.

Suppose it helps you were meant to be me ideal bird.

He leaned slightly, grabbing his phone off the bedside table and opened his chat conversation with Chas.

John: Anything?

Chas: Fuck all.

John: Don’t like this. Too quiet.

Chas: Don’t like it either. Big bad on the way?

John: Fucking hope not.

Chas: I’ll keep an eye out. Might capture a vamp and see what they know.

John: Stay safe mate.

Chas: Likewise

John thought back to your encounter with Myrddin and all the cryptic shit the wizard had told you. Maybe that’s why it was so calm. Everyone was gearing up for something that you were supposed to do in the future.

He looked back down at your peaceful face, nuzzling into his chest.

Oh love. Can’t keep you safe for five minutes, can I? I’m so bloody awful at this.
He touched your tattoos together and felt the wave of utter tranquillity from you. It made him smile at least before a thought popped into his head.

He’d never checked you out after you got thrown out of Faerie. You’d mentioned something about being doused with green water and he’d never even sodding thought to see if that had done anything to you. Maybe Myrddin had primed you for something.

He muttered as quietly as he could, the words of a spell an Ancient Greek doctor had concocted. It allowed him to scan your body, looking for defects, disease or tampering.

He started with your head which only showed a display of mild anxiety which he knew about anyway. He travelled down, seeing that your blood pressure was a little high and you didn’t seem to be getting enough nutrients but then again, you both hardly had a ‘my body is a temple’ lifestyle.

When he got to your lower abdomen, he thought he might have misinterpreted the signals. John’s breath caught in his throat as his fingers pressed into your skin so he could be doubly sure and he heard it again in his head.

A tiny heartbeat.

Panic completely gripped him as he understood finally what it is you’d actually told him. You’d said the green water had washed away enchantments…well that meant the anti-fertility spell too.

*Oh fucking hell, I’ve got her pregnant. Oh fuck, oh fuck, OH FUCK.*

Myrddin had done this deliberately. He had to have. The thing he wanted to take in the future was your child.

*My child. He wants to take OUR child.*

Briefly he thought about waking you up and explaining what he’d found but so much was running through his head.

What if he asked you to terminate the pregnancy? Would they come after you then? But….he couldn’t do that. He couldn’t ask you something so harsh. It wasn’t his decision to make.

As absolutely terrified as he was, there was a tiny part of him that became defensive and protective.

*My lass is carrying my child.*

Bloody fucking hell it was so confusing.

When he really thought about it, he discovered he wasn’t afraid of being a father but rather he was afraid for you. He was afraid all the evil little shits in creation would be after you. If they killed you and the baby as well…

*I would break completely.*

He needed to speak to Chas urgently but over the phone was not the way to explain this mess. Silently, he slipped out from your grasp and dressed himself before stepping out of the warehouse.

He made sure to absolutely ward the everliving shit out of the place so that not even a fucking archangel could get in any more. Finally he was satisfied enough to leave.
You awoke with a strange feeling that something was off.

It wasn’t until you stretched out and didn’t feel John’s abnormally warm body next to you that you realised he was up.

“You awake?” you call out, still half asleep.

After getting no reply, you get up and check the warehouse. Usually if John is awake before you, he just makes himself a cup of tea and reads next to you in bed. There’s no sign of him though.

You pad back to the bedroom and grab your phone.

Star: Where are you?

You don’t get a reply, even after waiting ten minutes.

You decide to get dressed and try checking out his usual haunts. He had to be around somewhere.

As you walk out into the living room again, your path is blocked by a smooth bare chest that swirls with golden light. You look up into the face of Raphael who looks at you curiously.

“Are you distressed child?” he asks.

“Uh…..” you trail off. “What are you doing here?”

“Delivering a message,” he says serenely.

“Okay….”

“Hark!” he proclaims and you bite your lip to stop yourself from laughing. “Two months have passed since Father’s plan was set in motion. I am here to bestow his blessing and protection.”


“You have not realised yet, child?” Raphael cocks his head but not in a patronising way. “John Constantine understands.”

“Understands what?!” you end up shouting. “Don’t speak to me in cryptic bullshit. Tell me straight!”

“Your child,” Raphael gestures to your stomach.

You felt like you were hearing through water as you tried to make sense of it all. Child?! But that would mean you were pregnant but that had to be impossible.

“I’m still bleeding monthly? What the fuck?” you shake your head. “That’s nonsense.”
Raphael places a hand on your abdomen but you don’t flinch away. God’s healer was unlikely to do you harm.

“That is an unfortunate side effect of the demonic taint John Constantine has reacquired,” he frowns. “Allow me to relieve that issue.”

In a flash, more magic settles into your body.

“It should not happen again throughout your pregnancy,” he nods, satisfied with himself.

“I’m not pregnant!” you yell. “I can’t be!”

“Do you think John Constantine would’ve warded this place exponentially if you were simply in your normal state?” Raphael quirks a perfect eyebrow. “Father had to direct me here himself.”

“So….I actually am….oh shit,” you half collapse on the floor. “And John knows? Did he run away?”

“I do not know,” Raphael answers. “I’m not here for him. I am here to bestow blessings on you.”

“Why me?” you breathe, on the edge of an utter panic attack.

“Father has chosen you and Constantine,” Raphael explains. “Your child is to be the next Messiah, a perfect chance for John to make up for his previous act of selfishness.”

“So God is making me Mary 2.0 because John fucked up the last Messiah’s conception?” you stammer.

“Strange wording but indeed. You have changed John Constantine into someone worthy. He will raise the child well.”

“No…I can’t do this,” you protest. “If I’m pregnant with some modern Jesus everything is going to come after me and John. Give it to someone else. Please!”

“There is no one better equipped to deal with such perils as you two,” Raphael says and you hate how right he is. “Child, if you can give birth, the world will change forever. God’s force and will on the mortal plain will drive back Hell’s army. There will peace. You will have peace. You can lead a domestic life with Constantine if you wish.”

“Don’t you dare dangle that in front of me,” you hiss. “Is that all I have to look forward to? If I survive a whole seven months of every demon, monster and wayward fable I might have a chance to play house?”

Raphael looks at you like an exasperated parent before he touches your chest and chants words you don’t know. A funny feeling ripples throughout your body, almost an elating feeling.

“Father’s blessing is given,” Raphael points to your tattoo, the one John had made himself.

You note the wings around his signature have become pearlescent, shimmering in the light and the pattern is more raised.

“That is the physical evidence,” Raphael tells you. “You are equal parts human and archangel now. Your virility is greatly enhanced, your health is greatly improved and your resilience unparalleled. You will survive almost anything.”

“And what can’t I survive?” you ask.
“Dark Arts magic,” Raphael says sternly. “Magic directly from Hell.”

“Good job John is a master of it,” you half giggle in delirium. “If he hasn’t left me that is.”

“If John Constantine has shirked his responsibilities, we will look after you,” Raphael assures you. “For now, Father is calling me. Farewell child.”

With a rustle and a gust of wind, he’s gone, leaving you in absolute hysterics on the floor.

You may have joked about a child someday with John and maybe if this was going to be an ordinary kid you could’ve coped but giving birth to the next Messiah?

Fucking hell…

Your text tone beeps and you dive on your phone.

**

John: At Chas’. Back later lass.

Star: We need to talk when you get back.


Star: Please come back soon. I’m scared.

You felt so pathetic for writing that but this was just overwhelming. You rarely bared your insecurities to John but you just needed his support right now.

John: Me too.

**

“You WHAT?!” Chas screeches as John tells him the news.

That prompts Renee to come huffing out of the kitchen, still drying a plate, to see what the fuss was about.

“Keep it down. This is a respectable household,” she chides. “What has he done now? Oh you haven’t driven Star away have you?”

“He’s knocked her up!” Chas blinks.
Crash!

The plate drops to the ground as Renee’s eyes widen comically.

“You’re meant to marry her first and then get her pregnant!” Renee shrieks. “What were you thinking?!”

“I didn’t bloody plan it!” John says defensively. “Myrddin wiped away my magical birth control!”

“Why would he do that?” Chas asks.

“To get at me kid when they’re born. Remember Star said he wanted something from her in the future.”

“And your child would be so special,” Renee rolls her eyes.

In his absolutely maelstrom of emotions, John rounded on her, “Yeah me kid would be bloody special. They’d have a demonic taint, an archangel taint and come from powerful magic. That’s the fucking goldmine of future potential.”

Renee, for the first time in a long time, shuts up completely. There was no way she could argue back on that one.

“So what does Star think of all this?” Chas butts in, eager to stop the fight brewing. “Does she want to keep it?”

“She doesn’t even know,” John runs his hand over his face, groaning. “Found out doing a doctor spell to check she were alright.”

“She doesn’t even know she’s pregnant?!” Renee bursts out. “Oh John Constantine, if you don’t tell her, I will.”

“Keep your bloody hair on!” John snaps. “I’ll tell her when I get back. I just…I don’t know what to do.”

“And why not?” Renee sneers. “Because you know you’d be a deadbeat dad?”

“ENOUGH!” Chas bellows and Renee jumps in fright. “That was too far, even for you. Look at him, he’s terrified. If they want to keep the baby, everything is going to be after them. They’ll never have a moments rest and always be looking over their shoulder. They may even have to live in the warehouse permanently, not coming out until it’s due. Then they have to keep the kid safe for the rest of their lives against any and all evil forces. Or John could ask something horrible, he could ask her to get rid of it, even though he wants a chance to prove himself, to be the father his father never could. He wants a family with her so badly. I know he does. What about that is a fair choice, Renee? Huh?!”

Renee looks incredibly guilty, “I’m sorry. I didn’t realise.”

“No you bloody didn’t,” John sighs. “What the hell do I do?”

He finally looks at his phone and sees you’re worrying about where he is. He tries to assuage your anxiety by replying but the answer he gets makes his stomach drop.

“Shit, she knows,” he hisses. “Christ this just gets worse.”

“It’ll be alright,” Chas pats his shoulder. “You know I’m here for you.”
John’s phone beeps again and he looks at your words, proclaiming how scared you were, his heart nearly broke. He bit his lip furiously to stop himself from crying, especially in front of Renee.

“What is it?” Chas frowns, noticing the change in behaviour.

John says nothing but shows him the text.

“Ah shit,” Chas sighs. “Poor girl. Go to her John. She needs you. Don’t leave her alone right now.”


“Any time,” Chas says. “Whatever you both decide, I’ll help you.”

“Cheers, knew you were me best mate for a reason,” John gives a smile to cover up his fear before walking back out into the Manchester rain.

**

You hadn’t really moved since Raphael had left, only pulling the blanket from the sofa across yourself and sobbing intermittently into it.

Of all the adventures and escapades and mishaps you’d had with John, this was by far the most terrifying. It was like Heaven was directly putting a target on your back just for the fun of it and if it didn’t work out, they’d just do this to some other poor bastard couple down the line.

John came back about twenty minutes after the final text he’d sent. You couldn’t even look at him as he came in and only met his gaze when his hand gently tugged the blanket away from your face.

“Love, look at me;” he says softly. “We’ll get through this, one way or the other. Do you hear me?”

“It’s not even that simple;” you burst into tears again and John is completely caught off guard.

You’d never really been this distraught around him before and he could tell it was something very serious because he shut up completely and just held you tightly, letting you cry everything out.

“Come on, bit. Tell me what’s frightened you,” he shushes you, whilst rocking back and forth with you.

“Raphael,” you start.

“What.” John stiffens. “Here were ‘ere? I made bloody fucking sure no dickhead angels could enter.”

“Said God helped him get in,” you continue and you listen to the string of curses John lets out before starting again. “John. He said we were Mary and Joseph 2.0.”

“Are you telling me an angel’s been shagging you?” John says confused.

“No, listen to me. He said it’s definitely ours but has been blessed by God and will be the next Messiah.”
“Our…our kid…fucking hell! As if it weren’t reason enough that our kid would be a target for magical shitheads it’s got to be the second coming of bloody Jesus too?!”

“I can’t cope with this,” you panic, clutching tightly at him. “We’ll never be safe.”

“FUCK,” John swears loudly. “If Raphael’s been meddling too then there’s no way we can stop this from happening.”

“I don’t even have a choice,” you breathe. “Fuck, I have to have this baby. It’s not even on my terms. I’m just a fucking rent-a-womb for that celestial twat up there.”

“Oi, pissing off God is my thing,” John tries humour. “Don’t you start too. Okay…okay. This is happening. We’re having a kid and it’s going to be the bringer of peace on Earth. No biggie.”

He scoops you up from the floor, blanket and all, carrying you to the bedroom where you positions you to lie on top of him, hugging you tightly.

“I’m really scared, John,” you whisper.

“I know, love, I know,” he kisses your forehead. “We’ll make it. We always do somehow.”

“Are you going to run away?” you ask and look up into his determined face. “John?”

* * 

Sodding hell, that small voice you used was killing him inside.

He’d never seen you so unsure about anything, so submissive, so completely broken. The sheer fact you thought he might abandon you now ripped him apart.

Once upon a time he might have. In the early days, running was all he ever did but he was utterly in this until the end.

I would never leave you. You’re my world, you stupid woman.

“Do I bloody look like I’m running anywhere?” he says seriously. “You think I gave you a ring as a joke? You think I shared me own soul with you for nowt?”

You bit your lip in a hesitant kind of way as you gave him the biggest saddest eyes he’d ever seen on you.

“You really are a daft bird sometimes, aren’t you?” he sighs, squeezing you gently. “I told you I wanted marriage, I told you I wanted a family someday even though it scares me and it still does and this is fucking terrifying but…I’m not going anywhere, lass. That’s my kid as well as yours and if you think for one second I would abandon you both, do you know me at all? I love you, you special case. What don’t you get about that?”

You burst into tears again but he could tell they were just emotional and not ones of fright. He kissed every part of your face he could until you calmed down again.
“I love you too,” you managed to get out. “Fucking hell, this is all so messed up.”

“Aye it is, but we’ll manage,” John assures you. “Christ…best start thinking of names then, bit. We’ve got seven months.”

You let out a small laugh and John relaxed a little that you seemed to have composed yourself.

In his own mind, John was cursing that this had entirely fucked up his secret wedding plans he was making. He’d intended to whisk you away next month to somewhere nice, somewhere private with just a few friends to witness it but…not like you could leave the warehouse now.

*Maybe I should have it here? Certainly cosy. Got enough bloody rooms. Could even get more people then.*

He felt like he owed it to you now to give you something to make you smile. He wanted so badly to make you happy again. Perhaps this was just what you needed. A grand gesture so you’d stop worrying he was going to do the old ’I’m nipping out for cigarettes’ routine.

*Settled then. Marrying her here. I’ll get Chas to help with the girly stuff.*

He hadn’t realised in his reverie, until you placed your hand over his, that subconsciously he was touching your stomach.

*Jesus, am I being that protective already?*

He traces the lines of your abdomen, currently showing no signs at all of your present state but he thought to himself…

*That’s my kid in there. Wonder if you’re gonna be a lad or lass? Wonder if you’re gonna take after me? Bloody hell I hope not. Take after your mum, kiddo. Safer that way.*

“I’m gonna be a dad,” he says out loud and half chuckles to himself. “Well I fucking never.”

**

From inside the warehouse, neither of you saw the star that hung brightly directly overheard, signalling to everyone that Heaven’s design was realised.

Neither of you knew the sheer amount of beings who caught that message loud and clear.

Myrddin, the old gods, Gabriel, Papa Midnite….and the First….

The First of the Fallen grinned to himself from his throne.

“Can’t outsmart me this time Constantine. I’ll take your woman and your child you little shit. That’s a promise.”
The Constantines

Chapter Summary

Settling into your imprisonment in the warehouse isn’t so bad but there’s always surprises in John Constantine’s world.

Chapter Notes

Warnings: Extreme fluff, heavy angst (I made myself cry whilst writing it, the soppy git I am)
Oh geez. I'm in the endgame of this fic now and it's tearing me up.
This has been the best part of a year writing so far and I only have a couple of chapters left.
Thanks to those still here and commenting.
Enjoy the heartbreak in this chapter.
- TLP xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“How about Moon Unit?” John jokes as he caresses the tiny little bump forming.

“Piss off,” you hiss, smacking him playfully. “I’m not some LSD taking hippy.”

“Fine fine, we’ll go with Thunderchild.”

“John!”

He breaks out into such a massive grin that you can’t help but return it.

You may have been confined to the warehouse for the past month but John had made it infinitely more bearable by being super supportive. You never would’ve expected him to be so accommodating but he made notes of your strange food requests and helped you through bouts of nausea. If you didn’t know any better, you’d say he was extremely excited about the entire thing.

“Alright, love. Just teasing,” he kisses your forehead. “How about you pick the name if it’s a lass and
I pick it if it’s a lad?”

“Isn’t that a tad outdated?”

“You’d rather I pick the lass’ name? The only one I could really think of would be me mum’s but it’s a tad ironic given the circumstances.”

“Yeah I suppose the next Jesus doesn’t need to be called Mary,” you snort. “But no bog standard Brit names, okay? Can’t be having Barry the Messiah.”

“Salt of the earth that,” John laughs. “But I get you. You wanna name the lass after your mum or Roxy?”

“My mum. I think Alice Constantine sounds better,” you mull it over.

“Aye, it does,” John nods, taking a covert drag of his cigarette. “Little Alice, eh? I like that. Alice the Messiah, making their own Wonderland.”

“Never thought of it like that,” you laugh. “And what if it’s a boy?”

“I’m not even sure if you’ll like any of me suggestions,” John answers shyly. “I’m a pretty old bloke remember. I don’t go in for trendy names like Finn or Ollie or whatever.”

“Just run them by me,” you settled into his shoulder more. “I mean…you’re not thinking of Reginald or something are you?”

“Behave,” John bops you on the nose. “I mean stuff like Benjamin, William, Samuel heck, even Alfred.”

“I think our Alfred would explode with happiness if we chose that,” you grin.


“That would be the most British second coming of Jesus ever,” you laugh. “I love it. And what better role model to have than Alfred? He’s patient, kind, gentle and just so inherently good.”

“Aye. I agree with that wholeheartedly, bit. Christ, we do like a lot of ‘A’ names, don’t we?” John remarks. “So, settled then. Alice and Alfie. I’m just happy with that.”

“Settled,” you nod, turning your face to catch his beaming expression. “You’re just made up aren’t you?”

“Love, you have no idea,” John smiles so the corners of his eyes crinkle. “I thought this would scare the bollocks of me, impending fatherhood that is, but I’m just… I can’t wait. Even though I know the shitstorm is coming, I’m excited.”

“You’ve gotten incredibly soppy the last few months, you know that?” you tease.

“Your fault,” he ruffles your hair. “This gorgeous bird that’s giving me everything I’ve ever wanted in life. What a bloody nightmare for sure.”

“Sarcastic prick.”

“You love it,” he kisses your cheek, before letting his hand rest over your stomach again. “You should get some rest, bit. I’ve got some errands to run through portalling and whatnot so make sure
“Bossing me around now?” you quirk up your eyebrow.

“If I was gonna boss you around, I’d tell you to take those clothes off so I can bury me face between your legs but you look too comfy for shenanigans.”

“Kinda,” you admit. “Although I’m rainchecking that for later.”

“You’re certainly welcome to,” John winks before laying you back down in the bed and kissing you softly. “Now sleep.”

You could swear he deliberately used a spell because the feeling of weariness intensified just a little and you just lazily nodded at him before curling up in the sheets and drifting off.

**

You stirred and then your brain went into overdrive.

You could swear you heard many many voices outside and instantly you were on edge. Had someone gotten in? Was this the part where someone tried to take you and the baby?

Chas quickly enters the bedroom dressed in a suit with his unruly hair tamed back for once and now you’re completely baffled.

“What’s going on?” you ask. “Is there a party I should know about?”

“Uh yeah actually,” Chas fiddles with his suit buttons nervously. “Your wedding.”

You thought you’d misheard him for a second or that it was a joke but no grin appeared on his face and he certainly wasn’t yelling ’gotcha!’.

“My wedding?” you stammer.

“John wanted to give you something nice considering all the shit that’s going on, and yeah he told me about the Jesus thing. So he got everyone here today so he could marry you.”

“But…how?!” you blurt out. “We’ve been in here for three months now. How has he prepped this?”

“Oh he’s determined when he puts his mind to it,” Chas snorts. “Trust me, you’ll see soon enough.”

“I don’t even have a dress that’ll be worth his effort,” you bite your lip self-consciously.

“Look under the bed,” Chas motions. “You sleep pretty soundly, you know? Didn’t even hear us put it there.”

In utter confusion, you looked under the bed and found a tailoring suit bag which you dragged out and lay on the mattress before unzipping it and gasping at the contents. You pulled out a replica of Grace Kelly’s wedding dress, albeit with less satin and no veil.
“He knows you like the vintage stuff so he kinda thought you may like it. I’ve never seen him so anxious about fashion before,” Chas explains.

Sometimes you thought John didn’t listen or absorb information about you but all of that train of thought vanished in an instant as you realised he knew you better than realised.

“It’s perfect,” you have to hold back the lump in your throat. “I…I’m really impressed.”

“He can get it right occasionally,” Chas smirks. “So you get dressed now. If you like, I can walk you to the ceremony area. I know…I know your family isn’t…”

“Please,” the word comes out a little more vulnerable than you meant it to.

“Alright. I’ll just go tell everyone we’ll start soon. I’ll be back in a little bit.”

As Chas leaves, you do your damnedest not to cry. This was completely overwhelming but in a good sense.

You pull the dress on and note how perfectly it fits you. You suspect Lucifer may have had a hand in the tailoring given the exactly matching measurements.

*I really wasn’t expecting this. I was wholly ready for my morning toast.*

It’s almost like you went into automatic mode as you made your hair elegant, your make up glamorous and added your own personal flair by winding a decorative flower into your hair.

“How are we doing?” Chas asks from the other side of the door.

“I think…I think I’m good?” you manage to spit out.

Chas enters and stills at the sight of you.

“How are we doing?” you ask. “Shit, I’m so out of my depth here.”

“You’re beautiful,” Chas reassures you. “There is absolutely nothing to worry about. John will be trying to get his leg over the moment he sees you.”

You end up laughing at that which deflates some of the building tension in your body.

“Seriously though, he’ll go into a jealous rage with all the guests that will be staring at you,” Chas grins. “So good luck with that.”

“I can handle it,” you wink.

“I don’t wanna know,” Chas rolls his eyes before offering his arm to you. “Shall we?”

“Chas, I’m really fucking terrified right now,” you admit. “This is all just….I didn’t expect this…..and are there a lot of people here?”

“Calm down,” Chas places his hands on your shoulders. “This is nothing to do with any other person here. This day is all about you and John and committing yourself in a nice and normal way that doesn’t involve soul dissection.”

“Okay, okay,” you take a deep breath. “Let’s do this.”
You were surprised to see no one in the living room when you came out. Chas just lead you up the stairs and onto the secret stairway John had installed to the roof.

Now the voices were getting louder and after Chas let out a giant ‘ahem!’ some folks went quiet. Not all though and you heard John’s brash Scouse accent cut across the din.

“Oi! Pipe down you lot! Me missus is just about to come out and I want a good look at her.”

That caused a ripple of laughter before everyone fell silent and then the nerves really kicked in for you. When you got to the top of the stairs your mouth almost dropped open.

Rows of seats had been erected on the roof and the entire place with decorated with fairy lights and flowers. At the end of the mini gangway, a dais with an arch of vines and wisteria housed John who was fidgeting with his hands whilst turned around.

Lucifer had obviously worked his magic there too because that pair of tuxedo trousers John was wearing were criminally tight around the right areas.

Speaking of the archangel, he was front and centre on the first row, mouthing ‘wonderful’ at you. In fact, as you went down the row with Chas you saw the Chandler family, Lucifer and Mazikeen, Amenadiel, Bruce and Selina, Alfred, Zatanna, Dick Grayson, Sweeney, Rich with a much older Syder and a woman you assumed to be his wife and at the top of the row…

“Valentine,” you smile.

Your lifelong friend gives you a shy smile and a wink before whispering to you as you came past, “Worth risking my hide for since you’ve done it for me so many times.”

You finally reach John who still doesn’t turn around like a true traditionalist as Chas leaves your side and to your surprise, stands in the archway between you two.

“Now I’m pulling double duty here as officiate and best man so bear with me,” he announces to everyone with a wry grin. “And you can look at her now, mate.”

You see John turn and the instant sheen of tears as he tries his best not to let them out.

“Bloody fucking gorgeous,” he manages to say through his radiant smile.

“You clean up well yourself,” you murmur back and he just lightly nudges your arm.

“Why is today so special and why here of all places?” Chas begins. “Some of you know, some of you don’t. Star is pregnant and the child has been chosen by God to be the next Messiah.”

That sets off a lot of hushed whispering and a brash snort from Sweeney.

“Good to know you’re fertile, lasslin’,” he wiggles his ginger eyebrows.

You can see John wants to make some possessive comment but he restrains himself.

“Because all the forces of Hell and every supernatural being will want to prevent this kid from being born, John and Star have had to stay here within the wards. It’s not what either of them were expecting but they still wanted you all to share in their day. Go on then, John.”
“Right right,” John fiddles with the inside of his tux, producing a ring box and giving it to Chas. “Made up some vows if that’s alright, lass. I know this was all sprung on you last second, like, but I’m hoping this makes up for it.”

Chas opens the box and hands John a silver band which he slips on your finger, “Star, I can never express how properly I love you. I was a broken man when we first met. I was crude, I was selfish, I had no regard for human life and no regard for anyone’s feelings but me own. You changed me into a man I can be proud of. I knew you were the one for me pretty quickly if I’m honest. We’ve had some ups and a lot of horribly traumatic downs but you’ve never given up on me and you’ve always seen the good in me. I hope I can make you happy for the rest of our lives and I can’t wait to have our little family.”

The collective ‘aww’ that runs through the crowd makes a tear spill down your cheek and John instantly wipes it away, smiling at you with complete adoration. A loud sob catches your attention and you look round quickly to see Renee in absolute floods of tears.

“I knew he could be decent. I just knew it,” she mutters to Geri.

You take the ring offered by Chas and slip it on John’s finger.

“Well I’m not quite sure how to top that,” you laugh. “Just to say thank you. Thank you for taking me on this wonderful journey with you and being with me every step of the way. Even if the path ahead is terrifying, I know we’ll make it through because you’re the bravest man I’ve ever known and I adore you.”

“Fuck,” John breathes, dabbing at his eyes. “Oh god, bit. Why do you make me so bloody emotional? I swear I’m more composed than this.”

“You never were, that was just bullshit bravado,” Chas snorts. “Anyway, I’m supposed to read this very long and boring admin as an ordained minister but I’ll skip to the end and the bit that everyone actually wants to hear which is….by the powers vested in me by some random Google search at 2am, I now pronounce you…The Constantines.”

John’s arm snakes around your waist and he dips you like an old school musical, kissing you passionately to cheers and whoops. As he brings you back up, he flicks his hand and petals start raining from the air.

“There are some perks to being a magus,” he grins.

“Now if everyone would like to stand up?” Chas asks and there’s the rustle of seats.

“Watch this, love,” John winks before making a complicated motion with his hands and all the seats turn into tables with food springing up all along them.

“Fuck me!” you hear Sweeney cry. “Fresh cream!”

“You’re spoiling him,” you squeeze John’s arm.

“It’s a happy day. Let’s have everyone being happy,” John beams at you.

As you all settle down, it’s almost strange how relaxed the entire atmosphere is. People you didn’t expect to be getting on with each other are all chatting merrily away. You look around just content to see the gathering of people you had started to call friends.

From the corner of your eye, behind one of the extractor fan units, you see Papa Midnite just give
you the barest wave before putting his hand to his lips in a 'shush' motion and conjuring the words 'Congratulations’ before vanishing. Maybe you should have brought that up with John but Midnite didn’t seem like he was here to spoil the party.

“Oh my god, I’m sooooo sorry we’re late!” comes a voice you’ve not heard for a long time.

“Death?!?” you whirl around to see the pale girl practically hopping on the spot alongside her brother Dream.

“Bloody hell,” John laughs. “Never thought you’d accept me invite.”

“Are you kidding?!” Death squeals. “Human bonding ceremonies are so adorable! Plus Star’s my friend.”

“Sister, do not make a scene of yourself,” Dream sighs. “Let us sit in the assigned seats and enjoy the mortal festivities.”

“Oh wow!” Death screams. “CUPCAKES!”

That was it, she shot off towards the table and hungrily began devouring the tiny cupcakes in the centre of the spread.

You catch Bruce looking at you bizarrely and get up, walking over and leaning on the table.

“That’s Death in case you were wondering.”

“I’m sorry?” Bruce blinks.

“As in actual Death, the Grim Reaper or whatever.”

“That actually exists?!”

You’d never seen Bruce so rattled before and Selina was obviously loving it, evident by the large smirk on her face.

“Oh and that’s her brother, Dream. He creates your night time adventures,” you add. “They’re some of the oldest beings in the universe. Make sure you’re respectful and for god’s sake don’t try and study them.”

“I’ll keep him in line,” Selina winks.

“You saw the voodoo priest hanging around by the way?” Zatanna asks, keeping a wary eye on the edge of the roof.

“Yeah I’ve clocked him,” you nod. “I don’t think he’s here to cause harm. More that he’s curious.”

“I’ll keep an eye on him for you,” Zatanna says firmly.

“Thank you,” you smile. “And thanks for being so…I don’t know….gracious?”

“John and I were over a long time ago,” Zatanna shakes her head. “You’ve definitely done him more good than I ever could. He’s almost a human being now.”

Both of you burst into giggles and she places her hand on yours and squeezes.

“Seriously though, you’re a good woman and you’re scarily good at magic for a novice. I can respect
that. I’ll keep you and your baby safe, don’t worry.”

“Thank you,” you repeat again and she just gives you an enigmatic smile that you think is quite beautiful.

“Oi, Mrs Constantine!” John calls from the top table. “Get up here, I got one more surprise!”

“Such charm and grace,” you sigh to Zatanna who almost chokes on her champagne.

You wander back up to John who kisses you long and hard.

“Missed you,” he murmurs against you.

“Only been gone five minutes,” you laugh.

“Too long. Don’t like it,” John pouts. “Anyways, see this cake here?”

You look at the two tier cake with its sprawling intricate brocade design.

“Yep, I see it,” you nod.

“I did some more spellwork and oh you wouldn’t bloody believe the research I had to do for this, so I linked the colouring of the sponge inside to the gender energy our kid is putting out.”

“I’m sorry, what?” you say in confusion. “Are you making this up right now? Sounds like bollocks.”

“No lass, it’s real,” John assures you. “Basically, I modified about five spells to make this like a gender reveal cake. That’s what modern couples do right? Well the internet told me they did. Shit, is that not a thing?”

“Yes it is,” you reassure him, kissing him softly. “And you want to know what we’re having?”

“Aye, I do,” John nods. “Feels a bit more…I don’t know, real then?”

“Okay, then we’ll find out,” you smile. “Together.”

“Always together, love,” John rubs his nose against yours. “Excuse me everyone. Button it now. So because this is me wedding, I get to be a bit self indulgent, like. So in this cake is the gender of our baby and I suppose your new Messiah. Now Star and I have already picked names for each possibility so we’ll tell you that too.”

“Please tell me the boy’s name is Brian,” Chas heckles.

“Think you’re being right funny?” John mock frowns. “See what happens when I ask me kid to bless you in the future.”

“I’ll just tell him he’s a naughty boy,” Chas snorts and Renee duffs him round the head with her handbag.

“Francis!” she scolds. “John is trying to be a mature adult here and so help me God I want to watch every minute of it.”

“Show us the gender!” Death giggles, bouncing on the chair excitedly. “I love new life!”

“Alright, here it goes then,” John picks up a knife and gets you to hold it with him before cutting a large chunk of a tier out and pulling it away.
It was blue inside.

You were going to have a boy.

"Yay Brian!" Chas laughs and Renee practically strangles him much to the amusement of Geri.

Some clapping later, John seems in shock still and you rest a hand on his shoulder.

"Are you okay?" you ask concerned.

As you turn him round, you see his cheeks covered in tears.

"I'm gonna have a boy," he mouths out. "A son. Holy fuck this is real. I'm gonna have my stunning wife and beautiful son."

"He's not been born yet," you grin at him.

"He's half your kid. He's gonna be a heartbreaker," John smiles.

"So what's the name of our Lord and Saviour?" Bruce asks.

John hurriedly wipes his eyes before turning back round to announce to the party.

"Star and I had a long decision where she vehemently decided against Moon Unit and instead we chose…Alfred."

If ever there was a sight to break your heart, it was the Wayne family butler completely breaking down into tears whilst Bruce tried to console him with a handkerchief.

"We can honestly think of no one better to model the second coming of Christ off of than someone who’s been so intrinsically good and kind to everyone they've met," John continues. "And if me son is half the man you are, Alf, I'll be bloody proud."

"In all the years I've known you, John," Alfred sniffs. "I can honestly say you’re a good man. I'm honoured you've chosen my name and I shall endeavour to protect little Alfred with my life when he arrives in this world."

"And me," Chas stands up.

"And me," Rich stands up. "Don’t fucking know about this mysticism bollocks but you’ve protected my kid for years, John. Gonna do the same with yours."

"And I suppose I shall protect the child as well," Lucifer sighs, standing up. "Even though I detest the little creatures. Maze will naturally follow and Amenadiel always does the right thing."

"Even though yer choice in men is fuckin’ deplorable," Sweeney stands up. "I ain’t lettin’ evil shite get to yer litt'l'un. I’ll even bestow them the gift a’ luck."

The entire wedding party stood up and declared their intention to safeguard your child prompting you and John to squeeze each other’s hand so hard to stop yourselves from crying further.

"To John, Star and little Alfie," Chas toasts, holding up a champagne flute.

"To John, Star and little Alfie," the party chorused back.

"Fuck me, never cried this much in me life," John laughs, dabbing at his face again.
“Not even at your last wedding?” you tease.

“Ooo you bad girl,” John inhales through his teeth. “Just you wait until later.”

“Get down!” Maze yells just as a plume of Hellfire hits the warding shield and blossoms across the protective barrier.

“Shit!” John cries, pushing you behind him. “No no NO! Why now?! Why fucking now?!”

BOOM!

The entire building shook as dark magic radiated across the forcefield, looking for any weaknesses.

“If you’re all bloody serious about protecting me kid I suggest you get ready for a fight,” John calls to the wedding congregation and all of your friends jump up immediately. “They’re coming for her. They’re trying to either kill her or take control of Alfie when he’s born. Please don’t let that happen.”

He runs to Chas and whispers in his ear and you watch as Chas darts down into the warehouse whilst the bombardment continues to happen. Minutes later he returns with a camping rucksack, throwing it at John.

“Contingency plan,” John explains. “There’s clothes, food and water in there as well as toiletries. Medication too.”

“I don’t understand,” you plead, frightened out of your mind.

“Time for Plan D,” John shouts to Dream and Death who move with a speed and grace that freaks you out a little. “No protests, no bloody arguments. You’re going with them. They’ll hide you from this plain.”

“What, for how long?!” you cry.

“Until our baby arrives,” John grits his jaw.

“You want me to disappear for six months?!”

“I want you to be safe,” John cups your face fiercely. “I want our family to be safe. Go in the warehouse and they’ll take you somewhere that not even I know.”

“And you’ll do what exactly?!” you start shaking.

“Keep them distracted as long as I can,” he fakes a laugh. “What I’m best at, right? The more time I can buy you, the better.”

“No! I’m not going anywhere without you!” you protest.

John pulls you into the most desperate kiss you’ve ever had, “If we go together they’ll hunt us across dimensions. This way, I can maintain the illusion you’re still here.”

“John what if you….what if….I can’t do this alone!” you beg. “If you die, we all die.”

“Not if I do this,” John smiles sadly and produces a blade. “Raphael gave it to me in case of emergencies and I think this is a pretty bloody big one.”

“What is it?”
“It’s an angelic ritual athame. If we touch our tatts together and use this, it’ll sever the soul link. I won’t be able to give your location away if tortured and if I die….if I die, you’ll still live on, the both of you.”

“No please!” you shout.


“NO!” you struggle against the archangel.”Please don’t abandon us!”

John winces, tears spilling down his face for a very different reason as he touches your chains together and gives you one last kiss where you can feel every ounce of his love for you before you see the shining ethereal links binding you. He brings down the blade and shatters the connection and you feel nothing.

“I’ll get her inside,” Lucifer nods to John.

“John! JOHN!” you call over and over as you’re dragged away and you see John completely break down and lose it as he watches you go. “JOHN!”

Lucifer holds you tightly whilst Death and Dream crowd you.

“Child, you need to come with us,” Dream says sternly. “Now.”

“Star, we’re here to protect you,” Death adds. “We’re not supposed to get involved in the mortal world this much but you’re so important to the future. John begged us to keep you safe and we will. Now let’s go.”

They both hold your wrists and Lucifer leaves one final kiss on the top of your head.

“Good luck, Star,” he says seriously. “I’ll do my damnedest to keep John alive. You have my word on that.”

“Don’t let him, die,” you sob. “Please, he’s all I have.”

Lucifer gives you the most determined look before nodding and leaving to help the fight upstairs.

“Let’s go Star,” Death prompts and the world around you fades to distant nebulas.

Chapter End Notes

I’m so sorry
John watched you be physically dragged away by Lucifer and he fought against every instinct he had not to reach out for you.

The severing of the soul merge had completely shaken him. He was used to knowing your mood, he was used to knowing where you were. Now there was nothing. Your souls were still mingled but the threads of angelic magic between them were broken.

“JOHN!” you screamed at the top of your lungs and his heart physically hurt.

Tears began uncontrollably tracking down his face and he could hardly breathe as heavy sobs wracked his chest. Chas could barely keep him composed as his lifelong best friend held him tightly, keeping him upright as John’s legs gave out.

“You did the right thing. You did the right thing,” Chas kept murmuring over and over.

Chas grabs him by the face forcing him to look up. “Time to focus John. Stick to the plan. Star and the baby are safe. You need to get a grip now and do what you said you would, otherwise none of this is worth it.”

John wipes his face with his tuxedo sleeve, “You’re right. You’re right. None of this will bloody matter if I can’t keep them safe. I’ll set up the portals. Get the non magic folk out of here, Chas.”

Another volley of hellfire blasted at the forcefield, skittering across the dome. John could see several of the ordinary human guests panicking but at least the Gotham crew were calming them down.

John concentrated on making the portal to the neutral zone, the pre-agreed place where Bruce would keep everyone safe, where no one could kidnap and torture his friends to draw John out.

“Go go go!” he yells, struggling to keep the bloody thing going.

Chas herded the wedding guests through with great haste, pushing some through even, until only those able to defend against magical forces were left.

“You too Bruce,” John grits his teeth, the strain of keeping the portal open really getting to him.

“I’m not leaving you,” Bruce says firmly. “I can help.”

“Help me by keeping everyone safe,” John retorts. “Please Bruce.”

“Alright,” the billionaire says solemnly. “Zee, keep him alive.”

Zatanna just nods, not breaking her backwards spell chant to fortify the barrier as Bruce passes through the portal and John finally lets it fizzle out, the sweat soaking his wedding suit.

“All together now!” he roars, going to the edge of the roof where he looks down and his heart drops through the floor.

So many enemies. I’ve made so many enemies in my life. Fucking hell….

**

Days turned to weeks and still the siege continued.

Long had been the day where he’d sent more and more of the wedding party to the neutral zone, their magic spent, their bodies burned out. Still he kept the vigil.

It was a monotonous cycle of restrengthening the wards all day only to pass out in the early morning and wake to redo them all again.

More and more of his enemies showed up every day. He could see through the CCTV the graffiti they carved into the tarmac outside, the insults, the threats. His little sign of ‘The Constantines’ was burned right in front of the damn camera.

Bloody fucking bastards.

He occasionally made new portals for Chas to check up on him, bring him food and water, new packs of cigarettes. Honestly he was the only lifeline John had right now.
About a week ago, Chas had brought him something, a giant framed photo of your wedding, you and John cutting your cake and the sheer surprise and happiness on your faces.

“Thought it might help,” Chas had said before disappearing again.

It did.

It helped immensely.

When John was feeling like he couldn’t go on any more, that the pain of being apart from you was too great, when he wanted to give up, he would stare at the picture and it would put things in perspective. He was fighting for you. He was fighting for his family and he would never give in.

*Is that the best you’ve got, you fucking wankers?*

**

“I can’t bear this much longer,” you admitted to Death as you watched John through the scrying mirror. “It hurts so much to be away.”

“I know it does but you need to let him do this,” Death says softly, resting her chin on your shoulder. “He’s fighting for the whole world to find peace. I’d say he was pretty brave.”

“He’s always been brave,” you smile fondly, watching him do spellwork on the sigils. “And horrendously stupid.”

“But you love him despite that right?” Death asks.

“Of course I do,” you nod, leaning your head on hers. “I just miss him.”

“I know, I know,” Death sighs, rubbing your stomach which was now showing a fair bit. “But it’ll be worth it once he’s born.”

“John’s missing so much though,” you start crying.

The damn hormones were messing everything up and your usual snarky persona was being replaced with an overemotional wreck.

“I just want him to feel this bump,” you continue. “And when the baby starts kicking….he’s missing his own child growing.”

Dream sits down at the side of you, one hand petting your hair, “Little one, you know this had to be. This is your sacrifice to ensure a future in which evil does not win. It is a small price to pay in the grand scheme of God’s plan.”

“Fuck God’s plan,” you spit. “Fuck everything. This was never fair. I didn’t ask for this responsibility.”

Dream places a cool hand under your jaw so you can look into his swirling galaxies of eyes, “And yet it has fallen to you. I can think of no one better to bear this challenge, Star. Shall I make you sleep again if you are too distressed?”

You’d been asking Dream to help you nap most of your days away, too distraught to even stay
awake, hating every second of being conscious when it meant all you could do was look at John from afar.

“Not today,” you shake your head. “Can you make me a children’s park please? I’d like to do some swinging.”

“Of course, my child,” Dream nods courteously and waves his hand, helping you up off the floor and conjuring the swing set for you.

Death leads you over, settling you before sitting on the swing next to you, kicking a little.

“You are about five months along?” Dream asks, checking out your body as you sit there.

“Six,” you correct him. “Oh god, I’ve been away from John for three months….”

“Don’t think about it,” Death squeezes your leg. “You’re halfway through. You’re doing great.”

“Three months,” you kept repeating to yourself.

“Star,” Dream sighs but you cut him off, getting up.

“I need some alone time,” you mumble, walking off in any direction.

It doesn’t matter where you go particularly, the House will always bring you back to the two Endless in the end. You could never get very far. Dream was the master of the House now and it obeyed his bidding.

“Take me somewhere so I don’t have to feel so sad,” you implore the walls, running your hands almost like a caress along the wallpaper. “Please, I can’t take this much more. I miss John.”

A door opens to your left and you say your thanks before stepping through, imagining it would take you to a nice luscious plain where you could just relax for a while but you never expected this…

**

John was weary. He was beyond weary. The exhaustion was creeping into his bones and there was only so many cups of coffee he could safely drink.

If he thought the Family Man stalking him was bad, this was a thousand times worse. Without the soul merge to give him extra strength, this consistent ward fortifying was wearing him out quicker than he could’ve anticipated.

He gathered the bed clothes, of which he’d pulled the bed into the living room and surrounded it in clothes that had your scent on them. He gathered the bed clothes and wrapped himself in them, cocooning his body as he lay down, his designated sleep time now upon him.

He gave one last look to your beaming face on his framed picture as he drifted off.

God he couldn’t even remember what it felt like to touch your skin, how your hair smelled, how it felt to bury himself deep in your body as you clutched him desperately.
I fucking miss you, Star. I wonder how you’re doing. I hope you’re safe. I hope our boy is safe. I love you.

Then he drifted off.

He drifted off and he could swear he felt warmth behind him in the bed. An arm crooked over his waist as someone pressed themselves into his back, spooning him.

“Lucifer, I swear to your father if that’s you, I’ll cut up all your ties,” he mumbles, not sure if he’s awake or asleep.

“And what will you do to my clothes?” comes your familiar sarcastic remark. “Other than decorating the living room with them?”

“Oh I definitely have to be dreaming,” John smiles to himself. “Hello love.”

He turns over to see you behind him, skin radiant, eyes aglow with adoration and a full and rounded belly. You look so beautiful he might have forgotten to breathe for a second. Instinctively he places his hand on your stomach, feeling the swell.

“You’re so warm,” he remarks. “How can I be dreaming that detail?”

“I have no idea,” you answer. “Just savour it. I’ve missed you so much.”

“Oh I’ve missed you too, lass,” he whispers in earnest, cuddling into you, making sure your bump is between the both of you before peppering you with kisses.

He finds it strange the experience is so tactile. He can sense the warmth from your mouth, the breath from your fervent kisses, the smell of fruit from your skin.

“Wait…” he trails off, pulling away. “Fuck, this is not a dream is it?”

He pinches himself and discovers it hurts, then he attempts a spell where he knows he will feel the magic running through him.

“How the bloody hell are you here?!” he cries, sitting upright. “I told you to stay away! I told you to be safe!”

“I just ended up here,” you say sheepishly. “I didn’t mean to.”

“Ahh fuck,” John swears. “You were in the House of Mystery, weren’t you? It sensed where you wanted to go.”

“Yeah,” you admit. “So…you’re not happy to see me?”

“Oh don’t twist me words, bit,” John sighs. “I’m sodding ecstatic. I’ve missed you like crazy but you need to go. If they sense you’re in here they’ll try harder and I’m struggling as it is. I can’t keep up if they strengthen their ranks.”

“I’m sorry,” you started silently crying. “I didn’t mean….I just-”

“Oh love,” John bundles you in his arms. “I fucking hate this. Day after day without you here, missing out on so much, a cold bloody bed every night.”

You dragged him by the top of his t-shirt towards you, kissing him furiously and he could feel how much you felt for him in that moment.
“I want to keep you here. I want you here with me. This isn’t fucking fair.”

“Just be with me for five minutes, please,” you plead. “For five minutes let’s pretend nothing’s happening and that we’re just two married people in bed.”

Would such a short space of time hurt? Probably not.

“Alright, Star, alright,” John caves in, his desire to hold you winning out over common sense.

“Come ’ere.”

He lays down on his side facing you whilst you do the same and you just touch foreheads together. In that moment, John felt nothing but peace. This was completely right.

“John?” you ask.

“Mmm?”

“If I’m not gonna see you again for another three months…..”

You tugged at the waistband of his jogging bottoms, suggestive mischief in your eyes.

“Are you actually serious?” John raises an eyebrow. “The hordes of evil, wizards, the king of vampires and the Hellfire club are all outside and you wanna shag right now?”

“Yeah,” you say boldly. “Why would I not wanna be intimate with you if I’m gonna be banished for another three months? This has been torture.”

“Aye it has, love,” John kisses your forehead. “Bloody hell you are something. Sure little Alfie’s gonna be okay?”

“You can have sex whilst pregnant John,” you smirk.

“I know, I know,” he blushes awkwardly. “I knew that.”

You quickly stripped and John got a look at your body for the first time in ages. Seeing you so heavy with his kid made him ridiculously proud for some reason.

“Come on then,” you challenge, tugging his jogging bottoms off. “You said we didn’t have much time.”

“God you are right bossy,” he laughs. “I’ve missed that.”

He shucks out of all of his clothing before coming to his next problem. He didn’t want to roll on top of you in case he hurt the baby. He also didn’t want you to lie on your stomach for the same reason.

He settled for hiking your leg over him in your side on position with his fingers trailing over your already slick folds.

“Mmm you’re always so eager for ol’ Johnny, aren’t you?” he chuckles to himself.

“Christ, just fuck me John,” you beg. “Please. I need you.”

As he sank his length into you, slowly pushing so you could adjust, his mind completely shut off from the danger. This was comforting, familiar even. This was home for him, being deep inside you, connected. Oh how he’d missed you.
Your hands found their way onto him, one cupping his face, the other clinging to his bicep as you brought him to you, kissing him hard as he lazily thrust into you, not caring about the time limit any more. This was all that mattered.

“Fucking hell I’ve missed those little noises you make for me, bit,” John groans, hooking one arm under your leg to pull it up higher, changing his angle so he can drive even harder. “Make some more for me.”

And that you did. Your little cries and soft whimpers, that half escaped moan as he hit a particular spot. You started keening uncontrollably when John started making circles around your clit with his well practised fingers.

“Come on, lass,” John pants, keeping his rhythm steady. “Let go for me. I wanna see your pretty face when you let go.”

You didn’t hesitate to hold back as you came hard around him, fingers digging into his skin and he could feel you pulse around him. Oh fucking hell was it divine!

He didn’t last too much longer. Normally he would’ve been embarrassed but then again, he’d not had sex in a very long time.

“Guess we’ve finally consummated our marriage, love,” he laughs as he kisses you earnestly before trying to regain his breath.

He lovingly places one hand over your stomach, trying to memorise the form before he’d have to send you away again. As he delicately traces over it, he feels movement and he stills completely before placing his palm flat against you.

“Was that-” he starts.

“I think he kicked,” you remark, looking down at yourself.

“Has he done that before?” John asks.

“Never. First time actually and-” you start but you stop as John feels another movement stirring beneath the skin.

“You mean I got to experience the first time?” he starts welling up with tears. “Me little lad is moving for the first time and I actually….fucking hell.”

You kissed any part of him you could, trying to calm him down.

“Shhh, it’s alright,” you stroke his unruly hair back. “I’m just happy you got to experience something. I kept saying to Death and Dream that is was unfair you were missing out.”

“I know I were angry you got here, lass but I really have bloody missed you,” John whispers, the lump in his throat strangling his words slightly. “And me little boy, he’s doing alright.”

“Our little Alfred,” you placed your hand over his.

“I don’t want you to go again,” John says, not caring how pathetic he sounded.

“I don’t want to go either,” you admit.

“But you have to, love,” John steels himself. “Just three more months. We can do this.”
He holds you to him tightly before his eyes fall over you shoulder to the monitors on the bar unit. His heart clutched in his chest to see the words carved into the tarmac now.

**WE KNOW SHE’S IN THERE. WE WILL TAKE HER AND YOUR CHILD.**

“Bloody fucking hell, you need to go,” John panics, scrambling up and into some clothes. “They know. They’ll be coming any second with reinforcements.”

“Fuck,” you swear, wrestling with your maternity clothing. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry I didn’t mean to spoil everything.”

“It’s alright, it’ll be alright,” John says hurriedly, making a portal. “This will take you back to the House of Mystery. Hurry, Star, I can’t keep it open for long. The House is temperamental, remember?”

You snaked under his shaking arms, giving him such a desperate kiss before stroking his cheek.

“I’ll be back,” you say fiercely. “We’ll both be back. Hang in for us.”

“Will try to, bit,” John smiles sadly. “Now get your pretty arse out of here.”

“I love you,” you whisper as you go.

“I love you both,” he replies, straining to keep the portal open until you finally step through it and he lets the spell fizzle out, just as the door to the warehouse buckles under a great impact.

“Strewth!” he jumps, running to the monitors and seeing a barrage of demons lead by the First and Myrrdin at the door.

He didn’t know if he had the strength to maintain the last failing wards. He could see the light from the symbols flickering out.

“Shit shit shit!” he hisses, physically trying to barricade the entrance with the new sofa whilst propping up the sigils.

Another thud and the top hinge broke away completely. He could hear the screeching from the other side and his fear level rose.

This was it. He was done for.

There was no way he was going to survive an onslaught this large.

He just did the only thing he could think of. He readied himself, prepping dark arts magic and waiting and waiting.

The door finally gave way and demons spilled in, circling him as the First just casually saunters in, stomping all over the remains of the steel door until his tarred feet touch down on the carpet.

“Sterling effort, Constantine,” he grins, showing his razored smile. “Bad luck though that she came back. I hope you enjoyed your last tryst with her. Now you’ll tell us where she is.”

“Sod the fuckin’ lot of ya,” John spat. “Have a taste a’ this you twats.”

He let loose the bolt of dark magic which directly hit Myddin behind the First and he roared in pain, his right arm completely melting away.
“Good shot,” the First chuckles before walking forward. “Boys, hold him.”

Many demons dove on John. He fought as best as he could but it was no use. He was overwhelmed. Demons pinned him to the floor where he continued struggling and throwing vicious insults.

The First straddles John’s body, squatting down and putting a long taloned claw underneath his chin.

“How…tell me where she is,” the First demands. “Or I’ll find all your little friends and slaughter them all.”

“Get fucking bent you ugly bastard,” John curses.

“Oh wrong answer Constantine, wrong answer,” the First practically beams with glee. “Let’s see how long it takes to break you in my dominion.”

“Bring it on,” John growls.

“Gladly.”

The claw turns into an iron grip on his neck and John feels the floor give out underneath him as the First squeezes around his throat. He feels the rush of air as they both fall and it becomes warmer and warmer until it’s unbearable.

Finally there’s an impact as the First hits solid ground and John’s neck almost snaps as he comes to a sudden halt, still firmly held by the demon’s claws.

“Welcome back to where you belong, Constantine,” the First chuckles.

He’d gotten himself out of worse scrapes, he supposed. In the grand scheme of things, getting dragged to Hell was worth it just to see you again for even half an hour.

*Keep our lad safe, lass. I’ll hold out as long as I can for you.*
A Father's Determination

Chapter Summary

John’s trapped in Hell and you’re near your due date with all of the evil beings in creation after you.

Chapter Notes

This has been a year of writing this fic. It’s practically been my baby for that amount of time. I’m really sad to end it but I don’t want the fic to overstay its welcome. It’s helped me through some very tough times and thanks to everyone who’s been on this journey with me. I’ll include some artwork at the bottom that I’ve done. I’m gonna miss John and Star.
(As always, may be errors, publishing this at like 1:30am)
Crying in the corner,
- TLP xx

“Take me back!” you rage against Dream who’s trying to restrain you.

You saw exactly what had happened in the mirror and it was now even showing John in Hell with the First.

“I can’t. You know I can’t, child,” Dream says firmly.

“I gotta help him! Fucking let me go!” you squirm desperately.

“Little bro, just make her sleep!” Death says in a panic.

“Don’t you dare!” you snarl. “Don’t you sodding dare!”

“Sleep,” Dream commands, sprinkling dust over your head. “Child of stars, mother of our saviour. Sleep.”
You spit out the most vile comments before you were being handled into a soft four poster bed. All you could think of though was John dangling in the air whilst the First was crushing his throat.

*Come back to me, John. We need you.*

Then all you knew was dreams.

**

“It would be so easy to snap your neck right now,” the First chuckles as John starts to turn red in the face from the vice grip.

“Fuckin’ doing it, you bloody coward,” John rasps.

“It’s too easy, John,” the First sighs, watching John kick and squirm. “You’ve been a thorn in my side for nigh on forty years now. It’s ignominious.”

“Jesus fucking Christ,” John rolls his eyes as best as he can. “You’re a sodding Bond villain. All monologue and postulating.”

“You insolent little shit!” The First roars, throwing John hard against a rock where he feels one of his wrists break.

“Cheers for the headstart, mate,” John grins through the pain. “You’re always so easy to play off.”

Ignoring the crunching sensation he felt when he rotated his arm, he made a portal before rushing through it up to the first level of Hell. Once he exited the other side, he could hear the First’s bellowing from the very bottom of Hell.

“FIND HIM! FIND CONSTANTINE!”

Oh the First. Always undone by his need to be dramatic. John could always count on his incessant desire to want to make John suffer before killing him.

Thousands and thousands of hands shot through the dusty floor, clawing, seeking.

*Time to get the fuck out.*

He knew exactly where he was heading. He could see the Tower of Souls looming into the swirling mass of angry red clouds. He just had to be quick enough to get there.

He began running, cursing how often he smoked as his lungs burned with the effort. He had a strong purpose in mind though. John needed to get back to you. The longer he spent in Hell, the more time passed in other realms and it could already be one month since he’d seen you.

The closer your due date got, the more danger you were in and John would be bollocksed if he was going to leave you to handle that alone.

A gnarled hand gripped his ankle, fingernails piercing his skin and he swore loudly as he struggled to yank his leg free. He ended up blasting the hand with a fire ball that singed the bottom of his trousers.
“Shitting Christ!” he hisses, the stinging pain in his shin not abating and he could feel blood running down into his shoe. “I hate this place!”

He continues on, running as fast as he could, eager to not get snared again. He kept a keen eye on the ground, jumping and dodging as more and more demons sprung up, shrieking through the dust.

He was almost home free when two hulking Princes of Hell, Astaroth and Soneillon blocked the entrance to the Tower of Souls.

“Good effort, Constantine,” Soneillon grins. “You almost made it.”

“Why don’t you take a rest, John?” Astaroth says, crossing his well muscled arms over his enormous chest. “Your little human brood mare is well in hand.”

“Cock off is she,” John snarls. “You lot don’t have a pissing clue where she is. Don’t try and con a conman.”

“She’s in the House of Mystery,” Soneillon laughs, the sound like nails on a chalkboard. “Myrddin already worked that one out.”

John felt his insides drop.

Fucking shitting bastard fuck! The Endless better be protecting you, Star.

“Ahhh he was correct,” Soneillon smirks. “Didn’t even need to get it out of you. You really are useless as a magus and you would’ve been useless as a father. Think of this like we’re saving you from yourself.”

“Because Hell has me best interests at heart,” John says sarcastically. “You’re going to get the fuck out of my way now because I want to see me wife and me kid.”

“Wife now is she?” Astaroth roars with laughter. “That worked out well for you the last time. As I remember, your ex-wife waited barely one day after you died that time to fuck someone else on your grave.”

The memory hurt a lot but he knew they were just trying to wind him up. He couldn’t get distracted.

“Little Epiphany,” Soneillon muses. “You know she’s down here right?”

“Don’t give a shit,” John cuts in. “Get out me way.”

“Wow, that hurts John,” comes that tart little voice from behind Astaroth.

The demon gives John a massive needling grin before stepping aside and John can see the shock of blue hair and that dour petulant expression.

Fuck me, was she always so bratty looking?

“You don’t miss me at all?” she pouts.

“What part of hearing me talk about me wife and child don’t you get, lass?” John says harshly. “All a’ you, step aside.”

“And how long before your eyes start wandering, John?” Epiphany cocks a hip. “You’re not suited to domestic life.”
“And clearly you’re not suited to life in general if you’re down here,” John steps forward until he’s
towering over her. “You’re no bloody angel, love. Think I don’t know you were shagging any bloke
that paid you a compliment whilst we were married? You’re all about the chase. Once you got
someone, you don’t give a shit any more.”

He saw the slap coming but he took it anyway, keen to make a point.

“Just a violent vicious little cunt of a girl,” John hisses. “Life with my wife just keeps getting better
and better. She’s shown me what a normal bloody relationship is like, what a supportive partner
is like—”

“But she’s not prettier and she’s not as good as me in bed,” Epiphany tries and John can see she’s
desperately trying to bring him down again.

Meanwhile the two demons have surrounded him and John knows they were pouring their influence
into the conversation….the demon of hatred and the demon of accusations. A toxic mix right now.

“She’s the most gorgeous bird I’ve ever seen,” John counters. “And fuck me I can’t keep up with her
sexually. So I hope you enjoy that bit of info, lass. By the way, this is the last kindness I will ever do
you. Duck.”

She dropped to the floor screaming but Astaroth and Soneillon weren’t so quick. John managed to let
loose a spell you’d actually taught him, one you’d blended together from two ancient tomes. First a
volley of ice shards that buried themselves into the demon’s bare flesh, the next a bolt of lightning
that worked its way through the conductive icicles straight into their withered organs.

It wouldn’t kill them but it’d keep them down for a while. Princes of Hell could only be killed with
certain divine weapons.

John rushed forward, pushing open the door to the Tower of Souls but felt a tug at his trenchcoat as
Epiphany tried to keep him from crossing the threshold.

“Get me out of here, John!” she screeches. “Don’t you dare leave without saving me!”

“Get bent,” John growls, trying to shove her back but she clings on for dear life.

“You owe me,” she hisses. “You died and left me broke.”

“Boo hoo, lass,” John says without a shred of sympathy before getting all of his essentials out of his
coat pockets and rapidly stuffing them in his trouser pockets instead. “You just left me broken and
I’ve never forgot it. Enjoy Hell.”

He shrugs out of the trenchcoat and he hears Epiphany fall backwards before he slams the double
doors, pulling the bolts firmly in place. He hears her on the other side screaming like a banshee and
he takes a breath before putting his foot on the first step, starting the journey as quickly as possible.

Fuck I’ve lost so much time here. What if I’ve missed the birth? What if they’ve got her? What if
they’ve killed her?

He also allowed himself a brief second to mourn the loss of his coat, that coat which he’d had since
the 1970s, that coat which was stained in magic and demonic blood and had a life of its own
sometimes. It was worth it though. Anything was worth getting back to you, even if he had to crawl
back naked.

He braced himself for the Sloth level and the unbearable weariness went down to his bones as he
ended up dragging himself along the floor, much more susceptible to the magic than usual with his already tired state. He ended up having to physically slap the steps to the next level and he was able to stand normally again, even a little more energised than before.

Gluttony hit him next. John couldn’t actually remember when he had last ate. He was pretty much surviving off Pop Tarts, toast and chips during the siege but that was only sporadically. As he walked to the next staircase, he could feel his ribs protruding a little more and became aware of the sensation of wasting hunger but it was a sensation he was used to. John was no stranger to starving for long periods of time. His childhood was pretty much filled with it.

Up and up again to Avarice but John never cared much for material gain. He only got what he needed to survive comfortably. I mean…with his skill level at magic he could easily be rich but at his heart, he was a working class boy from Liverpool and being in a poncy mansion just wasn’t for him.

Then came Pride and everyone he’d ever sought praise from in his life just surrounded him. He blocked it out, humming loudly with his fingers in his ears, barging and knocking through the people. He didn’t give a shit. He had better things to do. The only person he wanted to stroke his ego was in danger right now.

Wrath.

John saw you in the House of Mystery and he had no idea whether this was just a figment of the tower or what was happening in real time. You were in a four poster bed, screaming as Myrddin stole you right from under the Endless and the scene switched to Myrddin chanting words over your swollen stomach, words intended to induce birth quicker.

“Come on, child. Give in, give me the baby,” Myrddin croons.

“No, please!” you beg. “Don’t take him from me, please!”

It took John curling his fingers around the necklace he’d stolen from you, the one with the howling wolf to bring him back to a calm state. It was a tableau and nothing more. He shouldn’t get angry about it.

He just clutched the pendant until the pewter almost bit into his fingers as he whirled on the balls of his feet, heading upwards again and dreading what was coming next.

When you had climbed out, he’d known exactly the hardships you’d spoken about when encountering the Envy and Lust levels. They were some of the most difficult to get through and that was when John didn’t give much of a shit for long term romance. Now he imagined they’d be nigh on impossible to pass.

The Envy level planed out to reveal you lying on a bed surrounded by all the men, gods and divine creatures that had shown interest in you. It’s like they were all just waiting for your signal, stripped down to their underwear in readiness.

Fucking hell, even Bruce was there!

You just bit your lip in that way that drove John crazy and shrugged a little, “You just can’t keep up Johnny Boy. I need more.”

“And we’re going to give it her, quite literally in fact,” Lucifer grins as he mounts the bed, climbing behind you and taking your shirt off before running his hands over your chest.

“What makes ya think a fuckin’ human is enough fer somethin’ this beautiful?” Sweeney snorts,
joining Lucifer on the bed and running one of those brawny hands up your thighs, flipping your skirt up over your waist.

“Looks like I win again, Constantine,” Papa Midnite chuckles in that deep voice before ripping your underwear away. “I told you I always get what I want.”

John was seething watching your face contort in lust, your mouth dropping slightly open and your head lolling back. It should be him making you writhe like that, making those sounds fall from your lips.

_Fuck, get it together you bloody muppet. Envy level. Don’t let it rule you._

He turned away, walking with purpose to the steps until he smacked into Bruce who just spun him round and pinned him in place.

“She’s so fascinating,” he murmurs close to John’s ear. “So confident, so bold and yet so eager to please. It’s a heady mix, isn’t it? Even though I have Selina, I still wonder what Star would be like. Is she a fighter? Does she submit easily? Sometimes I get bored with a dominant partner. Look at her, I bet she does whatever you ask of her.”

John’s rage was at boiling point but he knew he had to get away as quick as possible. This was becoming extremely dangerous and he was not sure he could keep his jealousy in check much longer.

He burst out of Bruce’s grip, making a dash for the next level and physically leapt onto the steps just as Bruce tried to grab him back. John made it but only barely. The tip of his shoe just touched on the stonework and suddenly the sounds stopped.

John felt like he could breathe again but he knew this last level would probably be his undoing. This is what he’d been afraid of.

“Come on you cowardly bastard, they need you,” he says out loud to himself.

He willed his stubborn legs to get up to the next landing and his jaw dropped when he saw you. You were in full 40s burlesque mode, something you’d only ever done a couple of times because he kept ripping your stockings by accident. The basque, the suspenders, the stockings, the sky high heels, the carefully curled hair and the scarlet lips all just made his cock twitch in his trousers, straining at its confines.

“I’ve missed you,” you say, pouting a little. “Please fuck me. Let me know who I belong to.”

Oh fuck. This was torture.

“Please Johnny?” you start tracing your hands down your body. “I wanna scream for you.”

“Another time, love,” he coughs awkwardly before moving towards the last staircase, the door to freedom almost in his sights.

Again the Tower decided to up the ante by making you appear in front of the steps in nothing but a lace dressing gown that started sliding down your shoulders. John couldn’t help but drag his eyes across your form and in that moment of weakness, you were on him, running your hands up his chest and pulling him into a languid kiss.

It was so real, the heat of your body, the feel of the fabric, the urgency of your motions and
yet….none of it was real. He shouldn’t be entertaining this stupid fantasy when you were really somewhere else.

His hand tracked to your stomach and what you would insecurely call your ‘tiny cake shelf’ at the bottom of your belly. It felt strange not having the round swell and that was what snapped him out of it.

“Gotta go see you in real life,” he pushes you away.

He ends up falling backwards as you keep trying to throw yourself on him and his head hits the steps, bouncing hard and he swears like a true sailor, checking the back of his scalp and feeling blood run down it. Didn’t feel like he’d cracked his skull though.

So one broken wrist, a gored leg and a concussion. Not bad going for being dragged to Hell. Could’ve been worse. I’m still alive.

He managed to stagger up the steps and mentally prepared himself, putting his hand on the giant door knocker before opening it and letting the light engulf his very being.

The House of Mystery. Please….God, if you ever gave a toss about me, take me to the House of Mystery.

**

Dream fortified the back chambers, the hordes of Hell and Myrddin having long since broken in. He could only beseech the House for so long to help your cause. It was difficult enough controlling the temperamental plain it inhabited but when the House was sustaining damage for keeping you safe, its loyalty wouldn’t last for much longer.

“Let me help,” you drew some sigils on the walls, muttering whilst they flared into life.

“You’ve learned much, child,” Dream says, slightly impressed.

“She’s awesome though,” Death winks before going to collect more souls to cross over.

“How long do you think we have?” you ask grimly.

“Another hour at most,” Dream notes. “The House is becoming agitated.”

“Can we escape to the Dreaming?”

“A child born in the Dreaming cannot cross to the mortal plain,” Dream shakes his head, his shaggy black hair masking his expression. “It was not meant for humans.”

“Bollocks,” you sigh. “Guess this is it then.”

“I will keep them from you as long as I can. You will have to seek out your friends to protect you on Earth.”

“Thank you,” you say quietly. “For everything you’ve done. For putting up with me.”

Dream moves away from the door to administer a familial kiss to the top of your head, “Child, it is
no burden. You have been the most interesting part of my story this millennia and my sister is thrilled to have made a friend in her lifetime.”

You smile warmly and hug him which you don’t think he was expecting. To be fair, you never really imagined in your life that you’d hug a being from the beginning of time.

There’s a sharp pain that shoots through you and you end up crying out, doubling over. Dream manages to keep you upright.

“Child?! Star, what is wrong?!” and you swear you see panic in his starred eyes.

“No no no!” you babble. “Not here, not now!”

Nine months was up.

Death reappeared in front of you, “I sensed it! I sensed the pain!”

“Is it time?” Dream asks his sister.

“It’s time,” Death nods.

“I can’t do this now!” you protest. “Not when we’re under attack!”

“Sister, get her somewhere on the mortal plain. She cannot give birth here or the child will belong to the House,” Dream instructs.

“Come on, my friend,” Death loops your arm over her shoulder. “Let’s go. Dream, keep up the fight for as long as you can.”

“I intend to,” Dream says with an enigmatic smile. “Keep Star safe. Make sure that child is born.”

“Yes sir!” Death says jovially before disappearing with you.

You appeared back in the warehouse and immediately she set to work using her own brand of magic to make a forcefield appear over the shattered door, in fact, over the entire building.

“What’s that?” you ask.

“Kills people when they try to get through it,” she says casually.

“Why didn’t you use that before?” you blink.

“I’m not supposed to get involved,” she says, her face actually serious for once. “There’s rules, cosmic rules. I’m not allowed to kill myself, only to help people along to the other side wherever that is for them.”

“Then why have the powers at all?”

“Right?!” she gestures wildly. “But you know, why the heck not? I mean, if your baby isn’t born then the universe falls to chaos anyway so I’ll take whatever punishment is waiting for me.”

“Why would you do that?” you say bewildered. “You don’t know what the punishment is.”

“You’re my friend,” she shrugs. “Your baby is gonna make things real peaceful and if I’m honest, I could use a break. If that means I get wiped out of existence then so be it. I’ve lived a very very long life.”
You start tearing up and drag her into a hug, “Thank you.”

“Any time,” she giggles. “It’s been nice getting to know you. You’re super fun.”

Another wave of pain shoots through you and you growl heavily trying to ride it out. Death ushers you into the bedroom where she strips the sheets and makes you sit on the edge of the bed.

“Death?”

“Yeah?”

“Second drawer down, the black folder. Never shown anyone these before”

She curiously does as you told her and she finds your secret sketch pad that not even John knows about. She flips through the pages, admiring them as they show all the beings you’ve encountered and a lot of John until she suddenly shrieks with delight.

“It’s me! Oh wow, it’s me! Nobody’s ever drawn me before!”

“Keep it,” you smile. “A memento if I don’t make it through this.”

“Why wouldn’t you?” she says puzzled.

“Childbirth without any painkillers or nurses? I don’t know if I’ll even survive labour,” you grip the bedsheets, absolutely terrified.

A sharper pain hits your abdomen and you feel a popping sensation before a rush of liquid runs down onto the bed and down your legs.

“Shit,” you start panicking. “It’s happening!”

There’s sudden howling at the door followed by the mottled sound of death throes and you know they’ve found you again.

“I thought he’d be able to buy more time,” Death bites her lip. “I hope he’s alright.”

“Will it hold?” you ask. “The magic?”

“I don’t know,” she says honestly. “I sure hope so, otherwise we’re royally screwed.”

**

John dropped onto something rough and abrasive.

It took him a while to get his bearings, to smell that familiar scent of industrial oil, to feel the harsh gravel, to feel the cold rain beating down on his back.

“The warehouse?!” John cries into the air. “Are you bloody kidding me?!”

Clearly God didn’t give two shits about his second coming if he was being dropped here. You were still in the House of Mystery and John would have to make a damn portal now.
He was interrupted before he could start by the sounds of hissing. Seemed like vampires were close by. He chanced a glance over the lip of the roof to see something similar to the siege he’d lived through before the First got to him.

But why were they here?

He got his answer about a minute later when he heard you screaming in pain.

John had never rushed down the ladder so fast, down the stairs and into the living room where he saw some sort of whirling mist protecting the warehouse. He didn’t have time to think it through though as he heard you crying.

_The bedroom. She’s in the bedroom._

He bolted through the door to see you kneeling on floor, back supported against the bedframe and Death holding your hand as tears flowed down your face.

“John!” Death calls cheerily. “Hello! She’s having the baby now.”

“Fucking hell!” John blinks.

He must have been in Hell the equivalent of about three months.

“You’re okay!” you managed to say through your sobs. “You’re alive!”

“Told you I’d be there for you both,” he chances a cocky smirk and you laugh a little.

“Is it okay to say I hate you right now because this fucking _hurts_?” you quip back.

“Aye, perfectly fine,” John smiles. “Let me take some of that pain from you, lass. Least I can do.”

He sits next to you, taking your other hand and chanting the transference spell that allowed him to shoulder the burden of another’s pain. Immediately he regretted being so chivalrous.

“Bloody fucking bastard shite!” he hisses. “I’ll never complain about being kicked in the nads again! Jesus!”

You looked like you were regaining control a little bit so in John’s mind, bearing the pain with you was worth it.

“Am I supposed to say keep breathing or some bollocks?” he says, trying to distract you.

“If you want to go to Hell again, sure,” you say through gritted teeth as John felt another contraction come quicker. “Where’s the coat?”

“Met me ex-wife in Hell funnily enough,” John laughs. “Threw it at her to get away into the Tower.”

“Oh you’re going to have to explain that to me sometime when I’m not pushing out your fucking baby,” you growl.

“It’s your baby too, love,” John points out. “You can’t disown him because he’s being a difficult little bugger.”

“Help,” you whine and your whole body just relaxes like you’re giving up. “This is too hard, I can’t do this. How the fuck did women do this before hospitals?”
John kisses your face, stroking your hand gently, “It’s alright, lass. I’m here with you. You can do this.”

“I can’t,” you end up crying again. “I can’t.”

“Star, listen to me. You can. You can do this. You’re the bravest woman I know. You’ve done tougher shit than this. Just push.”

John was only feeling some of the agony you were in but it was overwhelming in of itself. He truly thought you were wonderful to be going so long with it and with the threat of the enemy at the door too.

“It’s coming!” Death encourages you, taking the position of temporary midwife. “Keep going, you’re doing swell!”

John takes more and more of your pain until he’s crushing his teeth together trying not to cry out. He just wants this to be easy for you. You’ve been through so much and you never asked to be a mother. He felt responsible so he took the burden upon himself.

*Come on, love. You can do it. Let’s meet our boy.*

You still screamed as you pushed even harder until you take a deep gulping breath, sweat sheening on your skin as Death handled the tiny pink bundle.

Immediately John used the healing spell, wincing at the fact you’d torn parts of yourself and he willed you to get back to full strength. He didn’t know if you’d need it if the enemy broke through the defences.

“Is he okay?” you ask immediately, straightening up.

There’s a tiny mewling cry and Death holds up the baby, “It’s Alfie! Say hello Alfie!”

She settles him on your chest after wrapping him in the sheets from the bed and John was completely blown away.

“He’s so tiny,” he chokes out, holding his hand in Alfie’s path and Alfie grabs onto his pinky finger instinctively, stopping crying in the process. “Fucking hell, I’m a dad. You did so well, love. You did so well.”

“She did indeed,” comes a voice and John looks up to see Raphael smiling broadly. “So this is Alfred?”

“Aye, it is,” John nods, exhaustion catching up with him as he rests his head against yours. “Is it done then? Nothing’s gonna come after us?”

“Take Alfie to the door,” Raphael instructs.

“Fuck no!” you yell, cradling Alfie closer to you.

“Child, trust me,” Raphael holds out his hands.

John helps you get up, the motion a lot easier since he’d healed you, and walked you to the front door where thousands of vampires, demons, werewolves, wizards, witches and gods were baying for blood.

It took one instant and suddenly they all evaporated in a haze of divine light. John turned with
bewilderment to see Alfie’s eyes burn bright gold before settling into his own shade of brown. John’s eyes.

“What in the everliving fuck was that?” John asks, amazed.

“Your child was meant to rid the world of evil,” Raphael explains. “He sensed your panic, your distress and the intention those beings had for him so he acted accordingly.”

“He’s not going to do that to us when he becomes an angsty teenager is he?” you say a little uncertain.

“No child,” Raphael laughs. “He will keep you from any and all harm, no matter how he gets on with you when he ages.”

“So me kid is an all powerful being already?” John questions.

“He has the power of God behind him, John,” Raphael smirks. “What do you think?”

“This is spinning me head,” John complains.

“You’ll understand in time. Just know the danger has passed and you are the harbingers of peace in God’s kingdom. Heaven thanks you.”

“Heaven can fuck off the next time it has plans for me,” you say bluntly and John snorts at your return to your usual self.

“Shall I relay that to Father?”

“Yeah, go on then.”

Raphael just chuckles as he disappears, leaving nothing but the sound of bells behind him.

Burbling noises attract John’s attention and even though he’s fully aware that this child just killed a bunch of evil beings, he can’t help but get that pang of fatherly protectiveness, especially when Alfie was just making tiny grabby hands into the air like a normal baby would do.

“Well, guess I have a family now,” John smiles. “Definitely got me eyes.”

“Sure has, although if he gets your arrogant smirk, you can deal with that one on your own,” you wink before going back into the bedroom to sit on the bed whilst John follows you.

Death seems to have left but there’s a hastily scribbled note saying she’s gone to look for her brother and also that she’s taking your drawing with her.

You both lay there, the baby in between you, just savouring the moment as Alfie happily gurgles.

John never knew he could feel like this, this fierce stirring of protectiveness but also this completely mushy feeling of love. This was his kid. He never thought it would happen, especially not at sixty four years of age.

“I love you,” he says to you, leaning over and kissing you softly. “Thank you. Thank you for giving me everything I ever wanted.”

“I knew you wanted a kid,” you laugh.

“Yeah yeah, just too shy to say it,” John blushes.
You both touch arms over Alfie and there’s this momentary glow from his eyes again which has John concerned until he feels the wave of pure unbridled love that wasn’t coming from him.

“Did he just…?” you trail off in bewilderment.

“I think he….you little terror!” John laughs, leaning over and kissing Alfie’s head where he laughs innocently. “He restored our Chains connection. Well I bloody never.”

“This isn’t going to be normal parenthood is it?” you ask, interlacing your fingers with John’s.

“How about…we turn it into every bloody moment of it.”

**

“Do it again, Daddy!” Alfie claps his hands as John makes butterflies appear from thin air.

“Alright, lad, just this once. I’m supposed to be cooking dinner you know and your mum’s going to kill me,” John laughs, clutching the boy to his chest where he lets out an adorable giggle.

More butterflies spring up from nowhere and Alfie holds his hand out curiously where one lands on his outstretched fingers.

You try and covertly take a picture of the cute moment but end up forgetting the flash was on and the second the picture is taken, John’s head whirls around.

“Busted,” John laughs. “Nice try, love.”

“What’s wrong, you shrug, smiling. “It’s a sweet picture.”

“Make sure you print it out then. It can go on our wall.”

You glance up at the designated photo wall of the warehouse, plastered with images of your little strange family. From outings, to silly moments to birthdays all the way up until the age Alfie was at now, six years old.

You nod before turning back to the bombsite of a kitchen where John had obviously been trying to teach Alfie how to make bolognese.

“Oh,” John notices where you’re looking. “I’ll clean it up, bit. Don’t worry. Just getting some father son time in because aren’t we having a good time, Alfie?”

“Yeah!” Alfie’s arms shoot up and he smiles broadly before hugging John.

In the years that had passed since the siege, John had mellowed out even more. He no longer looked for the danger around every corner, he took regular breaks to keep his mental health in check, he made more social connections and maintained them a lot better than he used to and most of all, he absolutely adored your son.

“Come on, go keep your mum company whilst I make dinner,” John instructs him. “She gets lonely when I’m away for more than ten seconds.”
“You have a very high opinion of yourself, you know,” you fold your arms playfully.

John gets up and gives you a long, sloppy kiss before winking at you, “I know when a bird is into me and you’ve got it bad.”

“What gave it away?” you tease as Alfie comes to hug your leg. “Was it the marrying you thing or the giving birth to your kid thing?”

“Bit of both maybe?” John laughs before kissing your forehead and rolling up his sleeves, ready to get to work.

You stroke back Alfie’s sandy blond hair that never seemed to look anything else other than an utter mess. He was the spitting image of John, although John would say he had your kind smile and heart.

“Let’s watch some Postman Pat, shall we?” you ask.

“Can we mummy?” Alfie’s eyes widen.

“Sure thing,” you grin. “We’ve got some time before food’s ready. I assume your father will burn it and we’ll have to get pizza so maybe we’ll get a few episodes in.”

A towel gets thrown at your face and you see John pouting at you.

You just smile at him before settling in with Alfie on the sofa whilst he watches cartoons avidly.

As you predicted, John was hopeless as cooking, a skill he’d never really mastered, so it wasn’t long before you were all eating pizza, just curled up together as Alfie fell asleep across your laps afterwards.

“Have I ever told you how much I love you?” John asks, stroking your hair.

“You could tell me again if you like?” you smirk.

“I love you, you bloody amazing woman,” he kisses you. “This is perfect. You know what? Domestic life is pretty damn good after all. Star?”

“Yeah?”

“I think I want another kid.”

I’m no artist but here’s my interpretation of Star and John (more of the classic comics vibe)
Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!