Angel With A Devilish Kiss

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Summary

Lucifer is still reeling from the revelation that he has a son and uncertain why it was kept from him or how to handle it. While he seeks a chance to talk to Lilith, his son is spreading his wings and will discover that small mistakes can be costly. Takes place between Episodes 8 and 9 of season 2
It was cloudy the day of Levi Sethos’ burial. With the scandal of all his misdeeds still figuring large in the headlines the decision was made to simply bury the man and forgo the eulogies. Even so, there was still a massive turn out, all trying to get a view of the great man’s casket. The press couldn’t snap enough pictures, particularly of Jeza, his wife. Her performance as the betrayed and tragic widow should have earned her an academy award without question. A-list actors could only dream of having her technique. Perhaps it wasn’t all an act. For more than forty years she had followed him and helped him build an empire. She had left home for a weekend spa retreat only to be called back and find out that Levi had gone mad and was facing prison. All of their accounts had been frozen pending investigation and now that he was dead, even his million dollar life insurance policy was frozen as well. The one thing she could do was visit her attorney and begin the process of suing the high security facility for their failure to protect her husband.
Among the multitude was a man watching the spectacle from the sidelines. He was dressed appropriately in a simple black suit. His thick dark brown hair was neatly combed and for once he was clean shaven except for his goatee. He wore dark sunglasses over his deep emerald eyes and he took pictures of the crowd using his phone as they pushed against each other in hopes of a better view. From his vantage point he could also see the casket being unloaded from the back of the hearse by six pallbearers. This man knew the story of the Preacher-man and in particular his obsession with one woman that would become his downfall, Lilith Eden.

The casket was carefully set in place, but the normal graveside speeches were not given. Instead Jeza stepped to the microphone, her pale, tear-streaked face on full display for all to see. Like her late husband she too had a natural charisma that the media couldn’t get enough of. She spoke eloquently about the heinous things that her husband had done as well as her belief that he had been coerced into making that false confession. She detailed the many good works that he had done for the community and for so many people in need. With glowing words she talked of his love of God and his desire to minister to everyone he met. Jeza’s voice broke and she had to wipe tears from her eyes when she expressed how much joy it gave him when someone was saved.

The strange young man watching the scene and smiled a knowing smile as she condemned those who had conspired against Levi and eventually destroyed him. She also promised that, as the Preacher-man’s widow, she would work to keep the Elymas Club going and make sure that his vision did not die with him. It was difficult to say whether or the not the spectators believed her. Levi’s confession and the sudden onset of madness had been a shock to everyone and very few were willing to believe it. Of course the reality was that Levi Sethos, aka the Preacher-man, had built a massive fortune and cultivated friendships with powerful and influential people. He had taken numerous mistresses, but the woman he wanted had been a waitress in a bar called The Green Lady. He had sought to claim Lilith through constant stalking and harassment and even by killing her fiancé. He didn’t know the woman he desired was a demon. In fact she was queen of a powerful race called the Lilim. She had given up her powers out of love for her human fiancé, Christian Elam and his murder drove her to the one person she knew could help her, Lucifer Morningstar.

This young man, silently watching the spectacle before him, had his own links to the famous, or perhaps infamous, fallen angel as well as the beautiful and seductive Lilith. Born in a cave near the red sea, he was the demoness’ first child, her favorite and the one she most protected. For the first time he was free to live and explore his human side and do all the things he had dreamed of . . . almost. There was one thing he could never have and that was the opportunity to meet and speak to his father. While Lilith’s covenant with God was in place his existence had to remain concealed. Still, he knew he was out there somewhere in LA, living life as only the devil could.

“Lucifer.” Called out Dr. Linda Martin. She had done this several times, but this was the first time he had heard it. At the sound of his name he managed to look away from the window he had been staring out of.

“I’m sorry, what were you talking about?” He asked, his mind coming back to the present. He had not been paying attention and wondered how long she had been talking without him hearing a single word.

“You’ve been here for thirty minutes and this is the first time you’ve spoken.” The doctor responded.

“I guess I’ve been distracted.” He answered seating himself on the couch.

“What’s going on, Lucifer?” Maze had told her what happened to Lilith, but despite her reassurance that the demoness was safely back in Hell, the devil’s emotional state was beginning to make her
“Does this have anything to do with Lili?”

“Alokaa. The fallen angel said to himself, softly. He had always called her ‘beautiful’ and to him she always was. “Yes . . . no . . . it’s complicated.”

“It’s always hard losing someone that you are very close to.”

“She’s not lost, doctor. Well, some might say her soul is, but physically she is very much alive. I’m really not sure you would understand.”

“Okay, well, explain it to me.”

“When she was killed she didn’t die the way a normal mortal would. Her body was returned to Hell where she once more assumed her demon form.” It was an over simplification to say the least. One could argue that Lili was a breed apart from the rest. If Maze or any of her brothers and sisters were killed then that would be it, no heaven and no hell because they had no soul. Neither could they be rendered human in any way. In some ways the Queen of the Lilim possessed a unique mix of angel and demon attributes. Lucifer even theorized that unlike her spawn she still had a soul. Of course he really didn't want to get into long discussion with the doctor regarding the finer points of Lili’s demon self. As it was, he couldn’t tell if Linda actually understood his explanation or not. “Rest assured, doctor, that the queen of the Lilim is once more her normal, duplicitous self.” This last word to describe the dark-haired beauty surprised the doctor. The day that Lucifer had brought Lilith to see her, she had observed a lot between them. It was obvious to her that there was a great deal of affection as well as a strong trust.

“Duplicitous? Interesting you would describe her that way.”

“But appropriate.” The devil answered acidly.

“Is this because she killed the Preacher-man?” Like so many others, she had read about it in the papers. Now that Lucifer had admitted Lili was alive, she could only assume she was the culprit.

“Levi Sethos is hardly worth mourning.”

“I’m not concerned about him. I am curious why you called Lilith ‘duplicitous’. You can’t be feeling betrayed simply because she hasn’t come to see you? In fact, under the circumstances I would think that keeping a low profile would be in her best interest.” Dr. Martin’s assertions were correct. There were a few people, Like Det. Decker that believed that Lilith was dead. Seeing her alive and completely unharmed suddenly would be difficult, no, impossible to explain.

“I’m hardly starved for female companionship, doctor. If she chooses to go her own way, it is her own business.” Lucifer answered as sat down on the couch. For a moment he fell silent again as he recalled the face of that young man smiling up at the security camera and the words of Amenadiel telling him who this person really was. “It seems she has been hiding something from me and . . . well, she’s out there somewhere and I need to find her.”

“What exactly did she do?” The doctor asked. She couldn’t imagine what could have put the devil into such a quagmire of emotions or cause him to be so mentally far away.

“I’ve only just learned that after all these ages . . . that I have a son.”

To say that Dr. Linda Martin was shocked by this was an understatement, but it still didn’t compare to what Lucifer was feeling. He had discovered three new levels of astonishment that he had certainly never known existed before. He just kept hearing his older brother’s words playing over and over in his mind ‘He is your son, Lucifer’. Even as he drove down the street after leaving his
therapist it haunted him. He wasn’t certain if he wanted to talk to Lilith or strangle her for keeping this a secret. With each passing block he flip flopped between complete denial, then shock and then anger. How many centuries had they spent together in Hell and never once did he have an inkling regarding Velius existence. Velius, even the named meant ‘concealed’. Clever, he thought to himself. He had to talk to her of course and . . . well . . . finally meet his progeny. Unfortunately, even if he were to step foot in from of him right this moment, he had no idea what to say or do.

Stepping off the elevator into his penthouse he was immediately struck by notion that something was different. He looked around and for a moment he could find nothing amiss. Suddenly he realized that Lilith’s suitcase was no longer sitting next to the steps leading to his bedroom. It was completely gone. Something else caught his eye too. Laying on the floor of the balcony was a single feather with stripes of dark and light brown. This was a feather from an owl, a great horned owl to be exact. Lilith must have flown in while he was gone, collected her things then walked out in her human form. Someone must have been waiting for her . . . probably Velius.

Going over to the bar he started to pour himself a drink, but before he could take even a sip the elevator opened and Detective Decker came in. Since the death of the Preacher-man she had heard very little from Lucifer. She assumed he was still reeling from the death of Lilith and the disappearance of her body. Despite his assurances that Lili was ‘home’, Chloe knew better. She had seen the gun shots and the pool of blood. She was hoping that if he had the chance to see this case to its complete conclusion he would start to be more like his normal Luciferiness.

“I’ve been trying to get a hold of you for days.” She said as Lucifer finally took a drink.

“I’ve been . . . preoccupied.”

“Obviously. I got a lead on the man that visited Levi shortly before his death.” This instantly caught the devil’s attention. “His name is Velius Haides and he has an apartment over at the Meridian Pointe building. I haven’t been able to find out very much about him, but apparently he showed up in LA the same day that the Preacher-man was killed.” She watched Lucifer as he turned his attention back to the glass in his hand and silently stared at the amber liquid. “Perhaps it would be best if you were taken off this case, Lucifer.”

“Why?”

“It’s obviously getting to you and there will be plenty of other cases.” She assured him.

“I’m not interested in another case, detective.” He answered sharply.

“Lucifer, Lilith was close to you. She died right here in your arms and the Preacher-man never got his ‘punishment’ as you like to call it. Nobody is going to blame you for being emotionally compromised.”

“I’m not compromised and I can assure you Levi Sethos is receiving his punishment.” He responded, putting on his best devilish smile.

Chloe didn’t believe him. There was something going on, but she didn’t know what. Partners should be able to confide in one another, but Lucifer wasn’t the confiding type, at least not with her. He didn’t act like he was in mourning. When Father Frank had been killed she saw the way he had grieved and it was nothing like this. He wasn’t acting out over some misguided belief that he needed to be punished, she had seen that too. This time he seemed to be withdrawn from everything. She just wasn’t certain how to bring him back.

The one thing she didn’t have to wonder about was the cause of all this. It was Lilith. The woman
had brought upheaval into her partner’s life and it was still there even after her death. In the short
time she had known her, she had liked her. She was strong, witty and certainly a match for Lucifer.
In fact, there were times when the pair had seemed very much alike. The two had also been very
close. So much so that Chloe found herself to be slightly jealous. They shared a long history and
clearly cared very deeply for each other. Chloe wanted to believe that she didn’t care what feelings
he had for his old friend. She preferred to think that she had just become accustomed to his constant
pursuit. It wasn’t true. He was becoming very important to her and she didn’t want to lose that. It
had broken her heart to see the way he punished himself over something he refused to talk about. He
was always trying to protect her and the eagerness with which he jumped in to help find her father’s
killer was certainly more than just a friendly gesture. This time it was her turn to be supportive and
she wasn’t taking ‘no’ for an answer.

“What is going on with you, Lucifer?”

“You wouldn’t understand.” He answered putting his now empty glass on the bar and turning to her.

“Talk to me. Let me be there for you, that’s all I’m asking.”

“Fine.” He responded, taking a deep breath. “Long, long ago, in a garden far, far away, I chanced to
meet the very first woman ever created and it wasn’t Eve. She was attractive, charming, and, as I
discovered, double jointed.” With a roll of her eyes, Chloe stopped his story.

“You know what, forget it.” He could see that she was clearly disappointed.

“I tried to tell you that you wouldn’t understand, detective.” He implored. He had been telling her
the truth, but if she didn’t believe he was the devil, how could she believe his stories about Eden,
Lilith or anything from his celestial past.

“You’re obviously not going to talk to me. Fine, let’s just get back to the case.”

“All right then, let’s go see this Velius Haides, shall we?”
Of Father's and Son's

Meridian Pointe Apartments was a large three story complex painted in shades of grey and surrounded by palm trees. It boasted numerous amenities from an olympic sized pool to a private workout facility for its residents. Its location was ideal, particularly for college students. In fact, finding tenants was hardly an issue and the building was generally quite full. There was only one place that remained empty. A virtual time capsule, apartment #M110-A had remained untouched since the last resident, Asher Tavor died seven years before. The rent was paid promptly every month, but the objects and furniture inside the two bedroom apartment had not been touched in seven years. An English teacher over at nearby California State University Northridge, he was well liked by the students and staff and very close to his parents. It had only taken one careless moment to bring it all to a crashing end. A college student texting on their cell phone had blown through a stop sign on campus while driving too fast and hit Asher as he was walking across the street.

The death had devastated his parents. His mother, Marian took to drinking her pain away. Kaleb, his father, turned into a hollowed-out shell of a man. He still went through the motions of daily life, teaching genetics at UCLA, but the spark had gone out. Unwilling to let go of his only child, he continued to pay the rent and kept everything the way Asher had left it. Every day he came to the apartment in a vain attempt to ‘spend time’ with his son. Sometimes he came there because it was simply easier than watching Marian drink herself into oblivion. He always brought a sack lunch that he had made at home and was careful to make sure that it all left with him so as not disturb anything in the apartment. Silently he looked out the window and watched as the newest tenant pulled into a parking space riding a Kawasaki touring bike that was a gorgeous red. On the back was a set of saddlebags from which he pulled out a suit jacket and tie which he tossed over his shoulder. He had seen him around the apartment complex before and although he didn’t know his name, he looked to be around the same age as Asher when he died.

The resemblance ended with age and Kaleb started to turn away from the window when something suddenly caught his eye. The unknown man pulled a receipt from his pocket and looked it over. It was probably from buying gas, food or anything really. He glanced at the paper, then looking around carefully held it in the palm of his head where it inexplicably vanished in momentary spark of fire. It lasted less than a second, but the old man’s dark brown eyes grew wide. What the hell was that? His first inclination was to follow the strange young man as he went to his apartment and find out how he did it, but the clock on the wall chimed the hour and he knew he was due back at UCLA.

Locking his son’s apartment he headed out to his car and glanced back at the door he had seen the other man disappear into. Rather than confront him, perhaps it would be best to simply watch him for a while. After-all, he was a doctor, specifically a geneticist and had long since given up on magic and miracles. What he had seen may be nothing more than a cheap magicians trick and he didn’t want to be taken in. Pulling out of the parking lot he barely noticed as Chloe’s car pulled in. The detective and civilian consultant had spent the better part of their drive debating whether or not Velius Haides killed the Preacher-man. Lucifer argued his belief that the man couldn’t have done it and just seeing him on the security camera at a nurses station proved nothing. Det. Decker couldn’t understand why her partner was so certain of this man’s innocence and pointed out that his arrival at the facility and time of death couldn’t have been more perfect.

Together they walked to the door and knocked. Nervous, Lucifer quickly straightened his coat knowing that whatever was on the other side of that door could make things very awkward. If Lilith answered he would have a hell of a time explaining to Chloe how the dead came back to life. There was also the possibility that she was hiding in the guise of an animal. He wasn’t sure he could come
up with a quick plausible reason why someone would keep such a deadly creature in their apartment. Most importantly, Velius was in there and he had no idea what to say or do when he saw him. Before he could come up with something the bolt of the door clicked and the door swung open. For the first time on he looked upon his own flesh and blood and found himself to be utterly speechless. His dark eyes looked over his offspring taking in every detail. This half-human, half-angel was a few inches shorter then himself, and had a muscular build that was evident through his t-shirt. Ella had been accurate when she had seen his face on the security footage and commented that he had Lucifer’s nose and cheek bones. One thing was certain, Velius’ eyes sparkled like two perfect emeralds. Unfortunately he was using them to look Chloe up and down appraisingly.

“Hello.” He said, smiling and raising an eyebrow

“Detective Decker, LAPD. Do you mind if we ask you some questions?” She flashed her badge, but Velius seemed unaffected. He looked past the detective to her partner. He recognized the devil and was pleasantly surprised to see him there. He could not recall any time in all his long life when he had ever stood so close to the great ‘Light Bringer’. Returning his gaze to Chloe, he continued to smile broadly as he once more looked her over. Lilith had told him about the detective as well as Lucifer’s feelings toward her. He knew the proper and respectful thing would have been to mind his manners and answer Det. Decker’s questions like a gentlemen, but where was the fun in that? When would he ever have the chance to verbally poke the devil with a stick?

“Well the answer to your question is ‘yes’, I do give incredible all-over body massages. I’m also a really good cook, so what kind of food do you like?” He asked, leaning against the door frame, a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

“Okay, enough of that,” Lucifer interjected moving himself between the detective and Velius. “I’m afraid her dance card is full, so just answer the lady’s questions.” Chloe rolled her eyes. She was in no mood to be the prize in a pissing contest between two dominant males. If someone made a pass at her it was no big deal and she could amply take care of herself. Lord knows, she had been hit on by witnesses and suspects long before she ever met the infuriating Mr. Morningstar. Velius didn’t seem the least bit intimidated, just continued to smile as the detective pushed the devil aside.

“Now, about those questions?” She asked, taking back control of the situation.

“First, I’d like to know what this is about.” He answered.

“It’s about a visit you paid to the Preacher-man, Levi Sethos.” At the name he immediately he stepped aside and gestured the detective and Lucifer inside. As the fallen angel passed through the door the two of them locked eyes for a moment and he wondered how much Velius knew about his parentage. “According to the security cameras at DSH-Atascadero, you were the last person to see Levi Sethos before he was mysteriously killed by a snake bite.”

“You think I smuggled a venomous serpent into the facility and killed the Preacher-man?” Velius couldn’t repress a slight laugh at the idea.

“If you didn’t do it, your timing was awfully convenient.”

“Exactly how am I supposed to have hidden it? Better yet, how did I conceal it and not get bitten myself?” He countered. “I also ride a motorcycle so getting the snake to the facility might have been a bit of an issue.” His arguments were the same as the ones Lucifer had made in the car, but she wasn’t ready to drop it just yet. When Chloe had a gut feeling she was usually right and right now she had that feeling. “Do you also have a motive for me Det. Decker?” He continued, much to her frustration. When she performed her background check on him she hadn’t turned up anything that would prove he even knew the Preacher-man prior to that day. Adding to her aggravation was her
partner’s inability to act like his normal self. Normally he would have made at least a dozen snarky
or inappropriate comments by now. At the very least he should have been in in his face asking
Velius Haides what he desired more than anything. Not once had she needed to reign him in and it
was weird to see him so quiet. Taking a deep breath she collected herself and continued her line of
questioning.

“Why don’t you tell me about your pets?”

“That’s easy, I have none.” He answered.

“Really, mind if I look around your apartment?”

“Go ahead, you won’t find any animals, reptilian or otherwise. You also won’t find any snake
handling equipment either.” He answered smugly. The detective looked at him skeptically.

“How about an owl? A Panther maybe? Perhaps you have a fat-tailed scorpion running around?”
The fallen angel chimed in. His natural waggish tongue belying his true interest in asking that
question. Chloe turned and looked as Lucifer as though he was crazy. What did any of those
creatures have to do with the one they were looking for? Velius wasn’t the least bit upset by the
question, rather, his eyes lit up in appreciation. He knew very well what animals his mother could
change into and obviously so did the Lord of Hell.

“A bit too exotic for my taste.” He answered, never taking his eyes off the devil. Det. Decker shook
her head then went down the short hallway to the bedroom and began to look around.

The two men kept their eyes locked on each other without speaking. Lucifer went to the coffee table
and picked up a heavy leather arm length glove and held it up. They both knew that the item was
used for handling animals with talons . . . like a great horned owl. The fallen angel was not about to
tell Chloe who this man was to him and they certainly couldn’t talk openly in front of her. He
wanted to know where Lilith was and taking a chance, he switched to an old forgotten language and
posed his question.

“U māmā eṅkē? Where is your mother?” This dialect was known to Velius and he answered his
elder without hesitation.

“Iṅkē illai. Not here.” No, he didn’t know where his mother was. All she had told him was she was
going upstate for a couple of days to see an old couple with the last name Elam. Lucifer immediately
recognized the name. They were the parents of Christian Elam, Lilith’s former human fiancé. To
Velius this was something of a dream come true. He had spent countless hours watching the devil
from a distance, knowing the truth but unable to say anything. He had never hoped for Lucifer’s
acknowledgment, but had often wished for the opportunity to simply exchange a word or two with
him. The moment was lost, however, as Chloe came back into the room and proceeded to open
cupboards and rummage through anything that she thought might yield a result.

“Can you tell me why you went to see the Preacher-man?” She asked shaking out some books laying
on the coffee table.

“I’m a free-lance writer, detective. Right now I have a couple of publications chomping at the bit to
get my story on Levi Sethos. They already paid me quite a lot of money for my exclusive pictures of
the holy madman in his cell.”

“You’re writing an article?” The detective once again seemed quite doubtful as the veracity of this
claim.
“Yes. He’s a modern day fallen angel.” His gaze turned to Lucifer as he spoke. “Not as spectacular as the fall of the Archangel Samael, but then their circumstances were completely different. This man became corrupted by avarice, lust and power. He expected the world to turn at his every whim and in the end he was reduced to a babbling lunatic in a cage. I guess you could say I’ve always had a certain fascination for those who have been cast out of heaven for one reason or another.” Lucifer’s eyes grew wide and he became certain that Velius knew exactly who he was. The young man pulled out his tablet and opened the file where he stored the article. “I really didn’t think they would let me in, but the nurse and I were able to work out an arrangement. I met the Preacher-men and she was able to work out a lot of tension.” The detective rolled her eyes in disgust. “I am a man of my word.”

Not entirely satisfied with this answer, she began to glance around the room hoping to find some clue she had missed. A small piece of lacy fabric sticking out of a couch cushion suddenly caught her eye. Pulling it out, she was surprised to find a bright red, lace, underwire bra. Apparently Velius had friends and she wondered if they were the type to assist him with endeavors outside the bedroom.

“Who’s your friend?”

“Jocelyn and her twin Jaqueline. I met them at Sound nightclub last night. Two very giving women.” At this the detective instantly dropped the bra and uttered a slight gagging sound. Glancing into his sink she noticed two coffee cups. Casually she held up the cups where he would see them.

“Is this also your girlfriends?” Chloe asked.

“Nope, my mother came by this morning to check on me. She’s a bit of a worrier.” He answered with a sigh.

“You know, I looked into you and I can’t find anything on a ‘Velius Haides’ before a few days ago.” Going over to a cheap leather briefcase the celestial half-breed took out several documents and a passport then tossed it in front of her. Chloe glanced through them and could see that they were basically in order. Looking at the passport she saw he had been born in the Middle East, specifically near the Red Sea in Saudi Arabia.

“We’re your parent’s missionaries?” She asked causing him to laugh as she handed him back his paperwork.

“I would hardly call my parents ‘missionary’ people . . . no.” He responded rather tongue-in-cheek. Despite his best attempts, a slight laugh escaped Lucifer which he quickly suppressed when Chloe shot him a look.

“Thank you for your time, Mr. Haides. We’ll be in touch.” The detective feigned a smile then started for the door. The two men once more locked eyes and for a moment Lucifer was very much inclined to stay and talk with this child of his. There was much to be said. Before he took that step, however, he needed to talk to Lilith. There were things he still needed to know.
“Gang shooting, drug deal gone bad, attempted robbery at a 7-Eleven and one domestic violence case. Boorring. Where are all the fun cases full of salacious details?”

“What?” Chloe asked, looking up and realizing that Lucifer was rummaging through the files on her desk. Immediately she started slapping his hands and taking the papers away from him. “What the hell is wrong with you?”

“Nothing is wrong with me, detective.”

“Really?” Det. Decker snapped. “For days I couldn’t reach you, then two days ago you insist on going with me to see a suspect where you barely say two words to him. You persist in saying that Velius Haides is innocent even though he’s the last man to see the Preacher-man alive. You’ve spent more time flipping through files that you think are boring then the one that should be of personal interest to you.”

“I thrive on contradiction, Detective. It keeps things interesting.” His flippant response only made her narrow her eyes in annoyance. Lucifer wanted a distraction badly at least for a little while. He didn’t know when Lili would be back from her excursion upstate and he wasn’t ready to sit down with Velius just yet.

Casually he looked down at the picture of his son that he had on his phone. It was a still image taken from the security footage. Amazing how quickly the world changes. Over the last two days he had kept an eye out for Lilith and quite frankly he was getting tired of staring at the sky hoping to see an owl. He had tried driving by The Green Lady bar, but it was still locked tight. He never thought the day would come when he would actually want to hear on the news that a panther had been spotted in the city. At least then he would know where she was.

“This is definitely the snake from Hell.” Interjected the ever cheerful voice of Ella Lopez, breaking the devil from his thoughts. If there was a more appropriate description, the fallen angel was not aware of it. The cute dark-eyed forensic scientist tossed her report on Chloe’s desk for the detective’s perusal. Piqued, Lucifer didn’t waste a second looking over his partner’s shoulder, curious to know how much she had found out. “I was able to run a toxicology screen to isolate the venom. I don’t want to know what kind of serpent did this. That’s an animal a mad scientist would come up with. That thing bites you and you will not get any snaky powers.”

“Snaky powers?” Lucifer asked.

“Yeah, you know, like Spiderman? Peter Parker? He was bitten by a radioactive spider and got all these spidey powers?” He stared at her clearly confused. “I guess you’re more of a DC fan.”

“Riiight.” The devil answered, putting an end to this line of conversation. Turning his attention back to her report, he was immediately taken back by the wide-eyed look of shock on Chloe. This was clearly something he needed to see. The document listed every component of the poison and it wasn’t the neurotoxins, cardiotoxins or fasciculins that had their attention. Rather it was the fact that the samples were a hundred times more concentrated than any known species of snake. Lucifer wasn’t entirely surprised, when stripped of her powers, Lilith’s blood was no different than any other humans, but when she was her full demonic self, it was deadly poison. “I ran the test twice because when I saw the results the first time I was sure there had to be a mistake.”

“Are you sure no one tampered with the results?” Chloe asked, shocked at what she was looking at.
“Positive. If you ask me, there is no way that guy managed to sneak a snake like that in there.”

Chloe hated to admit it, but Ella was right. Velius Haides wasn’t wearing enough layers to protect himself from a snake bite. Not a snake like this anyway. Everything about this case was frustrating. None of it made sense. Chloe never liked to give up on any case, but this one . . . well, this one was going to have to sit on the back burner. The Preacher-man wasn’t going anywhere and besides, the detective’s brain was beginning to feel fried. What she needed was to go home and enjoy a relaxing dinner with her daughter. A hot, luxurious bubble bath would be nice too.

Following Det. Decker out to the parking lot, Lucifer needed to only look up and he would have found the avian in question. She was perched on the ledge of the building next door watching everything. The owl was by far her favorite animal guise. She used it to hear conversations and observe people without being readily detected. Strange, that the devil failed to notice her sitting there. Clearly the pretty detective still had his undivided attention.

From her vantage point Lili could also see Ella as she got into her car. She had only met the young woman once during ladies night at Lux, but she had left an impression. Despite the demoness’ drunken state that night, she had noticed that the forensic scientist was sweet, tough and a woman of religious conviction. Maybe she had learned it from growing up in a rough part of Detroit or perhaps it was because she had an aunt who was a nun, either way she had faith in abundance. At the moment through, it was the only thing she had plenty of. Her cupboard was down to ramen noodles and a seventy-five cent box of macaroni and cheese. The grocery store closest to her apartment was packed tighter than two coats of paint, but she still managed to work her way through the aisles. It probably would have been easier to simply go to the nearest In-N-Out Burger, but not as healthy. She picked up some milk, sliced cheese and a package of deli sliced turkey, intent on having a homemade sub sandwich. Now all she needed was a package of hoagie rolls and a quick trip through the produce department and she would be done. Heading towards the bread aisle, she reached the end-cap just as two girls were attempting to escape their mother after putting a bag of candy in the cart. The kids narrowly missed Ella, causing her to accidentally run into someone at the display. She couldn’t apologize enough as she turned and looked into the beautiful green eyes of Velius.

She knew his face as soon as she saw it. The cheek bones and nose that were so much like Lucifer’s, but until now she hadn’t realized how much his smile was like his too. He was definitely the man from the security video at DSH-Atascadero and she was immediately cautious. She didn’t know how he would react if he knew she was part of the investigation against him. Too bad too, because he was terribly attractive.

“I am so sorry.” She said.

“No, no, it’s alright.” He assured her. “You may be able to help me, actually. Are these any good?” He asked, holding up a package of Little Debbie Devil Squares and looking over her cute figure. “Obviously you don’t eat junk food, but you may have heard something.”

“Are you kidding? Little Debbie’s are always good.”

“In that case . . .” He put the package in his basket.

“How do you not know about Little Debbie’s?”

“I’m not exactly from around here.” He answered

“Really, I’m a transplant too.” At the idea Ella immediately got excited. It was nice to meet someone else new to the area. “Ella Lopez.” She told him extending her hand.
“Velius Haides.” He told her shaking hands.

“Haides?” His last name was a play on the name of Hell, chosen in a moment of humor. Watching her expression on her face as she said it took some of the wittiness out of it.

“I hope you won’t think less of me because of a name.”

“Oh, no. I had a friend named Adolf once and I work with a guy named Lucifer so I wouldn’t worry about it.”

“You work with . . . Lucifer?” What were the odds of him accidentally running in to someone who knows the devil? His mom would never believe it.

“Well, that’s he calls himself. He’s a great guy, but really likes to play the name thing up. I think he’s a method actor, but he swears he’s not, which would be exactly what a method actor would do.”

Velius found the young woman quite enchanting. She seemed quick to laugh, open and honest. He was also rather impressed that a friend of Lucifer Morningstar would be wearing a crucifix. Clearly this was a woman of layers and one he wanted to get to know. Without hesitation the devil’s son suggested that they might go and have a cup of coffee together at a shop just around the corner. Ella was instantly uncertain despite his good-looks and definite allure. He was technically still the prime suspect in the Preacher-man’s death, even if there was no proof. Still, he could be innocent and she didn’t want to miss an opportunity as tempting as this one.

“How about I finish my shopping and I’ll meet you over there.” She suggested. Velius readily agreed then with a wink he went to the check-out counter.

Walking out of the grocery store, Hell’s only son made a conscious effort never to look up at the tree’s, ledges and eaves of buildings, or really anything that could be a perch for an owl. He was enjoying his new found freedom and didn’t want his mom to put a damper on it. Right now the only thing he desired was a quiet conversation over coffee with a beautiful dark-eyed woman who also happened to have a warm smile. Who knows where it might lead? Like father, like son.

Lucifer was also enjoying the company of an attractive woman, although his had eyes of blue/green. Chloe had invited Lucifer over for dinner which had never happened before. Usually he simply invited himself. He couldn’t imagine what had brought this on, not that it was anything fancy. It was a basic meal of spaghetti, but the detective thought that perhaps her partner could use an evening away from Lux, police cases and anything that might remind him of Levi Sethos and what happened to his friend. Her plan seemed to have worked at least for a while. He laughed, chatted and seemed his usual inappropriate self, which she managed to reign in a couple of times with Trixie at the table. Everything seemed perfectly right with the world as Chloe sent her daughter to bed and Lucifer asked if the Preacher-man case was closed. The detective explained that it was definitely not closed, but being set aside for now. At this answer the devil seemed quite relieved and it made Chloe wonder what was going on in that boorish brain of his. She was about to ask him that very thing for the one hundredth time when Trixie ran into the room, interrupting the conversation.

“There’s an owl outside my window!” She exclaimed, quite excited.

“Trixie, there are no owls flying around L.A.” Chloe corrected, but the child wasn’t having it.

“Now detective, let’s not dismiss your offspring just yet.” The fallen angel said, intervening. The detective stared at him in disbelief. Rarely did he side in with the child. In fact, children were usually something Lucifer wanted nothing to do with, but Trixie had become rather tolerable. He
still had no idea how to interact with them and really had no desire to try. At the moment, however, the adorable imp had information he wanted. “What did this owl look like?”

“It’s really big with huge eyes and brown feathers. There’s also feathers that look like horns on its head.” At her description he was sure it was a great horned owl and he knew only one that would be in this area.

“Is it still there?” The devil asked and was quickly answered with a nod. Not waiting for an invitation, Lucifer went straight to the girl’s room, Chloe and Trixie following close behind. To his disappointment, there was no bird.

Undaunted he went outside and began to look around the tree outside the child’s room. He found leaves, and twigs but nothing else. He was sure the small human had seen Lilith, but clearly she had moved on. Turning to go back in, he suddenly stopped and knelt down. Laying on the ground was a feather just like the one he had found in his penthouse. Proof that the girl and had been right. Carefully he picked it up and brought it inside, holding it out for Chloe to see.

“Seems your little pixie was telling the truth after-all.” Indeed the evidence was hard to deny, but Chloe couldn’t imagine what an owl was doing loose in Los Angeles. Lucifer could only assume she was looking for him, but that was not quite the case. While Lilith knew she would have to face him sometime, tonight was not the night. There was someone else she wanted to see first.

The large graceful bird flew high above the city, its sharp eyes looking over every fine detail. The sidewalks were strewn with an assortment of society. There were people out walking and enjoying the night life, some waiting to get into restaurants and clubs, but also streetwalkers, pimps and drug dealers all out plying their trade. The owl’s large yellow eyes studied every face before finding its query walking alone near an old warehouse and quickly descended into the shadows near a side entrance. Mazikeen was coming back from an attempt to apprehend one of the fugitives on her list. A known drug dealer, the guy had not shown up at his favorite watering hole as expected. There was always tomorrow night and besides, the lovely, demonic bounty hunter had managed to obtain his current address. She could always go there now if she wanted to. Walking past the forgotten warehouse she suddenly heard an animal chitter followed by a squawk and hooting. She recognized the sounds as an owl and followed it into the darkness.

“Hello, Mazie.” Said a voice quite familiar to the demoness. She would know the lilting British accent her mother assumed when she was in her human form. The icy, threatening tone of it was enough to put her on edge. The headlights of a car momentarily illuminated the scene, allowing parent and child to see each other. In the flash of light Maze could see Lilith standing near the doorway clearly unhappy. “I learned the strangest thing today. It seems that Lucifer and his little girlfriend paid your brother . . .”

“Half-brother.” Maze corrected.

“... half-brother, a visit not long ago. Apparently he questioned him about me in the old dialect giving Velius the impression that he has learned the truth.” The elder demoness walked towards her daughter. “Now I only know one person on the earth that could possibly recognize Velius on sight.” Maze instinctively tensed up as her mother stopped just in front of her. “Now what I want to know is, who told Lucifer.”

“He saw his picture . . .” Maze began, but Lili had no patience for excuses and immediately slammed her daughter against the wall with one blow. The Queen of the Lilim’s face changed into an amalgam of human and snake features. Her eyes became fiery green serpent’s eyes and long, needle thin fangs extended.
“Who broke the covenant, Mazikeen?!” The younger demoness never feared anything. She would take on any creature, regardless of how lethal and do so with a smile on her pretty face. More often than not she came out as the victor and seldom broke a sweat. The only thing that she feared was her mother’s wrath. She rarely had ever seen it on full display and preferred not to. She still could remember when two of her siblings, the twins Aliah and Lamia, attempted to overthrow their parents and take control of the Lilim. Even now no one knew what had happened to them.

“I didn’t know. I saw him looking at a picture of Velius on his phone and I mistakenly mentioned his name and that he must have opened the portal for you.” Lili’s face returned to its human form as she let her child free. Maze glared at her mother, but continued to be respectful. “I still don’t understand what the big deal is. So what if he knows about Velius. Who cares?”

“The big deal is that, your bother . . .” Lili began with a snarl.

“Half-brother.” The young demoness quickly interjected. The two glared at each other defiantly for a few moments. The elder woman would have preferred to say nothing, but it seemed that Pandora had already opened the box and there was no closing it again. She also knew that if this information got back to certain parties she would undoubtedly need her daughters help. Before she asked her to assume the risk, it was only fair she should know truth.

“Lucifer is his father.” The words barely left her mouth and Maze’s jaw dropped open and her eyes got wide.

“Are you serious?” She looked at her mother’s expression and could see that this was anything but a joke. “How is that possible?”

“I thought for sure I had that talk with you a long time ago. Maybe it was your sister.”

“Which one, I have a lot of sisters.” Maze responded acidly.

“When a boy, or in this case a male celestial being, really likes a girl they have sex and . . .”

“I got that.” Hell’s favorite torturer clearly did not appreciate Lili’s explanation as she narrowed her dark eyes. “What I want to know why all of this was kept a secret.”

“Oh, no. You still haven’t answered my question. Quid pro quo, my dear. Now, who told Lucifer?”

“Amenadiel . . . I think. I told him what little Amenadiel had told me and he left in quite a hurry. I assume he went and talked to him.” Maze answered.

“That stupid son of a bitch.” Lilith hissed. “He should have known better. You’d think by now he would have given up trying to please that slag. Seriously, that woman is truly a bitch.”

“Tell me about it.” Maze agreed then began to tell her all about the exciting times with Charlotte Richards, aka the Supreme Goddess stuck in a human body. Lucifer, himself had told her about his moms return from Hell, but he had not mentioned Uriel’s passing or Charlotte’s attempt at getting God’s attention by handing out maps to Azrael’s blade. Mazikeen was certain the woman needed to be returned to hell, but she had been unable to convince anyone else. “Now tell me about Velius.”

“He was kept in hiding because dear, darling Mama Morningstar wanted him dead.”

This was a surprise to Mazikeen and yet it really wasn’t. She never trusted Lucifer’s mom and with good reason. She was completely manipulative and she hated the way that woman used her sons to do her bidding. This was just another addition to an already lengthy list of why she should hate her.
Of course she would help protect her brother if it was necessary, but she also protected the Lord of Hell, whether he ever noticed or not. Right now the devil needed an advocate and she was happy to play the part.

“Don’t you think you owe Lucifer an explanation? I mean, you kept his son from him for how long? I should think that would be the very least you could do.”

“Ah yes, Mazie, run to the devil’s defense, just like a good little demon.” Lilith smirked exacting a look of hate from her daughter. Lilith’s hand touched the cold stone pendant that hung around her neck, her finger tips lightly brushing the inscription. “I have every intention of talking to Lucifer, you have my word on that.” A faraway look appeared in her eye as she turned from her child and started to walk towards the street talking softly to herself. “There is much I must answer for . . . but not yet.”
Coffee Shop Rendezvous

Beelzebean coffee shop was only around the corner from the grocery store and nearly every walk of life went in and out of its doors. Kaleb Tavor had just finished grading a seemingly endless stack of tests and was glad to get away from it. Over the years scoring mid-terms and finals had forced him to come to the same conclusion. For every student that seemed to understand and appreciate genetics, there were at least three that he felt needed to find a new major. The good doctor didn’t really want to go home, but had no excuse to stay away. The best he could do was delay it by stopping off for a cup of coffee. He ordered a regular cup of the dark brewed beverage when it was his turn then gave his name. The blond barista took a white cup from the stack and promptly misspelled his moniker then began to rattle off every variation of coffee that the establishment had to offer. Kaleb stared at her in amazement. When did coffee get so complicated?

“Just coffee. Coffee flavored coffee. Strong, bitter and black . . . like my soul.” He answered smartly. The girl looked confused a moment then went to get his order. As he waited, Kaleb looked around at the other customers. Most of them had their faces buried in their tablets, laptops, or phones. A couple of them were reading actual books and one or two were engaged in conversation, a rarity in these places. In a far corner he noticed the new tenant from Meridian Pointe Apartments. He had learned from the building manager that his name was Velius Haides, but that was all. He had told himself that the paper vanishing in flames trick was just that, a trick. He figured this guy was an out of work magician trying to make it in LA.

The barista suddenly returned with his order which he quickly took, only to roll his eyes as he realized that his drink had steamed milk in it. Looking back over at Velius, he froze with the cup only a few inches from his mouth. This strange man was holding his hand out just above the table and a quarter seemed to be floating in the air between the table and his hand. His curiosity was once again piqued. Quietly he took out his phone and started to record what he was seeing. He was only able to record for a few moments before the man clasped the coin in his hand and greeted a pretty dark-eyes, dark-haired woman as she stepped up to his table.

Suddenly realizing that he had a reason not to go home, Kaleb sat down at a table next to the pair and began to play with his phone while he listened in. Googling magician’s tricks, he found one that was similar where they did make a piece of paper vanish in a burst of flames. A clever trick, yes, but it didn’t look quite the same as what he had seen this man do outside the apartment. There was definitely something about him and he wanted to know more.

“Sorry, the check-out line took forever.” Ella apologized as she sat down. It was only partially the truth. For the last ten minutes she had been sitting in her car telling herself that there was nothing wrong with meeting this guy in a public place for a simple cup of coffee . . . or cappuccino . . . maybe a latte.

“Maybe the elderly bag boy took his time so he could stare at you longer.” He leaned forward resting his arms on the table. “I would.” Ella couldn’t help being drawn to this man and yet she also couldn’t help thinking he reminded her of someone.

“I should probably warn you, I have very protective brothers.”

“I seriously doubt they could hold a candle to my many half-siblings. In fact, the sister I’m probably closest to was the most decorated torturer in Hell.”

“Oookay.” The wide-eyed forensic scientist. wasn’t sure if he was trying to pull her leg or not.
Standing up he asked what he could get for her and Ella answered that an iced tea would be fine. As soon as he reached the counter the barista’s eyes lit up and she began to wet her lips, play with her hair and lean in towards him. She handed him his drinks making sure to brush his hand with hers. Politely he thanked her by name then returned to his seat and handed Ella her drink.

“I think blondie likes you.” She smiled knowingly.

“No I think she really likes you.” Ella grasped his cup and turned it so he could see that a phone number was written on the cup. Because he was half angel, he had some of the same gifts and abilities his father had though to a lesser degree. One that he enjoyed was the way human women (and to his surprise homosexual men) seemed unable to resist him. He had found this to be quite advantageous when he wanted to get his own way. He hadn’t tried it on Ella and he wasn’t sure if he wanted to . . . at least not yet.

Remembering that she had mentioned being an LA transplant herself, he asked her where she was from. Ella had no difficulty delving to the world of Detroit Michigan. Once the capital of the automotive industry, much of it was now a desperate, poverty-stricken place where crime was rampant. In 2015 alone there was an average of 43.6 murders per hundred thousand people. She, herself, had grown up in a rough neighborhood. She had stolen cars (mostly for thrill of going fast) and excelled at picking locks (a skill she learned from her grandmother). What amazed Velius was that despite the turbulent area she grew up in, there was no hardness to her physical look or in how she viewed life. A true testament to her family. Her inspiration to leave her family behind and come out to the west coast came while watching China Town on television. The move also afforded her the opportunity to keep an eye on her brother Ricardo and his ‘activities’.

Velius could only wonder what she would say if she knew the truth about his upbringing. A half-celestial being, innocent of wrong-doing yet confined to Hell as a means of protecting him. All his life he was surrounded by the most wicked of mankind and he could only watch as they were tortured endlessly. The air around him was hot and filled with ash endlessly floating about. Like Ella, it was amazing that none of his upbringing showed itself in his look or in his current view of humanity. Rather, he thrilled at the opportunity of exploring his human side and finally stretching his angelic wings.

The stories he told, while funny and entertaining, were purposely vague when it came to name and location. He wouldn’t lie, but he didn’t have to tell her specifics either. She seemed to enjoy the tales he told of fights between him and his brothers. Apparently they reminded her of her own. They shared stories of sneaking around behind their parents back and quietly breaking rules. Ella told him about coming to LA and how her brother totally ghosted her once she got there. Clearly her brother’s behavior had hurt her. Velius assured her that he too had a sister in town, Mazie, and she had made no attempts to see him even though she knew he was there. At the question regarding what this ‘Mazie’ looked like, he could only answer that she didn’t look anything like him. It was true enough. Mazikeen’s human look favored the guise Asmodeus assumed on rare occasions. Velius, on the other hand, looked like a perfect melding of Lilith and Lucifer.

“You’ve come to Los Angeles and started a whole new life, so tell me, what do you desire now?” He leaned forward, his eyes locking with hers.

“I . . . I” She stammered, clearly he had her. Suddenly to his surprise she snapped out of it completely.

“I’m sorry, what was that?”
**Interesting.**” He said, intrigued that she had managed to catch herself.

Ella suddenly realized who he reminded her of. Velius was tremendously confident, sarcastic and a bit too honest at times. Lucifer had those same qualities in abundance. Somehow she never imagined that there were two charmingly boorish men in Los Angeles. What she couldn’t quite figure out was where Velius was from. He remained vague only referring to his hometown as Hell. Unlike Lucifer, he had no real discernable accent that would help her figure it out. Ella couldn’t complain though, she was having a great time talking to him. So much so that she completely forgot why she had ever had reservations about meeting him in the first place.

Their conversation was suddenly interrupted as Velius’ phone suddenly buzzed. He pulled it out and glanced at it only to roll his eyes when he saw who the text was from. He could think of nothing more embarrassing then having his mom disrupt his personal life. He expressed his apologies and explained to her that his mother was checking up on him, then made a great display of turning off his phone. Ella remained undaunted and assured him she was familiar with how protective mothers could be.

“Well, my mother had to be, at least when I was young.” Absently he ran his fingers along the thin silver bar that hung at his neck. “You see, Mom didn’t have any parents of her own to speak of and my grandmother, on my father’s side, didn’t want a grandson that came from anything less than her pure stock, shall we say.”

“A real blue blood I take it? Your mom was from the wrong side of the tracks and she didn’t like it.”

“Something like that.” He gave a slight nod in agreement. “My paternal grandfather didn’t care so much but he did have to live with the old bitty so he made sure we simply stayed away and out of sight.”

“He paid your mother off.”

“I’m not sure what she received was exactly a payoff, but I guess you could interpret it that way.” Velius chuckled.

“Where was your father through all this?” She found herself feeling sorry for him even though he clearly didn’t want pity.

“My dad . . .” He pictured Lucifer as he had seen him just two days ago. Standing there in his apartment, tall, well-dressed and watching him intently. “Well, he didn’t know about me or any of it. Part of the deal between my mother and gramps was that dear old dad was not to know. The way I understood it, I was to remain hidden from him because if he knew, then grandma would know, and long story short, we wouldn’t want to piss the old girl off.” He took a sip of his iced coffee before continuing. “I guess I’m the first true mongrel.”

“Yeah well, purebreds are only that way because of inbreeding. Who wants a host of genetic disorders?” Ella observed correctly.

“Well put.” He had never thought of it that way, and once more displayed his bright smile.

“Have you ever seen your dad?”

“Many times and usually at a distance. I did get to talk to him once, not that we were formally introduced. Somehow the devil is never quite what we expect when we meet him face to face.” He explained as he sipped his drink.

“God, you remind me of him.” She said off-handedly.
“Grandson actually, but do go on.”

“No, no, no.” Ella laughed at what she perceived to be a jest. “No, you remind me of Lucifer.” At the name Velius smile disappeared. “Not completely of course, but . . . I don’t know, your sense of humor . . . some of your facial expressions . . .”

“Well, I hope you won’t hold any resemblance I might have to your devilish friend against me.”

“No, but I am on the list if you ever want to get into his night club.” She playfully teased. She really didn’t know if she was on the list or not, but she was confident that if she asked he would undoubtedly do her a favor.

“He owns a night club?” He asked. Lilith had told him many things about her five years on earth, but somehow that had been left out.

“Yeah, I’ve only been a few times, but it’s a cool place. The last time was for girl’s night out and Maze and Linda were there . . . oh and there was a woman named Lili there too. She totally got hammered and even did a pole dance. It was sad what happened to her.”

“What happened to her?” Velius, curious to hear the official story.

“She was murdered by a stalker. His name was Levi Sethos, but everyone called him the Preacher-man-a . . .” Her voice suddenly trailed off as she remembered who was sitting in front of her and what he was suspected of. He immediately knew what she was thinking and sat back in his chair. Ella hadn’t told him where she worked, but her sudden reaction and the fact that she knew the devilish civilian consultant was enough to clue him in that she somehow worked for the LAPD.

“While the man may have been an abhorrent fellow and a true abomination of what a holy man should be, I assure you I did not kill him.” He waited a moment, but she didn’t say anything, just looked down at her cup, clearly uncomfortable. He was quite sensible of the awkwardness between them and rather than make her feel more ill at ease, he put on his coat in preparation to leave. Before he got up he leaned forward and spoke softly so no one else could hear him. “I never lie. It’s a point of pride for me.” He took out a napkin and wrote his number across it then handed it to her. “Here, in case you change your mind.”

Ella watched him through the windows as he left the coffee shop, got on his bike and drove off. She felt so stupid right now. Just a couple of days before she had stood in the police station stating her opinion that this guy could not have done it and yet just now she couldn’t help being just a little bit scared of him. When he told her that he never lied, there something about the look in his eyes that struck her as being genuinely sincere. Gently she touched the cross hanging at her neck. For we live by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7 she thought to herself. Carefully she wrote his name above the phone number he gave her then folded it and placed it in her purse.

Getting up from the table she noticed Kaleb for the first time seated at the table next to theirs. She didn’t know who he was. To her he was just another stranger in a coffee shop. Still, Ella noticed his short grey hair, heart shaped face, olive skin, large brown eyes and a tall lanky frame. There was nothing in particular that made him stand out, just something about the way he looked at her. They politely nodded to each other as she passed then silently she went to her car and headed for home.

Kaleb sat there for several minutes after the pair had gone playing their conversation over and over in his head. At first glance it seemed like the usual flirtatious chitchat between two interested parties. It was the end of their talk that he found interesting. He had seen the headlines regarding the scandal and downfall of the Preacher-man, but paid little to no attention to it. He had seen it as yet another
reason not to believe in God. Not that he had really needed another reason. He had given up those beliefs the moment he saw his son in the morgue. Now he suddenly wanted to read those newspapers and find out what this magical man had to do with it. After running a search on his phone he located digital copies of past newspapers and learned about the case and in particular the unknown suspect that visited Levi right before he was found dead. So engrossed was he in what he was reading that the barista had to come and ask him to leave so they could lock up for the night.

Early the next day Beelzebean reopened just in time for customers to start trickling in looking for caffeine to help them face the day. One of the first customers was a tall, well-muscled African-American man who gave all the appearance of being the same as any other human walking in and out of the establishment, but Amenadiel was not the same. He was the first born angel and Lucifer’s older brother. His fine, handsome face used to possess a touch of arrogance, but since coming to earth he had been humbled repeatedly. The final blow was losing his wings with all the rest of his powers. Now all he wanted was to get them back and return to the Silver City.

He bought his coffee then drove to his office just down the hallway from Dr. Martin. Originally he used this office as a way to get close to Linda and manipulate Lucifer. Now he went there to pour over his books in hopes of finding the way back from his fallen status. So far he had found very little to encourage him. Sipping his hot coffee, he put the key into lock and opened the door. It was not unusual to get visits from Maze, Lucifer or even his mother, but he really never expected to see Lilith. There she was though, seated in his desk chair. Her long dark hair hung loose and she was dressed in jeans and a green crocheted vest that was held by two large buttons and left her mid-drift exposed.

“Well, well, Amenadiel. The ever loyal son.” Lilith smirked. The angel stared at his unexpected guest for a moment. “Wondering how I got in here? You left the window open a crack and I crawled in.”

“Lilith.”

“Oh good, you do remember me.” She got up from his desk chair and casually walked over to him, smiling quite warmly. “I know I remember you.”

“Then you also remember that a demon cannot beat angel.” He told her putting on a show of strength.

“Go ahead, underestimate me. That’ll be fun.” Her hand seductively moved up his chest then began to caress his neck. “By the way, I know your little secret.” Her hand closed around his throat and she lifted him off his feet and into the air. “You’ve been a bad boy and you’ve lost your powers.” With a single swift move, she sent him slamming against his bookshelves. “You told Lucifer about Velius, didn’t you?” She asked kneeling down next to him.

“He figured it out on his own . . . at least for the most part. I only confirmed it.” He replied trying to sit up. With both hands she swiftly caught him by his shirt, picked him up and slammed him against the top of his desk holding him there.

“What’s to stop my son’s life being forfeit just because you broke the sacred promise?” Her eyes glowed green and became snake-like. “Perhaps that was your goal. It’s not the first time you tried to kill him in a devious fashion.”

“I didn’t know you were pregnant at the time. Mom told me that you were influencing Lucifer and feeding his desire for rebellion. She wanted me to get you as far away from him as possible. There was to be no future interaction between the human and the divine so I had to make sure you feared us. I didn’t know the whole story . . .”
“What? You mean that lying bitch of a mum didn’t tell you that she was hoping I would miscarry from all the stress you were creating for me? Imagine that.” She smirked as she looked at her adversary. Where was his confidant posture? His eyes didn’t have that certain gleam of superiority that they normally did. Stranger still was that there was a genuine look of contrition written on his face. This was a man clearly unhappy and perhaps even tired of the position in life he had found himself in. Her eyes returned to normal and reluctantly she released him from her grasp. Slowly he got up, his back hurting from where he had hit the bookshelves and the desk. He went over and carefully began to pick up some of the books that had fallen. “You really didn’t know, did you?”

“You may not think so, but I’m not a monster.” He stopped what he was doing for a moment and sighed. “When I saw the baby and . . . his wings, I knew I had been lied to. I didn’t say anything when you were brought before my father because I was too proud to admit the part I had played. I didn’t even know that Velius had survived being sent to Hell until I saw him hiding in a fissure high above Lucifer’s throne. After that I talked to Senoy and he told me about the covenant.”

Lilith was surprised at this change in her adversary’s attitude. Somehow she had not expected to find Amenadiel so apologetic for his actions. She had almost forgotten about that crevice in the rocks. Mazikeen used to go up there with him sometimes when she was a girl and together they would both watch the action. Maze always got a thrill out of seeing the tortures and assumed it was the same for her brother. Velius simply wanted to see his father.

“Does,” He suddenly smiled in spite of himself “Does my nephew know the truth?” It was the first time he had ever said that title and he rather liked it.

“He was almost completely grown when the first of the Lilim were born. He watched Asmodeus interact with his children and I think it started him wondering about his own lineage. He asked me numerous times, but I always dodged the question. I just didn’t know how to tell him the truth. One day I found him sitting quietly in that opening above Lucifer’s throne quietly holding the necklace he wore. He pointed and said ‘He’s my father, isn’t he’. At that point I could no longer sidestep the inevitable so I told him everything. He was angry for a long time after that, He was never one to deal with his emotions as a rule anyway. Instead he showed it by being blatantly defiant or at times he would simply act out. Other times he shut down all together.” Amenadiel nodded. He had seen his younger brother behave in much the same way because he simply couldn’t face his emotions. “Eventually he forgave me.”

Neither spoke as Lilith knelt and began to help pick up books with this first of God’s angels. They had spent an eternity at odds with each other and this momentary truce was awkward at best. Setting books on the shelf, the demoness quickly skimmed a couple of pages of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. She smirked at an artist’s depiction of Lucifer with bat-like wings on his back. The human imagination was a fanciful place. Amenadiel watched her as she placed the book on the shelf with the other. He had always had a certain fascination for Lilith. How could he not? Here was a human woman who had lived in a paradise where every need or want was provided for. Why anyone would give that up for a moment’s pleasure in Lucifer’s arms was beyond him.

“Are you going to ask your question or just stand there staring with your mouth hanging open like a cod fish?” Lilith asked without looking up from what she was doing. Caught off guard, Amenadiel stammered for a moment before finally asking what was on his mind.

“Why did you do it?”

“I’ve done A LOT of things, you’re really going to have to narrow that down a bit.”

“Eden.” He responded. “Why did you give up Eden? You had an ideal existence in that garden.”
“Everyone always thinks that.”

“Was Luci really worth it?”

“Have you seen him naked?” At the very mention, the angel immediately twisted his face in absolute disgust. As far as Lili was concerned she had already been too touchy feely as it was with Amenadiel. She certainly wasn’t going to tell him anymore. She didn’t like opening up anyway. True, she trusted Lucifer and would confide in him before anyone, but even then it was under duress. She had no intention of spilling the secrets of her heart and soul to anyone, not even him, if she could help it. “Don’t try to do the whole ‘feels’ thing with me. You’ll end up way over your head, old man.” She shoved the last book into his hands then started towards the door. “By the way, should anything happen to Velius I will hold you and your precious mum personally responsible. What I can’t do to her physically, I will accomplish emotionally when she finds small pieces of your body all over LA.” Upon reaching the door, Lilith stopped and look back at the original angel. “Oh and speaking of small body parts. I know you have a ‘thing’ for Mazie. I have no doubt that she can take care of herself, but I am her mother and as such I am duty bound to play a certain role. If you hurt her in any way, I will drag you to Hell and hang you by your thumbs. Then I will give each of my offspring an aluminum bat so they can play piñata with your holey poker.” She winked and then waved as she walked out the door. “Nice chatting with you! We really should do this more often.”

Now that she had uncovered the guilty parties, there was only one thing left and that was to finally give the devil his due. She had been putting it off because she wasn’t sure how to face him. The fallen angel had long ago mastered the art of seeing betrayal and manipulation where there was none, especially when it came to his Father. She had always been one of the very few he trusted and she was afraid of looking in to his eyes and seeing that trust gone. I hope, she thought to herself, I hope he will understand.
Dr. Tavor sat in his lazy-boy chair and re-watched the short video he had made of the coin floating in mid-air. He had spent the entire day reading old newspapers and looking at that all too brief movie. Frustrated, he tossed the phone onto his coffee table and rubbed his eyes. Why was he so obsessed with this? In his entire career he had never missed teaching his class except one day seven years ago when he attended his son’s funeral. He couldn’t say that anymore. All day he had buried his nose in this bizarre research and it wasn’t until one of his students called that he had even remembered he had a class.

Getting up from his chair he stretched and glanced over at his wife. The sun had not completely set and she was already passed out on the couch. She had managed to get groceries earlier that day which was good. Reaching above the refrigerator he pulled down a container of cheese balls then poured some into a plastic bowl and grabbed a cold soda before returning to the living room. Just before passing out, Marian had put on her favorite movie, *The Bishops Wife*. Kaleb was sure the woman watched this almost daily and couldn’t understand why. As far as he was concerned the movie never had a real conclusion.

In the story, the bishop and his wife are having marriage difficulties because he is constantly gone and preoccupied with building his cathedral. An angel comes and makes him realize what is really important. What aggravated Kaleb was the fact that the cathedral was still not built and the poor bishop would once more have to try and get the funds taking him away from his wife again i.e. nothing is ever solved. Marian used to tell him that he was simply thinking too much and to simply enjoy the movie.

Sitting back down in his chair he looked at the screen and shook his head. It was only a few minutes into the movie and he really didn’t want to watch it. He mouthed the dialogue as he searched for the remote to the DVD player.

*Dudley* - I'm an angel.

*Bishop* - I beg your pardon?

*Dudley* - I'm an angel. No wings at the moment, but...

*Bishop* - You're an angel. I knew it. I've been working too hard.

Unable to find it he went over to the machine and was set to press the stop button, but the next few lines caught his attention. He looked up at the black and white images of Cary Grant and David Niven. He must have heard every word they ever uttered in this movie a million times, but this was the first time it ever made him stop and think.

‘I understand, Henry. It's hard to believe, even for you. I'm not one of the more important angels. I just happen to be assigned to this district temporarily. You see, we're everywhere, helping people who deserve to be... to be helped. As you're walking through the city, you may look into a strange face. It may be the face of a murderer or it may be the face of an angel.’

He replayed the scene several times before finally hitting the stop button, but his imagination was on fire. He took his drink and cheese balls to his study and once more looked up those newspapers. It seemed that the LAPD were stymied by the breed of snake and how such an animal was smuggled into his cell. *It may be the face of a murder or it may be the face of an angel*, he thought to himself.
He didn’t believe in angels of course, but he still opened a new tab and ran a search to see what angels were thought to exist. To his amusement there were quite a few sites, some religious and some not, that gave examples. Messenger, helper, seraphim, guardian and of course Archangels came up, just to name a few. He sighed, thinking of how gullible people are to believe in such things. Realizing that he was obsessing again, he got up and once more rubbed his eyes. He had to get out and get some fresh air. He grabbed his keys and wallet then stopped for a moment and kissed his wife on the forehead. *If only they’re were angels, he thought to himself, then perhaps they could have their boy back or find some peace.*

He drove all over Los Angeles with no clear destination in mind. At one point he drove past that tall grey tower that was Lux and glanced out the window at the line of people waiting to get inside. The club, itself, was packed with people dancing, drinking and of course hooking up. Everyone was having a good time. Lucifer, himself, had been propositioned at least a dozen times. Normally he would have accepted, but there were other things on his mind. He believed Trixie when she said she had seen a really big owl outside her window. Chloe had still been skeptical even after he showed her the large feather as evidence. Pat Benatar’s ‘*We Belong*’ blared as he looked over the crowd, his eye falling on a woman across the way. He could only see her from the back, but she seemed familiar. She wore a black silk and lace camisole, had long dark hair and possessed a butt that could stop traffic. Her height and build seemed a perfect match for Lilith. He pushed his way through the multitude only to lose her in the throng.

Discouraged, he decided to head back to the bar, only to stop as once again he saw the woman in question on the other side of Lux, still with her back to him. Keeping his eyes fixed on her, he started once more through the crowd, but halfway there he was stopped as a beautiful, sexy red-head that was clearly buzzing caught him and wrapped her arms around him. He was able to make out only a word or two through the loud music but it was enough to know that it was an indecent proposal. He gave his apologies and assured her that he would be happy to indulge her another night. Turning back to his query, he grimaced as he realized she was once again gone. If it was Lilith, then she knew how to find him, right now he wanted to simply go back up to his penthouse and relax.

Fate or God had other plans for him though. As the elevator reached his penthouse, Lucifer could already hear his piano being played by some as of yet unknown person. He took off his sport coat and held it over his shoulder as the doors slid open revealing to his surprise that it was Lilith seated on the bench quietly playing. Always beautiful, she naturally had a look of softness that at times completely contradicted the true demon she could be. Her long fingers gracefully moved across the ivory keys, playing each note with precision. The devil hung back and leaned against the closed elevator doors as softly she started to sing.

*The moon was all aglow*

*And heaven was in your eyes*

*The night that you told me those little white lies*

*The stars all seemed to know*

*That you didn’t mean all those sighs*

*The night that you told me those little white lies*

There had never been lies between them, white or otherwise, of course, but neither could they say they were totally open and honest either. Omitting details was an art both were skilled at and used to great effect. It could be costly when those particulars surfaced. The air between them was
charged with emotion. These two figures had so much to say to each other and they both knew it. That two very different beings should be so much alike was amazing and one could argue that they truly belonged together. No matter how tied their souls were to each other, their hearts had been lured in other directions. She had discovered what love really was in the eyes and arms of Christian Elam. This human man had loved her without the inducement of her spells and even when he knew what she really was.

I try but there's no forgetting when evening appears
I sigh but there's no regretting in spite of my tears

The devil was in your heart
But heaven was in your eyes
The night that you told me those little white lies

Lucifer was only beginning to understand what he felt for Chloe Decker. The beautiful blue/green-eyed cop was impervious to his charms and trusted him more than most. She never believed he was the devil and adamantly argued against him being evil. Of course Lilith and Lucifer could never really be parted. Deep emotional ties longer than the road between Heaven and Hell and stronger than the chains that held cursed souls bound them together. If that alone was not enough to attach the dark haired beauty to him, certainly knowing that they had a shared son was.

I try but there's no forgetting when evening appears
I sigh but there's no regretting in spite of my tears

Who wouldn't believe those lips
Who ever could doubt those eyes
The night that you told me those little white lies

Those little white, tiny white, little white lies

Listening to her sing brought to mind the memory of seeing Lilith standing in the water of that river they often met at in Eden. She was singing peacefully to herself as she bathed in the cool clear water. It was the very spark that made him want to break the rules and explore his carnal desires. A decision that he still never regretted. Watching her play the piano, he quietly came up behind her and placed his hands gently on her shoulders, feeling the silk strap of her camisole and softness of her skin. Her back immediately straightened and softly clasped his hand in return. For a moment no one spoke. Perhaps because there was too much to be said. Lucifer finally broke the loaded silence between them.

“Well, well, look who finally decided to make an appearance.”

“There were certain matters that I needed to take care of.” She answered.

“You know, the strangest thing happened the other day. I was investigating the death of the
Preacher-man with Det. Decker, and do you know what I found?” He waited a moment but she didn’t answer. “Well, first and foremost I knew you were the snake behind it, but there was something else too. I found myself looking into the face of a man with my nose and cheekbones.” He felt her tense up, confirming everything he had been told. “Is there anything you would like to tell me, Lilith?”

“Lucifer . . .”

“Save it. You kept my son from me.”

“I had to so that he would be protected.” She responded sharply. “You see, Velius . . .”

“Yes, Velius Haides, I believe he calls himself.”

“It’s a bit tongue-in-cheek I grant you, but it wasn’t as though he was at liberty to call himself Morningstar.” At her flippant response the devil squeezed her shoulders painfully before releasing his grip and going to his bar.

“This really has been a grand joke for you hasn’t it?” He gave a slight bitter laugh as he tossed his sport coat on the counter and poured himself a drink. His glass in hand he then turned and looked back at her. “Very few people can pull one over on me, but you . . . you did the best one yet.”

“Yes, Lucifer, you caught me. This has all been one big laugh at your expense.” Lilith’s own ire was rising. She rose from the piano bench and turned toward the fallen angel, ready to spit venom back at him. “Do you know what the best part was? The best part was when I thought my insides were being ripped out of me.” Lili gave a caustic laugh back at him. “When your brother, Senoy, told me that I probably wouldn’t survive giving birth to a half celestial being, I couldn’t stop myself from laughing, it was just too hysterical.” There was no more laughter, just the demon and the devil squared off in their anger. “The final punchline was truly inspired though. I mean, being forced to agree to a covenant with your Father so Velius could be protected was the greatest gag since Adam slipped on a banana peel.”

“That’s right, you did make a promise with my Father, didn’t you? Exactly how many months did you carry him before that agreement and still said nothing to me?” His eyes flared red at her for a moment before throwing back his drink.

“That’s not fair.”

“No it isn’t.” He snapped as he refilled the glass. This time he looked into the backlit marble of the bar, not wanting to see his old friend.

“Lucifer, I didn’t know myself until Senoy told me.” Her explanation did not sway him and he still refused to look at her. Lilith was many things, both good and bad, but there was never a time when she had lied to him. She certainly never wanted to hurt her oldest friend. Angry at the way he kept his back to her, her own eyes glowed green and became snake-like. By merely willing it she caused the glass he held to instantly shatter, spilling its contents on him and the bar. This made him turn around and face her. “I have never lied to you. The only reason I didn’t tell you about Velius was because of that damned covenant.” At this Lucifer’s face softened. “How could I have known what was happening to me? Had there ever been a human child born before? I knew I was sick every morning and that my courses had ceased, but I didn’t know why. I was constantly on the move by the time by body started to change. I wanted your help desperately but I didn’t know how to find you.”

Lilith began to tell Lucifer what it had been like. She could remember well the torment of being
unable to rest for very long because wild beasts would find her and chase her. She knew great hunger and thirst because even when she did find food it would quickly go bad and fresh water either dried up or turned bitter. Before she knew his name she had seen Amenadiel watching her wherever she went. He would wave his hand and destroy her food and or make it vanish altogether. Only once did he speak to her and it was a warning to stay away from ‘Samael’ and matters concerning heaven. While she knew Lucifer’s God-given name she couldn’t imagine what this angel was talking about. Since when had she ever concerned herself with celestial matters? She tried to explain this but he vanished only to return later and continue his persecution.

How exhausted she had been when she found that cave on the banks of the Red Sea. Thirsty, she had attempted to get a drink only to find the water to be salty and unpalatable. Then the pains started. Sharp pain that made her tense up and cry out. It lasted only a moment before subsiding. Afraid she went into the cave for shelter. Her body contracted again and she wailed for help. Again and again the agony came on and she was sure she was dying. Suddenly a figure appeared at the entrance and she was scared that it was once more Amenadiel there to torment her. Instead it was a different angel. This one was about her height with sandy blond hair and a gentle almost elvish face. He introduced himself as Senoy, one of a set of triplets that were the angels of healing. He handed her a skin of cool fresh water which she quickly drank.

Softly he placed his hand on her swollen belly then smiled at her reassuringly. His two brothers also appeared and began to assist. Senoy explained that she was not ill but carrying a baby. For a moment Lilith was overjoyed but she noticed that the angel’s expression was grave and she wanted to know why. His voice was calm and soothing as he explained that although she was designed by God to bear children, this baby was partly celestial and very strong. Being a human made things complicated and endangered her life, but he assured her that he would do all he could and that she needed to trust him. It was difficult to say how long she labored, perhaps it was less than an hour, but to Lilith it seemed like an eternity. Her voice was starting to become hoarse from her screams and her already exhausted body was on the point of giving up when Velius entered the world. In that second all the pain and torment were instantly forgotten as this small infant was placed in her arms. Soft dark downy hair, tiny wrinkled fingers and toes and the most beautiful set of shining white wings.

One of the triplet angels, Sansenoy, gently washed the sweat from Lilith’s face with a cool wet cloth as the baby began to suckle and look up at its mother with its muddy blue eyes. She smiled sweetly at her child, enjoying the first moment of peace that she had felt for months. Unfortunately the serenity was broken as another shadow appeared in the doorway of the cave. She recognized the silhouette instantly as Amenadiel. The three other angels stepped back in deference to their older and stronger brother. He never said anything, only stared at her and then at the child in her arms. For a moment he reached out his hand towards the baby and Lilith in desperation and anger cried out the sacred name of YHWH and declared that if he allowed her son to be harmed then she would seek revenge on the descendants Adam.

The words no sooner left her lips and the sky grew dark and thundered. The triplets lifted her and carried her out of the cave back to Eden and before God. The whole time she held on to her baby unwilling to give him up. She closed her eyes and trembled in fear as she felt the earth beneath her shake. She was on the point of tears when suddenly everything stopped and was silent around her. The ground beneath her felt different and the temperature had gotten significantly warmer. Opening her eyes she found herself in a world like nothing she had ever seen before. There were molten rivers and tall black hexagonal rocks that spiraled up to a dark sky. Turning, she saw a doorway that was chained shut and for the first time saw her reflection and the new form she had been given. She was no longer human but a demon cast into hell. For a moment she believed that all was lost, but then she realized that she was still holding Velius. He was alive, safe and still the perfect baby he had been at his birth. The only thing that was different was that around his neck hung braided
leather cord with a thin, four-sided silver bar hanging from it. It read ‘Son of the Light Bringer’. She touched the necklace and the ghostly image of Senoy appeared and explained that she was bound by covenant not to tell Samael of his son because it was the only way to keep him safe from his grandmother.

Lucifer didn’t want to believe that Amenadiel had done what Lilith accused him of, but knew better. His brother, the first born had steadfastly done whatever their father had asked of him. When instructed to bring Lucifer back to hell, Amenadiel’s determination had known no bounds and several humans paid with their lives. He had even resurrected Malcolm Graham, a corrupt cop and true psychopath. The first born angel didn’t follow their mother quite so blindly, but she could always cajole and manipulate him into it. With his power reduced and unable to go back to Heaven on his own, he was his mother’s willing pawn. Like it or not, he could well imagine his brother tormenting Lilith at the behest of Mum. How many times had he heard his brother say that humanity and divinity do not mix? Velius was a walking contradiction of that belief.

Overwhelmed, the devil turned back to the bar and taking out a new glass poured himself a drink. This was the first time he had ever heard the particulars of why she was damned. He knew she had used the sacred name of God, either in rebelling against him or offending him. He may not have been an active participant in her downfall, but clearly he had played some role in it. How long had he hated his own Father, only to discover that he, himself, had a son who was a complete stranger to him? He wanted to hate Lilith for her choice only find that he couldn’t. She had been handed an impossible situation.

Still, it was very difficult to forgive. For ages he had trusted her more than anyone. Even when she had ceased to be his mistress she had held his confidence. He was beginning to wonder if there was anyone he could rely on at all. The detective perhaps? How many had known about this son of his and said nothing. He hated being a pawn of his Father’s and no matter how he tried he couldn’t seem to fully put an end to it. For some reason it had never occurred to him that the fiercely independent Lilith, queen of the damned, had been manipulated as well.

Why had he thought she was different? Perhaps he believed it because in so many other facets she was different. In Eden, she had been willing to listen to the anger of his heart when no one else in heaven or on earth would. In Hell she was the only one who refused to cower before him. His other three mistresses in the underworld were always submissive to the devil. Mazikeen had enough of her mother in her to argue quite vehemently, but there was always a point where she would defer to him. If the caramel skinned demon were here right now, no doubt she would be telling him how wrong he was for being angry and that he needed to think about someone besides himself.

“How many knew the secret?” The devil asked, turning to look at her. “Asmodeus? Your snuggluffagus, Christian, perhaps?”

“Asmodeus knew I had a son, yes, but I told him nothing else. If he suspected anything then he kept it to himself. As per the agreement with your father, I did not tell anyone except Velius. I never told Christian about any of my children. He had a hard enough time wrapping his head around the fact that was the Lilith.” She glanced down the engagement ring of diamond chips that he had given her and smiled slightly to herself. “I still can’t imagine why he loved me.”

“Yes, well, that certainly worked out well for him.”

In that instant a blade flew from her hand only to be caught by Lucifer a mere centimeter from his face. He looked at it and recognized it at one that was forged in Hell. Silently he tossed it to the side, his gaze never leaving hers. The devil crossed the floor closing the gap between them and for a moment caught her by the neck. There was fire in their eyes as they stared into each other. How
easily he could squeeze that pretty throat of hers. Both had the power to make themselves carnally irresistible, yet neither had ever needed to use it on the other. His glittering black eyes looked her over. Why did this maddening woman have the power to infuriate him and simultaneously stir his blood? Fiery anger at times can awaken other needs and desires. Swiftly his lips found hers in a hard passionate kiss. Lilith pushed him away then slapped him for his presumption.

“You arrogant . . .” Lilith began, but the fact of the matter was the genii was out the bottle. His lips were hot against hers as she kissed him. How could anyone make her so angry yet in the same breath command her desires? His strong arms took hold of her and he quickly led up the few steps to his bed. Roughly setting her down, he pulled the silk camisole off over her head then grabbed her chin and made her look up at him.

“I should have brought you to heel a long time ago.”

“I kneel before no one.” Her long fingers took hold of the expensive fabric of his shirt and tore it open. The sound of the material ripping and the buttons flying made her smile before she quickly threw it aside. In response Lucifer took hold of her thighs and pulled her closer to him. He once more kissed her roughly then pinned her arms to the mattress.

“I will break you.” He said between heavy breaths.

“You can try.” Lilith pulled her hands free and flipped him on to his back.

They had engaged in this ‘combat’ many times before with no one ever really winning . . . or perhaps they both did. As strong as the demoness was, he was always a little stronger. All anger, hurt feelings and resentment were laid waste in the heat of their ‘battle’. Of course, this was only round one.
After spending the night driving around all of LA, Kaleb finally parked his car at the end of a street with a splendid view of the beach. He turned his radio to a station that played oldies music and listened until he finally dozed off. It lasted maybe an hour or two before he was jolted awake but the sudden sound of bongos and a loud ‘whoohoo’ from Mick Jagger before the singer broke into ‘Sympathy for the Devil’. He quickly turned down the volume then rubbed his face and eyes. He glanced at his clock and sighed. It was morning . . . technically. If he had been ambitious enough to get out of his car and look east he would have seen the soft yellow hint of light coming from the rising sun mixed with shades of blue that got progressively darker until it blended into the still night sky in front of him.

He yawned and stretched his long frame. He had left his window cracked open and could smell the salt air as it wafted through. The waves were rolling in and out across the light brown sugar sand. No foot prints were there to disturb the perfect smoothness. Not a single soul in sight. It had been a long time since he had been to the beach. He used to come here a lot with his son. It was a typical family excursion with sand castles, sea shells, splashing in the water and of course being buried up to your neck in sand. When he got older, Asher tried his hand at surfing only to sprain his wrist and realize that he should probably stick to his college studies.

Looking out at the waves, Kaleb found himself wondering, what was he doing here? This was getting ridiculous. He needed to go home. He still had time to get a couple of hours sleep and a hot shower before he had to be at class if he left right now. His hand gripped the key in the ignition and he was about to turn it when something caught his eye. It was a lone figure emerging from the ocean after an early morning swim. At first the only thing he could tell was that it was a man, but as he got closer, he realized that it was the man from Meridian Pointe apartments, Velius Haides. He didn’t leave the water completely, but rather stood where the ocean reached his ankles. He shook the salt water from his hair, clearly exhilarated by the early morning swim. For a moment Kaleb envied the genuine joy that seemed to surround this fortunate man.

Why did he give a damn about this stranger? What was he to him? Nothing. Perhaps it was just the thrill of having something to occupy his thoughts that made him so interesting. Velius turned his face towards the ocean taking in the nice cool breeze blowing in with the waves. Kaleb rolled down his window so he too could enjoy it. The doctor once more gripped the key and just barely started to move it when he noticed the man flex his shoulder muscles.

Nothing in all of science, Heaven or even Hell could have prepared him for what he saw next. It was only a slight motion but from it appeared the most glorious set of white wings. All the color drained from his face and his jaw went slack in shock. At first he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. This couldn’t be real. Kaleb’s large brown eyes opened as wide as they could and for a moment he couldn’t breathe. He watched as the wings extended to their full size and the breeze gently moved through the soft feathers. They were elegant even as they shook off the water like a graceful bird. Regaining his wits he quickly grabbed his phone and began to film exactly what he was seeing. No one was ever going to believe this. He wasn’t certain if he believed it. After a moment Velius folded them back before they seemingly vanished into thin air.

The doctor gazed in wonder as the strange winged man headed up the beach unaware that he had been seen. Still in shock by what he had witnessed Kaleb stumbled from his car and walked out to where he had seen him standing. He was hoping that there might be a feather left behind. Something that he could hold and study, but there was nothing. He quickly played the footage he had taken. There they were, wings that almost seemed to glow with an ethereal beauty. He fell to
his knees in awe of what he had discovered. How powerful such immense wings must be. He wanted to learn more. No, he had to learn more. This creature . . . this angel held the answers to so many questions. Through him he could learn the truth about God, Heaven and Hell, or better still, he could find out where his son was or perhaps be taken to him. The possibilities seemed endless.

Of course Velius would have been the first to tell the good doctor that he was not quite the angel he imagined him to be. He was a Nephilim, half-human and half-celestial. His gifts and abilities were not as powerful as his angelic father or other divine kin. While he was certainly immortal, he could be harmed. His flesh could be cut and his bones broken, but unlike the rest of humanity his injuries would heal within seconds. Fortunately while he was growing up he was stronger than his demonic half siblings so he rarely sustained any wounds. Since leaving Hell he couldn’t say that he truly missed any of half-brothers or sisters . . . except perhaps Mazikeen. He knew she was somewhere in LA and, who knows, they might yet run into each other. For now he was perfectly content. Each morning just before dawn he came to this beach to swim. Never in all of his wildest dreams did he imagine there was so much water. There certainly wasn’t in the underworld. The son of the devil went over to his motorcycle and took a towel from his saddlebag and began to dry himself off. Utilizing a nearby bathroom he managed to get himself dressed then stored the wet things in the saddlebag as he drove home. Taking the scenic route he drove down Hollywood Blvd and passed Lux. The story of his life, so close and yet so far away.

Inside the grey art deco tower, Lilith rolled over and wrapped her arms around Lucifer with a purr of contentment. The night’s exertions had left them exhausted but very satisfied. Both possessed supernatural stamina and could go for long periods without sleeping, but an immortal can exhaust an immortal and these two were very skilled at it. Lucifer gently stroked her arm as he continued to stare up at the ceiling. His mind was not a thousand miles away, but rather thousands of years. He was remembering the first time he had ever laid eyes on Lili. After arguing with his father he had decided to take a closer look at this little project known as humanity. He remembered tossing a boulder and hearing something cry out. Instantly he went to it only to find a woman lying on the ground where she had fallen. His first inclination was to show her exactly who and what he was. It would have been a simple matter of showing her his true face for only a fraction of a second, but seeing how scared she was already, he reconsidered.

“Who are you?” She asked, her voice shaking. “What are you?”

“Samael. I’m an angel.” He answered. He offered his hand to help her up, but at first she wouldn’t take it. “What are you called?”

“Lilith.” She answered. Again he offered her his hand and again she refused. Lucifer told her that it was merely a hand and certainly not going to bite her. Reluctantly she took it and he helped her up. His assistance, however, did not come without a price. He wanted to know just what his Father’s little creations really amounted to. Lucifer wanted to discover just how feeble and imperfect they really were. His dark eyes looked deeply into hers pulling her darkest desires to the surface. “Why don’t you tell me, what it is you really want?”

“I want . . . I want to run away from my husband.” Immediately she became embarrassed at what she had said. Lucifer started laughing. Could this be any more perfect? The first two humans ever created and one can’t stand the other. “I can’t believe I said that, but it’s true. He’s always telling me that I was made to serve him. Was I not made of the same clay that he was?” Her pretty face clouded over as she looked down at her feet, avoiding Lucifer’s gaze. “He never speaks kindly to me or wants to have any fun. He barks his orders at me each day and when the night time comes . . .” Here she cringed. “I hate the feel of his sweaty body on top of me. The only time I am happy is when I come here each day.” She looked up into his dark eyes. He was so very different from Adam. “I really don’t know why I’m telling you this.”
“I guess I just have one of those faces.” He answered, flashing a confident smile.

“Do you think I should be subservient to him?” He really hadn’t come to this place to hear someone’s marital problems. He could listen to that back at home in the Silver City. What did intrigue him was the possibility of manipulating this situation. This was truly tempting. How many ways could he exacerbate this and prove to his Father what a waste of time his little pet project was. At least a hundred scenarios went through his brain but he strangely found he didn’t want to do any of them. This woman standing before him already looked unhappy. There was no reason to add to that.

“I think . . . I think you should be free to be your own person and make your own choices . . . and be judged accordingly.” He started to leave and go back to the river only to have her catch his arm and stop him. Instantly he whirled around and caught her wrist. “Don’t . . . please.” Feeling her human wrist in his hand suddenly made him realize just how fragile she was compared to himself. With no effort he could so easily crush her. He held on to her for several minutes, contemplating the implications of this before ultimately letting her go. Her brilliant green eyes stared into him and for a moment it was both entrancing and unsettling. It was as if she could see through his human guise to the real him and he didn’t know how to react to it. This strange human woman intrigued him and he really didn’t want to walk away from her . . . at least not yet.

“Why are you so angry?” She asked.

“You wouldn’t understand.” He declared. How could she? How could any human understand the increasingly more complicated relationship between himself and his Father?

“Help me understand. You asked me what I wanted, now I want to know what it is that you really desire.”

After all these ages, he still didn’t know what had made him decide to trust her, but he had and still did. Getting out of bed, he pulled on his black boxers then glanced over at the sultry dark-haired beauty as she slept before strolling out onto his balcony. The sun was up and all of Los Angeles was alive. He thought about that fateful meeting so long ago and smiled. What a kindred spirit she had turned out to be. Little coaxing was needed when an accidental kiss turned into so much more. He really wasn’t sure how long they had carried on their little trysts there in the garden, but he did remember discovering she was gone. He had always found her sitting by that same river where they met, but one morning he was greeted by Adam instead. The very first human had known for some time about the two lovers and was quick to tell his celestial rival that she had been cast out for those indiscretions. The self-righteous attitude with which the human man looked at him forced the devil to repress his urge to rip out his internal organs with a fish hook. Bravely, or perhaps foolishly, Adam stepped forward, his face a mere inches from Lucifer’s. Conceit oozed from his words as he informed the fallen angel that his new wife Eve had been warned about him and would never fall to his charms.

Everyone knows the rest of the story, or at least they think they do. Lucifer’s favorite part was watching the deeply humbled Adam lead his wife Eve from the garden. In that moment he saw exactly what he had hoped to when he first arrived and that was just how flawed these little humans were. The only thing that bothered him was that he still didn’t know what had happened to Lilith, but he knew someone who would. As the disgraced couple left the garden an angel approached and handed them a sacred document known as Sefer Raziel HaMaalach. Lucifer recognized his brother’s gentle round face, dark almond-shaped eyes and his buzz-cut dark hair. Raziel was the angel of mysteries and usually stood so close to their Father’s throne that he heard everything that was said. He was the keeper of God’s holy secrets and protector of the Torah’s divine wisdom. At times he could be called upon to help gain a more clear understanding of the divine magic and spiritual
insights as well as assist people in hearing God’s guidance. Usually these two were at odds with one another. The devil saw this brother as a proverbial know-it-all that was unwilling to hear or consider anything that didn’t come from their Father’s mouth first.

Lucifer approached Raziel and the latter immediately shunned him. The fallen angel was not about to be ignored or disrespected, not by his little brother. He quickly caught him and slammed him against a nearby tree. The younger of the two only stared at the devil. There was no emotion in his face, only indifference. Lucifer demanded to know what had happened to Lilith. At the mention of the name, Raziel smirked.

“She was beautiful, wasn’t she?” The fallen angel was not amused and showed it by tightening his grip around his brother’s neck. The younger angel’s sneer never diminished. “Since she was so willing to follow you, our Father found a new place for her in Hell.” At this revelation, Lucifer’s dark eyes took on a slight look of contrition. Adam’s fall he had enjoyed, but Lilith’s he regretted. He released Raziel and started to walk away. “I doubt you’ll recognize her. You see, our Father reformed her into something more appropriate for her new home in one of the caves on the second level.”

“What’s on your mind, ‘old scratch’?” Lili cooed from the bed, bringing him back to the present.

“I was just thinking about an old friend of ours, ᴛɪpɪ. I’m sure you remember him. He was about so tall, slight gut, brown hair, juvenile sized credentials and the personality of a complete lob.”

“Oh, you must mean Adam.” She answered.

“Well done, my dear.” Looking back inside at his overnight guest, Lucifer smiled broadly. “You’ve won the big prize.”

“I’m already quite familiar with the ‘big prize’.” She purred, pulling the blankets up tighter around herself. Her eyes followed her friend as he came back inside and went to his bar for two cups of espresso.

She couldn’t imagine why he was wasting even a moment’s thought on Adam. To her he simply wasn’t worth it. In the same instant that she became Lucifer’s lover, she shut Adam out of her life completely and even now she refused to waste her thoughts on him. He would forever be remembered as the first human who was willingly led astray by Eve. As for herself, she became the symbol of seduction and deceit. The succubus stealing men’s souls and murdering mothers and babies. Well, the part about seducing was probably right. It was a long time before she understood exactly what she was and all that she was capable of. Condemned to Hell she had been fortunate not to be locked away in one of the rooms to endure a personal torture of her own making like so many other souls. Instead she had taken her infant and hidden herself away in an attempt to hide her appearance and keep Velius safe.

Over time Lilith had all but given up until one day when she heard Lucifer’s voice calling her from the entrance. She begged him to leave, afraid of what he might think when he saw her new form. In the end he gave her no real choice. It was either come forward or he would simply go in the cave and drag her out. Velius was asleep so summoning her courage she did as he asked, but was careful to stay in the shadows. To her surprise and horror the devil made some of the rocks around her spontaneously burn illuminating the cavern. She desperately tried to hide herself, but it was impossible. Raziel had been correct, she had been changed into a demon. Her lovely face was now framed in grey scales that ran from her left cheek bone up across her forehead to the other cheek bone. Her pretty legs were bird-like with sharp talons and her fine hands were a blend of human and beast. Far from repulsed, he instead called her ᴛɪpɪ, or ‘beautiful’ for the first time. Lucifer taught her how to put on a human guise and encouraged her to discover all of her new gifts. When
she became his most favored mistress in Hell he placed around her neck a pendent carved from a stone taken from the underworld. It was smooth and hung from a leather cord by a copper scorpion clasp. In the presence of the devil rudimentary images of flames would appear and glow in a fiery orange/white. Etched into the stone were the words: Lilith, beloved of Samael. It was the last time he would ever use his original name.

The demoness could hear him walking across the floor and smell the espresso as she sat up in bed. Handing her a cup, she took a sip, enjoying the rich, bitter flavor before setting the small mug on the night stand. The devil was about to have a drink himself, when she took it from him and playfully demanded her ‘prize’. He answered with a wicked laugh as two began to kiss. She laid back on the bed enjoying the weight of his long lithe body on top of her. Despite what myth might say, she enjoyed any and all positions. Unfortunately the moment came to screeching halt as the elevator opened.

“Lucifer, I was thinking, what if we’re going about this the wrong way. Maybe it wasn’t a snake but simply made to look like a snake bite . . .” The detective called out as soon as she exited the lift. The mood was definitely over and the devil was on his feet greeting Det. Decker in his usual charming, albeit barely dressed, manner. “I . . . I should have called first” Chloe wasn’t sure if she was more irritated at her decision not to pick up the phone so he could get the Brittinies out or at the massive ego he possessed to make him think standing in front of her with nearly nothing on was appropriate. Noticing movement from Lucifer’s bed, Chloe rolled her eyes. “I’m going to go back down to the bar for a few minutes so you can say good-bye to whichever Brittany is visiting.” She was about to turn around when Lilith appeared in the doorway wrapped in one of the devil’s sheets. Det. Decker froze and the color quickly drained from her face.

“Hello, detective.” Lili’s voice showed its uneasiness at the situation. The demoness had never intended to run into Det. Decker again. Unfortunately things were clearly not going as planned. How do you explain the supernatural to someone who steadfastly doesn’t believe in it? Chloe could only stare at her in shock. She could remember the gun fire, the scream and the look of anguish on Lucifer’s face as she died. How could any of this be possible?

“You’re dead. Adam Benoni shot you three times.”

“I got better.”

“You bled out, right there.” The detective pointed to the spot the floor right in front of the bedroom where Lilith had fallen. “I watched you die in Lucifer’s arms.”

“I tried to tell you, detective.” The fallen angel quickly interjected. “She didn’t die she went . . . home.”

“I don’t suppose you’d believe me if I told you that I was immortal?”

“I’d sooner believe you were an owl outside my daughter’s window.” Chloe retorted acidly.

“Apparently a discussion on the finer points of shape-shifting is out of the question.” The demoness softly commented to her devilish friend. Det. Decker glared at Lili and Lucifer then turned and started towards the elevator.

“Detective!” He called out.

“What?” She snapped. “I have a case to work on and I am not taking part in whatever sort of game you two are playing.”
“There’s no game going on” Lucifer insisted, then eyeing Chloe playfully added a touch of waggish humor in an attempt to diffuse the situation. “Unless of course you’re interested in a game of naked twister.”

“Gross, no.” Det. Decker was in no mood for his usual jests and lashed out. “I can’t believe I actually felt sorry for you. My heart was aching because I really thought you were mourning the loss of your friend and the whole time she was alive.”

“I assure you detective no one was trying to pull one over on you. I could explain it all to you, but you never believe me anyway.” Sometimes he was glad she didn’t believe that he was the devil, but there were other times, like this one, where it would simplify everything.

“And you!” Chloe continued turning to Lilith. “I actually believed that you really needed help and this whole time you had some sort of plan to disappear. I guess I was just a convenient dup to help pull it off.”

“Believe me none of it was planned. Your eyes were not deceiving you detective. What you saw was exactly what happened.” The demoness explained.

“Really?” Chloe sniffed. So how exactly did you pull it off? Were you wearing blood packs? Was it staged to make the Preacher-man think you were dead? Is there a trap door that I don’t know about?”

“Actually my mortal body rematerializes in Hell where once more it’s joined to its demon self and . . .” Lilith started casually only to be interrupted by the detective.

“You really are something. I mean, your ‘fiancé’ is murdered and less than a week after he’s buried you’re over here sleeping with Lucifer. I tried to overlook it because you are his friend but how many more days went by before you were dancing on stripper poles and flirting with my ex-husband? You have to be the center of attention, don’t you?”

While Lilith could appreciate the detective’s anger and disbelief at the situation, she was not about to explain herself to anyone. Nor was she going to stand there and be judged by some human who had no idea what she had gone through. Perhaps to outside eyes it did seem odd that she would run into the devil’s arms so quickly after Christian’s funeral. She had loved him with all of her heart and even now she would give almost anything to have him back. When she came to Lux after his funeral her desire had nothing to do with pleasure, but the need to feel protected and forget her pain and emptiness. The pole dancing incident was simply a moment when she had drank far too much. Giving up her powers meant she also lost her immortal metabolism so getting drunk came too easily. Thank God she was whole again. Why had she flirted with Dan? That was simply a moment’s fun and chance to be her old self. It was probably the only thing she might consider a mistake on her part. Although he did possess a very nice body. Listening to Chloe Decker’s lecture on her behavior did not sit well. The demoness’ nails began to lengthen as the two women glared at each other followed by the low growl of a panther. Lucifer heard it and was instantly aware of the imminent danger if it was not quickly diffused. Immediately his face became hard and his expression became threatening as he looked at the demoness.

“Lilit piŋvāŋka.” His warning to her to back off did not illicit the immediate response he expected. While he was cognizant of why Lili felt insulted, he knew her temper and was not about to let her touch Chloe. Under the circumstances, how could the detective not feel betrayed? Regretfully there wasn’t a way to make her understand without lying which he was not about to do. He watched the demoness and could see the pupils of her eyes begin to change shape to something more cat-like. In response he took a step towards her ready to unleash Hell if he had too. It was a tense moment before Lilith finally softened and casually leaned down and picked up her bra from the bottom of the
steps. Disaster avoided, Lucifer turned his attention once more to the lovely detective. “I assure you detective that no one here has been deceiving you. There are no trap doors, no special effects. I can’t offer you any real concrete evidence that what we’ve been telling you is true. You’re simply going to have to trust me. Nothing untoward is going on here.” He waited, but she still looked at him with skepticism. “I can’t force you to accept my answer, but sometimes the simplest explanation is the truth.” He flashed his most charming smile at her before continuing. “You know that I am all about the truth.”

This was unsatisfactory and yet somehow the detective finally conceded. Lucifer was many things, but one thing Chloe was sure about was his honesty. The most he ever deceived her was by simply not telling her what he was planning. His word was his bond. The tension in the room eased and after giving one more look of warning to Lilith, the devil went up the steps to his bedroom to get his espresso. Before he disappeared into his room the detective caught sight of his back. She was familiar with the two large scars, but this was something new. There were five long scratches from his shoulder to his waist and they appeared deep despite the fact that they were partially healed.

“My God.” Chloe winced at the marks. “What happened to your back?” For a moment she stretched out her hand to touch them, but before she could, Lucifer pulled on his robe and turned around. “Was that from . . . finger nails?”

“Claws actually, but close enough.” Lili responded as she began to walk around the penthouse gathering up pieces of her clothing. The detective looked at her, still shocked. “I may have gotten a bit carried away. What can I say, passionate fighting can sometimes lead to equally passionate . . .”

“I really don’t want to know.” Chloe interrupted.

“Well, you asked.”

Lucifer stooped and picked up Lili’s lace panties from where they were hanging on a lamp next to the bed and held them up. The demoness walked over and started to take them only to have the devil hold onto them resulting in a playful game of tug o’ war lasting only a few moments before he finally released them. He then disappeared into his dressing room leaving Lili to finish gathering her belongings. The momentary flirting and the various state of undress that these two were in made Chloe feel like a bit like a voyeur spying on two lovers.

She knew she was being ridiculous and in truth the detective was hardly the jealous type, but here lately she had found herself feeling just a hint of envy. She paid no attention to the endless parade of women that came through the revolving door that was his bedroom because she surmised long ago that to him it was nothing but a moment’s pleasure. Her first twinge of distrust came when she thought Lucifer was spending a lot of time with Ella, but that had quickly been dispelled. He had explained that everything was completely professional. Unfortunately she knew that with Lilith, the relationship was quite the opposite. She could remember what Lili had told her that night in the hospital while waiting for a doctor to come and set her broken hand. ‘He was my first friend, my first real love . . . my family. He is woven into my soul.’ Given the way she had seen them look at each other, she believed it. Of course the detective was also inclined to believe that there was a more romantic attachment between them despite Lili’s denials.

The devil remerged dressed in one of his tailored black suits with a deep burgundy shirt and his hair properly combed. As always he cut a dashing figure. Lilith was looking him over as he straightened his French cuffs and clasped his silver cufflinks.

“Don’t you ever wear anything but suits?” The demoness asked as she leaned against the doorway to his bedroom, her clothing all gathered up. “Blue suits with white shirts, blue suits with blue shirts, suits with vests, suits without vests, blacks suits with maroon shirts, white shirts, black, purple or
even blue shirts. Always with a nice hanky and cufflink combo. You are aware that Prada makes other men’s clothes, right? So does Burberry, Ted Baker, Hugo Boss and Canali.”

“Yes, but why mess with perfection? At least I actually wear a whole outfit.” Lucifer argued, pointing at the flimsy attire in her hands. “You seem hell bent on wearing skinny jeans that show off your butt and shirts that barely manage to hide your cupcakes.”

“I’ve never once had anyone complain about my bum or my boobs.” She answered smugly. “I can’t imagine why people choose to wear clothes in the first place. It’s not natural. Your skin should be allowed to breathe. We never wore anything in Eden.”

“Yes, well, I remember Adam and believe me nobody wanted to see that. Why do you think Eve was so eager to bite the apple?”

“I have no idea what you two are talking about.” Chloe interjected.

“That’s probably best.” Answered the devil and his consort.

Seizing the opportunity, Lilith went to Lucifer’s dressing room and bathroom so she could finally get herself ready for the day. Alone, the fallen angel decided use the moment to discuss the subject that had brought the detective to his home in the first place, the Levi Sethos murder. He had always enjoyed the detective’s sheer determination to see her cases to the conclusion, but not this time. He really wished that this one time she would simply leave well enough alone.

“I thought the Preacher-man case was closed?”

“No, I said it was set aside for now. Since when are you so reluctant to punish the guilty?” She asked.

“The guilty should be punished, but maybe in this case I think the good padre got exactly what he deserved.” He answered. The detective looked at him skeptically. “Who knows, it could be any number of people that the man wronged. Someone that he never even listed in his confession.”

“Or it could be Velius Haides.” Det. Decker charged.

“Alright, you’re the one always touting the importance of evidence and following the rules, where is your proof?” He returned smugly. She hated it when he was right. “There is nothing to indicate what happened in that cell from the time Mr. Haides is seen on camera to when the padre was found dead. I think you’re going to have to let this one go, detective.” He asserted as Lilith came back into the room. She had only caught the last few words, but the look of frustration on Chloe’s face was enough to tell her something was up.

“Is everything alright?” The demoness asked.

“Of course.” Lucifer assured her, smiling brightly. The detective excused herself, politely explaining that she needed to get down to the police station.

The devil watched her as she left, his brilliant black eyes following her as she got into the elevator and disappeared behind the doors. Lilith was watching him, bemused at the notion that the Lord of Hell could ever do anything as human as falling in love with someone. It was actually rather sweet. Her own children would have argued that she, herself, was incapable of such an attachment, but she had discovered differently.

“I don’t think she likes me.” Lilith commented as she slipped her foot into one of her black platform pumps.
“Why wouldn’t she like you?” he asked playfully.

“For the same reason most woman don’t. I’m a threat.” She responded as she looked around for her other shoe.

“A threat? To Det. Decker?” He scoffed. He couldn’t imagine Chloe feeling threatened by anyone. She had seen women around Lucifer so many times that he couldn’t understand why Lilith would be any different. The demoness suddenly located her other pump beneath the leather couch. Slipping it on her foot, she then went over to her old friend and smiled. Maybe he couldn’t see that the good detective had feelings for him, but she could.

“You’re adorable when you’re naïve.” She turned to leave, but Lucifer caught her arm and pulled her back into his embrace.

“And our offspring?” He asked.

“What about our offspring?”

“When are you planning to bring him here?”

“Ah, that.” she mused. This was a meeting she had been picturing in her mind for ages, but now that it was happening, she was actually nervous. “Tomorrow night. I will bring him to Lux tomorrow night.”
Carfentanil, such an interesting drug. Ten-thousand times stronger than morphine and a hundred times more potent the fentanyl. It’s used as a general anesthetic for large animals such as Rhinos and elephants, and certainly not readily available to the public. Kaleb stared at the two vials that he had taken from his friend Mitch’s office. It was hard to imagine that anything as small as these vials could be so deadly. He really didn’t like stealing from his friend, but he knew that he would never just give it to him. Mitch and Kaleb had been friends for over fifty years. They met in the seventh grade and were best man at each other’s weddings. Both were doctors, but in very different fields. Kaleb had been fascinated by genetics while Mitch became a veterinary specialist focusing on zoological medicine. When Mitch went overseas to study exotic wildlife in Africa and Asia they lost touch for a few years, but once he returned to LA it was like old times again.

The two friends always had lunch on Tuesdays at the exact same local sandwich shop. Normally the two would meet there, but today Kaleb made a point of meeting him at his office at the LA Zoo. While Mitch was busy dealing with one of the animals, Kaleb used the opportunity to visit the store room. There it was, Carfentanil, or Wildnil as it was marketed, sitting on the shelf in glass vials. He really didn’t know if this could knock out an angel or kill one. He didn’t know if it would have any effect at all, but he was willing to find out. He reasoned that if it did kill him then it would be an excellent opportunity to dissect and study the creature’s genetic make-up. Learn exactly what makes something human and what makes it divine. If it only knocked him out then perhaps he could figure out a way to secure it so he could ask it all the deep questions that have plagued man for ages. If it didn’t work at all then he kept hearing Cary Grant’s words from The Bishops Wife echoing in his mind. ‘Don’t you realize that as an angel, I could destroy you with a bolt of lightning?’

Lunch went well. Mitch was completely unaware of the theft and Kaleb wanted to keep it that way. He really didn’t like using him in such a fashion, but this could be (for lack of a better description) a discovery of biblical proportions. Imagine every bible story being true and having something more tangible then just faith to believe in. The chance to put a face to God. The opportunity to gain all of this was worth bending some ethics and breaking a few rules. Of course it would be all for nothing if he had no way to contain a celestial being. Fortunately he knew of an abandoned hospital not too far away from where he lived. Driving home from his lunch with Mitch, he stopped there and began to walk around the grounds.

Semangelof Psychiatric Hospital closed its doors some ten years before due to financial issues and had remained vacant since then. The five story mission revival building had once been a brilliant white, but the paint was faded and beginning to peel. The once well-manicured lawns and landscaping were now overgrown and unruly. A few of the letters on the outside of the building spelling out its name had long since disappeared as had the sign that used to sit at the street entrance. At first he wasn’t sure how he would get inside until he found a side door that someone had jimmed open. If he decided to use this place, he would certainly have to correct that problem. He definitely didn’t want to get caught, at least not before he had proof of his findings and could justify it.

He walked the halls and found that not much had changed since its days in operation except that that it was all covered in dust that had accumulated over time and debris that had been left behind. In one room he found stacks of old patient files that had sat where they were left after the facility’s closure. Thumbing through he found a rather amusing notation regarding a patient that claimed to hear ‘cat’ voices rather than ‘people’ voices. Another file spoke of a patient that would spend hours carving soap bars with plastic tableware. Leaving that room and continuing down the hall he would occasionally pass an abandoned wheel chair or a gurney that was little more than a metal frame and a mesh top. There were the remnants of abandoned equipment lying around as well as sticks of
furniture such as desks and chairs. The walls were decorated in the obligatory graffiti. Turning
down one wing he found exactly what he had been hoping for, padded rooms.

Each cell was about ten feet long and eight feet wide with walls covered in leather cork-crumb filled
pouches. The door was made of reinforced steel and except for the observation window it was
covered in the same sort of padding. It also had a strong lock that could only be opened from the
outside. Kaleb ran his hands along the wall and was pleased to see that it was all still in good
condition. He also tested the lock and thrilled to see that it was in perfect working order. There was
still a bit of work to be done, but not too much. He visited the local home improvement store and
purchased their strongest chains and locks, lanterns as well as walkie-talkies before going to a
welding supply shop where he paid for tanks of argon gas as well as their delivery. If they asked, he
would simply tell them that it was for a project with this college students.

After that was taken care of he went home to find that Marian was once again passed out on the
couch while The Bishops Wife played on the television. He shook his head then went into the garage
and got his tool box and put it in his car. He then went into the spare bedroom and pulled the twin
mattress from the bed then strapped it securely to the top of the vehicle along with the box springs.
He then folded the blanket and sheets and placed them in a bag and into the car as well. His head
was pounding when he came back inside. Two hours sleep in a parked car on the beach didn’t make
for a restful night.

His vehicle loaded up, he drove back to the abandoned hospital and hauled the items inside. Kaleb
went from door to door securing them with the heavy chains and locks from the inside except for the
one he was using. That door he chained and secured from the outside. He lay the box springs and
mattress on the floor of the padded cell then covered them with blankets and sheets. With his tools
he drilled a hole that was just big enough to connect a nylon hose to the wall and the tank regulator.
He then connected one of the tanks of argon gas to it. Whatever samples he took he could easily
transport after hours to the college and examine them in his lab. He only had one problem now. He
wasn’t going to be able to move a full grown man around on his own. It would take at least two to
get him onto a table or get him into a car without anyone noticing.

More troubling was the question of who he could trust. Anyone he confided in would instantly think
he was mad. Walking up to someone, even a good friend, and telling them you saw an angel
generally only garners strange looks before offering a weak excuse and making a hasty departure.
Driving home he started to list all the people he felt he could trust with this information and found
himself woefully shy on names. It wasn’t until he pulled into his driveway that someone finally
came to mind. Matthew Willard was a colleague and a trained anesthesiologist that worked with
medical interns. He was also a deeply religious man, or at least he gave every appearance that he
was. The two had engaged in many arguments regarding the existence of God since Kaleb
renounced his beliefs. What better way to make amends then to show Matt that he was right all
along?

He took out his cell phone and called his friend asking him to join him for a late night meal at a
nearby diner. Dr. Willard was surprised to hear from him and was quick to accept the invite. Kaleb
never got out of his car and instead drove straight to the restaurant. The two ate and swapped
amusing stories about students and patients. Dr. Willard had numerous anecdotes regarding things
he had heard patients say when coming out of anesthesia. His favorite involved an attractive woman
close to his own age that looked him right in the eye and said ‘before you f*ck me, at least take me to
dinner and give me a kiss.’ This brought tears to Kaleb’s eyes as he laughed. He in turn told stories
about his students. Tales of cheating were usually at the top of his list, but there was one that
entertained him more. He had one student who was one of his best, but had a knack for off-the-wall
behavior. Once he arrived with a large pepperoni pizza and proceeded to eat it while doing his lab
work. Another time he noticed a girl walking by the window and he immediately stopped taking
notes, got up and climbed out the window to give her his cell number.

As the friends laughed the waiter brought the check, which Kaleb immediately snatched up instigating the age old friendly argument about who was going to pay. Despite Matt’s best arguments he was unable to convince his companion to let him at least get the tip. As the waiter walked away Matthew took one final drink of his iced tea and was about to call it a night when Kaleb asked him to give him just a minute more of his time. At first he wasn’t sure how to begin such a strange conversation but after a moment he found his voice.

“Over the years how many times have you and I argued about faith, God and the church . . .” He started to say.

“I don’t want to fight with you, Kay, not today. Let’s agree to disagree.” Dr. Willard quickly interjected.

“What if I told you that you’re absolutely correct and I can prove it?”

“You have proof of God?” Matthew laughed at the notion. “Listen, I am always there for you and I know you’ve had a rough time since Asher’s death, but I have to wonder if the stress isn’t getting to you.”

“I-I’m not crazy, but I can see why you might think that.” Kaleb leaned forward conspiratorially. “Believe me, if I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes, I would have thought I was a damn liar too.”

“I’m not calling you a liar.” The doctor pointed out.

“Just . . . just keep an open mind and watch this.” He picked up his phone and brought up the video then handed it to his friend. Matt started the video prepared to see some third rate magician’s trick presented as a miracle for the masses. Seeing the man in the video and the immense wings on his back his face became serious and pale blue eyes began to scrutinize the images. It was difficult to make out all the fine details on a screen measuring five inches. Hoping for a better look he suggested they go back to his home. He would be able to get a much better look there.

At Matthews place they uploaded the video onto his computer so he could see it better. True, he was no expert, but he couldn’t find the cheat. They moved so naturally that it couldn’t be a contraption on his back. He might have thought it was CGI, but he knew that his old friend knew nothing about that sort of programming. He even considered the possibility of an actor whose gimmick was dressing up as an angel, but that still couldn’t explain how the wings could move with such fluidity.

For an hour the two men didn’t speak. Kaleb waited patiently unsure if his friend would think he was mad or believe what he was seeing. Matthew didn’t know what to say. He just watched it over and over. There had to be an explanation but he found none. What was the famous phrase of Sherlock Holmes? *When you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.* He was a spiritual man and yet he found himself looking at something he couldn’t accept on faith alone. He took off his glasses and looked over at his friend unable to speak.

“He lives in the same apartment building that my son did. The manager says that is name is Velius Haides and I ran one of those online background checks and there’s nothing about him before a few weeks ago.”

“What exactly are you planning to do?”

“I don’t know.” Kaleb admitted. “I want to catch him, study him . . . get answers.” His brown eyes were alight with wonder at the possibilities. “Think about it. People have been fighting over religion
for centuries. Debates over which God is the right one, which religion is correct and whether or not he exists at all. You and I have the chance to put it all to rest. Isn’t that worth pursuing?"

Matthew sat there contemplating what he had seen and all the ramifications of this outlandish proposal. How many archeologists spent their lives on digs trying to prove if some ancient settlement was a biblical city? How many churches claimed to possess a body part taken from a saint only to have another church claim to possess the same part? Countless Indiana Jones’ were out there fruitlessly searching for the Holy Grail and Arc of the Covenant only to die never finding it. Here was a chance to study real divinity. How could he say no?
Many hours and two pots of coffee later, the two men had formulated their plans and early the next morning Kaleb was officially on a leave of absence from the university. This didn’t take much convincing since nearly all of the staff and administration at the college were aware of Marian’s drinking. It was assumed that he was taking this leave to dry her out. Until that moment the genetics teacher had never realized just how transparent his problems were. Each of the men knew what was expected of him and the role they were assigned. There was still much to do, but the two friends agreed to meet later that evening at the apartment building so they could acquire their subject.

Everything seemed so perfect as the moon began to appear in the sky and dusk began to settle on the city. Partiers began to line up for their chance to enter Lux. The club itself was heating up with hot bodies, drinks and music. Stevie Nicks’ voice filled each corner of the club as the DJ played ‘Rooms on fire’. Always a woman impossible to miss, Lilith stood out in her black velvet fringe, spaghetti strap dress. The outfit and the way she wore her long dark hair pulled back into a bun with a silver feathered headband gave her all the appearance of a fetching ghost from the buildings roaring twenties past. Quick to greet his old friend, Lucifer was surprised to see her alone. He had naturally assumed that she would be bringing their Nephilim offspring with her. Seating herself at the bar she explained that the night was only beginning and that Velius would be here later. Patience is a virtue and there was plenty of time.

Fortunately neither had any difficulty finding ways to pass the time. Before an hour had passed Lucifer had already been approached three separated times by three very enticing women. One had even offered to include Lili in their games. The demoness looked at the sultry female with bemusement. As if she would ever need this harlots help to get into the Lord of Hell’s bed. Besides, she had already had two men bring her drinks and try to pick her up. Another drink was given to her by the bartender on behalf of a gentlemen who was apparently a bit shyer then the others. This one she was far more tempted to pursue.

“Lead me not into temptation.” She commented as she looked longingly at the shy man. “Oh who am I kidding, I know a shortcut.” The demoness angled her body towards him making eye contact then picking up the drink he had sent her, she smiled and took a drink. She was about to motion him over when she became distracted by a constant clicking sound. Lili turned to her friend to find out if he could hear it only to realize it was coming from the fallen angel’s continuous opening and closing of his lighter. “Are you actually nervous?”

“Of course not.” He answered quickly. “Why would I be nervous? It’s not as though I haven’t laid eyes on him before.”

“True.” She wasn’t buying it of course, but she was in no mood to argue. Lucifer was not someone in tune with human emotions. He was simply learning as he went or seeking advice from his therapist. The devil continued to fidget with his lighter while his dark black eyes scanned the crowd that was quickly filling up Lux for Velius’ face.

“I thought you said he would be here?”

“He will.” She finally snatched the lighter from his hand to end the incessant clicking sound. “His word is his bond and if he says he will be here then he will. Besides he’s not due for another hour.” She took the silver zippo and slid it down into the strapless bra she was wearing.

“Do you honestly believe I won’t reach in there and take it back?”
“Do you think I will stop you?”

The two eyed each other playfully for a moment before another woman stepped up to the devil. She said nothing, but the hungry look in her eyes made it obvious what she wanted. The suggestive blond ran her hand down his chest and planted a passionate kiss on his lips. She walked a few steps then turned around with a look that was clearly an invitation to follow her. He obviously liked the look of her and wouldn’t have minded partaking, but he was already booked for the night. He turned and smiled smugly at his lady friend but Lili didn’t seem to be the least bit affected or impressed. A moment passed and the bartender, ‘man-bun’ as he was called, came over and handed Lilith a drink known as ‘tie me to the bedpost’ along with a note scrawled on a napkin.

“Another drink bought for you. That would make your forth. Let’s see, that would mean we’ve both received an equal number of indecent proposals.” He smiled.

“Not exactly,” Lilith smiled and showed him the note on the napkin. It had three different phone numbers and the names Brittany, Brittanie, and Britney. “Aren’t they your playmates?”

“Sometimes.” He remarked. “They do possess a zest for pleasure.” Turning around he glanced at the four drinks that had been sent to Lilith from various admirers. They were as varied as the individuals who sent them. “Do you plan on drinking any of these?”

“No really, help yourself.” Normally she would have already drank each and every one, but her mind was full of anticipation. Long ago she had given up hope of Lucifer and Velius ever really knowing each other, but now the moment was soon to be and she couldn’t have been happier. She just had to remain patient. Another pretty young woman sauntered up to the devil and slid a cocktail napkin into his pocket then smiled seductively as she walked away. Lucifer looked at the napkin and saw her phone number and measurements written on it and smiled. “Well, ‘old scratch’, perhaps one evening you and I should have an official contest to see which of us has the most allure.”

“Now that would be fun.” He said as he raised his eyebrow and then his glass. Lili picked up the drink sent to her from the Brittanies and toasted the idea. The two were certainly well matched for such a contest. The fallen angel and Queen of the Lilim were carnally irresistible to human men and women alike. The only difference was that Lilith had demonic tools at her disposal that would enslave each and every man in this room while simultaneously repelling her competition. Even angels were not immune, although the pull was not so strong. It was instruments like this that allowed her to build a sort of ‘harem’ of her own, housing souls that were forever pining for her to the point of pain. Each of them wore her mark burned on their chest and her name etched in their blood on their forehead. Fortunately for mankind she had little desire to take souls and preferred to attract a night’s pleasure using nothing but her own skill. It was these arts that made humans summon her. One such human was the infamous Elizabeth Woodville who had hopes of catching the attention of King Edward IV of England.

Lucifer readily admitted that he was like walking heroin and that the results of that particular addiction never ended well, but he had never wielded it as a weapon. He had no desire for that ability anyway. Anyone who knew him, knew that he much preferred lust over love. It was far less complicated and certainly more fun. Not to say that he couldn’t love. The devil and demoness certainly possessed a deep emotional attachment to one another. A kind of love as it were, but it wasn’t romantic. The strange thing was that here lately he had begun to notice a change between himself and Chloe. He had been surprised at how much she had seemed to care when she realized he had placed himself in the path of a sniper. She didn’t know what he had done to Uriel or how much he felt he deserved punishment for it. She only saw how torn apart he was.

Lucifer had also been surprised and completely taken back when after telling Chloe that her father
would have been proud of her, she hugged him. It was the simplest of acts and yet it was one he was anything but used to. He still wasn’t quite sure if the detective had actually been jealous when she questioned him about spending time with Ella, but it certainly seemed that way. Of course there was also Lilith’s comment about Det. Decker seeing the demoness as a threat. He marveled at the possibility, but would not allow himself to give it any weight.

“Tell me, Ajakāṇa, have you ever encountered someone that your gifts didn’t work on?” He asked suddenly, catching his lady-friend off guard.

“Odd question, but yes.” Her emerald eyes looked off across the club towards the warm memory of a man whose smile shone brighter than the sun. Piercing dark eyes that showed vulnerability and tender affection. She could recall the sound of his voice and the smell of his skin. “Only once.” This was quite a revelation and the devil’s curiosity was piqued. He didn’t think anyone was immune to Lilith’s charms when she invoked them. “Christian.” She smiled at the sound of his name. “I discovered he was impervious to my charms when I was trying to get out of working one day. I didn’t know why at the time. I just assumed it was your Father’s sense of humor having fun at my expense. Then one day I noticed four paleo Hebrew symbols tattooed on his chest. The sacred moniker that renders me powerless.” She furrowed her brow and grew silent. She didn’t want to talk about Christian. His memory never visited her without making her feel as though she was bleeding inwardly. She still had not been able to make herself visit the cemetery. Wanting to drown what she was feeling she finished the rest of the cocktail then smiled up at Lucifer and quickly changed the subject. “So what has that delicious detective been up to?”

“Det. Decker? You saw her only yesterday.”

“Not that one. I’m talking about Dan.” The moment she mentioned the name of Detective Espinoza, Lucifer looked ill. She really didn’t know which she enjoyed more, the memory of Dan trying hard to seem uninterested in her and failing or the way it disgusted the devil. Lilith firmly believed that someday he would come to her of his own free will and she would make him scream her name in pleasure after she discovered whether or not there was a six pack beneath his t-shirt.

It was probably a good thing that Velius wasn’t due to arrive for another hour. The last thing he would have wanted to hear was his mother discussing her sexual fantasies. Lathering up his face, he picked up his straight razor and, with a surgeon’s precision, began to shave leaving his sideburns and goatee. He then took out his comb and parted his dark brown hair on the left, then swept the thick mane to the right. Like his mother’s pretty locks, Velius had hair that was straight and sleek which was quite different from the devil. Lucifer kept his hair short and meticulously groomed, but if he deigned to let it grow out then it inevitably turned into a mass of black curls.

Velius splashed some cologne on his face then dressed himself in a nice deep green dress shirt that he had picked out for the evening. He wanted to look his best, not just because he was formally meeting his father, but also because he had heard quite a bit about Lux and its reputation. What better way to end the day then with a beautiful woman on your arm. As Velius buttoned his cuffs, his phone began ringing. His initial assumption was that it was his mother checking up on him, but he didn’t recognize the number. Answering the call, he was pleasantly surprised to hear the voice of the pretty little forensic scientist.

“Ah, Ella, I hope this means that you’ve decided to give me the benefit of the doubt.” He had honestly believed he had heard the last of her at the coffee shop. He didn’t blame her of course. Even if she believed he was innocent of the crime, it could still prove very detrimental to her career and reputation. He really didn’t want to do that to her.

Since leaving Hell he had discovered that, like his parents, he had a certain charm that women and
some men found irresistible and he rather enjoyed it. Ella had not been that way though. She had obviously been attracted to him of course, but it wasn’t exactly the same. She was too nice a person to be used for a moment’s dalliance and he had no desire to pursue anything more. He was about to explain this to her when he heard his doorbell. He wasn’t expecting anyone and in fact was pressed for time. No doubt his mother had already checked the hour. Surely this wouldn’t take long, though. He apologized and asked Ella to hold for a moment.

When he opened the door he was greeted by a tall, lanky man with grey hair and brown eyes. Velius didn’t know Kaleb and couldn’t recall having ever seen him before. To him, he was nothing more than another inconsequential human banging on his door needing something. Polite as ever, the older man apologized for interrupting his evening and explained that he lived in apartment #M110-A and that his car wasn’t working. He asked if he could borrow a three-quarter inch socket wrench which Velius was more than happy to lend him.

As Hell’s only son turned and walked towards the kitchen, Kaleb followed quietly behind. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a syringe he had filled with carfentanil. As soon as Velius reached his tool box, the older man jabbed the needle into him and injected the drug. Instantly the half-breed angel whirled around and sent his attacker flying against the wall with barely a push from one hand. The professor didn’t move right away. Every inch of his body hurt as he mentally assessed his injuries. He was sure there were no broken bones or internal bleeding, but dear God the pain. Velius started to walk towards the older man intent on learning what this was about, but he barely made it two steps before he began to feel weak and light-headed. The professor was still struggling to catch his breath when in a moment of quick thinking Velius used his phone to snap a picture of Kaleb before collapsing to his knees. Suddenly he could hear Ella’s voice asking him what was going on. He was fading fast and having difficulty forming words.

“Get . . . Lucifer . . .” He managed to say before hanging up and sliding the phone beneath his over-stuffed chair. Kaleb managed to pick himself off the floor just as Velius passed out.

Not wanting to waste even a second, Kaleb ran and called out for Matt to come and help him. His friend hurried through the door to find his co-conspirator checking their victim’s vitals. Velius heart rate had slowed considerably but not stopped and his breathing was shallow but remained steady. If there was any doubt that this man was an angel, the mere fact that he was still alive after being dosed with such a powerful drug removed it. Together the men carried him to the car and set him into the back seat.

Matt immediately began driving while Kaleb stayed with their prize and took blood and tissue samples. It was not an easy task and more than once he had made jagged cuts or missed the vein altogether. He might have felt bad for the pain he was causing, but the speed at which he could see this creatures skin heal, awed him. Checking Velius’ pulse, he noticed that it was getting stronger and quickly ordered his friend to drive faster while he prepared and administered another dose of carfentanil. The last thing he wanted was to be trapped inside a vehicle with a being that could literally rip his spine out.

Velius had no idea what was happening. In his drugged mind he was walking through the throng of revelers at Lux. Everywhere he looked he saw fine looking men and women drinking, laughing and dancing. The only peculiarity was that each and every one of them was moving in slow motion. The only exceptions were Lucifer and Lilith. The devil sat at his piano and the demoness was snuggled up close beside him. A cigarette burned in the ashtray and a glass partially filled with liquor sat next to it. The fallen angel was playing music, but everything seemed blurry and twisted as sights and sounds became strange and nonsensical. He shook his head and everything became normal again. There were no voices just the notes coming from the piano and after a moment he recognized the song as *Silent Lucidity*. He tried to walk towards the center of the club to speak to his
parents, but it seemed that no matter what he did the path was blocked. He tried to call out to them but no sound came from his lips. Within the confines of his dream, Velius had found a new kind of Hell. To be so close to the ones who could help him and yet be unable to reach them.

The car drove down the road putting miles between them and Meridian Pointe apartments. Time ticked by very fast for the abductors, but inside Lux it moved slowly and even the devil couldn’t change it. The promised time of their progeny’s arrival came and went. Soon another hour passed with still no Velius. The devil’s patience was beginning to wear thin and his companion couldn’t blame him. She had no idea what was keeping her son and she was becoming more than a little embarrassed by his rudeness. She could only imagine that he was busy with some delicious looking tart who managed to capture his interest. If that was the case, she would make sure he regretted it. An attractive young lady stepped over to the bar and the fallen angel glanced down at the watch on her small wrist. It was nearly a quarter past ten. The night was still young and he had no intention of wasting it.

“Clearly our spawn has found something or someone of greater interest to spend his evening with.” Lucifer said, setting his glass on the bar and straightening his jacket and cuffs. He gave all the appearance of being indifferent, but Lilith knew him better than that. Perhaps it was the cold knife-like look in his eyes or the subtle way his jaw set itself. Yes, the devil was angry and not likely to forget this slight.

“This isn’t like him.” Lilith argued, and indeed it wasn’t. She couldn’t imagine why he hadn’t shown up as promised.

“Well,” The fallen angel cast a dark smile on his lady friend. “Perhaps he had a change of heart, or maybe our little accident wasn’t as interested in knowing me as you thought he was.”

“That’s not true. He has always wanted to be acknowledged by you.” She insisted.

“How do you know?” His voice was sharp as his indignation rose.

“I know because he spent every day of his life, since he was big enough to go about on his own, sitting in a crevice high above your throne watching you.”

“Maybe he has seen enough then.” He could only imagine what must have gone through his offspring’s mind as he looked down at the Sovereign of Hell’s red, evil visage as he mete out a myriad of sadistic tortures to humans naughty enough to warrant punishment. A dark laugh issued from him “I mean, just because he is my own flesh and blood, why should I expect differently? He grew up in Hell, didn’t he? What else could he see but a fallen angel . . . a tormentor of souls cast out of Heaven.”

“Dear God, it must be hard living inside your head.” Lili responded with a roll her eyes. “Believe it or not, all of humanity has not been issued a set of balls with which to plunge you into a giant metaphoric dunk tank.”

“Are you so sure about that?” He was no longer smiling.

“Exactly how long do you plan on romancing this image you carry of yourself as victim?” The words barely passed her lips and he stepped towards the demoness putting his face inches from hers. His normally sparkling black eyes were now glowing red and threatening. She was not afraid and certainly was not about to cower before him. She remained as defiant as ever.

How far things might have gone was hard to say. From the corner of his eye, Lucifer noticed Ella coming towards them and he quickly tried to adopt a more pleasant demeanor, but his mood was still
less than amiable. Ella was not her usual cheery self either as she approached the devil. Lilith turned away and began to sip on the drinks that had been sent to her. Whatever business they had was between the two of them and did not include her. Lucifer couldn’t imagine why the pretty forensic scientist was visiting him, but the look on her face told him that it wasn’t for pleasure.

“Ah, Miss Lopez, what brings you to Lux?”

“I think . . . I think I might need your help.” She said looking around the room uncertain.

“Really?” Lucifer was surprised to hear this. She wasn’t one to ask for a favor, at least not from him. Ella was resourceful and usually had connections of her own that helped her get things done. It could be rather advantageous having brothers who may or may not have professions that were less than legal. She also had this unwavering belief in her faith that the fallen angel couldn’t help but view with equal parts amusement and cynicism.

“Look, it’s probably nothing, but your name was the last thing I heard him say so I came to you.” She sighed. Lucifer was intrigued.

“So then, who exactly is this person who claims to know me?”

Ella looked at the floor rather sheepishly. She was going to have to come clean about her coffee shop tête-à-tête with a suspect. True, they never even so much as held hands, but it was still inappropriate and could get her into a lot of trouble. What she was counting on was that this was Lucifer and a small amount of impropriety was not likely to faze him. Besides, she had indulged him when he needed her forensic expertise regarding a super creepy, ‘not-a-grave’, grave. Surely he could humor her the same way.

“Okay, so here’s the thing, the other night I ran into that guy that you and Detective Decker are investigating, you know Velius Haides . . .” At the mention of his name, Lilith immediately turned around. Anything involving her son was of interest to her.

“Why are you investigating him?” The demoness asked. Ella turned and her eyes grew wide as she looked into the Lili’s face. She had never seen the body, or even the crime scene really, but she had heard of Lilith’s death at the hands of a gunman. By the time she had gotten to the penthouse to gather forensic evidence, Lucifer (against Chloe’s advice) had already cleaned up the blood and anything else. All that remained was Adam Benoni’s confession. She couldn’t believe that Lilith was sitting here right in front of her.

“You’re dead.”

“One of the perks of being immortal actually. Now why is this Velius Haides being investigated?”

“It seems he was caught on camera visiting the good padre, Levi Sethos, shortly before he was found dead.” Lucifer explained. The intense look he gave the demoness silently asked that she play along. The fallen angel took one of the fruity drinks that were sent to Lili and handed it to Ella. While she took a drink he leaned close to his lady friend’s ear and whispered, ‘avar, Akāyānta ētiyum ceytāra nirūpikka mutiyātu’. This assurance that the police could not prove their son had done anything didn’t make her feel any better. Turning back to Ella, the devil was curious to hear the rest of her explanation. “Now about your friend . . .”

“Oh, yeah, um well, long story short, he gave me his number and tonight I decided to call it. While we were talking I heard his door bell and he asked me to hold for a minute. I could hear him talking to a man then after a moment I heard strange noises like a struggle or something.” Lilith blanched and grabbed hold of her old friends arm. “I called out his name and he sounded like he was trying to
tell me something, but I couldn’t understand it. The last thing he said was ‘Get Lucifer’.”

Suddenly it was apparent why Velius had never showed up at Lux. Lilith tried to convince herself that her son was fine, but her heart had all but stopped beating. Who on this earth could possibly hurt him? Belying his true concern, Lucifer reassured Ella that the young man was undoubtedly fine, but to ease her mind he would go over and check it out for her. As was her way, the forensic expert threw her arms around him in a big hug which he begrudgingly accepted. As soon as she was gone the devil and demon wasted no time getting into the corvette and speeding off to Velius’ apartment.
Lilith was silent as she drove through town with the devil at her side. Lucifer glanced at her from time to time, but she never noticed. She was silently berating herself for ever allowing Velius his freedom from Hell in exchange for opening the portal for her. This was all her fault. She should have left Levi Sethos’ punishment in the hands of her friend the Prince of Darkness and his finest torturer, Mazikeen.

Pulling up to Velius’ apartment Lili leapt from the corvette before Lucifer could bring it to a complete stop then ran straight for the apartment door. On her way she passed Velius’ motorcycle, still parked out front. The devil managed to catch up with her just as she opened the lock. If she had been slightly more patient she wouldn’t have needed to fumble with the key. The devil would have had the door opened in less than a second. One of the perks of divinity it would seem. Her eyes were immediately drawn to the large spider web of cracks in a framed print above the couch that continued into the dry wall.

“You should see the other chap.” It was the fallen angel’s attempt at a joke, but not a very good one. Lilith didn’t even hear it, instead she ran into the bedroom calling out for her son, but it was empty. While she was out of the room, Lucifer glanced down at the floor near the couch and noticed an empty syringe. He didn’t touch it, but could clearly see that whatever substance it held was clear. He really didn’t know Velius or whatever lifestyle he had chosen to lead. If he was anything like his old man then it was possible this syringe was a remnant of a night’s self-indulgence and pleasure-seeking. Then again, it might well be an important piece of this mystery. Either way he decided not to tell Lilith. She was already worried enough.

“I’m sure he’s fine. He’s an angel.” The devil pointed out as she came back into the main room, her brows furrowed and her face clouded in fear. “I mean, do you really think that a human can hurt an angel?” The devil pointed out, hoping to ease her mind, but Lilith wasn’t convinced.

“He can be hurt.” She corrected.

“What?”

“He’s half human, of course he can be hurt. He just heals really fast because of the divine blood he inherited from you, that and being immortal among many other traits.” She grabbed her phone and dialed his number only to hear a muffled music instead of an answer. Following the tune, Lucifer pushed aside the overstuffed chair revealing Velius’ phone playing *Dark Lady* by Cher. For a moment Lili started to reach for it, but the devil quickly stopped her.

“Don’t.” He said stopping her before she could touch the phone.

“I’m just going to check the log to see who he’s been talking to. It might give us a lead.”

“True, but it’s also a little thing called evidence.” He was right of course, and she so hated it when he was. She knew that the correct procedure according to human protocol would be to contact the police and let them handle it. Unfortunately, Lilith’s mind and judgement were clouded with emotion. Past transgressions by Amenadiel and his mother the Supreme Goddess made Lili certain they were responsible for her son’s disappearance. What else could it be? The very first of God’s angels knew her son was here on earth, didn’t he? Sure, he had pretended to regret what he had done so long ago, but it was probably all a very good act.

“It would be evidence if we didn’t already know who’s behind this.”
“Oh do we now?”

“Yes, Charlotte Richards, otherwise known as your blood-sucking mother.”

Lucifer wanted to tell her that she was wrong, but he really couldn’t, not with certainty anyway. He was amply aware that his mother was capable of anything. When he questioned her, she admitted that she was the cause of more than a few floods and plagues. All of it was an attempt on her part to get rid of her husband’s little hobby known as humanity. She was certainly no stranger to manipulation and the devil was quite aware of the cruelty she had inflicted on Lili while she was pregnant with Velius. Not one to dirty her own hands she had lied to Amenadiel and used him to torment the mother-to-be. His mum was dangerous and terrifying even in an incredibly hot human body. Still, since she first appeared at the fallen angel’s door step she had given no indication that she even knew about Velius.

“You don’t know that she’s guilty.”

“Yes I do.” Lili argued. “That woman was determined to make sure our son was never born. Do you really think she’s the type to suddenly say ‘oh well’ and let it go? No. She lies in wait and then she pounces.”

“This from the woman who can change into a panther.” The demoness was not amused by his smart tongue and clearly she was not going to let this go. “Fine, Tomorrow morning we’ll go and talk to my mum. Will that satisfy you?”

“I know you and you would never have agreed to this unless you thought there was at least a possibility that I was right.” Lilith smiled feeling completely vindicated.

“Yes or no?”

“Yes . . . of course.” She almost giggled. “I’ll bring my best knives.”

“No knives, no torture, we’re just going there to chat.”

“Fine. You realize of course that you’re handicapping me.”

The apartment secured, Lucifer led her back to his car and together they drove back to Lux. Speeding down the road they had no idea that within the space of 39 miles and a mere 29 minutes Velius was locked in a padded cell inside an abandoned hospital. Kaleb had tried to stay awake so he could observe the first moment his prize awoke, but eventually he dozed off. The building was dark except for the lantern sitting on the snoozing professor’s desk. There was the occasional odd noise, a drip from an old pipe perhaps, or a breeze through drafty windows creating a faint whispering sound. That Kaleb could sleep at all in such a creepy place was amazing.

Kicked back in his chair and snoring loudly, the professor never noticed Velius finally waking up. His deep green eyes fluttered for a moment seeing nothing before he closed them again. The echoes of Silent Lucidity still played itself over and over in his mind, a remnant of his bazaar dream. He could feel that he was lying on a bed with fresh smelling sheets and pillow. Without opening his eyes he reached out his hand and promptly found a padded wall close to where he was lying. Sitting up, his head began to pound and his stomach was churning. The only thing he could think of was how nice it would be to have a cold drink of water or feel something cool against his face. Opening his eyes, he looked around but he couldn’t see anything in the pitch black room. Everywhere was total darkness and the stagnant air carried a musty moldy scent. Gradually his eyes altered their structure so that he could see in the dark and know where he was. Unfortunately there was still nothing to see. The walls were all padded as well as the floor and ceiling. A small singular window
was on one side and he could make out a small camera hooked to the ceiling. The blinking red light showing that it was recording. He started to wonder if he was trapped inside a *Saw* movie and imagined Jigsaw on the other side of the camera watching him.

The room was essentially bare except for the bed and a portable toilet. Something else caught his eye too. Lying on the floor a few feet away was a walkie-talkie. Apparently someone wanted to talk to him. Standing up, he thought for a moment he would wretch, but the feeling quickly dissipated and he managed to make his way to the two-way radio. Getting down on his knees he picked it up and looked it over. It was clearly on, the red light glowing quite bright in the darkness. He picked it up and pressing the button managed a feeble ‘hello’, but there was no answer. All he could hear was the sound of static.

“Is anyone there?” He continued, but once again there was only white noise. He sighed in frustration then sat down completely on the floor. At least his stomach had stopped rolling. Thank God and an angelic father that he was such a quick healer. Now if his head would just stop pounding he could think clearly. He could tell where the door was because of the small observation window. It would take little effort to break it, but he would never be able to squeeze through it. Unlike his mother he couldn’t shapeshift. He could also manipulate locks, but of course one must have access to the lock in order to open it. That was something he did not have. He looked back over at the camera with its ominous red light gleaming in the dark. *Someone is watching me*, he thought to himself, *but who and why?* Once more he picked up the walkie-talkie and tried calling to whomever it was on the other side.

“Can anyone hear me?” He waited a moment, but there was still only the continued sound of static. He rested his arms on his knees and bowed his head.

“H-hello.” Came voice from the radio. Velius nearly jumped at the sound.

“Yes, hello. Who is this?” the devil’s son asked.

“Uh, that’s not really important. I am glad to know you’re awake. I wasn’t sure how much carfentanil you could handle so I’m afraid I just emptied the whole vial . . . twice actually. You did surprisingly well, better than most elephants on that drug.” Velius suddenly remembered the man that was at his door and being hit with something sharp in the back.

“Where am I?” He asked.

“I wasn’t sure how to contain you, so I’m afraid I had to improvise.”

“Contain me?” He laughed. Why would this man, this stranger, think that he needed to be contained? He gave all the appearance of being a man and he had never told anyone differently. He wondered if the man on the other end of this walkie-talkie was one of those humans who believed every conspiracy theory and wore a foil cap.

“I realize that these accommodations are less than appealing, but it was the best I could do on short notice and on a shoe string budget. Keeping you secure was a bit more important than your comfort. However, to show you that I’m not a bad guy, we do offer free housekeeping and three meals a day from any of the fine eating establishments within a twenty-five mile radius of this place. I, myself, am partial to In-N-Out Burger. Just let me know if there is something in particular you want. I’ll do what I can.

“Great, five-star cuisine it is. Got a phone I can use? Tablet? How about a phone book? You should know though, that I have a taste for expensive wine.”
“You’re laughing and making jokes, but I know your secret.” Kaleb answered. It was exciting talking to a real angel, but he was afraid too. They had only just begun and he really didn’t know if he could confine a celestial being. This creature might unleash an earthquake that topples the walls. He really was stepping into new territory.

“And that is?” Velius asked, still chuckling.

“You’re an angel.” At the word ‘angel’, Hell’s only son laughed more. He had been called many things, but angel was not one of them. Half-breed, Nephilim, bastard, mongrel, mutt and even cur were titles that resounded in his ears for as long as he could remember. They were some of the favorite taunts of his half siblings. He could certainly never be accused of being an angel, not a whole one anyway.

“I-I’m hardly an angel.” He managed to say between cackles.

“I’ve seen your wings.” This revelation from Kaleb stopped his captive’s laughter. “I saw you open them at the beach and shake the water off.” Even just thinking about the beauty of those wings left the doctor in awe and his voice trembled. “White and ethereal. . . so beautiful. I . . . I even managed to film it.”

“Why are you doing this?”

“Because it’s only fair.” The voice on the other end of the walkie-talkie answered. To Velius this seemed to be the strangest answer he had heard yet.

“Fair?”

“For ages men have died for their faith. Now with you, we can prove that they were right.”

Velius laid back on the floor of the cell and looked up at the ceiling. This had to be some sort of madman he was dealing with. That he might be living out a version of the movie Saw was definitely still a possibility. More than any other time in his life, he wished he had more of his father’s celestial genes. At least then he would be unaffected by whatever this person was planning. He glanced at the blinking red light of the video camera on the wall. The voice was still watching him. He really had no idea if his parents were aware he was missing or still waiting for him to arrive at Lux. He didn’t even know if it was the same day. His mother would certainly come looking for him if he were gone too long. Lilith always would. The last time she came to his rescue he was still quite small, maybe around four or five. He was learning to use his wings and struggling at it. During one attempt he had managed to stay aloft for several minutes before falling and breaking his arm. She was immediately at his side.

Lilith wore the title of ‘mom’, but she could never be accused of possessing a nurturing personality. Far from it actually, but every now and then the mothering instinct would appear. It was there now that her offspring was missing. To the demoness it seemed perfectly obvious who was to blame. She had never laid eyes on the Supreme Goddess’ current human form, but she was certain that she was behind this. Normally spending the night at Lux with Lucifer meant pushing the laws of physics and God, but instead she spent it imagining the tortures she would inflict on Charlotte and worrying about her child.

The Goddess, herself had no idea what was waiting for her when she arrived at the law offices of Richard’s and Wheeler the next morning. In fact, when Charlotte Richards stepped into her office she fully expected another mundane human day filled with legal cases and insipid mortal bickering. She was surprised to see Lucifer sitting in her chair with his feet kicked up on her desk. Next to him seated on the corner of the desk was Lilith, Not that the Supreme Goddess recognized her. In fact, as
far as she knew the very first human woman had long since gone the way of the dodo bird and this was just another one of her son’s playmates.

“Hello . . . son.” Uncertain what was going on, her gaze moved back and forth between the dark-haired beauty and her angelic offspring. “Have I done something wrong?”

“Well now, that depends, mother. What can you tell me about Velius?”

“To answer that I first need to know what a Velius is?” She answered as she set her briefcase down on the desk.

“Velius is a ‘who’, more specifically, he is my son and your grandson.”

“Impossible. I don’t have a grandson.” Charlotte answered very quick and smug.

“Ah, but you do, mother. In fact, you tried to keep him from being born.” His dark eyes looking into hers like daggers. “Or was that not you?” As he expected there wasn’t even a hint of remorse, rather she looked more like the cat that ate the canary.

“Okay, I wasn’t pleased about your little indiscretion with that . . . human . . . and I may have attempted to rectify the situation.”

“So it’s all true then?” Lucifer couldn’t believe his ears and yet found himself not really surprised at this woman’s audacity.

“I was not going to have my family . . . my bloodline tainted by insipid humans. It really doesn’t matter anyway, because your offspring died at birth. I’m sure it was for the best. He was a corruption of divinity and was never meant to exist.” At this this declaration, Lilith started to leap across the desk at Charlotte. Her claws extending and ready to rip her eyes out. Instantly Lucifer caught her and held her back.

“Sorry, Alakāṇa, deserved or not, you can’t kill my mum.”

“Personally,” Charlotte continued completely ignoring the near attack on her person. “I think its weak human body was simply too inferior to handle celestial DNA and it destroyed itself taking its ghastly human mother with it.”

This made Lilith struggle harder to free herself from Lucifer’s grasp. How she hated that woman. Her anger was so hot that the devil kept expecting her to foam at the mouth like a rabid beast. He really wasn’t sure how long he could hold on to her if his mother continued speaking the way she was. The demoness in his arms possessed strength that was a close match to his own. He imagined this was token of his father’s sense of humor. Remold the human woman into a demon that could very likely hold her own against any angel. Quite frankly, he could rein in Mazikeen easier then he could Lili.

“Oh do go on mother, Lilith here hasn’t dug her talons far enough into my arm yet.”

“Lilith . . . why do I know that name?” Charlotte asked, seemingly oblivious to the physical pain Lucifer was in.

“Hello, ‘first human female’ Adam’s first wife, The Garden of Eden . . .” Lili spat as the devil forced his lady friend into the office chair and flashed a silent red-eyed warning at her if she moved.

“Oh, I thought she was dead and her body was returned to the dust she came from by my dear husband?”
“I am sitting right here in the room so clearly I am not dust!” Lili hissed. “As for Velius, he was born perfectly healthy and has lived a very long life until yesterday evening. Now tell me what you did with him!”

“Lucifer, I have no idea what this . . . human is talking about.”

“She’s not a human, Mother. *She’s* Lilith. Father changed her into a demon. You know, Queen of the Damned and Mother of the race of Lilim.” The devil explained. “In fact, she’s Maze’s mother.”

“I’m sorry.” Charlotte said in clearly feigned sympathy. The truth of the matter was that the Supreme Goddess and her celestial brood (except Lucifer of course and more recently Amenadiel) saw demons as barely a step above vermin. “I honestly didn’t think you would be sent much lower than a human, apparently I was mistaken.” For a moment Lilith attempted another lunge, but the fallen angel quickly pushed her back into the chair again.

“Perhaps I am beneath you, but remember this. Your husband created every tiny detail of me and I look nothing like you. Perhaps I’m what he really desired.” Her words had the desired effect as Charlotte’s smug expression was wiped away. Now the devil had to hold back his Mum. This was getting tiresome. If there was a place worse than Hell, Lucifer was sure he was in it. Of all the tortures he had consigned souls to, he could think of none worse than being stuck in a room with his mother and his mistress while they bickered. He suddenly was beginning to understand why some human males slaughter their families. They probably just wanted to hear a few minutes of actual silence.

“I hardly think my ex would even glance in your direction. Remember you are a demon and barred from Heaven.” Charlotte hissed.

“Oh, have you been permitted back into the Silver City? As I recall, ‘Lotte’, your ex sent you to hell for eternity.” The demoness smirked.

“ENOUGH!” Lucifer bellowed, silencing both women. “Bottom line, do you know where my son is, mother?!”

“Of course not.” She answered, looking almost offended at the accusation. “As I said, I was under the impression he had died at birth. That was what Amenadiel told me, anyway.”

“Amenadiel, mister holier than thou himself, told you that Velius died?” She couldn’t stop a ripple of laughter from slipping out. “Tell me, ‘old scratch’, haven’t you ever found it funny that you’re called the ‘Father of Lies’ while your brother is the one telling more falsehoods than a professional conman.” The fact was he had noticed, but now was not the time to delve into it. There were more pressing matters to attend to.

“Swear to me mother. I want your word that you had nothing to do with Velius’ disappearance.”

“Fine, you have my word.” Charlotte begrudgingly answered.

“If I find out that you are lying to me, I’ll simply lock you in a room with Lilith here.”

“Is that supposed to scare me?” The Mother of Creation sniffed. There was nothing about this woman that was remotely intimidating. Smiling wickedly, Lili walked over to Charlotte, her face only inches away.

“I had a pair of twins once, a boy and a girl. They thought they could usurp my position and take over control of the Lilim and eventually Hell itself. They are both locked away in cells, separated from each other and little more than gaping, drooling, babbling lunatics. They were my own flesh
and blood, so you can imagine the things I will do to you.”
“Do you think Lilith is Lucifer’s type?” Chloe asked. Ella looked up rather surprised at the question. This was completely out of the blue. They were supposed to be looking at a list of exotic venomous snake owner permits to see if any of them had a link to the Preacher-man.

“Uh . . . maybe . . . I mean, she’s breathing. He seems to like that in a date. Not to mention she’s stupid hot and that is definitely his thing.”

“I’m probably overthinking this. They’re friends . . . really good friends. They’ve probably known each other since they were kids. You can be best friends with someone of the opposite sex without being in a serious relationship with them.” The detective was talking to herself, but unfortunately it was out loud and Ella heard it all.

“I don’t know, I read this article on the Huffington Post website that said that you should marry your best friend. It makes sense actually, I mean, think about it, they already know you inside out, ugly parts and all. Lucifer and Lilith definitely have a chemistry between them, even when things are a little less than pleasant, like last night.”

“You saw them together last night?” Chloe asked, immediately interested.

“Um, yeah at Lux.” Ella was trying to speak carefully. She didn’t want Chloe to know why she was there. Having to explain how and why she knew Velius was something she wanted to avoid at all costs. “I didn’t realize it was her at first, it just looked like he was having a heated discussion with some attractive woman. Once I saw her though there was no doubt who it was. She’s kind of hard to miss.”

“So I’ve noticed.” The detective responded with a hint of annoyance etching her tone.

“Are you jealous?” the forensic scientist smiled, surprised that Chloe should feel threatened at all by any woman in Lucifer’s life.

“What? No. I’m just concerned because it seems like wherever she goes trouble follows. I just don’t want to see Lucifer hurt . . . that’s all.”

“Okay.” Ella shrugged. “You know, if you’re really concerned you can always talk to Lucifer himself.”

“Well, yeah, but he’s not here . . .” Det. Decker started to explain only to be cut off by Miss Lopez.

“Yeah, he is.” She pointed. “He just came in . . . oh and it looks like he brought a friend.” She glanced over at the detective to see for herself the ‘not jealous’ face of Chloe before popping in her earbuds and turning on her music.

“Lucifer, what are you doing here?” She tried to act natural, but that made her seem all the more guilty. Inside she was praying that he hadn’t heard any part of that conversation.

“Is something the matter, detective?” He queried, suspicious of her behavior.

“No, no, nothing is the matter.” She returned, failing at the art of appearing casual.

“Riiight.”
“Is there something you’re needing help with?” Chloe prompted, changing the subject. Instead of answering Lucifer barked a moment as he looked around at the busy police station.

“How about we talk somewhere private.” He started to lead the detective to one of the interrogation rooms followed closely behind by Lilith. Before she could join them, the devil quickly stopped her. “Wait out here Añakāṇa.”

“Fine.” She sniffed, a little put off. She glanced over and saw Dan talking with another cop on the other end of the station and a smile spread across her face. “I think I see someone who can keep me entertained in your absence.” Before she could take a step Lucifer caught her by the shoulders.

“I don’t think so.” The devil walked her over to the lab where Ella was working, then quickly got the forensic scientists attention by pulling out her earbud. “Perhaps Miss Lopez here can entertain you for a few minutes till I get back.”

“Sure.” Ella chimed in brightly. “I have several different samples of body fluids that I’m getting ready to test, I’ll be glad to show you how it’s done.”

“Be still my heart.” Lili feigned interest then shot an annoyed look at Lucifer as he walked away.

Heading towards the interrogation room, Lucifer was trying to figure out a way to broach the subject of Velius’ disappearance without the detective getting that angry ‘mom’ look in her eye. More importantly he had to explain it to her without revealing more than he wanted to and without lying. That part was harder. He could charm his way out of the ‘look’ but his pride would not allow him to stoop to the other. He also wanted to remove Lilith from the entire problem for the sole purpose of making sure that no connections were ever made between her and Velius. The last thing he needed was for any new evidence to connect his son with Levi Sethos death, circumstantial or not. Lili was not going to take well to that decision, but that was a problem for later and even the devil can only handle one at a time.

“Alright, Lucifer, what is this about?” Chloe looked at her partner the same way a parent looks at their child when they know they want something. Shutting the door, Lucifer flashed his most charming smile.

“Do remember our friend Velius Haides?”

“Yeess” The detective answered, suspicious of why he was bringing this up.

“It seems . . . that,” The fallen angel hesitated, knowing that there would be a small explosion from his lovely partner. “. . . he’s disappeared.”

“What?” And there it was, the detonation. “What do mean he’s disappeared?”

“I mean, gone . . . vanished, went away . . . missing, departed . . . ceased to be . . .”

“I-I got it.” The detective responded, interrupting his flow. “Lucifer, what makes you think he’s gone?”

“I may have gone by his place . . .”

“You did what?” Chloe could not believe what she was hearing. Wasn’t this the same guy who days ago was determined to convince her of the man’s innocence.

“. . . and noticed that his motorcycle was still out front and the inside looked a bit disturbed. When I went inside . . .”
“You broke into his apartment?”

“I noticed a syringe on the floor,” The devil continued as though he had never been interrupted. “And then I heard his phone ring which I located under a chair.

“Please tell me you didn’t touch anything.”

“Of course not. Well, maybe the chair, but that was just to locate the phone.” He tried to look as though he were completely guiltless, but that was impossible, Lucifer could never appear innocent.

“Lucifer, what makes you think that he’s disappeared? How do you know he didn’t simply go out for a stroll?”

“At midnight, without a phone?” He answered, raising a doubtful eyebrow at her suggestion.

“Maybe he had to blow off steam and didn’t want to be reached.”

“And the syringe?” The devil pursued.

“Seriously? I don’t think it’s a stretch to think that he could be a user.”

“Well, I think it’s a stretch or he’s one particularly talented user since there were no track marks on his arm when we visited his apartment.” He was beginning to make her head hurt.

“Lucifer, why are you so sure this guy has been abducted?”

“Why are you so certain he’s not?” The devil challenged, turning the question back on her. The two stared at each other caught in an impasse. Chloe was certain that her partner knew far more than he was telling. It was one of the things that made working with him so aggravating. She could take his arrogant determination that he was right, but couldn’t he at least fill her in on the details? She wanted to send him home and tell him no, but she knew he would continue this on his own. If she indulged him then she could at least keep an eye on him.

“You’re not going to leave me alone until we go over there are you?”

“Nope.”

“Fine. Let me talk to Ella and see if she can help us find anything to collaborate your theory.” She opened the door muttering to herself as she left the interrogation room. “More than likely he’s trying to escape justice for killing the Preacher-man.”

“I seriously doubt that.” Lucifer chimed in.

Looking over at the lab where Ella was still hard at work, Lucifer’s dark eyes immediately noticed the distinct absence of Lilith. Before he could become too concerned he heard the detective utter an exasperated ‘unbelievable’. Sure enough, there was the demoness standing with a young and terribly handsome beat cop. His sleeve was rolled up displaying one of his tattoos and she in turn had partially unzipped her jeans and was giving him a sneak peek at the snake that encircled her just below the hips. Lucifer smiled, enjoying the racy game of show-and-tell before him. Perhaps it was the lean hungry look of the beat cop that made it entertaining. Then again it could just as easily be the way the demoness teased him by lowering the zipper just enough to hint at paradise without allowing him to actually see it.

Whatever delight the devil was experiencing was quickly shut down by the glare blazing like a beacon on the detective’s face. Clearly she did not find any amusement in the interaction at all.
Lucifer was well acquainted with that look, though usually it was because of something he, himself, had done. Without words it screamed one of two things: Fix this, or I can’t believe you did this. In this instance it was the former. Rather than wait for the lecture, Lucifer strolled over and quickly intervened, zipping Lilith back up and leading her away from the hot cop.

“What’s the matter, darling, getting jealous?” Lili teased.

“Hardly.” He answered. “You do remember that you’re in a police station and not a brothel?”

“Of course I do. The staff in a brothel, usually have a better sense of humor.”

“Didn’t I leave you with Ella?” Lucifer asked as he stopped walking and turned to face her.

“Yes.” Lilith conceded. “No offense to her, but a conversation involving the finer points of DNA analysis and proper handling of bodily fluids in a laboratory are just . . . not my thing.”

“Lucifer,” Chloe interrupted. “We need to get going.”

“I’ll be right with you detective.”

“Sounds promising. So where are we headed now?”

“We are not headed anywhere. I am going with the detective to Velius’ apartment and looking for evidence. You are going back to whatever place you’re calling home and letting us handle this. Feel free to take the vette.” He explained trying to be as diplomatic as possible.

“Home?” Diplomacy was obviously not working. “My son . . . our son is missing and you really expect me to sit around home twiddling my thumbs?”

“Go to Lux if you prefer, or perhaps you could take Maze out for a little mother/daughter bonding.” Even before he said it, he knew the latter would never happen. Lilith and Mazikeen could tolerate each other and could even manage to be cordial, but bonding was never on the table.

“Just tell me why, Lucifer. Why are you shutting me out of this?”

“Lucifer!” The detective called out, keys in hand and ready to go. Lilith stared hard at Chloe for a moment before looking back up at the devil.

“I will discuss this with you later, I promise.” He placed the keys to his car in her hands then kissed her forehead before turning quickly and catching up with Det. Decker.

Lilith watched them leave. She felt angry and betrayed, but it wasn’t just that. There was something else there too that she couldn’t understand and had never felt before. She didn’t know what it was, but it was deep and it hurt. Why would he want to look for their child with Chloe and not her? She had sacrificed all of her humanity to protect him. How could Lucifer now expect her to sit around and do nothing? Velius was her son . . . HERS, not the detectives. How could he choose that woman over her?

She watched the two of them walking away, talking to each other. A soft smile gently played on Chloe’s lips as she looked up at her partner with obvious affection. Well, obvious to anyone other than perhaps themselves. Lucifer beamed down at Det. Decker and Lilith could see that he was happy. Truly happy. She was trying to remember if she had ever seen him quite as content as he was now with the detective. Whatever this feeling was, it felt like a knot inside. Lilith had always been his co-conspirator, the keeper of his secrets, his best friend and mother of his child. For the first time she felt as though that role was being taken from her. Dear God, what was this horrible feeling
eating away at her?

Silently Lilith went out to the devil’s car and sat down behind the wheel. She needed to talk, but didn’t know who she could turn to. Right now she wanted to just drive and clear her head. Maybe that would take this feeling away. The car handled smoothly as she traversed one end of Los Angeles to the other. Heading toward the beach she turned a corner and noticed an old run down hospital. Even with the sign’s missing letters she could tell that it once read ‘Semangelof Psychiatric Hospital’ and the name really struck her. That was hardly a common name so clearly someone knew their angels. Semangelof was one of three angels, triplets actually, who helped her deliver Velius. Senoy had acted as doctor or midwife, Sansenoy was her support. He held her hand, was ready with water for her to drink, and he gave her encouragement and strength. It was Semangelof who had cleaned the newborn and wrapped him in a cloth brought from the Silver City. It seemed strange to see the name now. These three angels of healing were largely forgotten, except perhaps by her. She wished he was here to protect her son now.

She couldn’t have known as she drove past, that in a way the angel was. Inside that very building, Velius had just been returned to his cell, a bag of food from In-N-Out Burger waiting for him when he woke up. That morning Dr. Matthew Willard had arrived at the abandoned hospital with a portable, battery powered x-ray machine that he had procured. Neither of the men were willing to go in the cell while Velius was awake, so Kaleb devised a solution before they captured him. Manually sealing off the vents, he then turned on the argon gas regulator to sixty percent then silently waited for the oxygen to deplete. He had survived the injections of carfentanil so Kaleb had no concerns as to whether or not the gas would hurt him. It took only two, one hundred and twenty pound tanks filled to twenty-five hundred PSI and an hour and a half of patient waiting to drain the good air from the cell and cause their ‘patient’ to pass out. Acting quickly the two men put their prize on a gurney and Matthew began administering anesthesia.

Of all the spaces in the forgotten facility, the abandoned cafeteria was the best choice for using as an examining room. Thanks to its wall of windows that extended nearly floor to ceiling, it had the most light. Kaleb had swept the floor and disinfected several of the tables while moving the remaining ones into other rooms for storage. Pushing three small dining tables together and covering them with foam padding and plastic they were able to create a make-shift examination/operating table. The two men moved their patient to the table then sitting Velius up they began to remove his shirt. Kaleb stood in front making fast work of the buttons, while Matthew stood behind helping to remove the sleeves and lay their patient back down. As the fine cotton fabric fell away, Dr. Willard’s icy blue eyes grew wide as he glimpsed Velius’ back and he barely managed to utter a soft ‘my God’. Kaleb came around the table to see what had left his friend speechless and found himself equally in awe. There on their ‘patients’ back was a pair of wings so tightly folded that they had been imperceptible beneath his shirt.

“Their voice was like ten thousand angels, singing. And they sang to the One seated on the throne and to his helpers, the elders.”

Kaleb was not a praying man and he hadn’t opened a bible since he was a boy. In that moment on the beach when he had first glimpsed those wings he found himself with a burning desire to dust off his long forgotten copy of the scriptures. He had read and re-read any verse pertaining to angels. He had read them so much that Revelation 5:11 came to him almost without thought.

Fingers trembling, the professor reached out his hand and barely brushed one the feathers. It felt like fine silk and he was almost afraid to breath for fear of ruffling them. The two friends looked at each other gratified to see that they were right. Matthew gently took hold of one of the wing tips and began to unfold it while Kaleb took his camera and began to film it and take individual stills. They were particularly interested in showing the area between the shoulder blades where the wings attached to the body. Climbing onto a ladder he managed to get a photograph of the one of the
wings completely extended. They did the left wing followed by the right before the two men turned him over and once more took pictures of each wing. They then stripped off the rest of his clothes and continued to photograph and video tape. Positioning him for their final photo, Kaleb noticed the small silver bar that hung around their captive’s neck. He marveled at the unusual writing etched into the surface. Carefully he turned it over in his hand before taking a photograph of each side so he could find out what it said.

Their next step was X-rays. Matthew rolled in the machine and they took images from one end of his body to the other. Satisfied they redressed him as best they could, put him on a gurney and returned him to the cell. He hadn’t regained consciousness yet when Kaleb set a bag of fast food inside, but he was stirring. From his laptop and the comfort of his make shift desk, Kaleb watched his prisoner slowly wake up. He was groggy but he could smell the food and part of him wanted to dig in, but even in his haze he knew better than to trust anything placed before him by this stranger. Sitting up, he looked down at himself and was shocked at his disheveled appearance. His shirt lay beside him on the bed and as he became more cognizant of what was going on around him, he realized that his wings were visible and partially unfolded. With haste he made them disappear, but the damage was already done. He had no idea what had happened while he was unconscious or even how long he had been out. In a moment of frustrated sarcasm he mumbled to himself that he hoped it was good for them too. Velius leaned forward and ran his fingers through his hair in annoyance. There had to be a way to free himself, there had to be.

“We didn’t slip anything into the food, if that’s what you’re concerned about.” Kaleb’s voice suddenly broke the silence of the room, startling the prisoner. His bright green eyes looked up at the camera as he made a mental note of the word ‘we’. So he had more than one captor; that was good to know. Unfortunately he had no way of knowing just how many were out there watching him. Quietly he rose and collected the food and drink. He could actually go quite a while without nourishment and he felt as though he had. Normally he didn’t go to fast food places, preferring to sit down and eat something that was of a higher quality then frozen beef patties on a bun, but at the moment there was nothing that tasted better. He didn’t usually consume soda pop either but right now it was water to a soul in deepest Hell.

“What is it like?” The voice asked as Velius all but inhaled the burger in his hand. The prisoner licked the dripped condiments from his fingers then pressed the button on his radio.

“What do you mean?”

“Heaven. What is Heaven like? I mean, do you really walk among the clouds? Are there golden roads and palaces? Are the gates really made of pearl?” There was a child-like eagerness in his voice as he spoke.

“I have no personal knowledge of Heaven since I’ve never been there. I assume, however, that a place called the ‘Silver City’ is probably not made of gold.” The only son of Hell’s tone was invective, but it was hard to say whether it was to the man on the other side of the radio or the place in question.

“You’re an angel, of course you know what it is like. You’ve heard the music and seen the throne.”

“I AM NOT . . .” Velius started, but quickly cooled his anger. “I am not an angel.”

The two didn’t speak for several minutes. The hostage continued to eat his fries and drink his soda, while Kaleb watched him in silence. The professor didn’t believe the prisoner of course. He had experienced far too much proof for that to happen. He wished this being would stop his lies and just talk to him, tell him what it was like. Finished with his meal, he crumpled the bag and tossed it aside before sitting down against the wall and resting his head in his hands.
“They’re like silk, you know. Your wings, I mean.” Kaleb recalled. Velius looked over at the walkie-talkie laying on the floor where he had left it. He knew what had happened. Being unconscious he had not been able to render his wings invisible. “While you were sleeping we took photographs and x-rays of you and them. They are so beautiful. I hope you won’t be angry with me, but I took a couple of small downy feathers for testing.” The professor watched as his captive silently lowered his head down into his hands. “I have a son that... I believe... is, uh, up there... in heaven. What did you call it, the Silver City’?” He waited, but his detainee never moved. “Can you help me contact him, or... or just tell me how he is doing? Is he happy?”

Velius didn’t move and Kaleb sat back in his chair resigning himself to the idea that his ‘patient’ was done speaking for the day. Occasionally be glanced at his lap top to see if anything was happening in the cell, but nothing did. Taking out his phone he started to watch the latest episode of ‘Supernatural’ while he snacked on a package of skittles. He soon was lost in the intrigue of hunters dying from suspicious ‘accidents’ and never noticed the way his captive placed his hands together in a prayer. His mother had once told him that his angelic kin could always call upon one another in this fashion. He didn’t know if he was capable or not, being half human, but he had to try.

“Appā, vantu eṇṇaik kaṇṭupiṭi. Nāṅ uṅkaḥkku tēvai, tayavuceytu... Tayavuceytu eṇakku utavaṅka!” He implored, but nothing happened. The room remained silent, dark and empty. Perhaps if he waited a moment and tried again.

Standing in Velius apartment, Lucifer was looking over Chloe’s shoulder as she scrolled through the contents of the missing man’s phone. Nothing stood out as unusual. Ella joined them peering down at the screen as the detective made quick work of the gallery file. There wasn’t many pictures and the ones that were there were mostly selfies in various locations around LA, including one in front of Lux. When the last photograph appeared, Ella went pale and she took a step back. Casually she slid around to Lucifer and gently pulled him aside.

“That last picture,” She began, speaking low. “The man lying on the floor in this apartment. I’ve seen him before. The night I met Velius at the coffee shop he was at one of the tables. I noticed him as I left.”

“I don’t suppose you have a name to go with our strange friend?”

“No. I’m sorry.”

She started to explain how even at the coffee shop the man gave her the creeps. Lucifer was listening, although he would have preferred she stick to information he could actually use. As she continued, her voice and every noise surrounding him seemed to fade into the distance as another voice took over. He heard his son speak as clearly as though he were standing in front of him. Appā, vantu eṇṇaik kaṇṭupiṭi. Nāṅ uṅkaḥkku tēvai, tayavuceytu... Tayavuceytu eṇakku utavaṅka! he had said and for a moment he had seen the name Semangelof. It was a prayer calling him, in the same fashion that he had used to call upon Amenadiel not so long ago. No one ever called for him like this and for a moment he almost believed it was his imagination playing tricks. A second time he heard it. It was his child calling ‘Father, come and find me. I-I need you, please... please help me!’ Lucifer wanted to help him. He was doing everything he could to try and find him. The prayer should have been accompanied by the knowledge of where he was so the fallen angel could go to him, but there was nothing. Only the name of one of his younger brothers. What could he have to do with any of this? In all the ages he had lived, never had the devil felt as helpless as he did right now.
Revelations on all Things Heaven and Hell

Velius lay on the bed staring at the ceiling of his cell. He gave up praying hours ago. It was painfully obvious that his angelic parent couldn’t hear him or didn’t care. He preferred to think it was the former. He didn’t know why it hadn’t worked. Perhaps it was because of Lucifer’s status as fallen, or perhaps because he, himself, was not of pure celestial stock, but whatever the reason, he decided it would be best to abandon it and try something else. Right now he was beginning to believe that the solitude and boredom would drive him mad. You would think that if someone were going to abduct a man and lock him in a cell, then they could at least give him a book or magazine to read. A television would be a nice touch. That wasn’t going to happen of course, since there was clearly no power to the building. He had noticed that the camera was battery operated, as was the walkie-talkie. He had also noticed that they never tried to observe him using the overhead light and there was never any kind of illumination through the tiny window. Well, that wasn’t strictly true, there was a small amount of natural daylight that filtered in. He could only assume that the surveillance camera was set on night vision. He figured that his ‘wardens’ had no idea he could see in the dark and that was why there was no reading material. He certainly wasn’t going to correct their assumptions.

A sliver of light began to appear in the small window and Velius sighed as he mentally counted off another morning of confinement. He closed his eyes and rubbed his face. He really needed a shave. His whiskers were beginning to itch. If he couldn’t have a magazine, he probably wasn’t going to get a razor and a mirror either. A hot shower or bath would be a God send right about now. He hadn’t had one in days let alone a toothbrush. Uncivilized bastards. He tried to imagine himself in some other place with open air and wide fields and blue skies, but the stale moldy air inside the cell made it difficult for his imagination to work.

The sound of the cell door creaking opened suddenly roused him from his meditation. He looked over in time to see a hand toss in a McDonald’s bag and then set a cup of coffee on the floor. Instantly he tried to rush the door only to have it slam shut before he could grab it. In a burst of anger he expressed a few ‘colorful metaphors’ and punched the door padding. Just a few more seconds and he would have had it. For a moment he considered opening the portal back to hell. It would be simple enough, all he needed to do was project the flames. He could do it in his sleep. Unfortunately he also knew it would allow his captors to see and record a display of power not meant for their eyes. He would just have to bide his time.

When his anger had cooled he grabbed the sack and looked inside to find three sausage McMuffins in bright yellow paper. He unwrapped one and taking a bite made a mental note that any food that starts off with the prefix ‘Mc’ probably wasn’t gourmet. Each bite tasted like cardboard and salt with a touch of sausage spice to help make it palatable. True, it could sate a hungry stomach, but it was a virtual culinary migraine. That people willingly stop and purchase this food amazed him, but then they were only a dollar and twenty-nine cents apiece. He hoped that the coffee was good at least. How can you mess up ‘black and hot’? On a sudden whim he took up the walkie-talkie and pressed the button.

“If you’re taking notes, and I think you are, I prefer espresso.” He had no idea if his captors were currently watching him and manning the radio or not. He really didn’t care. He just wanted to break the silence and make the time pass. “Since you’re determined to hold me here, then perhaps you could get me some basic necessities like a shower, change of clothes . . . a toothbrush and toothpaste would be nice. As a reward for my good behavior could I have some books or magazines along with a pen light to read by? I hear there’s a lovely comic book series called The Sandman.” He waited but there was no answer. “How about at least allowing me some conjugal visits. Hair and
“Eye color don’t matter so long as she’s petite and curvy. Of course I am in prison so I suppose anything will do. I can give you a show worth studying, but you’ll need a wide angle lens.”

“I didn’t think angels possessed carnal desires.” Kaleb answered.

“Well, I’m not an angel, am I?” Velius answered rather smartly. This wasn’t a lie, although he was omitting the fact that his fallen father had quite an appetite for sins of the flesh. How else could he exist?

“If you are not an angel, then what are you?”

“Something, different from you.” The half-breed angel answered with a sniff. There was no point in trying to deny it, not to the man on the other end of this radio. “I am a Nephilim. It means that I am half human and half angel.”

“How is that possible?” Kaleb had never heard of such a thing and was googling it even as his captive answered.

“Well, once upon a time my father decided to take a little stroll here on earth and happened to notice my mother, who was and still is, a very enticing woman. Well, not to me.” He laughed. “I would definitely be a sick bastard then, wouldn’t I?” He chuckled again then sipped his coffee. It tasted burned. There were beverages in Hell that tasted better. “Anyway, dear old dad noticed mom, and likewise mom noticed dad. Evidentially they both liked what they saw and decided to play a rousing game of boppin’ squiddles and now we have ‘yours truly’.”

“Is . . . is this something that angels do often with humans?” The professors still had his doubts about the validity of the claim, but his brown eyes grew wide as he read the definition of ‘Nephilim’ on his computer screen. He never could have imagined that such a creature existed.

“Not to my knowledge, but then I’m not a part of their celestial circle.” He took another sip of the coffee and cringed. He had no idea where the nearest McDonalds was, but this cup was definitely the dredges from the bottom of the pot. The fact that it was starting to cool off, didn’t help the flavor. “Despite what you pure bred humans think, angels really aren’t that interesting. I mean, harps, choirs, following idiots around and trying to keep them from earning a well-deserved Darwin award, where’s the fun in that?” He really had no idea what his celestial kin did in heaven, but it was the image portrayed in many paintings. “I used to have an uncle who gave the welcome speech to new souls entering Heaven. I understand it’s enough to make you want to stick an ice pick in your ear. Your son probably had to endure it and for that I apologize. Tell me, was your son as good at shanghaiing as you are?”

“No. He never did anything like this.”

“Did he have a rebellious streak or was he the perfect son?” The half-breed angel goaded. “Come on, you can tell me.”

“Not much to tell really.”

“I find that hard to believe, since you’re going to all this trouble over him.” The response he got was the sound of static over the radio. “He is the reason, isn’t he?” Again there was only white noise. “I don’t suppose you’ll at least tell me his name?”

“Asher.” Kaleb finally answered.

“I believe in Hebrew it means ‘happy’, fortunate, or blessed.” Velius commented. “Mine means ‘concealed’, rather appropriate don’t you think? My mom’s unique sense of humor.” He started to
take another sip of coffee then quickly thought better of it. The bitter, burned tepid beverage wasn’t likely to improve the more he drank it. “So, what exactly happened to your golden boy?”

“He was hit by a car . . . seven years ago.”

“I’m sorry.” He had assumed something tragic had happened. When he had first heard this man mention his son, he had observed the desperation in his voice, particularly when he had asked if his child was happy. There had to be a gaping hole in this man’s heart to make him decide that capturing an ‘angel’ was a good idea. “The two of you must have been close.”

“We were. He . . . he was my only child and . . .” After all these years he still found it difficult to talk about him. He had never spoke to a therapist or even discussed it with any family members or friends. He didn’t know why he could suddenly talk to this ‘being’ when he had never wanted to open up before. “. . . And we were a close family. We used to go deep sea fishing together and even co-signed on a motoryacht. Asher was an English teacher and thought it would be clever to christen the boat ‘Galene’ after the Goddess of calm seas.”

“It must have been nice.” Velius commented. He had no interest in fishing, but he marveled at the idea of a close father/son relationship, although in all honesty he couldn’t imagine doing any typical bonding activities with Lucifer. It was well known among those who actually knew the devil that children were things to be abhorred. Still, it would be nice to be able to sit down, just once, and talk face to face, openly and without hiding their blood ties to each other.

“It was.” The professor responded, smiling slightly at the memory. “I’m sure it’s nothing compared to what you’ve experienced. I can’t even imagine the celestial adventures you went on.”

“I’m afraid not, mate.” He rolled his eyes at the assumption. Why do humans always think that divinity equates perfection? “Unfortunately dysfunction runs through my branch of the family tree. One might even say it gallops.”

“I find that hard to believe.” Kaleb returned. At the mention of heavenly dysfunction, his curiosity was piqued. Fumbling through the photographs he had taken, he quickly found the four that detailed the writing on Velius’ necklace. He had already sent copies of those pictures to a colleague that worked with him at UCLA and he was hoping to hear back from him soon on a translation.

“I don’t care what you believe. The fact is, I’m not here to sway you in any particular direction. I’m just telling you the reality. Take it for what it’s worth.”

“Which angel is your father?” The professor asked. He could only think of two, maybe three that were named in the bible of the thousands that existed and he was curious to know more.

“Dear old dad’s identity is not really your concern, now is it?” He answered sitting himself on the bed with his back against the wall. “Let’s get back to your family, shall we? Does your wife know about your little hobby?”

“Hobby?”

“Yes, you know, the one that involves kidnapping, imprisonment and who knows what else? Cheerful little pursuits like that?”

“My wife,” Kaleb sighed. “My wife starts drinking at approximately one in the afternoon and doesn’t stop until she passes out. So I guess the answer is ‘no’, she doesn’t know about my little hobby as you call it.”

“So basically you decided to hold what you thought was an angel prisoner rather than help your
wife? I’m not sure I understand the logic in that, but I suppose we all have our demons.” Velius returned. He felt genuinely sorry for the man, but also confused by his priorities.

“I guess we do.” Professor Tavor felt rather embarrassed suddenly. He had been so consumed with his son’s loss that he hadn’t even thought about helping Marian. A sudden pang of shame washed over him and he couldn’t speak. He had no excuses.

“When it comes to demons, I’m personally acquainted with thousands . . .” Velius’ suddenly gave a slight laugh. “I actually don’t know the exact number. I’m not sure anyone does.” Not only did he not know the answer, but he honestly didn’t think his mother, nor her paramour Asmodeus, knew the number of spawn they had created. Kaleb didn’t answer. Caught up in his guilt, he hadn’t even heard him. The half-breed angel suspected he had hit a rather raw nerve and decided to forgo any more conversation for now. His guess was right, the voice watching him was done talking for now. It wasn’t until Matthew Willard came into the makeshift office that Kaleb snapped out of his introspection.

When Matthew was excited about something, his icy blue eyes almost danced. Tonight they were practically doing a salsa. He could barely speak for all his eagerness. Despite his exuberance Kaleb was able to grasp what his friend was saying. It seemed that Matthew had been speaking with a mutual acquaintance who had not only been born into money, but had managed to build his own fortune as well. Isaac Bonaventure was truly a man whom fortune had smiled on. His favorite hobby was hunting Elk, moose, deer and many other animals all over the country. He always had the animal processed and kept a large walk in freezer inside a storage unit for stowing the meat. It wasn’t currently in use, but was definitely in perfect working order. Matthew saw this as divine providence and felt they should take the next step. He wanted to see if freezing temperatures could affect an angel and if so what were the effects?

Kaleb wasn’t sure this was a direction he wanted to go. True, this had all been his idea and he alone had taken the blood and tissue samples. He was the one who had initially drugged Velius and suffocated him to safely take him from his cell for photos. That was before he had ever really talked to him for more than a minute of two. Now he was having doubts. He didn’t turn down the freezer, just explained that he had some reservations. Matthew assured him that all he told Isaac was that he had purchased quite a bit of meat for a get-together and didn’t want it to spoil. Despite his reluctance, Kaleb nodded in agreement. Dr. Willard was congratulating himself on the brilliant idea when his phone rang. Seeing it was one of his students he apologized and quickly left the room.

Kaleb still wasn’t sure he liked the idea of freezing their ‘test subject’ but felt as though he had already gone too far to stop now. Carefully he collected all the samples he had taken and placed them in his bag then started to gather the pictures up. He needed to get over to his lab and finish the DNA extraction process, but as he set his laptop in his briefcase and locked it, his phone began to ring. He immediately recognized the number as the friend he had sent the necklace photos too. Dr. Logue was a linguist and could speak many languages fluently. In particular he specialized in the study of speech and communication, but also had a great passion for ancient languages and writing as well. Professor Tavor sent him copies of the four pictures he had taken showing each side of the bar. Dr. Logue recognized the writing, although he was quick to admit that it was obscure. It didn’t take him long and he advised his friend that the first word was the equivalent of ‘the’. The second he quickly deciphered as ‘of’. The third took a few minutes longer but he soon figured out that it was ‘son’. Dr. Logue began to study the last word and for a moment he cackled with pride when he solved it. His laughter didn’t last as he realized the significance of what he was reading. When he asked where Kaleb had found this object, he was quickly told it was just some odd jewelry in a flea market. Dr. Logue was quiet a moment the explained that the last part said ‘Light Bringer’.

“Son of the Light-Bringer.” Kaleb echoed. “Does it mean something?”
“The Light-Bringer is the Archangel Samael also called Lucifer.” Dr. Logue explained, surprised his friend hadn’t known the celestial title. From deep in Professor Tavor’s recollection he could once more recall a scene from his wife’s favorite movie, but this time it made him wince.

Bishop - He says he’s an angel.

Professor - An angel?

Bishop - Nothing stopped me from saying it.

Professor - From heaven?

Bishop - That I'm not sure about.

It had never occurred to him to look beyond Heaven and yet now it seemed so obvious. Quickly he thanked his colleague for his assistance then hung up the phone. His imagination was on fire with pop culture images of a creature possessing brilliant red flesh, hooves instead of feet, horns on his head, dark pointed goatee, and a long tail that was barbed on the end. For a moment he pressed the button on the walkie-talkie and was set to ask his ‘patient’ if the devil really was his father. Perhaps it was the reality that Velius could be the child of the devil, or maybe it was his sudden awareness that there could be ramifications for what they were doing, but he set the radio down and said nothing. Kaleb sat in silent contemplation as Matthew came back in the room still talking about his grand ideas. Dr. Willard saw in their captive a chance to better humanity. If they could unlock the secrets of celestial DNA there was no telling what they could do. Cures for diseases, increased human strength and ability were just the tip of the iceberg. Kaleb nodded, but said nothing. His friend had no idea that their captive was only half an angel and he certainly didn’t know that he was the Lord of Hell’s offspring. Glancing down at the walkie-talkie, he thought of the person on the other end and couldn’t help but wonder who his mother was.

The professor naturally assumed whomever she was, that she was at least a human female and that Velius had been born within the last thirty-five years or so. He sat there trying to imagine what sort of modern day woman could be seduced by the devil. Given the image of Lucifer that he had conjured up it was difficult to believe that any woman would want him. Of course, of all the images that came to mind, none of them included a handsome, charismatic, albeit arrogant Mr. Morningstar or the beautiful, intoxicating and proud Lilith. Like so many other humans in this century, he had never even heard of the demoness. No, in his fevered brain, Kaleb was imagining Rosemary’s Baby and picturing a poor woman manipulated by those around her into sleeping with the devil. He couldn’t have been farther from the truth on all accounts. The fact of the matter was he would have been shocked if he could have seen Velius’ mother, particularly at this moment. Lilith was hardly a woman in her fifties with the ‘End of Days’ weighing heavily on her shoulders, filled with regret and praying to be forgiven for spawning such a child. No, Kaleb could never have imagined that at that moment his ‘patient’s mother was laying across Dr. Martin’s couch with her feet propped up on the back.

Lilith had sought the doctor out to help her understand this knew emotion that had gripped her after Lucifer had run off with the detective. It was her best option. The only other person in her circle she could have turned to was her daughter, Mazikeen and that was not going to happen. Maze had less experience dealing with human emotions then Lili and would likely take Lucifer’s side against her (she always did). Not to mention that Lilith could never open up to one of her children. The Lilim were like sharks and any weakness was tantamount to blood in the water. No, the only person she felt comfortable talking to was Linda. The doctor was flattered and more than a little surprised when Lili showed up at her office that morning. While she wanted her patients to be comfortable, she would have preferred it if Lilith sat all the way up or at least could have taken her feet down off the
back of the couch. Of course she also would have preferred it if the demoness were wearing an additional two inches of fabric on her shorts. Not that there was anything inappropriate showing, but it was still a bit too short for her taste. Lilith probably wouldn’t have listened anyway since she was hardly there for fashion tips.

“He actually expects me to sit at home, twiddling my thumbs while he and the detective look into Velius’ disappearance. I mean, could anything be more ridiculous?”

“You know, I’m really glad that you came by to see me and that you’re alive and well. I’m just not sure why you’re here.” Linda Martin said as she stared at the demoness bewildered.

“You help people, it’s what you do.” Lili answered turning her head to look at the doctor.

“That’s true, but not in the way that your obviously thinking.”

“Do you or do you not help people solve their problems?” The dark-haired beauty asked.

“Yes, but you’re not my patient.” Dr. Martin explained.

“Of course I am. Don’t you remember when Lucifer brought me here before? You were very helpful then and I need your help now.”

“I do remember that and quite frankly I didn’t think we had made that much progress.” She glanced over at the table in front of the window at the vase she purchased to replace the one Lilith had broken during her last visit. She then looked back over just as the demoness sat up. “The bottom line here is this: you are not my patient. Lucifer is my patient. Because of your association with him, it would be a conflict of interest for me to treat you as well.”

“Well, that’s hardly fair. You’re the only one who really knows who I am.” Lili stared at the doctor in disbelief. “I need you to help me. Velius is my son, I should be allowed to help look for him. Can’t you talk to him and convince him to let me join the search? He listens to you.”

“First of all, I’m here to help Lucifer get in touch with his emotions and work through his issues, not help you push your agenda on him. Second, I don’t think he listens to me as much as you think.”

“What else can I do?” Lilith was obviously at the end of her tether. “I’ve spent too many ages trying to protect my boy for Lucifer and his little girlfriend to push me aside and take over.”

“Somehow I doubt that is Lucifer’s intent. Chloe is a very experienced detective and he is her partner as well as Velius’ father.” The last part of that sentence seemed strange even as Linda said it. A million different images came to mind when she thought of her patient, the Lord of Hell, but that was not one of them. “I’m sure that everything is in good hands.”

“Yes, of course it is, but it still bothers me.”

“Why is that?” Dr. Martin asked.

“I don’t know.”

Linda looked at the dark-haired beauty and could see that she was clearly perplexed. Absently the demoness began to fidget with the smooth stone hanging from her neck. The doctor had no idea what was scratched into the surface, but she had noticed that the energy and glow that had emanated from the stone during their last visit was now gone.

“What does your necklace say?” Dr. Martin asked, curious.
"'Lilit, Samael kātaliyai’. Translated it means ‘Lilith, beloved of Samael’. That’s Lucifer’s actual God-given name, but for your own safety I wouldn’t use it in his presence."

“I . . . I found that out.” Linda responded recalling a moment of manipulation by Amenadiel. “Tell me about your relationship with Lucifer.”

“You perv,” At this request, a wry smile spread across Lili’s face. “I don’t mind, though. It’s just between us ladies, right?”

“Not those details.” The doctor quickly amended.

“Oh.” Lilith almost looked disappointed.

“What did you two do in Eden?” Linda queried, trying a different approach.

“I don’t know. We used to swim . . . climbs trees. Rode horses a couple of times. Played jokes on Adam. We laughed a lot, but mostly we used to talk. He had a rather bad home life, but then you already know that. Life was hardly idyllic for me either so I guess I was a sympathetic ear. We were good at making each other smile.” The Queen of the Damned couldn’t imagine what this had to do with anything. Eden was such a long time ago, the beginning of time in fact, so what did it matter. “I remember one morning I was bathing in the river where we used to meet and he appeared at the edge. He didn’t think I knew he was there, but I did. He watched me without a word. When I was done we gathered some figs and sat down and talked while we ate. I can’t remember if it was his second or third fig, but when he went to grab it I turned at the same time and we accidentally kissed.” Lost in the memory she didn’t notice her fingertips momentarily brush her lips. “I had never been kissed before. Of course from there one thing led to another.”

“Was that when he started calling you Ala . . . Al . . .”

“Aḻakāṉa.” She responded finishing the name for the doctor. “No, he started calling me that after discovering me in my demon form. I might have thought he was just saying to make me feel better, but as you know, he never lies.”

“What was your relationship like in Hell?” to the doctor’s question, Lilith raised an eyebrow. “Outside of the bedroom.”

“Well, that’s a bit more complicated. For starters I was his highest ranking mistress and the favorite. The other three were subservient to me.”

“So you were courtesan to the devil.”

“I am much more than that.” The dark-haired beauty answered. “You see, there are seven levels in Hell all corresponding to one of the deadly sins. Each one is ruled by a dark prince and served by a horde of demons. They all answer to Lucifer. Of the seven princes Asmodeus is the highest ranking.”

“Exactly where do you fall in this? Is one of the levels yours?”

“I am unique in Hell. My Lilim are a society all their own and are not confined to any particular level. As for me, I am the second most powerful being after the devil himself. I am also the one closest to him. I have an honorary place next to his throne, no one else could boast that. Lucifer trusted me above anyone else in Hell because he knew I wouldn’t lie to him or patronize him. In his sessions, doctor, I’m sure you’ve learned that he is a man given to dark moods and painful thoughts that go back to his relationship with his father. When his anger and resentment grew too hot, which
was often, I could always make him laugh again. Mazikeen eventually rose through the ranks and became close to him, but never to the degree that I was and that still galls her.”

Linda Martin sat listening to Lilith with fascination. Lucifer seldom talked about his life in Hell and when he did he tended to gloss over it. This description painted quite a picture and yet she still couldn’t fathom what it was really like. What Dr. Martin lacked in understanding all things Heaven and Hell related, she more than made up for in her understanding of human emotions. This was advantageous since none of these beings seemed to have any understanding of their feelings. Their version of dealing with them was to build a strong figurative wall around themselves to keep the ‘feels’ at bay. From her experience, Linda knew that such barriers were only temporary fixes. Right now she could see something in this Queen of the Damned that Lili, herself, couldn’t seem to see. She didn’t doubt that the demoness had loved her human mate, Christian, and that it had crushed her when he was killed. The problem was, the doctor could see that inside her heart was a name etched deeply over time until it had become part of her life’s blood. The bearer of this name was the only one who could hold sway over Lilith and command her. God forbid that he should ever know how much power he had. The demoness, for all her gifts of telepathy and scrying, couldn’t see who held her heart, or perhaps she simply refused to see.

“Lili, how do you feel about Chloe?”

“I think . . . she’s capable, she’s . . . smart and pretty. She . . . could stand to take the corn cob out of her ass . . . a bit.” Lili wasn’t sure what to say, really. She didn’t know the detective that well, but she generally liked her. This was the first time she had ever had any issue with her.

“Lucifer seems to like her.” The doctor pointed out.

“Yes he does.”

“He’s changing because of her and she makes him happy.”

“True.” Lili agreed.

“She’s made him laugh before and he certainly seems to trust her implicitly.”

“I suppose so.” The demoness wasn’t sure what Linda was getting at.

“From what I’ve seen, he really seems to care about her.”

“Yes, well, she certainly has claimed his mornings and daytimes. The eager civilian consultant rushes to her side to help her save the day and punish the wrong-doers.” There was a touch of acid in her words and she grimaced as the feeling once more returned.

“Do you think that what you’re feeling might be jealousy? Perhaps you’re afraid that Chloe is taking your place in Lucifer’s life.”

“I’m not jealous.” The demoness responded quickly. “I inspire jealousy in others, I don’t feel it myself. This is utter nonsense. You’re the therapist, surely you know that in order for me to be jealous I would have to be . . .”

“In love with Lucifer?” The doctor finished the sentence for her. Suddenly she felt uncomfortable talking to Linda and she didn’t like it. She never like anyone peering into the dark, hidden corners of her core. “I’m not.” She suddenly wished Linda would stop watching her. It made the demoness feel vulnerable, as though her thoughts and feelings were being laid bare before her. “I have a strong attachment to him of course, I mean, we’ve only been together since the world began, but it doesn’t mean I’m in love with him. Besides, even if I was jealous (which I’m not) she will eventually die
and I think we can all agree on where she’s going. In the end I will still be there at his side . . . just like always.” She tried to say this with her usual bravado, but her confidence was lacking and Linda could see it. “At any rate this was not why I came in here. I came here because Lucifer has excluded me from looking for my son and it’s not fair.” Dr. Martin had seen the devil pull this trick before when she had brushed a nerve. They really were similar in nature even if they couldn’t quite see it themselves. One notation she was making was that the Lord of Hell and his mistress were long overdue for an intimate chat.

“I really feel like this is a conversation you should be having with someone else.”

Lilith didn’t want to hear that. She wanted to hear that she was right and Lucifer was wrong. She wanted a creative solution to her problem not to be told she had feelings that she refused to believe were there. She couldn’t bear the thought of sitting around waiting for the devil to finally show up and give her news on Velius. She had to be a part of this. Somewhere out there was her baby that she had given up her soul and humanity to protect. Surely there was someone who could help her. Then suddenly she knew who she could turn to. There was someone she was certain her charms would work on. A wicked smile spread across her lips and her face suddenly lit up.

“You’re absolutely correct doctor, there is someone else I should be having a conversation with. ‘old scratch’ has his detective, and now I shall have mine.”

“Um, that’s not what I . . .”

“You know, he doesn’t pay you nearly enough.” Without hesitation Lili was on her feet and out the door leaving Linda shaking her head.

“Yeah, I can agree with that.”
Dan opened the breakroom fridge and took out his favorite tub of pudding. He had spent most the morning as well as the day before making inquiries at Meridian Pointe apartments hoping to get a lead on the missing man. The most he had learned was that no one noticed any unusual vehicles or suspicious activity. In fact, the only thing he could say definitively was that no one really knew Velius Haides. A few people had seen him around, but no one actually knew him. The closest he came was when he spoke to one of the tenants, an attractive twenty-something woman who was heavy into yoga . . . hot yoga. Despite the fact that she could identify every part of his body, she didn’t know so much as his last name. His background was becoming more mysterious then Lucifer Morningstar’s. So far the only thing they had for evidence was the syringe. Ella had confirmed that it was pure carfentanil and the police department was aware that it was often combined with heroin which more often than not ended in overdose. No body at the scene meant all they could do was speculate as to the reason for the drug and its outcome. Heading for his desk, Dan was approached by another officer who leaned close and smiled slyly at him.

“There is some-body to see you Dan.” He glanced over and seated on the corner of his desk, smiling at him was Lilith. He had only met her the one time, but it had been memorable. He recognized her long dark hair and the shapely figure that wasn’t even trying to hide itself in hip-hugger jeans and an unbuttoned, skin tight, red lace Henley. More troubling then her curves was the fact that Chloe had told him she was dead, murdered by one of the Preacher-man’s henchmen. One thing in this life that he was confident about was Chloe’s word.

“Surprised?” She asked.

“You could say that since last I heard you were dead.”

“The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.” She smiled. “I’m actually thinking of having it put on a billboard so people can stop asking.

“You were shot. Chloe saw it.”

“I don’t suppose you’ll believe that I’m immortal?” He looked at her skeptically as he sat down in his chair. “How about we say that I simply got better and leave it at that.”

“Right.” Dan answered, clearly not convinced, but willing to let go for now. “Are you sure you’re in the right place? I figured the girlfriend of Lucifer Morningstar would be more into partying and sex clubs. Does he even know you’re here?”

“I’m not his girlfriend nor do I answer to him in any way shape or form.” She explained and again Dan looked at her dubiously. “We are simply friends.” The detective raised an eyebrow. “Alright, we’re friends with benefits perhaps, but friends none the less.” She leaned forward conspiratorially. “I do not live my life by Mr. Morningstar’s leave and if I choose to talk to a fine looking cop, well, that’s my prerogative.” She could tell that he was definitely tempted by her, but there was something else she hadn’t expected. Dan Espinoza was one of the ‘complex’ humans that could actually resist her charms. Although it wasn’t easy. She was going to have to take this from another angle. “Why do I get the feeling you don’t care much for me?”

“That’s not true, I don’t know you.” He answered.

“You could get to know me. It is possible for a man and a woman to be friends without sleeping together.” Lili pointed out.
“I—I’m not sure that’s a good idea.” The truth of the matter was that he wanted to say ‘yes’ very badly. He could smell her perfume and there was certainly no denying she was attractive. “Unlike your boyfriend, I don’t interfere in other people’s relationships. Besides, I’ve seen the caliber of woman that Lucifer sleeps with so forgive me if I hold myself to a higher standard.”

“Ouch. That hurt. You really don’t like me do you?”

“It has nothing to do with liking or disliking you.” He explained. “I-I just don’t trust you.”

“You admit you don’t know me, but you don’t trust me.”

“You’re too much like Lucifer.” Dan answered. “Chloe has mentioned how close the two of you are and told me enough stories detailing your drinking, flirting . . . pole dancing.” And there she was again, Det. Decker. Lilith had only planned a simple flirtation, which clearly was not going to happen. She could always do this the old fashioned way. All she had to do was slip on her signet ring and he, as well as any man or lesbian, would be compelled to do her bidding. That would certainly be one way to ensure his help with finding Velius. She couldn’t bring herself to do it though, even if she had brought her signet ring with her (Which she hadn’t). She liked Dan too much for that.

“Well, apparently I came all the way down here to be insulted by a man who clearly pines for a woman interested in someone else. Well, however you may feel about me, Dan, I still like you. You’re far more interesting than most humans and because of that I am going to pay you the enormous compliment of being straight forward and honest. Well, I’m always honest so instead I’m just going to put my cards on the table.”

“Okay, what is it you want?”

“I know that Lucifer and Chloe are working on a missing person’s case and I want to know what they have found so far.” She explained. A laugh escaped him at her audacity.

“I know the case you’re referring to and I can’t imagine why you think I would tell you anything about it.”

“Because you’re under the mistaken impression that I am like Lucifer, but you and I both know that you are not a douche. I think Dan Espinoza is an honest and decent man who would do anything to protect his family, even if it means crossing the line, like when you shot Malcolm Graham at Palmetto. Now I want to know about the case they’re working on because I know that the man their looking for is a suspect in the Preacher-man’s death. I may not believe he had anything to do with it, but Levi Sethos had many followers, some more zealous then others. What I am afraid of is that one of them decided to get revenge on what may be an innocent man.” Lilith truly believe in that possibility and she was prepared to destroy each and every member of the Elymas Club if that’s what it took to get her son back. She furrowed her lovely brow as she thought of her missing son. “This really is all my fault. If I would have just said ‘yes’ to his advances or simply not . . . “She stopped here, there were too many regrets to finish that sentence. As a human, he would never understand them anyway.

“It’s okay.” Dan reassured her. “There is no evidence that anyone connected with the Preacher-man had anything to do with this. Right now there isn’t really any evidence of anything. The only thing they found was a picture on his phone and an empty syringe.”

“Picture?”

“Yeah it’s of an unidentified older man.” The detective explained. “He’s been seen around the
apartments, but no one knew him any more then they knew our missing man. The building manager might be able to help, but he’s out of town at the moment.”

“And the empty syringe?”

“Yeah, it contained carfentanil, but there’s no finger prints or anything to go on yet.”

“Thank you, Dan.” She leaned over and hugged him. “You have been a bigger help than you know and for that I would like to reward you.” For a moment he looked uncomfortable. Given what he knew about her, he was uncertain what this ‘reward’ would be. “You tell me what your favorite alcoholic beverage is and I will have a bottle sent to you.” Dan breathed a sigh of relief which she immediately noticed. “Were you afraid I was going to ask you out on a date?” he stammered, embarrassed that he had assumed that. “You’ve made it clear I’m not your type, although I am rather curious who is.”

“Yeah well . . . first I would have to meet somebody and . . .” He faltered, a bit uncomfortable the direction the conversation had turned. Trying to reassure him, Lilith took his hand in hers and held it.

The two talked about trying to get back into the dating scene with all of its ups and downs. Their situations were hardly the same, but there was still some common ground. They were laughing when Det. Decker walked into the precinct and started towards her desk. She had been following up on some leads in another case and had not been expecting to find the demoness here. She stopped short, noticing the pair sitting so cozy together. Quietly she moved to a spot where she could listen.

“You really haven’t dated since your divorce, have you? What’s stopping you? You’re good-looking, amiable . . . carry a big gun.” She smiled slyly and he blushed slightly at the inference.

“I guess I’m just rusty.”

“Well, do yourself a favor, the next time someone asks, accept.”

“Are you asking?” He tried to appear indifferent, but in truth he was a touch hopeful.

“Not this time, but should you need a friend, look me up at The Green Lady. My specialty is listening, but I’m talented in many things.” She wrote her phone number and the bar’s address on the palm of his hand.

“Unbelievable.” Chloe said, catching the attention of Dan and Lilith. “Miss Eden, may I talk to you for a moment, privately.” It may have sounded like a request, but it clearly wasn’t. The demoness politely excused herself then walked towards one of the interrogation rooms.

“Look, there is nothing going on . . .” Dan started, but Det. Decker shot him a look that clearly said she didn’t want to hear it.

“Her, Dan, really? We’re not married anymore and I know it’s none of my business, but really Dan, her?” She immediately turned on her heel and joined Lili.

“Have I done something wrong, Detective?” she asked as Chloe closed the door.

“What is your game?” Chloe asked.

“Game?”

“Yeah. A few nights ago I find you in bed with Lucifer and today you’re flirting with Dan.
“Jealous?” The word fell from Lili’s lips with an acidic bite.

“There is nothing about you I would be jealous of.” The detective’s words should have been just as cutting, but the demoness only stared at her in amusement. “You show up out of nowhere playing the part of the lady in distress while simultaneously acting as though the universe was created to revolve around you.”

“Lady in distress, that’s a name I’ve never been called before.” Her smirk was maddening to Chloe. “I’m also very much aware that the universe doesn’t revolve around me. You should hear Lucifer’s take on that subject. I’m sure he’d be happy to tell you who it does revolve around with brutal and quite possibly sacrilegious honesty.”

“You always have a smart answer. Do you take anything seriously?”

“What can I say, sarcasm is how I hug. Why should you care who Dan chooses to spend his time with anyway? Last time I checked you are his Ex-wife and as for Lucifer, well I’ve never met anyone that could truly hold him.” Lilith commented, dropping her smug façade in favor of getting this over with.

“I care because Dan and I have a daughter together.”

“Are you afraid of someone else playing mother to your hatchling?” From the flair of the detective’s nostrils and the narrowing of her eyes, Lilith surmised that she had hit a nerve. “Well, don’t worry dear, my intentions with Dan are completely platonic.”

“Good. I want Dan to find someone and be happy, but you are the last person I would want to see him with.”

“Funny isn’t it?” Lilith remarked remembering a far more cordial conversation while her hand was being set in the ER. “We used to get along.”

“Yeah well, that was before I discovered that you were a liar and a manipulator.” This time the bite in Chloe’s words had teeth and Lilith bristled. There were a thousand things the detective could have accused her of that she would readily agree with, but calling a liar and manipulator was dangerous. “If Dan is interested in you then I can’t stop him. I certainly can’t control Lucifer if he wants to sleep with you, but I’ll be damned if I’m going to sit idly by and watch you disrupt everyone’s life.”

“’Damned’, nicely put.” A bit of laughter escaped her lips at the idea. “I don’t know if you’re aware of this, but ‘old scratch’ needs no help when it comes to disrupting lives.”

“Really?” This time it was her turn to be sarcastic. Chloe knew well Lucifer’s tumultuous personality, but firmly believed that Lilith was no angel and had no one to blame but herself.

“Oh yes, my dear. There was a time, well, almost the beginning of time actually, when I was more naïve than you. Completely untried by life and with no real understanding of God and his powerful seraphim.” The recollection of her downfall erased the arrogance and replaced it with a more somber personality. There was so much the demoness wanted to tell her, or better yet, show her. It wasn’t up to her though. If anyone was going to stand up and reveal the truth to the detective, it should be Lucifer. Whether they liked each other or not, she really didn’t want Chloe to pay the steep price she had for loving the charmingly boorish fallen angel. “He’s the original angel with a devilish kiss and you should know that getting close to Lucifer can cost you . . . dearly.”

“Is that a threat?” Det. Decker asked.
“More like free advice from someone who doesn’t want to see you hurt.” The demoness answered.

“I can take care of myself. Maybe you’re just worried that you won’t have him wrapped around your finger anymore.” At Chloe’s suggestion, a wicked smile spread across Lilith’s face.

“Are you actually challenging me?” This was a temptation hard to ignore and Lilith sorely wanted to take her up on it, if only to knock her down a peg. This human had no idea who she was playing with. The demoness could be ten times the bitch that Chloe Decker could be and when it came to the art of seduction there was no one better than her. She could possess the heart and soul of her choosing to the point that they would shoot themselves or others for her sake. They would physically hurt with desire for her. True, this was not a trick she could use on Lucifer, but that didn’t mean she couldn’t sway him. Fortunately for the detective, the better angels of Lili’s nature wouldn’t allow her to accept such a contest. “For Lucifer’s sake I’ll just ignore that.”

A tense silence permeated the interrogation room and each woman watched the other closely. Lilith marveled at the detective. Her clothes were plain and practical, the perfect choice for a woman who was both a mother and cop with few opportunities to dress up. Her long blond hair was pulled back out of her face in a messy ponytail, although sometimes it was worn in either a messy or fastidious bun, but this again was more for functionality then fashion. Chloe did possess large bright eyes and flawless skin and Lili never doubted for a moment that when the occasion called for it, she could easily turn heads. It was almost nauseating to think that in some ways she was a real-life Dudley Do-right and yet she had the power to command each and every beat of Lucifer’s heart.

“You’re not really mad at me just because you’ve imagined me to be some liar or manipulator.”

“Oh no?” Chloe returned smartly.

“You really are jealous.” At the assertion, the detective laughed.

“I already told you, I could never be jealous of you.”

“Yes you are, and I know that because . . . I’m jealous of you.” The admission tasted bitter to Lili. The hardness in Det. Decker’s face suddenly softened and she seemed rather surprised to hear her say that. “What can I say, all you have to do hold out your hand and he would follow you anywhere.” That strange emotion was beginning to come back and Lili was starting to wonder if Dr. Linda was right after-all. “You’re his northern star always leading him towards his better self.”

“But he talks to you. He confides in you. There is always this . . . wall and he doesn’t let me in. He tells me that I can’t understand and never will.”

“Detective, that wall . . .” She couldn’t believe she was doing this. She should be coming between them not moving them closer. “That wall is there to protect you both, but . . . if you are patient, then in time . . . I imagine that it will come down.”

This was absolutely ridiculous, there was no war to be waged here. Softly Lili excused herself and left the room. Her jovial mood was gone, but she still managed a smile for Dan as she left the building. She had little concern for Chloe or her opinion because whatever the future she still had something that the detective would never have . . . Lucifer’s son. Velius needed to be her focus right now. Lilith wanted him back home safe and sound, but all she could really do was wait and talk to Lucifer. Unfortunately no one had seen him for a while. He hadn’t even been home since visiting their son’s apartment the night before.

He hadn’t vanished really, just temporarily hid himself away to clear his mind and think. He had to get away from the distractions that made up his normal everyday life, at least for a little while. He
placed a cigarette between his lips and pulled a lighter from his pocket as he leaned against a grey decaying wall. The sanctuary he had chosen was a long forgotten subway station deteriorating beneath the Metro 417 Loft building. Once called the Subway Terminal Building, it opened in 1925 and reflected the Italian renaissance revival in its architecture. Beneath it was the remains of the very subway it was built for. Small sounds echoed in the cavernous space with its coffered ceilings and columns that still bore the traces of terra cotta on their upper portions. The click of his lighter seemed loud in the silence. Inhaling deeply, his mind cleared with each wisp of smoke that filled his lungs. He wanted to think in silence without interruptions or sage advice from any of the souls in his circle. His reasons varied with each person. He didn’t want to see the lovely detective because of the suspicious look in her eyes. She always seemed to know when he was trying to hide something and between, Mum, Amenadiel, Mazikeen, Lilith and Velius it was getting harder to hide the truth about himself. He had told her a millions times that he was the devil, but the proof would be showing her his true face. The fallen angel couldn’t bear to see her repulsed and afraid of him. He didn’t want to see Maze because she would try to help (with good intentions) and end up being no help at all. Considering the history, Mum and Amenadiel were totally useless and the farther away the better. Most of all, he hadn’t returned to Lux because he hadn’t wanted to face Lili with no new information. The look of disappointment in her eyes would only make him feel worse.

He had heard Velius’ telepathic calls to him throughout the night and each one hurt worse than the last. Not being able to answer and help him was more agonizing then he ever could have imagined. One word in particular bothered him and that was Appā or Father. Strange how one little word could suddenly make everything so real. For the first time he realized that there were things he had missed, not that he had any desire for children. God forbid. It was his long standing belief that children were hideous little creatures, and terrible taxing burdens. This opinion had not changed. He had never wanted one in the past and certainly did not want one now or in the future, but it really didn’t matter because Velius was here. Lucifer just didn’t know where and for the first time he was beginning to wonder if he had lost him without ever knowing him. That was truly an unbearable idea. Whomever was behind the disappearance would be punished with all of his hell-fired fury and the devil would have no problem smiling while he did it either.

This was probably the only picture of Lucifer that Kaleb Tavor had gotten correct. Since learning the name of Velius’ father he had found himself constantly afraid. He was sure that Lord of Hell was lurking around every corner waiting to devour his soul, or boil him in a lake of fire. He envisioned a dozen different medieval tortures then would remind himself that this was the devil and capable of more then what a human mind could dream up. Taking his lap top with him he went to the cell and stopped at the door. Kaleb tried looking through the window, but it was too dark. He opened his laptop and watched his captive through the security camera for a moment. He was lying on the bed staring up at the ceiling. He sat down on the floor and rested his back against the door then carefully picked up his two-way radio and pressed the button.

“Your father . . .” Kaleb started but hesitated for a moment as he thought about the reality of who he held captive behind this door. “Your father is the devil.” Velius heard the voice over the walkie-talkie and quickly snatched it up from where it lay on the floor next to the bed.

“So mum tells me.” Velius answered. The confirmation left the professor momentarily stunned, so much so that he didn’t even notice that his thumb had pressed down the button on his radio as he spoke to himself the words of John 8:44.

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

“Should you happen to meet dear old dad, I wouldn’t lead off with that if I were you. Pops takes a
rather dim view of humanity blaming him for their weaknesses. Oh, yes he does have faults, but I
wouldn’t say that lying is one of them. Honesty is a point of pride for him, just as it is for me. To
my knowledge he has never killed anyone either. Well, there was uncle Uriel, but according mum
there were extenuating circumstances.” These statements only added more questions to thousands
Kaleb already had. He didn’t want to keep talking though 2-way radios, but rather he longed to talk
face to face with this man of divine blood.

“C-could we talk . . .”

“That’s precisely what we’re doing.” Velius answered.

“No, no, I-I want to talk to you face to face, man to ma . . . Nephilim. I’m just afraid that you’ll run
the moment I open the door.”

“Let’s see, you drugged me, locked me up, suffocated me, done God knows what while I was
unconscious, no showers, no real toilet, no light, nothing to stimulate the mind and the food was
crap. Can’t imagine why I would want to bolt as soon as you open the lock.” At this list of offenses,
the professor could only rest his head against the cold steel door. “You’re actually sincere aren’t
you? You really want to meet me?”

“Let me get you something real to eat and drink. There’s an Italian restaurant I know that’s about
twenty-five minutes away and when I get back perhaps we can finally meet.” He started to walk
away, but quickly stopped and once more pressed the button. “You won’t take off, right?”

“You have my word and I like veal scaloppini if they have it.”

Satisfied, Kaleb set his briefcase and laptop on the make-shift desk while he called in a take-out order
to Rao’s. It had been a little while since he had eaten there, but he knew the food was excellent. His
own mouth was beginning to salivate at the thought of their eggplant parmesan. It was a busy night
for the restaurant and the food took longer than anticipated. No matter, the fresher the better, Kaleb
thought to himself. Rao’s was a long established Italian eatery in New York and it was a booming
business here in LA as well. The meal was expensive, but considering he had held the man captive
for days, it was the least he could do.

He walked through the side doors of the hospital just as he always did and straight to the psych ward
and the padded cell holding Velius. Uncertain if his ‘patient’ would keep his word or rush him at the
door, he was understandably nervous as he rounded the corner where the chamber was. Of all the
possibilities he had played over and over in his mind, none of them included finding the door
standing wide open. Dropping the sack of food he took out a flashlight and looked the space over,
but the angel was gone. He ran to his desk hoping to see the security footage, but his laptop and all
the materials were gone. How could this be? His natural assumption was the prisoner had somehow
broke out, but going back to the cell and looking it over once again, he found no evidence. Walking
past the argon tanks he noticed that they were not the same ones. Matthew must have changed them
out. He suddenly remembered his friend’s idea of testing extreme cold on Velius. The good doctor
must have taken him to wherever that freezer was.
After her little conversation with Det. Decker, Lilith had decided it was time to let loose and live. Why not? Lucifer wasn’t going to let her join the search and visiting Dan at the precinct again might be too awkward with Chloe. Right now she wanted something to heal her bruised ego and prove to herself that whatever Dr. Linda had said was not true. She was Lilith, the great seductress and love was a useless emotion. Lust was always so much more fun and there were plenty of hearts to be plucked. She had to get back to the person she was before leaving Hell and she knew the fastest way to do that. Few things could boost an ego like a night of lusty men at your beck and call. She slipped on a long double slit black skirt then complimented it with a cropped camisole made of white, sheer, eyelash lace and boasting spaghetti straps. A few carefully chosen pieces of jewelry and a pair platform heels and she was ready.

Getting into Lux would hardly be an issue. Her name had long ago been added to the list and even if it hadn’t been, the doorman would never have stopped her. *Wild Women Do* was blaring on the sound system as she walked through the doorway. If there was a more appropriate song at the moment, she didn’t know it. Stopping at the wrought iron railing she looked over the scene with gratification. So many fine specimens of pure male masculinity, so little time. Casually she removed the engagement ring that Christian had given her from her finger and slipped it into her clutch purse. From the same bag she took out another much larger ring and smiled at it. This piece was large, silver, encrusted in gems and bore a waning crescent moon with a cross emerging at the bottom. It was the symbol of Lilith and this, her signet ring, held great power. Like a beacon it called out to the carnal desires of men making them unable to resist Lilith and flock to her side as willing slaves. Truth be told she usually didn’t want to be followed around by love sick suitors, but tonight nothing would please her more than to have potential lovers fighting for her attention.

She had barely slipped the ring on before she was approached by a man who was quick to pull her into his arms and steal a few kisses. Swiftly she moved from one eager companion to the next. Dances and drinks were plentiful and she turned none away. The harder the liquor the better. Minutes moved into hours as she continued from one handsome man to the next. Some might have thought that the men were a bit too hands-on, but she was no better. Her hands enjoyed caressing a man’s chest as well as the feel of a firm ass. Despite the amount of alcohol running through her, she couldn’t stay drunk for more than a few minutes, but that wasn’t going to stop her from trying. At least her immortal metabolism afforded her a nice buzz.

Taking a break from dancing Lilith took up a stool at the bar and was quickly surrounded by hungry men all vying for her attention. One in particular had Lili’s interest. He was tall, had brown hair and possessed the most brilliant blue eyes she had ever seen. He cut a rather dashing figure with his cheek bones and turned up collar. He was certainly an excellent choice to take home for a night’s distraction, but then again, there was no reason to settle for just one.

Outside, Lucifer pulled up in front of the door to the club and tossed his keys to the valet. A man can only stay in seclusion so long before he has to rejoin society and face his demons, mainly the queen herself. He placed a cigarette between his lips and was about to light it when he noticed several women emerge from Lux complaining of headaches or other various discomforts. When two more left murmuring about the same thing, he began to wonder if something was wrong inside the club. Walking through the door he began to feel a faint irresistible urge stirring in his blood, and without conscious thought, he found himself heading for the stairs. He paused at the top, the feeling pulling his eyes toward the bar. He sighed as he saw the large group of men surrounding the figure seated on a stool.
"Holding court like the bloody queen..." He mumbled irritably. He was amply aware that men always gravitated towards Lilith, but this seemed excessive even for her. What bugged him more was that he felt the need to be among those surrounding her throne. He couldn’t understand that at all. As she brushed back her hair he noticed a flash of light. That bloody ring!! Suddenly it all made sense. When she wore that particular bauble, human men could not resist her. Clearly it even had the power to beckon to the devil, but thankfully being celestial gave him the power to resist its pull. Instantly he was down the stairs and with many a polite ‘excuse me’ forced his way through the circle of men to the demoness.

“Lucifer!” She said, pleasantly surprised to see him.

“Take it off, Alakāṇa.” Immediately he realized his mistake as she raised an eyebrow and the circle of men began chanting ‘take it off’. Lilith laughed savoring the attention.

“I’m afraid I can’t do that, ‘old scratch’ the night is still young yet. You can either join us or return to whichever of Hell’s portals you escaped from.” So saying, she turned back to the man with the brilliant blue eyes. Annoyed and impatient Lucifer pushed him aside then swiftly tossed her over his shoulder inciting immediate complaints from the throng of men.

“Sorry, party’s over.” He responded as he worked his way through the crowd of human males in rut. He carried her up the stairs to the elevator where he unceremoniously dropped her on her rear before hitting the button. He would gladly have taken that ring from her finger himself, but that was impossible. Only she could wear the ring and only she could remove it. He didn’t even want to know what happened to humans who attempted to wear it. Defiant as ever, Lilith got back up on her feet and faced him.

“We are not in Hell and you have no authority over me here.”

“You stepped into Lux, my dear. My club, my home and therefore it’s very much my business. I’ve got male human zombies bowing and scraping before you at the bar while loin-stirringly beautiful women are leaving due to various ailments all because of that damned ring. Now take the bloody thing off!”

“Fine.” She rolled her eyes then slipped the bauble from her finger and put it back into her clutch. “Happy? You’re just pissed because you’re not immune.”

“Well I’m more immune then those poor bastards downstairs. At least I still have my own will.” Taking up one of the bottles on the bar he began to pour himself a drink. “Which of your ardent admirers were you planning to enslave anyway?”

“I hadn’t decided yet. Perhaps I wanted you.” She purred. This wasn’t entirely a joke, but it was easier to pass it off as one.

“We both know that’s impossible. The ring might beckon to me, but it cannot possess me like those poor devils. Why on earth are you wearing it anyway? You’ve never needed help to find a night’s diversion.”

“Sometimes a woman just wants to feel like she’s the most desirable thing in the room.”

“You?” This seemed unfathomable to Lucifer. “The Queen of the Damned? Mother of the Lilim? Look-up seduction the dictionary and your picture is there?”

“Instead of telling me about me, why don’t you tell me what you learned about our missing offspring?” Lilith took the devil’s drink from him and strolled out on the balcony. He poured a
second drink then followed her outside. Lilith sat in one of the chairs and looked out at the incredible view before her. Without even looking at the devil she knew he was trying to figure out the best way to tell her that they had come up empty handed. “You didn’t find anything except perhaps an empty syringe with traces of carfentanil and a single photograph on his phone of an unknown older man.” She said, taking pity on him.

“How did you know that?”

“You have your detective and I have mine.” She smiled slyly, but never turned her gaze from the vista before her.

“Please tell me, AšakāṆa, that it wasn’t Dan.”

“You know, he really has fine eyes.”

“I suppose if you like a man who’s boring, but helpful.” The thought of Lilith cozying up to Det. Douche was not a pleasant one. He had never been terribly happy about relinquishing the lovely demoness to any of the men who caught her fancy, but Dan was the limit. “Wouldn’t you prefer getting a dog or a cat or something? I mean, I don’t care for the beasts, but they have to be better than a Dan.”

“Oh, I don’t know, I think I could teach him all sorts of tricks like: Bring it, take it, beg and come.” She took a drink of her bourbon. “This is why I never brought Christian to meet you. Watching you and Dan try and prove your dominance gets old and tiresome. Why don’t the two of you finally put an end to it all by whipping it out and letting us measure?”

“I think we both know who would win that contest.”

“Yes, but Asmodeus isn’t here.” She responded smartly before finishing her drink.

“Ha ha ha, funny.” He feigned, clearly not amused. “Seriously, though, he is hardly worthy of you.”

“Really? As I recall you said the same thing when I became interested in Asmodeus and he is one of your seven princes.”

“That was different.” Lucifer responded. “He has a tendency towards jealousy and possessiveness. His alliance with you allowed him to consolidate his power and fathering the Lilim only made him stronger. For that, he has never wanted to let you go and you know it. It’s probably best if you don’t mention your dearly departed ‘snookums’ or Det. Douche to him.”

“Oh, so your objections to me taking Asmodeus as a lover was because you were worried about me?” Lili commented sarcastically. “I thought perhaps it was because you didn’t want to see your little harem broken up.” She wanted to ask him if he intended to make Chloe an official courtesan, increasing the number from four to five, but she didn’t feel quite that brave. “I am curious about one thing, since when do you have an issue with ‘boring, but helpful’? In fact I believe you ditched me at the police station just so you could spend time with miss ‘boring, but helpful’.” She retorted acidly. That emotion was back and she was trying desperately to hide it, but it still shown in her eyes as she shot him a hard look.

“What, the detective?” He asked, leaning against the railing of the balcony and facing her. He never thought of Chloe as boring, and the term ‘helpful’ was not exactly the word he would have chosen either. To him she was incomprehensibly selfless. A trait that he found both admirable and infuriating at times. “I didn’t let you tag along because I didn’t want any connection between you and Velius to be discovered. He was already a suspect in the death of our good friend the padre.
The detective finds out that you are acquainted with him and now . . ." 

". . . we have a motive.” Lilith finished the thought realizing how foolish she had been. “Damn.” Humility was an emotion she rarely had occasion to feast on, but she was certainly being served a healthy portion now. Lilith rose from her seat and meekly walked over to her friend and lover, her head was bowed in a rare act of submission. “You were acting in our son’s best interest as well as mine and I didn’t see it. I’m sorry, I should have known better.”

Lucifer was rather taken back to hear the proud Lilith become humbled, momentarily at least. Softly he placed his fingers beneath her chin and raised her face to look at him. He was trying to ascertain if Lili was actually jealous or if it was his imagination. If she was than it was the second time it had happened in as many weeks. The last time was when Chloe had thought something was going on between him and Ella. He still wasn’t one hundred percent certain if the detective was jealous or not, but she had certainly seemed like it at the time. Just now he had gotten the same vibe from Lili and it was extraordinary.

The demoness had been jealous, of course. This whole evening had been an attempt to alleviate that feeling, not that it had worked. She looked into the devil’s eyes, so dark and yet they sparkled with a fire of life that only the Light-Bringer could possess. She could suddenly recall her conversation with Dr. Martin regarding her feelings for Lucifer and her suggestion that they talk. Yes she had understood Linda’s hinted advice, but it had been easier to ignore. How many lovers had she taken over countless millennia, yet their names and faces were long forgotten. This one, this angel was the first and would undoubtedly be her last. She felt his strong arm wrap around her waist and hold her to him. Damn you Linda, Lilith thought.

“Lucifer . . . I . . .” she began, the words were there on the tip of her tongue but couldn’t complete the confession, it was just too hard. Some things needed to remain locked inside her heart, no matter how much it hurt. She remembered the way he looked at Chloe and the lengths he went to protect her. Yes, the devil could love deeply and passionately, but she would never be the object of his affection, Chloe was. For the first time she felt as though she truly would be a damned, dirty bitch if she so much as tasted Lucifer’s lips knowing he had feelings for Chloe and she for him. He looked at her expectantly waiting to hear what she had to say. “I . . . I need a drink.” Puzzled, Lucifer watched Lilith as she went back inside and to the bar where she poured herself another drink. He didn’t believe it. His gut instinct told him that whatever it was she had started to say was far more important than the bourbon she ended up with. Part of him wanted to demand the truth from her, but one could not demand anything of Lili. Perhaps that was the curse of a long enduring friendship. They knew each other’s temperament, hot buttons, and when it would be safer not to pry. They could finish each other’s sentences and could see each other’s pain when all the rest of the world was blind. Whatever it was, it didn’t matter now and he wasn’t going to let it spoil the moment.

Lucifer walked up behind her and taking the glass from her hand, he quickly downed the amber liquid. He brushed back her hair and caressed her flower-soft face. Their eyes continued to look into each other as she gently slipped his suite jacket off then moved her fingers down his chest. His long fingers entwined themselves in her hair as his mouth found hers. The eagerness of his hands moving on her body gave her no doubt as to what he wanted and Lilith quickly reminded herself that he wasn’t the detective’s yet. Tonight at least, he was hers and she was not going to waste the opportunity. She finished opening the last buttons on his shirt as his long fingers slid the fabric of her skirt upward before lifting her up and wrapping her legs around his waist. She loved the way he felt in her arms, always had. Moving across the room he pressed her against the wall, the stone cool against her back. She was just beginning to unfasten his belt when the sound of elevator doors sliding open met their ears.

“Hey Lucifer I . . . OH MY GOD!” Ella exclaimed, realizing what she had interrupted. “I am . . .
wow... so sorry.” She immediately turned around completely embarrassed. She started to go back to the elevator, but the mood was already destroyed. The demoness was once more on her feet and casually sliding her skirt back down while the devil himself was trying to put on a smile and friendly air despite his displeasure at the interruption.

“Miss Lopez,” Lucifer called out, stopping her quick exit. “Is there a reason for your unannounced visit, this lovely evening?”

“Uh...” She hesitated to turn around. This whole situation was beyond awkward. It was hard to believe that only a few days ago Chloe was questioning whether Lilith was her partner’s type. When Ella finally turned around, Lucifer was finishing the last button on his shirt and Lili was pouring a drink. “Well, I remember something that was said while I was on the phone with Velius and I thought it might be helpful.” Wide-eyed, the devil stared at her in anticipation of the information, but that was where she stopped her current line of thought. “Again, I am really sorry for barging in. I know I should have called first but...”

“I believe, Miss Lopez, that you were about to tell me some information you recalled.”

“Oh, right. The guy that Velius was talking to that night. I couldn’t understand a lot of what was said but I do remember him saying the number #M110-A. I’m not sure what it means, though.”

“It’s an apartment number at Meridian Pointe Apartments.” Lili answered. Lucifer looked at her quite interested in this information. “That doesn’t necessarily mean anything, though. He could have just used one of the numbers as a ruse, or he could have just made one up that sounded good.”

“Well, I guess there is only one way to find out.” The devil declared as he pulled on his suit jacket.

Lilith quickly followed the Lord of Hell to the elevator with Ella close behind. The corvette could only seat two so Ella suggested that she would follow them. At this idea, Lucifer stopped her. He was terribly indebted to her for everything she had done whether it was coming to him in the first place or giving him a lead to help find Velius. He couldn’t have been more grateful and he repeatedly told her so, but he couldn’t take her with him. She would never understand the reasons if he told her. The simple truth was that if things panned out and he found the one behind this then there was punishment to delivered and he couldn’t have Ella there as a witness. She was disappointed, but she trusted him. The last time he had asked her to have faith, things had worked out and the case was solved. She would simply have to do so again.

Ella was not the only one having her faith tested, but for her it was easier to believe then it was for Kaleb Tavor. He had only just started to have faith again and rather than feeling uplifted he was scared of his own shadow. He had spent hours trying to get a hold of his friend and partner Matthew Willard with no success. He glanced at the clock on his dashboard and saw that it was about eight minutes after two in the morning. He was so tired. There was nothing he could do but get some sleep and try again later. He tried to tell himself that Velius was half divine so they probably couldn’t kill him, but he also knew that celestial blood didn’t make him impervious to pain and torture was still torture. A few weeks ago he never would have believed in the existence of angels or even nephilim, now he felt as though he were committing a grievous sin for which there was no forgiveness. Coming to a stop at a four-way intersection, he rested his head momentarily on the steering wheel and sighed.

“I’m sorry... I’m sorry. Please God... I never intended... I need help. Please tell me how to fix this.” The sound of a horn honking behind him suddenly brought him out of his prayer and back to the moment at hand. It seemed strange, but since first laying eyes on those angel wings there at the beach something in him had changed. He had stopped visiting his son’s apartment. He hadn’t even
thought about it. Now he wanted to be there, if only because he felt like he could hide from the world. It was still a place of refuge for him and there he could sort things out.

As he pulled into the parking lot and came into view of the apartment, he was surprised to see the lights on, the door open and a corvette parked in front of it. Parking next to the strange vehicle, he reached under his seat and took out a tire iron. He couldn’t imagine who could be inside. The car was far too nice for a drug addict looking for items to pawn to pay for his habit. No one else could possibly have any interest in the place. As quiet as possible he walked into his son’s apartment and was horrified to find the place had been disturbed. It wasn’t a mess, but objects had definitely been moved. His attention was suddenly caught has he heard a voice in the bedroom. The intruder was a man with a distinct English accent.

“Nothing.” Said the man. “Not one bloody clue as to where Velius is.” Kaleb had no idea who this person was but they knew about his prisoner and that alone made him afraid.

“It looks to me as though no one has lived here for years. Did you notice the amount of dust?” This voice was a woman bearing the same accent. “There must be a mistake. Maybe Ella got the number wrong.”

Kaleb watched as the pair stepped into the hallway then turned and saw him. He had no idea who they were, but Lucifer instantly recognized him from the photo on Velius phone. In that second of recognition his eyes flashed red and at the sight, the professor dropped the tire iron and became paralyzed with fear. It was only a matter of a few steps and the devil was on him, lifting him off his feet then sending him crashing against the wall. He then went over and picked Kaleb up once again and slammed him against the same wall, holding him there.

“Where is he?” Lucifer asked, keeping his voice low and calm.

“Y-you’re the devil.”

“Yes and you’re the man who has my son, now WHERE IS HE?!” With all the noise and raised voices, Lilith became aware of the potential for unwanted gawkers. Casually she went over and closed the door then locked it. The click of the deadbolt echoing like the crack of doom in Kaleb’s ears.

“I-I don’t know. H-he took him.” This answer was not what the fallen angel wanted to hear and for a brief moment the handsome, human face of Lucifer disappeared and the red, burned and scarred face of the Lord of Hell took its place. It was only there for a few seconds but it was enough to make Kaleb cry out in terror.

“Careful, ‘old scratch’, his screaming will bring the cops around.”

Yielding to her advice, Lucifer slowly lowered the man and released his iron grip on him. Shaking, Kaleb stared at the pair. While the momentary evil red face may have been the devil he had expected, this tall, dark, good-looking man in a suit was not what he had envisioned. Still, there was no doubt in his mind that this was indeed, Velius’ father. As for the woman, he was uncertain who she was. Clearly she was tied to the devil, and had the same eyes as his prisoner. To him she seemed far too young to be his mother, so perhaps she was his sister?

“Now, tell me who has my son, because your life depends on it.”

“Dr. Matthew Willard has him, but I don’t know exactly where. He wants to experiment on him. See how cold temperatures affect an angel a-and I am sure there is more up his sleeve.” He barely said this and Lucifer’s eyes once more blazed red hot and in the flash of an instant caught him by the
throat and forced him to his knees. “I-I . . . I didn’t . . .” Kaleb struggled to speak and breathe under the devil’s grip.

“Not quite so tight, darling. He won’t be able to tell us what he knows.” Lilith commented casually. Lucifer conceded and released his grip. The professor immediately fell against the couch and sucked in much needed air.

“Thank . . . you.” He said to Lilith as he caught his breath.

“I wouldn’t be so fast to thank me. You see, Velius is my son too, and a mother is often far more dangerous than the father.” She flicked her tongue at him, but rather than it appearing pink and human, it was long, narrow, black and forked. Startled, Kaleb backed up against the wall.

“I-I thought his mother was human.” His hands shook as he held them out in a feeble attempt to protect himself.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” The devil answered with a momentary wicked smile. Kaleb felt as though his head would explode, but whether it was from fear or from trying to comprehend the existence of all things Heaven and Hell he couldn’t say.

“All I really wanted was a chance to touch heaven and see my boy again.” He said to himself as tears filled his eyes. “You’re right, I’m to blame for everything. I’m the one who abducted him and locked him in a padded cell at the abandoned Semangelof Psychiatric hospital.” At the mention of facilities name, Lucifer was thunderstruck. He suddenly understood why each of Velius telepathic prayers had been accompanied by that name. He had no idea the place existed. “I sold Matthew on the idea of capturing him so we could prove the existence God and the bible. He didn’t even believe me until I showed him the video of him opening his wings on the beach.”

“The syringe.” Lucifer growled. “You drugged him with carfentanil to subdue him.”

“I didn’t know any other way. I figured if it could tranquilize an elephant . . .” Lilith took a step toward him, only to be stopped by Lucifer. “When we wanted to move him from his cell, I would remove the oxygen with argon gas and wait for him to pass out.” A low angry animal growl escaped the demoness. How badly she wanted to rip his eyes out. It’s likely she would have too, but for the fact that this man was the only one who knew where Velius was. “I started talking to him using a two-way radio . . . not much but a few minutes every now and then. After a while I didn’t want to hold him captive, but simply get to know him, that’s all. I was even going to release him, but when I got there he was gone. Matthew has him, I know it. He took my laptop and all the information we had collected. He knows a guy . . . um, Isaac Bonaventure, I’ve never met him. The guy owns a freezer . . . H-he’s probably there, but I have no idea where it’s located.”

“Well,” Lucifer’s tone was deep and threatening even as he worked to keep himself under control. “I guess you’re going to be making some phone calls aren’t you?”
Eager to alleviate the weight he was carrying on his shoulders, Professor Tavor told Lucifer and Lilith all he knew, including every last detail of his partner’s life. When he was done the sky was changing to a soft blue as night became morning. Kaleb was exhausted emotionally and physically, but for the millionth time he dialed Dr. Willard’s phone number and once more prayed that he would pick up. To both his great surprise and even greater relief, Matthew finally deigned to answer. Before they could even exchange friendly salutations, Kaleb demanded to know where their prisoner was and why this was not discussed with him. He expected to hear a forthright response and learn the location of their ‘patient’ but his partner simply skirted the issue. Despite his exuberance, Dr. Willard had had not been so blinded by his own grand ideas that he had failed to notice Kaleb’s hesitation and reluctance when he mentioned the freezer. He might not have given it much thought, but then he had witnessed the interaction between their captive and Kaleb the evening before. Arriving just after professor Tavor, he was headed to their make-shift office when he heard voices. Staying in the shadows he heard Kaleb talking to Velius through the two-way radio and immediately became concerned. They had only begun their work and was not about to see it fall apart. As soon as Kaleb left to go buy food, he hooked up the new argon gas tanks and started removing the oxygen. He managed to drag the prisoner out of the cell and get him into the car with only about five minutes to spare before his partner returned. Angry, Kaleb once more demanded to know where their patient was being held, but Matthew was keeping that information to himself.

Lilith and Lucifer leaned against the building watching the scene unfold before them. They were both beginning to have doubts that this particular human would be able to lead them to their missing child. Lilith glanced at her phone hoping for a response to a text she had sent earlier just after they had found Kaleb, but there was none. She looked back over at the professor as he talked in an obviously heated and animated manor. How long were they going to wait, she wondered, obviously he doesn’t have the answers. The rustle of a package caught her attention and she turned to see Lucifer snacking away on a bag of salty processed food stuffs he had procured from the apartment vending machine.

“I have never been so bored in all my life.” Lili sighed as once again she glanced at her phone, but still no answer to her text. “At least if we were in a car then there would be something we could do to pass the time, but this . . .”

“Have a cool ranch puff.” He offered, holding out the bag.

“I’m not sure how ranch-flavored puffed cornmeal is supposed to help.”

“Well . . . it doesn’t, but it’s better than staring off into space.” He gave her a playfully wicked smile “Go on and take one. You know you want to.” She rolled her eyes with a smile and took one of the puffs and tossed it back into her mouth. “Since we’re waiting anyway, why don’t you tell me about him?”

“About who?”

“Velius. You’re his mother, you should have all the goods on him. At least an amusing anecdote or something.” He popped another puff into his mouth then looked at her expectantly.

“Uh, well, I don’t know . . . um . . . he was small when he was born, maybe three, three and a half pounds.” She really didn’t know what to say. She couldn’t imagine that Lucifer was interested in first words, or first steps. He loathed children, so typical kid stories seemed a poor choice for conversation. Thinking back over her memories of Velius, she recalled a few incidents that she...
could laugh at today that were not so funny at the time. “Hell needs more color.” She chuckled, off-handedly to herself.

“What?”

“Sorry I was remembering something that he once said. I had caught him painting a graffiti mural in your throne room and that was his excuse.” This particular piece of artwork, the devil remembered vividly, but not fondly. Each likeness was masterful with hell depicted as though it were a zoo with its sovereign plumed in peacock feathers and strutting about. It was the only time anyone had ever dared such a ballsy attempt at mocking the devil. Even now the memory stung.

“He was the one who did that?” Lucifer clearly didn’t find it as amusing as she did. “He painted me as a bloody peacock.” Lilith tried stifle her smile and laughter, but couldn’t quite do it. “This is funny to you? I forced three damned souls to clean that thing off. One who had a strange fear of brushes and the other two had a bizarre phobia about paintings. To make it worse, I got branded ‘the peacock of Hell’, thank you very much. There is still some confusion between the Muslims and the Yazidi over whether or not I’m the peacock angel.”

“You are so overreacting.” Lilith countered. “He hurt your ego, nothing more. Now when he stole the keys to the cells holding the most dangerous souls . . . that could have been bad.”

“He took . . . !” The devil stopped himself before he said something he would regret. He well recalled a large iron ring disappearing then one by one each key being found in various nooks all over the underworld. “I asked you if you knew who was behind it and you said you didn’t know.”

“No, you asked if I knew where the keys were and I didn’t.” Lili corrected. “I can’t believe you’re getting so upset about this after all this time. You’re retired, let it go.” She sighed. “Yes, they were stupid pranks, but he was an angry young man who desperately wanted to know his father despite the fact that he knew it was forbidden.” Lucifer suddenly grew quiet. “He was hoping that somehow his messing about would force you two to meet. He wanted you to find him so much.”

“Well,” Lucifer suddenly felt a bit chastened at this revelation. He hadn’t realized how much Velius was like him. “I suppose . . . if there is anything I should be able to understand its having a difficult relationship with your parents.”

“Not to mention the whole ‘acting out’ thing.” the demoness added. Lucifer turned to Lilith to correct her statement, but before he could say anything, Mazikeen stepped up to the Queen of Demons and tossed a piece of paper at her.

“There it is. This Isaac Bonaventure guy is currently renting a very large unit over at a place called ‘Extra Space Storage’ on Santa Monica Boulevard.” Hell’s greatest torturer was as efficient as always.

“You contacted Maze?” Lucifer asked, a bit surprised that Lilith would actually do that.

“Well, it didn’t look as though our new friend was going to make any progress, so I decided to try another route.” The dark-haired beauty explained just as Kaleb gave a loud yell in frustration then threw his phone as hard as he could across the parking lot. Still fuming over the phone call, he walked over to the devil apologizing profusely.

“I finally got a hold of him, but he won’t tell me anything. He’s afraid I’m going to release him and . . . well, he’s right.”

“Well, your charms may have failed, but fortunately for us, Maze here was able to find the
information we needed.” The fallen angel stated as he threw away the empty bag of cool ranch puffs.

“Yeah, well,” Maze began, knowing she didn’t have all the information they needed. “The place has a gate that can only be opened by a numeric code and every unit is padlocked. I wasn’t able to find out which unit is his, but there is always someone behind the front desk. Oh, and you should know that they have camera’s everywhere.”

“Right, I’ll keep that in mind, now take your mother back to The Green Lady or Lux . . . or wherever it is she wants to go.”

“What?!” Both demoness’ exclaimed in unison. Lucifer looked at both of them, staggered that they were questioning his decision.

“I am not babysitting her again.” Mazikeen snapped.

“Fine, don’t, but at least drop her off since I’m taking the vette with me.” He ordered, then turned his attention to Lilith.

“That is my son,” Lili protested. “I have protected him . . .”

“Yes, ḳāṇā, and you’ve done a smashing job of raising him,” He interrupted. Clasping her hands in his and holding them, his tone softened as he looked at the desperation in her face. “But it’s my turn now. He’s my son . . . I’m his father. As you said, he’s been waiting a long time for me to find him. I think it’s time I did.” Lili looked up into his shining black eyes and reluctantly nodded. It was hard for her to let go of her role as Velius’ protector and let Lucifer take over, but it needed to be done. She had to trust him. She did trust him. “Now, go with Maze and let me do this.” He answered, kissing her hands then directing her towards her daughter.

“Swear to me before your Father and all of Heaven that you will bring him back to me.”

“Of course.” He answered then started to turn towards the car only to be caught by Lili again.

“Swear it on the life of Chloe Decker.” This was no off-hand promise, but a rather costly deal if he failed. Confident as always, the devil never faltered.

“My word is my bond.” He replied with bright smile, then watched as she went off with Mazikeen. Always loyal to the Lord of Hell, Maze did as she was asked and took Lilith back to Lux. She had noticed her mother’s silence the entire trip back and knew that something was brewing. She knew that look and was grateful it wasn’t directed towards her. The last time she had seen it her siblings Aliah and Lamia, a twin brother and sister, attempted a coup of the Lilim. They were never seen again. Yes, the sands of time were running out for someone and she was curious as to who it was. Casually she went over the devil’s bar and poured two drinks, one for her and one for her mother. She handed one of the glasses to Lilith, who took a drink then set it on the piano lid. The Queen of Demons reached into her clutch purse and took out the large signet ring that bore her symbol. Each of the gems seemed to sparkle with an unholy light. Mazikeen had heard stories about this bauble, but she had never really seen it before. It had always been kept in a large ornate box made of onyx and amber and carved in a Babylonian style showing scenes of Lili’s story. The first panel showed her creation in the garden, the second depicted her with Adam, the third was a rather racy image of Lilith in the arms of Lucifer, as indicated by his wings, and the last showed her transformation into a demon. Maze had seen this box many times growing up in Hell and knew that it was supposed to contain many powerful objects like the piece her mother was holding now. It stood to reason that if the ring were here on earth then so was the box and that alone was enough to make Mazikeen
apprehensive.

“Does Lucifer know that you brought your ring back with you . . . or that the box is here too?”

“Why does everyone assume that I am a subject of Lucifer’s? I rule me. As for ‘old scratch’s’ knowledge of the ring, yes he has seen it. I didn’t mention my jewelry box and there no reason he should even know about it unless someone opens their mouth.” She glanced up at her daughter in a silent warning. She needn’t have to though, since Maze had no intentions of bringing up the box. After all the stories she had heard in her youth about it, she was paranoid enough to believe that just speaking of it could potentially be a hex. The signet ring, on the other-hand intrigued her. She went over to her mother and stared closely at the bauble.

“Is it true, that you can possess a man’s soul with this ring?”

“All I have to do is put it on and it automatically calls out to the deep carnal hunger in all men drawing them right to me while making potential rivals ill so they move away. On a young man it takes merely seconds, an older one can take longer due to the drop in testosterone and the natural aging process, but they will still come to me.” She laughed for a moment remembering how it had worked on Lucifer. “Apparently it is strong enough to stir even an angels desires, but they are still powerful enough to resist. As far as actually taking a soul is concerned . . . well, I need to do more than just wear it. Speaking of which, I have a job for you, Mazie.” Lili’s eyes had a faraway look in them as she took a drink of bourbon.

“Oh?”

“I want you to use your considerable bounty hunting skills to find a man, Dr. Matthew Willard an anesthesiologist.” The demoness commanded, never looking away from her ring.

“Why do you want this human?”

“He’s the one who has your brother . . .”

“Half-brother.” Maze quickly corrected. Lilith was in no mood for her daughter’s usual catty, smart-ass remarks. She turned towards her child, her eyes were snake-like and her reptilian, needle thin fangs were beginning to show.

“Lucifer may find your lip amusing, but I find it childish and tiresome.” Her growl of displeasure did not fall on deaf ears. Mazikeen stared at her mother with defiance, but her naturally caustic wit was silenced. “Do you really think I haven’t heard the whispers and vicious murmurings of you and your thousands of siblings? I’m sorry if none of you got the sort of mothering you thought you deserved, but Hell is hardly a place for nurturing. You’re right when you say that I am more protective of Velius then any of my other children, but that is because he needed it more. You and your other brothers and sisters were always so strong and independent . . .” Lilith didn’t know what else she could say. Velius always held her heart in a way nothing else ever could. He was all that was left of her humanity and a part of Lucifer that no one else could possess. The very thought of losing him forever was enough to make her physically ill. “Now, this man has your brother locked away somewhere in a freezer and I want that brigand found.”

“No problem.” A smile curled her lips. Lucifer may no longer subscribe to the same punishments and tortures that he once did, but she was gratified to see that her mother still did. “You pay my standard fee. No freebees, even for family.” Lilith stepped towards her daughter, her voice low and a half smile beginning to appear.

“Oh, you’ll be compensated.”
Lilith trusted Lucifer to do exactly as he promised and bring their child home, but finding Matthew was the last thing on the devil’s or Kaleb’s mind. The professor loaded his car with blankets from his son’s apartment including an electric one that plugged into a car lighter. He also found some heat packs that were left over from a ski trip Asher had taken with some colleagues years ago. Both men sped through LA towards the address Mazikeen had provided for them. The fallen angel leading the way in his corvette while the professor did his best to keep up in his old sedan. The large tan and rust colored building with its palm trees came into view and Lucifer’s heart began to pound slightly. Somewhere inside his son was freezing and he still didn’t know exactly where. Parking his car he strode up to the front desk just as Kaleb was managing to get out of his own car. The woman behind the counter was a heavyset blond with an attractive face buried in a well-worn Victoria Holt novel. Lucifer went up to the counter and smiled down at her, catching her attention. She took one look at the tall, dark-haired and devilishly handsome man and immediately smiled.

“Hello, I was wondering if you could help me.” He said as she pulled the hair away from her face and tucked it behind her ear. Professor Tavor managed to join the devil just as the desk clerk’s green/blue eyes began looking the fallen angel up and down lustfully.

“I’d be glad to.” She answered, tilting her head invitingly. He knew that look so well and had used it many times to get what he wanted.

“We’re looking for a storage unit currently being rented by a chap called Isaac Bonaventure.”

“I-I can’t give out any names or information regarding our renters. I’m sorry, but it’s part of our privacy policy. I can’t even tell you if you’re in the right place.”

“Come on, Gail.” Lucifer said, looking at her nametag and laying on the charm. He would have asked her what she desired, but he already had a pretty good idea what it was. “Surely you can help me out.”

“I-I really . . . really wish I could.” She leaned closer to him as she began to play with her hair. Kaleb couldn’t believe what he was witnessing. Lucifer gently took her hand and held it between his. Feverishly she began typing with the other. “Unit #89, just around the corner on the other side of the security gate. The code is 0948 followed by the pound key. I’ll loop the footage on the security camera in that area.” This was better than he had hoped for and thanked her with kiss planted on her eager lips.

“What the hell did you do to her?” Kaleb asked as they turned the corner of the building.

“I’m the devil remember? I appeal to the dark, mischievous hearts in most women. It’s not her fault really, she was simply reacting to me.”

“A-and you can do this with any woman?” The professor wasn’t sure if he was shocked or impressed.

“I’ve only seen it fail once.”

Lucifer stopped at the security gate and punched in the code the clerk had given him then slid it open with ease. Looking up at the numbers painted above each bay door he soon found #89. Taking hold of the padlock he gave it one mighty yank, forcing it open. Inside he saw the freezer positioned in the back and for a moment his red eyes flashed as he saw that it was chained and secured with two heavier padlocks. Summoning his divine strength he broke open each of the locks and removed the chain allowing the freezer door to finally be opened. The inside had been set at -2F, sending a chill through the devil instantly. More alarming was the sight that met his eyes. Velius sat huddled in a corner, still as death with his head in his lap. He had obviously been trying to keep warm, but he had
failed. His skin was blue/grey and icy to the touch. Lucifer felt for a pulse and for a moment feared the worst. To his relief he managed to find a faint rhythm and he sighed with relief. He looked up at the ceiling of the freezer and noticed the red lights shining from two cameras positioned with the sole intent of catching every second of Velius’ ordeal. Enraged he grabbed cameras and tore them from their places then tore apart the mechanisms before flinging them outside. He then turned back to his son and lifted him from where he was sitting and carried him out of the freezer to the warm sunlight. Kaleb took a couple of blankets and some heat packs from his car and brought them to Lucifer. They wrapped him in the first blanket careful to leave the twelve volt power adaptor accessible. Then the two of them carefully placed the heat packs around Velius’ trunk area then wrapped him in the second mantle.

Sitting across the street watching everything from the parking lot of a strip mall was Matthew. During their phone conversation, Kaleb had tipped his hand by telling him about Lucifer and his female companion. While Matthew did not believe for a second that this man was actually the devil, he was concerned about private investigators and cops snooping around. He had gone down to the storage facility to verify that it was still secure, but now he found himself quite interested in the scene unfolding before him. Any human would have already been dead, but clearly Velius was not or they wouldn’t have been working so hard to warm him up. He glanced at his watch to see how many minutes had gone by, noting it had been five minutes since he was taken from the freezer. How long would it take to revive him? Could he be revived? Taking out his Canon Mark 5 camera, he zoomed in and started snapping photos of Lucifer as well as Velius and Kaleb. He wondered who this obviously wealthy man was and what he had to do with their test subject. He scribbled down some notes on the back of a receipt regarding his observations and just how much this stranger looked like their patient.

Kaleb was also counting the minutes since Lucifer had extracted his son from the freezer, although not with the same motives. He suggested to the devil that they should take him to the hospital or call 911, but Lucifer dismissed the idea before he could finish the sentence. What was he going to tell a doctor? Watch out for the wings? That the patient’s blood matched no types on file? He was certainly not going to do that. Velius should be able to heal quickly on his own without the intervention of human medicine. The fallen angel once more put a hand to his son’s pulse and was relieved to feel it was stronger. His breathing was becoming sounder and steadier as well.

Carefully they lifted Velius and set him into Lucifer’s car, making sure he was still wrapped up then plugged the adaptor into the cigarette lighter. The devil then turned his attention to Kaleb. Staring at this unassuming professor, he found himself caught between wanting to rip his throat out for kidnapping his son in the first place and grateful for his help in finding him. Kaleb too was gaping back at the fallen angel. Like Lucifer, he had no idea what to say or how to proceed. His heart was heavy with regret for what he had done to Velius, but at least he had been able to right some of his wrongs. He wanted nothing and expected nothing from the devil.

“You dared to take my son from me.” Lucifer said coldly, stopping Kaleb in his tracks. “You locked him away in some misguided attempt to reach my Father and somehow touch the heavens. I destroyed a man once for stealing my wings and mounting them on the wall like a decorative stag head . . . this was something far more valuable to me.” The Professor said nothing, just hung his head, clearly ashamed of his actions. He had no idea what the Lord of Hell was planning, but he was prepared to take whatever the punishment was. “But . . .” the devil continued. “It seems that life has punished you enough with the loss of your own son. It’s also quite possible that I wouldn’t have found him without you.” Kaleb didn’t know what to say. “Against my better judgement I am leaving you to live your life, such as it is. I trust that in the future neither me, nor any of mine will ever see your face again.” The dark look in Lucifer’s eyes was enough to tell the professor that this was far from a suggestion. Silently he nodded then turned and started towards his car.
Kaleb sat down behind the wheel and watched the devil drive away with his son. He couldn’t help wondering what the next adventure of his life would be. He reached out to turn the keys in the ignition and his eyes fell upon his left hand holding the steering wheel. In particular he noticed his gold wedding band. It was dull, slightly bent and a little beat up, but still as valuable as ever. He was best off leaving the angels to heaven and the devil and his son to Hell. There was something far more important that he needed to do, something he should have done a long time ago. Marian needed him and his family was long overdue for healing.

Of course neither Lucifer nor Velius were going back to Hell. They were headed towards Lux where Lilith was waiting along with a hot bath and even hotter coffee. The combination of the scorching California sun, an electric blanket and Velius’ supernatural ability to heal quickly was certainly working in his favor. By the time Lucifer pulled into his reserved parking space beneath Lux, the son of Hell was beginning to regain his normal color as well as movement in his joints. The devil first noticed his fingers begin to slowly flex then the soft flutter of his eyes as they opened. The structure of Velius’ eyes was still set for dark conditions and that combined with them being frozen, left his vision momentarily blurry. Slowly they changed their composition and adjusted to the light. To his surprise and relief he saw Lucifer looking down at him, sporting a devilish grin.

“Well, look who’s back.”
Parties and Punishment

It took Velius twenty-four hours to heal and be his old self again. The frostbite that had marked his fingers and toes had vanished and there was no evidence that he had been so close to death, not that he would have actually died. Never had hot coffee tasted so good and after the swill he had been given during his captivity he found the food Lucifer brought him to be an incredible explosion of flavor on his tongue. Since Maze no longer lived there, Lucifer gave her old room to Velius while he recuperated. The time spent healing wasn’t wasted as father and son finally got to know one another. There was plenty for them to talk about. How different things might have been. Velius neither needed nor wanted any apologies. The past was the past and it was enough to know Lucifer had been there when it mattered most.

As the sun began to set on the second day of Velius’ freedom from captivity, Lux once more came alive. The devil needed no excuse to turn the club atmosphere into one big party. Whether he announced it or not, the only son of Hell was most assuredly his reason to celebrate. The two of them were not the only celestial beings at the party either. Invited or not Amenadiel sat alone at a table sipping a cosmopolitan. Lucifer had made fun of his choice of drink in the past, but he paid no attention. It was yummy and at was all that mattered to him. From his vantage point he could see his fallen brother laughing and talking with Velius and part of him longed to go over there, but couldn’t, not yet anyway. After what he had done to Lilith when she was carrying him, he didn’t feel that his presence was wanted. He wasn’t too worried though. They were both immortal and had all the time in the world. He could wait if that was what it took.

“Is that him?” Charlotte asked approaching her eldest child and pointing at the laughing pair on the other side of the bar.

“Yes it is.” Amenadiel answered. A smile spread across her lovely features and she started to walk towards the pair, but Amenadiel rose from his seat and caught hold of her arm to stop her.

“Leave them alone, mom. They’ve both waited a long time for this.”

“But he’s my grandson.” She argued. “If he can open a portal from Hell into this world then he might be able to help us get back home!”

“After all we’ve done,” He began. “Do you honestly think he would help us?” He was right, but it wasn’t what she wanted to hear. Disappointment clouded her face as she sat down next to him. “I wouldn’t give up, mom. Down the road . . . who knows?” She nodded and tried to smile then looked back over at her son and grandson. She looked at their smiles, gestures and behavior and sighed.

“They’re a lot alike, aren’t they?” She asked wistfully. Amenadiel nodded as he watched the eyes and heads of both father and son follow an incredibly beautiful woman as she walked in front of them. “I’m surprised his . . . mother . . . isn’t with them.” Charlotte said this title with disdain as she commented on Lilith’s absence. Amenadiel hadn’t really thought about it, but she was right. The demoness was missing.

Lilith would like to have been there at the Morningstar family reunion, but she firmly believed that the best thing she could do was step back and let father and son spend time together. As it was, there was something more important for her to take care of. Maze’s reputation as the top bounty hunter was well earned and she had managed to track Dr. Matthew Willard to the Embassy Suites Hotel near LAX. Paranoid that someone would show up at his home before he could catch his morning flight to New York, he had booked a room near the airport. He went over his itinerary again and
again afraid he’d forget something. He absolutely couldn’t miss the flight since he had an important meeting two hours after he landed.

Desiring a drink, Matthew went down to the hotel’s bar and ordered a bourbon on the rocks before sitting down at a table. The place was completely empty except for the bartender. He took out his phone and began to scroll through the missed calls as the drink was set in front of him. His voicemail was still filled to capacity from the barrage of phone calls left by Kaleb a couple of nights ago. Now the doctor sat erasing each and every message. Taking a drink, he leaned back in his chair and thought about what he had witnessed at the storage facility. The way that well-dressed stranger had so easily forced open the padlock. No human could have done that. Kaleb had said he was the devil, but despite having held an angel in captivity, he still couldn’t quite believe that. Not that he wanted to take any chances either. Putting the glass once more to his lips, he emptied it and assured himself that no one knew where he was and he still had all the proof locked away in a briefcase in his room. In the morning he would fly out of Los Angeles and take it to a colleague in New York. One of the foremost genetic scientists in the country and hopefully continue this work.

It seemed strange to think that before that fateful meeting with Kaleb, Matthew had been a fairly devout man, or at least gave the appearance of one. He went to church each Sunday, was regular with his prayers and tithes and always tried to help those in need. Like his friend, the sight of those wings changed him, but not for the better. The professor had found hope, faith and something to believe in again, but Matthew’s heart became filled with greed and ambition. He had seen in Velius a chance to make humanity as great as God and his hubris hadn’t faded yet. He firmly believe that all he needed to do was talk to his New York colleague then recapture the angel and they would be back on track. The first step was to get out of Los Angeles and after that all would be well.

He was deep in contemplating his situation when two figures walked in. He never looked up to notice anything about them, but after a moment he felt a strong unexplainable desire to look over at the bar. Looking up he saw two of the most incredible women he had ever seen watching him intently. The first woman was a vision, tall, with long black hair, a creamy caramel complexion and fiery black eyes. Her black leather pants and tight leather bustier emphasized every desirable curve on her body. The second woman was seated on a stool. Her lightly tan skin was barely covered by a short, backless, silver sequined gown and its plunging draped neckline. Her brilliant green eyes sparkled like two perfect emeralds. Her long dark brown hair was held away from her face by silver chopsticks and he imagined each strand felt like silk. Her hands seemed delicate, yet on the ring finger of her left hand was a large gem encrusted silver signet ring. These two incredibly hot women stared at him, with heated intensity. Never in Matthew’s life had women of this caliber noticed him. This had to be a mistake. He started to look back down at his phone when the bartender set a drink on his table.

“Uh, I didn’t order . . .” He started to protest, but before he could finish the bartender pointed to the two women. Whatever doubts he had about their interest in him, were gone now. He couldn’t imagine why these two sizzling hot women would be attracted to a scientific, book-wormish man like himself. Somewhere in his mind he told himself that this had to be a ruse. These two women had to be con-artists or thieves. Everything in his body and soul screamed for him to go to them and the pull was so strong he couldn’t resist it. He felt like he was in a dream as he took up his drink and walked towards them. As he approached, his eyes drank in each desirable part of their bodies while simultaneously wondering what he was getting himself into. He was nearly seventy years old and it had been a long time since he had been active with any woman, let alone two that seemed so much younger then himself.

“I’m glad you decided to accept our invitation.” Said the green-eyed beauty.

“You have an interesting accent. Are you from England?” He asked.
“No, I’m from a much warmer climate. My name is Lili and this is my friend Mazikeen.”

“Mazikeen, that’s quite an unusual name.”

“Why be ordinary?” She cooed.

“Why indeed.” He agreed. Maze ran her hand down his chest. “I’m not sure I’m really the kind of guy you want.”

“My guess is you’re either a doctor, a lawyer or a professor, am I right?” Lili asked

“A doctor actually.”

“Then you are definitely my type. I want someone who has experience, intelligence and maturity.” She leaned close to his ear and softly whispered. “I want a man.” She gently nibbled his ear sending shivers through him. “Perhaps we should take our little party to your hotel room?” Without hesitation he showed her his key card and the threesome quickly finished their drinks and headed for the elevators.

As the lift moved upward the ladies teased him by never quite allowing him to touch or kiss them. It was truly maddening. Their perfume was enticing and he wasn’t certain if he could wait until they reached his hotel room. At one point he managed to catch Lili up against the lift wall and wrap one of her legs around his waist. Dear God she was so beautiful. He moved his fingers up her outer thigh to the curve of her bottom. He was just about to finally steal a kiss when the doors slid open and she playfully escaped his advances. Mazikeen gave him a teasing push off of the elevator then caught him by the tie and pulled him close to her lips without allowing him to actually touch hers. He reached into his pocket and once more took out his room key card which Lili slipped out of his hand. She glanced at the room number then crooked her finger beckoning him to follow. Matthew caught up with her at this room door. Pressing her up against the wooden surface he finally managed to claim a kiss as he slid the card through the lock.

Once inside it was not the paradise he had expected it to be. The door barely closed behind them and Maze caught him and sent him flying across the room then she went over and picking him up, slammed him against the bed. He didn’t understand what was going on. How could she be so strong? He looked up at Lili, watching him as she leaned against the chest of drawers. She was still so beautiful, so enticing. Despite all of his fear he still felt completely drawn to her. Surely she would stop this, get help . . . something. All the teasing playfulness was gone. If they wanted money they could just take what he had and go.

“I’ve got a hundred bucks in my wallet, a debit card and two credit cards. Take them and go.”

“You humans, sure do love your money.” Lili smirked. “Of all the deadly sins that one seems to trip your kind up the most. As well as lead to so many other avenues of sin. You can keep your money. What I want is something far more valuable than a few mortal dollars.”

“I have nothing else of value to you.”

“You know, I was never one to participate in the doling out of punishment in Hell. That was always more Lucifer’s thing. Of course Maze here was the most decorated torturer in all of Hell. Her father and I were very proud.” For a brief moment Lili’s eyes changed, becoming snake-like and revealing the reality of who she was.

“My God . . .” He uttered, his voice shaking.

“God is never in LA this time of year, but I certainly am.” She took a step towards him and he started
to get up only to be shoved back down by Mazikeen. “Now you’re going to give me every last shred of evidence that you have on your captive angel.” He shook his head trying his level best to be brave.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” She could tell he was lying by the way he was breathing heavily and not blinking. She had seen it so often before.

“I applaud your courage, but that was a really stupid decision.” She opened the clutch purse she had brought with her and took out a quill. Its sharp metal tip was engraved with designs and attached to an owl’s feather that the demoness had plucked from herself. Over all it didn’t seem very big and neither Maze nor the doctor knew what it was for. She walked over to him and climbed up on the bed, straddling his hips. Her long lithe fingers caressed his upper body then tore open his shirt exposing his chest. “It’s been a very long time since I’ve done this so I might be a bit rusty.” She winked. He had no idea what she was doing as her fingers moved along his chest finally stopping just above his heart. She felt the rhythm for a few moments then turned her hand placing the top of her signet ring dead center of his heart. She pressed it into his flesh, wringing a cry of pain from him as the symbol of Lilith seared itself into his skin. “Did you honestly think you could torture my son and get away with it?” Matthew didn’t answer, only whimpered in fear and pain. Lilith gently wiped a stray tear from his face. “You can feel it already, can’t you? All of the control you have over yourself and your soul is ebbing away, isn’t it? I promise, the final step won’t hurt too much.” So saying she raised her pen and began to carve her name across his forehead, his own blood marking each letter. For this particular ceremony she used the proper spelling of Lilit just as she had once been known. As she sat back up, a strange glowing white vapor began to radiate from Matthew’s eyes, mouth, ears and nose. Slowly it flowed through the air before it poured into Lilith through her same corresponding outlets. Closing her eyes, Lili took several deep breathes before she started to fall backwards. Alarmed, Mazikeen cried out the name she had always called her mother, Tāy, before catching her and laying her down on the bed next to the doctor. The Queen of Demons quickly assured her daughter that she was fine then explained that when she enslaved a soul it would always leave her temporarily weakened. It was simply the cost being who and what she was. Lilith stood up and tottered her way back over to her purse where she returned the quill before turning around in time to see her bloody name vanish and Matthew’s eyes look at her.

“Let’s try this again shall we?”

Mazikeen was hardly adverse to violence or punishment, but she did find herself wondering how Lucifer would feel about all of this. Lilith might be her mother, but her loyalty was first and foremost to the Lord of Hell. Of course the devil had every intention of dealing with the Matthew Willard himself, but for the moment he was simply enjoying the opportunity to spend time with Velius. The music was blaring and the drinks were flowing and many a beautiful woman had cast their alluring gaze at the devil and his offspring. Since being rescued the day before, both father and son had discovered that they had much in common, with a few differences of course. The son of Hell had no intentions of staying in Los Angeles. He was hungry to explore this human world as much as possible.

Earlier in the day while the two had lunch together, Velius mentioned that he had been planning to ride his motorcycle to New York and then sail to England where he hoped to continue his journey. His kidnapping had brought that to a screeching halt. The devil never ventured an opinion, only listened. After spending every second of his existence in Hell, Lucifer was certain that Velius was hungry for life. His assumptions were correct of course and the party at Lux that they were enjoying was all about celebrating that very thing. Lucifer had called in all of his lovely dancers and the place was full to capacity. Two more drinks were set in front of the devil, and his son, just as Velius was finishing up a joke.
“The dad then says to the son, ‘that’s the difference between theory and reality. In theory we’re sitting on two million dollars, but in reality we’re living with two whores.’” The joke may have been old, but they both still laughed. Quickly downing their shots, a man approached Lucifer and handed him a large envelope which he opened and examined the contents before handing the man some cash.

“Since you’re determined to ride off into the sunset like some cheesy cowboy movie, I figured you would need these.” Hell’s only child couldn’t imagine what it could be as he took it and lifted the flap. He truly expected nothing from Lucifer, least of all a new phone, cards and documents of every kind that a traveler would need to move about Europe and Asia, including a passport and a first class ticket on the RMS Queen Mary 2. At first he assumed that Lucifer had simply greased the wheels in order to get through all of the red tape, but then he noticed something else. None of the paperwork was in the name of Velius Haides, but rather, Velius Morningstar. For a moment he couldn’t speak and tried to hand the envelope back.

“I-I can’t . . . it’s too much. All of this . . . too much.” This was a full and complete acknowledgement on Lucifer’s part and it touched him deeply. It was certainly far more then he could have ever hoped for.

“Well of course you can.” His objections made no sense to the devil. “Besides, it’s done.” The devil got two more drinks from the bartender and handed one to Velius. The half-breed angel could only stand there silent, uncertain of what to say.

“Thank you.” Velius said, holding the envelope close to him. “How were you able to do it so fast?”

“When you were showering this morning I called in a few favors and then after our chat over lunch I may have sent a text adding a few things to it. It’s not that hard, I even picked up this brochure for a sightseeing tour of Los Angeles. I’m thinking it might be good for your uncle Amenadiel so he can see all LA has to offer instead of brooding over going home.”

“Does mum, know about this?” The son of the devil asked, gesturing to the packet of documents.

“I haven’t even seen or heard from your mum since breakfast this morning. We were both exhausted after last night and she left before we had a chance to talk.”

“Yeah, I’m still trying to forget everything I heard between you and mum down below in the penthouse. I guess it’s never too late to traumatize your offspring.” Velius drank his shot then ordered up another one. “So what is the story between you and the detective?”

“Story? There’s no story, we’re just partners.” Lucifer answered. “I help her solve murders and also punish bad people. Same calling, just handled a little differently.”

“Right, you two just work together.” Hell’s only son smirked. He no more believed that than he believed Mazikeen was an innocent school girl. “Of course, just a professional relationship.” He sniffed. “Funny thing, for as long as I can remember mum’s been in love with you. I never thought I would see the day when she would completely step aside for another woman. I guess there’s a first time for everything, eh?” This statement caught the fallen angel completely off guard and his jovial mood vanished. “Your Chloe must be something.” The devil wanted to ask Velius to expound on what he had said about Lilith, but before he could a hot woman caught his son by the collar of his shirt and led him away to the dance floor.

Lucifer was at a loss. This was something he never expected. He found himself wondering if it was true or the imaginings of an offspring hoping his parents would somehow get together. Perhaps the best thing would be to talk to Lilith. Taking out his phone he dialed Lili’s number, but there was
only ringing then it went to voicemail. He tried sending a text, but again, she didn’t answer. The
demoness wasn’t exactly ignoring her phone, she was simply too busy being helped into her car to
notice anyone had called. Mazikeen opened the passenger door of the 1952 classic convertible and
set Lilith down. The demoness slipped the large signet ring from her finger and put it back into her
purse then laid her head against the red leather bench seat and closed her eyes.

“Are you sure he’ll do everything?” Maze asked as she closed the car door.

“Yes. I have no doubts that he’ll complete everything tonight and in a few days I’ll get a package in
the mail with no return address that contains all the photos and memory sticks. He will do whatever
it takes to please me because the more he resists, the more pain he’ll feel. The soul and body cannot
fight each other for long.” Lilith explained. Maze looked at her mother and furrowed her brow. The
mother of the Lilim was pale and weak and that disturbed her more than a little.

“Are you sure you’re okay?”

“I’ll be fine Mazie. This is just reason number one hundred and fifty-three why I don’t like to
perform that ritual. It really takes it out of me, but by tomorrow I’ll be good as new again.” Lili
explained giving her daughter a weak smile. Maze wasn’t entirely convinced, but remained silent as
she went around to the driver side and got in.

“Well, I’ll feel better when I get you back to Lux and into Lucifer’s care.” She said as she shut the
door and slid the keys in the ignition.

“No. I’m not going back to Lux. I have intruded on Lucifer long enough. He has his own life and
it’s time for me to move on anyway.” Lili looked up at the night sky and recalled another moment in
time when she was sitting in this very automobile looking up at the stars with her human lover by her
side. For a moment her world had seemed perfect. “You know something, Maze, I’ve never once
gone to the cemetery to pay my respects to Christian. I really should. Perhaps tomorrow. He was
the only one ever truly loved me and think I’m ready to go home to The Green Lady. If ‘old scratch’
wants me then he knows where to find me.”

“But you’re Aṣakāṣa.”

“I don’t think that’s exactly true anymore.” Lilith’s fingers gently brushed the stone hanging from her
neck. “Anyway, since you seem to be so concerned for my welfare, why don’t you stay with me? It
seems to me a devilish little bird once said that you and I should have some mother/daughter bonding
time. Perhaps we should.”

“I might be able to do that.” Mazikeen looked thoughtful for a moment as she turned the ignition and
started the car. “Lucifer and Lilith going their separate ways. Hell has finally frozen over.”
Despite a night of partying, and one or two luscious ladies lighting up his night, Velius had managed to be up fairly early the next morning. He loaded up his motorcycle with all his clothes and personal items, careful to include the papers and documents that Lucifer had given him as well as slipping his new phone into the inside pocket of his leather jacket. The son of the devil was eager to be on his way and travel the world. He had a new name, a new beginning and (so long as he didn’t cheapen the Lucifer brand) his father’s financial support. It seemed strange to be parting when they had only just found each other, but that seemed to be the way of the world. Neither father nor son were huggers, but with the uncertainty of when they would see each other again, there was no hesitation to embrace. Lucifer reminded Velius that from time to time he would like to hear from him and that he had no doubt that his mother would definitely be expecting him to call her. He pulled on his helmet decorated with various characters taken from Neil Gaiman’s Veritgo comics. The two exchanged one more good-bye before Velius took off down the road towards new adventures.

Lucifer returned to his penthouse and poured himself an espresso. He, himself, had not slept all night. He had tried to call Lilith twice without answer. Even if she had, he really didn’t know what he would say to her. The other night she had almost said something to him. Something she had quickly thought better of and changed the subject. Now he wondered if she hadn’t been trying to tell him what she felt. Cup in hand, he went over to his piano and sat down. He set his drink on top of the instrument then softly he started to play the old jazz song Angel Eyes while he contemplated his Āḻakāṇa. Strange that his home should feel so empty without her. He glanced at his phone where it lay on top of his piano, but there were no new messages. She had finally returned his text earlier that morning, letting him know that she had gone back home to The Green Lady. He never mentioned what he wanted to see her about, but it didn’t matter because without hesitation she declined. Her text was simple and to the point saying ‘You know that I would normally do anything for you, but not right now. It is unfortunate that life should be so complicated, but it is what it is. My door is always open should you need me or even just want me.’ He must have read the message at least a hundred times, and while it certainly never said it, he couldn’t help feeling as though there was something there between the lines. Lilith did love him. Why had he never seen it before? As to what he felt for Lili, well, he really didn’t know. He had never given it any thought before. There was no question in his mind that she was a part of him. Throughout the ages they had fought passionately and made love passionately. She was his best friend and if he could no longer see her . . . well . . . a part of himself would be lost. Yes, he loved her, how could he not? The question of how much was far more difficult to answer, perhaps impossible. For the moment he was prepared to simply forgo contact with the demoness and leave such a difficult conversation unsaid. He could always bring it up in his next session with Dr. Linda, if another existential crisis didn’t arise first.

The devil was so deep in thought over Lilith that he didn’t hear the elevator door or even the sound of footsteps as they approached him. Indeed it was a pleasant surprise when Chloe sat down next to him on the piano bench. He greeted her with his usual cheerful greeting of ‘detective’ and beamed a charming smile at her, but his jovial mood was not returned. The fact of the matter was, she seemed rather down and pensive. He had long been aware of the fact that every crime scene broke her heart, but he was not aware of any new cases and she seemed more troubled than usual. Hoping to help, he inquired as to what was bothering her and she sighed.

“Sorry I just got done visiting a possible crime scene.”

“I didn’t know we had a new case.” Lucifer pointed out, unsure why she hadn’t included him.
“Oh, no, we don’t. It was pretty cut and dry.”

“Yet it still troubles you.” Lucifer commented as he stopped his piano playing to focus on her.

“A maid at the Embassy Suites went to clean a room and discovered the body of Dr. Matthew Willard.” This name was of immediate interest to Lucifer. He had planned to reach out with his own feelers (mostly Maze, but he had other connections who owed him favors) and punish the man. “He was found in the bathtub, naked and his wrists were cut.” Chloe’s description surprised him. It was the last thing he was expecting. Until this moment the devil had believed that Dr. Willard would undoubtedly run and hide, mostly run. This didn’t make sense. “Empty test tubes were found on the bathroom counter, but they were completely clean and disinfected so who knows what was in them. A laptop was open on his bed and our computer forensics lab will try to recover what was on it, but it looks like he ran ‘kill disk’ so we may not get anything. We also found his briefcase open on the table but all the contents were gone. We know he had a cell phone, but it’s missing and attempts to call it or track it have failed. He probably turned it off and took out the battery, who knows. Financial records led us to an account with a cell phone company, but all the calls were typical. Nothing out of the ordinary. Given how far he went to erase whatever he was doing, my guess is he conducted his business using a burner phone. Obviously that’s nowhere to be found. The only person who recalled seeing him last night was a bartender and she said that he came in, had a drink and then returned to his room with two women who came in after him. She couldn’t tell me much about the women other than they had long dark hair. Apparently she started to have a headache and some nausea after they came into the bar.”

Hearing this last bit of information made everything quite clear for the devil and he no longer had any doubts as to what happened. The mother of the Lilim had found the doctor and exacted a punishment that only she could give. Lilith’s ring, that bloody bauble. Lucifer didn’t doubt that it had called out to Dr. Willard luring him to her side like a little puppy dog. The bartender was actually the fortunate one, the ring would only repel her. At most she had to endure some temporary discomfort. He was trying to think of how many times his lady friend had enslaved a soul and the number was astonishingly low. In fact, including Dr. Willard he could only think of two or three at most.

“Well, detective, it sounds as though there is no mystery to be solved.” Lucifer responded.

“True, but . . .”

“But?”

“I don’t know.” Chloe pondered as she absently looked down at the piano keys before her. “Something about it just doesn’t seem right. Both women left after about forty-five minutes then he was seen an hour later when he briefly left the hotel with a package. He came back empty-handed about forty minutes later and cancelled his wake-up service then went back up to his room. The clerk said that he seemed perfectly normal, although maybe a little distant. What was in that package? Why did he destroy whatever it was he was working on? The only note he left was on hotel stationary and said: ‘Hope not ever to see Heaven. I have come to lead you to the other shore; into eternal darkness; into fire and into ice’.”

“Dante Alighieri.” Lucifer remarked softly to himself. It was certainly a fitting quote for a man who was being compelled towards an end he did not desire.

“We pulled the security footage hoping to identify the women and talk to them, but the cameras never caught either women’s face. One was leaning on the other though, like she needed help to walk. Drugs maybe? The strangest part was that he had a small mark burned onto his chest right above his heart like a brand. I’ve never seen anything like it. It was a crescent moon with a cross at
the bottom.” Chloe had been watching his face from the moment she began to tell him about the case, but the devil gave away nothing. She stared off thinking about the scene in the hotel room. Clearly it had moved her more than most. “I’ve never seen eyes like that on a victim, not even the Preacher-man. It was like he was facing all of his demons at once and horrified at what he saw.”

“I imagine there were a few thousand waiting for him.” The devil agreed with a raise of his eyebrow.

“The whole place seemed cold and filled with sadness. It was as if he desperately wanted to live but something or someone was forcing him to take his life.”

“Well, detective, perhaps whatever it was he was working on turned out to be more than he could handle. Sometimes the knowledge we seek can be our own undoing. Regardless, any scene where a person has taken their life is invariably filled with deep loss over wasted potential. I’m sure some are darker than others.”

“You’re right.” She nodded with a sigh. “You’re right.” Lucifer once more went back to playing Angel Eyes while Chloe off-handedly began to glance around the room. Everything was quiet and peaceful. It had been awhile since it had seemed like that around here, at least to her. There was no hint of perfume in the air. In fact, as she sat there she suddenly noticed the distinct absence of Lilith. “Where’s your friend? I was just getting used to seeing her running around your penthouse half-naked.” Lucifer smiled and gave a half laugh at the description. It did seem as though the last few times Det. Decker had showed up at his home, Lili was close to, but not quite ‘in the altogether’.

“All the details have been worked out and it seems that she is signing the paperwork to take over ownership of the The Green Lady today. She’ll be making mortgage payments to the parents of her late Bubloo, but she can handle it. Right now she’s going to be plenty busy with licenses, inspections, hiring servers . . . all the fun stuff. That should keep her occupied and out of trouble for quite a while.”

“I have a feeling she’ll have no trouble attracting customers.” Chloe commented. “Being the center of attention is kind of her thing.”

“You could say that.” He once more gave a half laugh, “Lilith Eden is . . . well . . . she is complex to say the least.” Even a blind detective could see there was something going on with Lucifer, at least where Lili was concerned and Chloe had two good eyes. She thought back to their conversation that day in the precinct and remembered what she had said. That wall is there to protect you both, but . . . if you are patient, then in time . . . I imagine that it will come down. For now she could be patient.

“There is something that I need to apologize to you for.”

“Oh?” Lucifer couldn’t fathom Chloe committing any sort of error towards him that she would need to apologize for.

“The other day Lilith came into the precinct and I said some things I shouldn’t have. I crossed the line. The relationship between you two is none of my business and I never should have interfered. I’m sorry.”

“And . . . how did Lili react to this?” His voice faltered slightly knowing how the demoness felt about unwanted prying. Still, he didn’t see any missing digits or limbs and the detective seemed to have all of her faculties together, so it seemed as though things went well.

“Well, I think we parted with a mutual understanding.”

“No harm done then.” He said brightly. Chloe reached out to take a sip of Lucifer’s espresso and her
hand bumped his phone accidentally bringing up Velius’ picture. It was the still taken from the security camera at DSH-Atascadero. He looked at his confident smile, sparkling green eyes, strong jaw line and dark hair. She held it up and compared it to Lucifer for a moment.

“Ella was right, he really does look a lot like you. Well, the eyes don’t, but otherwise, yeah.”

“Lucky for him.” The devil answered, smiling broadly. “Does this mean you’re refocusing your efforts back on the Preacher-man case?”

“Oh no.” She assured him. “I mean, we still don’t know where Velius is hiding or the snake, but . . . honestly I have had my fill of Lilith Eden for a while. No offense.”

“Too much for you, detective?”

“You could say that.” Chloe agreed. “We’re just two very different people. She’s the life of the party and I’m more like . . . the designated driver.”

“Come now, detective.” Lucifer corrected. “Maze told me you were really something once you let your hair down at the tiki bar on girl’s night.

“Yeah well, I was drunk.”

“Being drunk doesn’t make you a completely different person, it simply lowers your inhibitions and brings out who you really are. So clearly the life of the party is in there somewhere. In fact, I bet you even have a favorite joke at the ready.” He goaded.

“Mmmm . . . no.”

“Come one, you know you have one, let me hear it.” He continued to push at her, putting the detective on the spot.

“Oh come on. Daddy hear a joke about paper? Never Mind, it’s tearable.” The detective smiled and waited for her partner and friend to react, but instead he stared at her as though he were still waiting for the punchline. “Come on, get it?”

“Oh I got it . . . and I stand corrected.”

“Alright you win.” She laughed.

Chloe took another sip of Lucifer’s espresso as they continued to talk and laugh together. Even as they enjoyed this quiet moment, the devil and detective were not alone. Perched on the railing of the balcony sat a large great horned owl. It had had been there during Velius’ departure, not that anyone had noticed, and now that he was gone it sat listening to every word being said inside the penthouse. A breeze lightly ruffled it feathers as its large yellow eyes intently watched the pair sitting at the piano. For the moment Lilith preferred this animal form. It hid whatever she might be feeling from the outside world. In her human state she could easily fake a smile and pretend to be happy, but whether woman or animal, she could never make-believe that she didn’t love him. She had come to Lucifer’s penthouse for only one reason and that was to see his face. She wanted to confirm what
she already knew. He was happy . . . very happy with Chloe at his side. Silently she reminded herself that she wasn’t exactly giving him up. You can’t give up something that was never really yours to begin with. Besides, their roots would always be tangled together. You could no more separate their souls then you could separate every individual grain of sand on the beach. There was no cause for her to be sad because it wasn’t as though she were saying good-bye. She was simply stepping out of the picture, at least for now. Satisfied, the owl stretched its wings and took off into the blue sky. Should the fallen angel need her, then she would be there . . . waiting to continue their ageless dance.
The grand re-opening of The Green Lady bar was still two days away. Lilith had talked at length with Christian’s parents and they had agreed to let her make payments and slowly buy the place from them. She wasn’t making any real changes outside of a few odds and ends that reflected her own style and hanging a picture of her late fiancé on one side of the bar. It only seemed right. It was his place after-all and therefore only fitting that he should continue to keep an eye on it. After spending the day interviewing potential wait staff and getting everything cleaned and restocked, Lilith was relaxing on a stool with a glass of absinthe in front of her. She shouldn’t have had to do the interview at all, but the waitress she had hired found herself a better job. C’est la vie. Her green eyes watched the sugar cube in the slotted spoon slowly melt into the green liquid. A small stereo positioned on a shelf behind the bar was playing old jazz songs and Lilith was singing along to Ella Fitzgerald’s Get Thee Behind Me Satan. The demoness glanced up at the framed picture of Christian. How badly she missed him. That was something that still hadn’t gone away. His handsome face, warm voice, and playful smile. What would she give to see him walk through that door and hold her again. He would always have a special place in her heart, of that she was certain.

Of course, if one were able to look into the vast secrets of her soul then they would learn a great many things. There were numerous mysteries, buried inside her, such as how close the prophet Elijah came to succumbing to her charms before finally calling out the name of YHWH and rendering her powerless. There was also the secret of her youngest and certainly most dangerous child. Like Velius, he was not of the Lilim, but unlike Nephilim, the blending of angel and demon blood had produced a child that was psychotic and unstable. Nephew of the devil, Lucifer had dealt with him long ago and it was best he remain locked in one of the chambers held with strong chains. She never denied the existence of Ahriman of course, that would be a lie. She simply preferred to not speak of him at all. Like her friend the devil, Lilith would never lie, but that should never be mistaken for virtue. She simply preferred to not give a full account. This was a highly useful skill, as Lucifer could attest to. No the demoness never lied, except perhaps to herself. Christian was not the love of her life, though she had cared for him very deeply and would always mourn him. Every beat was for another face and name, but she would never confess it, no matter how many ages went by.

The last few grains of sugar had finished oozing into the absinthe when she heard a knock on the door. She couldn’t imagine who would be visiting her this late at night. Pulling the bolt and unlocking the door, she was surprised to see the playfully wicked face of Lucifer Morningstar. She was even more surprised to see a man with a juke box strapped down to a dolly standing just behind him.

“Lucifer, what are you doing here?” She asked, her eyes looking at the devil and then at the burly man with the hand truck.

“Well, I couldn’t very well leave without bringing you a grand re-opening present. Don’t worry, its nothing big.”

“Leave?” She asked puzzled. “Nothing big?” She stepped aside letting in the Lord of Hell and the delivery man.

“Well, I noticed that the one you had wasn’t working so I thought I would surprise you.” Lucifer immediately availed himself of the newly stocked bar while the completely restored Wurlitzer juke box was put into place and the old one taken out. Once plugged in, the machine came to life and glowed in a myriad of vibrant colors. Lucifer reached into his pocket and handed the delivery man a
fist full of bills then unceremoniously shut and locked the door as he left. For a moment she started to ask why he was leaving and where he was going but before she could say anything he reached into his other pocket and took out a roll of quarters. “Shall we test it out?”

Lilith barely managed to get a sip of her drink before the opening beats of The Doors Hello, I Love You started and Lucifer caught hold of her and pulled her into a dance. As much as she was enjoying all of this sudden attention, it seemed a bit out of place. Lucifer seemed himself and yet she could tell that something was wrong. She knew her old friend well enough to recognize that this was one of his attempts at a momentary distraction rather than a friendly gesture. Lilith didn’t mind going along with it of course. If there was something bothering him then he would confide in his own time. The worst thing you could do was try to force the devil’s hand.

The machine was still set at the original 1960’s price of twenty-five cents for three songs allowing them to play all fifty songs and still have a few quarters left over. He had chosen each and every song carefully with each one making a reference to Heaven, Hell, angels, demons, or God. Lili imagined this was his own little inside joke with her. Sometimes they danced if the song was right, but mostly they drank and talked, careful to keep the conversation light. Anyone watching from the outside would have been more inclined to believe they were over grown kids then ancient souls. They wasted straws blowing the wrappers at each other, told each other jokes and anecdotes for the sole purpose of making themselves laugh like children.

“You know I saw your mother the other day.” At the mention of Charlotte, the devil tensed up and his eyes narrowed. “I think she was desperate for an ally because she barged in and started telling me how you were foolishly risking your life by going back to Hell all for the sake of a human.”

“And you said?” He asked, his jaw setting.

“I told her to try being a supportive mother for once in her miserable life and to get the Hell out of bar before I showed her a new definition of pain. Apparently she believed me because she turned around and left.” Hearing this the fallen angel’s body once more relaxed and putting a straw to his lips he shot the paper wrapper at her, landing it squarely on her cheek. Whatever was on his mind, it clearly involved his darling mother.

In retaliation for the paper projectile, Lilith threw a handful of mixed nuts at him. Taking the last straw from the box, Lucifer tore open one end and gently slid the paper before blowing into it. Unfortunately nothing happened. The sealed end of the paper had accidently tore when he was preparing the projectile. With a look of genuine disappointment he held up the straw and began to tease that she had purchased cheap and defective drinking implements. Playfully she started to grab the straw from him, but he held on tight leading to an impromptu tug of war that caused Lilith to slip and fall forward into the devils arms.

Since nearly the dawn of time itself they had found comfort and pleasure in each other’s embrace. Tonight was no exception. For Lilith their love making brought warmth, familiarity and alleviated the loneliness left by her beloved Christian’s passing. The fallen angel too found great satisfaction in a long established lover as well as a welcome distraction from his painful thoughts. Unfortunately diversion and indulgence won’t make them go away. Even after they had taken each other to their physical summits, the darkness was waiting.

They laid there together in the silence of Lilith’s bed. Lucifer stared off, lost in thought. She had not seen him quite this brooding since the day they first met in Eden. Hoping to bring his attention back to the moment, Lilith suggested something to eat to sate the appetite they had just worked up. Lucifer nodded in agreement. A quick run to the kitchen and the demoness was back with a tray containing fruit, cheese and crackers. With a saucy smile she tossed a deep red apple at the devil as
he sat up. He took a generous bite then playfully she took the fruit from him and ate some herself.

“Why don’t you come with me?” He asked, pulling her closer and taking the apple back from her.

“What?” This seemed an odd request from the devil. She would have expected to hear him ask Chloe. She was, after-all, the one he was in love with. Anyone could see that. This question was yet one more odd thing about his visit here tonight.

“Think about it. It would be absolutely smashing. Lilith and Lucifer together, here on earth and bringing a touch of Hell with them. We can finally have our little competition that we always talk about and discover which one of us can attract the most partners for a night.” He raised a wicked eyebrow and relished the thought of all the decadence the two of them could enjoy. He started to lean close for a kiss and seal the deal, but to his surprise Lili stiffened and pulled away.

“Tempting, but I think I’d rather stay here, ‘old scratch’.” This statement seemed to confuse him and he was uncertain of how to take it. He had just assumed she would say yes. “I’m quite happy here.”

“Happy?” Lucifer couldn’t understand this at all. How could the Queen of the Damned and the mother of the Lilim be content in such a hole-in-the-wall? “How can you be satisfied running a bloody little pub? I should think it would a new kind of Hell having to spend each day and night with sports fanatics who come here to watch the game and drink because they’re not allowed to at home. Let’s not forget the occasional disillusioned white collar or blue collar worker that comes in to wind down for the day or drink away their petty lives. I’m sure there is also one or two ladies prowling about either looking for a game of pelvic pinochle or perhaps they’re just members of the oldest profession looking for a customer.” His descriptions, while boorish and rude, were not entirely inaccurate. She liked these people though. They were regulars at the Green Lady and in a way they were a sort of family. Lucifer couldn’t imagine why she would want to stay in this place when she could step out and do so much. “Surely you’re not happy burying yourself in this place just so you can keep company with the ghost of your hunky monkey.”

“I’m hardly burying myself.” She argued. “If I want to raise a little Hell or have a companion for the night, I assure you I can.” She picked up a fist full of grapes and tossed one at her old friend who instantly caught it in his mouth. “Besides I am far too interested in binge watching Rush and Miranda.” Lucifer looked at her as though that was the most ridiculous thing he had ever heard.

“Please tell me you’re joking.” At this she immediately started laughing. “For a moment I thought living among humanity was beginning to affect your sanity.”

“Well, I have heard Miranda is quite funny.” At the jest he gave a half-hearted smile then his gaze trailed off, clearly lost thought. “Talk to me, Lucifer, tell me what’s going on?” He looked at her with uncertainty. “Do you really think that after countless millennia I can’t tell when you’re hurting?”

“What makes you think I’m hurting?”

“You show up out of the blue with a juke box for a present and want me to run away with you. In case you forgot, you didn’t even suggest that I leave Hell with you and came back only to retrieve Mazie.”

“Perhaps I should have.” He answered turning his head towards her.

“Oh, decidedly.” She affirmed, her ego was easily as large as his. “That’s not even in dispute. Now talk to me, old friend.”
Lucifer suddenly went silent, his face becoming serious as he once more stared out at nothing in particular. Reaching down to his pants he took out his lighter and a cigarette. He flipped open the zippo, but before he could flick it Lilith grabbed it as well as the smoky treat from between his lips. She had spent far too many ages living in a world filled with ash and burning. She would not have it here too. The fallen angel rested his hand on hers as she once more wrapped her arms around him from behind. He told her about nearly losing Lux to a real-estate developer and Chloe finding a way to save it. He told her how he had promised her a dinner at a nice restaurant only to stand the detective up when he couldn’t reconcile his own feelings for her. He spoke of Deputy Warden Perry Smith’s murder trial and the exchange of genuine compliments from both he and the detective on the stand. He also recalled the moment of realization that Det. Decker deserved something far better than the devil and the surprise of kisses on the beach.

Here he grew silent again but his face and body grew tense, his hands balled into fists, his jaw muscles set and his brilliant black eyes glared daggers. None of it had been real. It seemed that Chloe had been created special by his Father and then he placed her in his path. Whatever affection had grown between them had all been a lie. He knew this because his mother had taken great pains to tell him and watch his heart break. The fallen angel was angry at himself for falling for such an old ploy and so tired of the endless game of manipulation. He had been used as a pawn between his parents far too many times and quite frankly he wasn’t even certain who to trust. That was why he had come here. When all else failed, he knew he always had Lilith, Aḻakāṉa, his beautiful one.

“I’m so sorry.” She sighed sadly. His sudden appearance at her door and his unusual behavior began to make sense. So you’re walking away from it all, is that it?” she asked. He nodded. “I can’t help but think that you’re making a tactical error.

“Well,” He stood and started to dress. “I guess it’s mine to make.”

The devil remained silent as he pulled on his trousers and buttoned his shirt. After fastening his silver and sapphire cufflinks he turned to Lilith and pulling her to him he gently laid his forehead against hers. There were moments, like this one, when she wished that he would look at her the same way he did Chloe. Despite the anger and betrayal he was feeling, she knew that one word from that human woman and he would reorder time itself, if he could. He was pulling on his suit jacket when she stood and pulled on her robe. To her surprise he suddenly took her hand in his and held them a moment.

“If I should ask, would you and your Lilim still fight at my side?” He expected either a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ instantly, but instead she helped straighten his vest.

“You know I was watching the weather earlier today and it seems they are predicting storms. What kind do you think they will be, a hurricane or a simple spring shower?”

“Well, the conditions are certainly right for things to get . . . interesting.” The devil answered, his eyes momentarily flashing red.

“You know, the best laid plot can injure its maker.”

“Do I have your legions?” Lucifer asked a little sharper, clearly becoming annoyed at her attempts to skirt the question.

“Yes. Always.” She answered without hesitation. “At this point I cannot decide for Mazikeen, but the rest follow me without hesitation. If you give the word, we will be there.” She looked into his brilliant black eyes and could see that a tempest was brewing, but it was impossible to say what form it would take. “What are you planning, Lucifer?”
“I don’t know myself just yet, but there will be a reckoning, make no mistake about that. Who knows, maybe a triumphant return to the Silver City.” He answered with a half-smile. Yes, something was looming, it was evident in his posture, his walk and the formidable look in his eye. She wondered if he remembered that as a demon, neither her, nor her children, could ever enter Heaven. He had no power to bridge that gulf. Reaching the front door of The Green Lady, she caught his hand and stopped him. She wanted to ask him to rethink it all, but the words didn’t come. Would it really be so bad to love someone created for you? It was possible that God had placed Christian in her path and she looked upon it as a gift. The devil was stubborn though, and the war with his Father was an old one. Rather than part on bad terms, she said nothing and instead simply smiled and kissed him.

“I hope you won’t stay away too long, ‘old scratch’.”

“How could I ever stay away from you?” He jested lightly, letting go of her hand. From the doorway she watched the fallen angel get into his car and drive off, disappearing quickly into the dark streets.

Walking back across the barroom, Lilith clasped the smooth stone that dangled around her neck. This stone forged in Hell was cold now and the energy that usually showed itself in crude rudimentary flames glowing on its smooth surface, had gone out. Without the Lord of Hells presence the rock slumbered, but its etched writing was as clear as ever. Lilith, beloved of Samael, it read. Running her fingers along the engraved surface she contemplated her friend and lover the Light Bringer, Samael . . . Lucifer Morningstar.

How long had the devil fought against his father? It seemed to her that the war began as soon as the first grains of sand fell through the hourglass. His penchant for rebellion seemed written into the very fibers of his being and could never be extricated. Not that he would want it removed. She was not so different really. Her greatest battles had ended long, long ago, but even now if someone were to command her to move left she would defiantly go right. Neither of them could ever be tamed, though they might give the appearance of it. He would always be the devil and she would always be a demon. Inside they were wild animals and very capable of snapping.

Returning to her apartment Lilith poured herself a drink which she swallowed before curling up in her bed. She could still make out the faint smell of the fallen angel on the pillow next to her. She pulled it close and held it as though it was actually him beside her and thought about what sort of plans the devil was formulating. She also pondered Chloe and wondered how she was going to react to her partner’s abrupt departure behind her back.

“What though the field be lost? All is not lost; the unconquerable will, and study of revenge, immortal hate, and the courage never to submit or yield.” She whispered to herself, remembering a passage from Milton’s Paradise Lost. Heavy, her eyelids closed and drifted off to sleep confidant that even if he lost, Lucifer’s will would never be conquered.

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