The Evolution of a Winchester

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Mature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive Warning:</td>
<td>Choose Not To Use Archive Warnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>Multi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom:</td>
<td>Supernatural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship:</td>
<td>Castiel/Dean Winchester, Arthur Ketch/Original Female Character(s), Lucifer/Original Female Character(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character:</td>
<td>Sam Winchester, Dean Winchester, Original Winchester Character(s), Original Supernatural (TV) Character(s), Arthur Ketch, Castiel (Supernatural), Jack Kline, Lucifer (Supernatural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Tags:</td>
<td>Romance, Demons, Betrayal, Love, Broken Promises, Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series:</td>
<td>Part 3 of The Way You Ketch Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
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The Evolution of a Winchester

by A_David, Bullet6756

Summary

The sequel to The Way You Ketch Me. Please take the time to read that and The Life of Elly before reading this as those hold important information that happens prior to this story. Thank you and happy reading.
“You're dead,” Elly whispered, her gun lowering to her side. “You're not supposed to be here.”

“Yet here I am!” I said with a laugh. “And you're welcome, by the way. Totally saved your asses.”

I jumped as Elly tackled me in a hug. She was older now. Hair darker than it had been, but still a beautiful blonde. And her eyes were still a very bright blue. I hadn't lied. She was still sexy. She had aged well. Like a fine wine. I hugged her back tightly. When had been the last time I'd hugged her? It must have been 20 years ago for her. But for me it'd been about a year and a half, although it felt so much longer.

I released her and cleared my throat. I hadn't had a real hug like that since Crowley had left me his kingdom.

Lucifer had risen to his feet, clutching his bleeding arm. I stepped over to him and looked him up and down. He was still younger than he had been before. I was surprised he had aged at all. Maybe it was the lack of grace.

“This is weird, being on the other side of this.” I reached my hand out to him and touched his arm. There was a cool feeling in my fingers as I healed him. As soon as his energy was back up, I dropped my hand. He stared at me confused as I turned away and went to where Elly was untying her daughter. “I'm your aunt Alex,” I said with a smile to the younger blonde. “Don't worry dear. I don't bite...hard.”

Once she was free, the younger girl clutched tightly to Elly, who kissed her head and smoothed a hand over her hair.

“What are you doing here doll?” Lucifer asked from behind me. I grumbled at the name. He knew I hated it. He said it on purpose. He stepped around and went to his family. The younger girl moved from her mom to her dad. “It's ok,” he whispered to her, hugging her tightly.

“We can talk later. There's more of their pack. I've been tracking them for a while. They'll be here soon. Let's get somewhere safe and then we'll talk,” I explained, looking outside of the barn to see if they were possibly here.

My eyes stopped on the car that was parked outside. It was a '60's Pontiac. A beautiful black color. Elly must have picked it out. I didn't see Lucifer driving a classic car. I smiled a little, she still had great taste in cars. I heard movement not far off and made a motion towards the door, silently urging the others to start moving.

We got into the car and Elly tore from the barn and down the road, spraying dirt behind us. She took after Sam. He had always been one to drive fast even if there wasn't any danger. That's why Dean didn't let him drive Baby very often. My younger brother came back with it covered in mud and dents more often than any one else did. That memory reminded me that I still needed to talk to them. Still needed to find them.

They pulled in front of a house and Elly turned off the car. I stared at it. It was huge. It obviously had more rooms than they needed. Especially since I knew the only family Elly had was her mother and some cousins I knew she didn't much care for. It made me wonder why they’d gotten something so big. It wasn’t like it blended in and they didn’t seem to have any other children. There was really no need for them to have a house this large.
I looked over Elly. I didn't think she worked. She looked like she was more of the stay at home type of mom. Lucifer had to work then. What did he do? I pictured that he worked in a factory or a diner. Something where he could disappear easily without co-workers worrying about where he’d gone or why.

I got from the car and just stood there. This was so weird. They must have stopped hunting like I had hoped they would, but... For some reason I had half expected to see the two of them in some dingy motel, wrapped up in each other, guns and knife on the bedside tables. Not like this, not a family of three settled down in an actual house with no danger in sight.

Lucifer walked his daughter up to the house and Elly stood beside me, leaning against the car.

“He's an entrepreneur,” she explained, her arms folded over her chest. “He couldn't decide what to do, so he does a bunch of everything. Mostly buys and sells companies. He woodworks and sells furniture in his free time. Likes to create.”

“And you?” I asked softly, gazing around the neighborhood. It might as well have been a gated community. Every house here had to be some of the most rich houses I had ever seen.

“I stay home most days. Just... Became my mom, you know?” She snorted as she laughed. I had missed that sound so much. “Laundry, cleaning, dinner. I'm a glorified maid. Tonight felt good. Normal even. I've missed this. It's not what I ever wanted for Alex though.”

“You did name her after me,” I said with a grin.

“I only did it because you died,” she shot back. Her eyes grew and she turned to face me, punching me in the arm as hard as she could.

“What was that for?” I demanded through clenched teeth, holding where she hit me, even though it didn’t hurt for long.

“You're not dead!” she shot back. “You have a lot of explaining to do before I'm not angry at you anymore. Come on. I'll get you a drink. I'm sure we have something you'd like. Lucy likes to splurge on his alcohol like Ketch.”

My heart twinged painfully at the name. Elly started off towards the house, but my feet were still against the pavement. After a beat, she turned back to face me.

“You and him are still....” She trailed off as I shook my head. “You were still wearing the ring.”

“I haven't seen him since the night we sent you back,” I admitted softly. “He disappeared. No one knows where he went or if he's still alive.”

“And Sam and Dean?” she questioned, moving back over to me. “Your mom?”

“They're all great. Mom's busy hunting. Sam's got his law degree. Dean and Cas are still hunting with Jack. He's a smart kid, enjoys sports.”

“Sounds like you've read that off a file. Have you seen them at all since that night?”

I again shook my head. She licked her lips with a sigh. “I think you need that drink. Come on.”

I followed her inside. It had been a hard year for me. I struggled with my new abilities and struggled even more with the decision to tell my family or not. And suddenly, the necklace around my neck that held the ring I was too heartbroken to wear, felt very heavy against my chest. I needed
to find everyone. Whether they accepted me as what I was now or not, they needed to know I was still around.

I stared at the large entree way that was open to the rest of the house. A staircase was in the middle and lead somewhere I was sure I wouldn’t go. To the right was a large kitchen with a full bar, with another doorway that I could just see a dining room through. And the left was a beautifully decorated sitting area. The windows were large, with seating in the sill. There was an ordinate rock fireplace with one of the largest TVs I think I had ever seen.

Elly pulled off her flannel to reveal that she had quite a few more tattoos now that she had aged. There was a water colored bird on the back of her shoulder and a gun on her right arm. She moved to the bar and grabbed a bottle of some carmel colored drink and poured out three glasses, sliding one to me. I took it and followed Elly through the house and to the sitting room where Lucifer sat beside his daughter, rubbing her back as she cried into her hands. Elly gave Lucifer his own cup and he downed the drink quickly, before setting the glass aside on the coffee table. Elly took a seat on the other side of her daughter and I awkwardly sat on the couch opposite the coffee table.

“I’m sorry you had to see that, kid.” I said, putting the cool glass to my lips and taking a small drink. The smooth burn was comforting, even if the actual alcohol content didn’t affect me anymore. “Why were they after you anyways? There aren’t supposed to be supernatural things in this world.”

“The best Lucy and I have figured is that when you and I were at the rift in the first place, monsters got through,” Elly replied, sipping at her own drink. “They’ve been spreading like crazy, but we just don’t have a way to hunt them all down. This is the first time in a while they’ve gotten this close.”

“And why did they want her?” I questioned, sitting forward.

“They wanted to open a rift. They needed grace,” Lucifer replied. “They thought they could get it from her. She is a nephilim after all. Thought she’d be powerful enough.”

The young girl seemed to perk up at that, sitting up more fully, wiping her tears from her cheeks. “I’m a what?” she choked out, looking between her parents.

“Half human, half angel, sweetie. The grownups are talking,” I replied as gently as I could.

“I was the one who was kidnapped! I was the one who was almost killed—”

“You weren’t almost killed,” I shot back with a scoff.

“I think I have a right to know what the hell is going on!”

A smile came to my face as Elly frowned. She had raised a strong girl. I didn’t expect anything less from her. “Language, Alex,” Elly whispered.

“I don’t give a fuck about my language,” the young girl said back strongly. “What the hell have you been hiding from me? Werewolves aren’t supposed to be real! They’re only in that stupid old TV show you used to watch.”

I chuckled lightly, finishing off my drink. I placed it on the coffee table and leaned back in my chair, resting my boots next to the glass. “Hun, that old tv show is my entire life.” I let out a sigh and adjusted my posture until I was comfortable. “A lot of it might not have happened exactly as they wrote it but Sam and Dean are still very real and do all of those very real things.”
“Bullshit!” She gave a forced laugh. I saw Elly roll her eyes and shake her head. She couldn’t control her daughter. She was a daddy’s girl. It was so obvious.

“Listen to your mother, Sapphire,” Lucifer instructed, patting her knee. “You know better than to swear in the house.”

“She’s got quite the tongue, Feathers.” I smiled and closed my eyes, “Just like you did.”

“I haven’t gone soft if that’s what you’re insinuating,” he said back with blue eyes shining.

“Oh no, I just meant that your wings have been clipped.” I smirked, “I would never call you soft.”

“What is happening here?!” the kid demanded, breaking up our little scuffle.

“This is my old friend, Alex,” Elly started to explain, motioning to me as I pulled my knife to me and wiped it clean on my shirt.

The kid rolled her eyes. “I got that much. I’m not stupid.”

Elly sighed and looked back to me. “Alex... I... you were dead...” Elly mumbled.

“I was.” I used my pocket knife to pick my nails.

“And now you’re what? A demon?” Elly rubbed at her eyes and pushed her hair from her face.

I smirked and felt my eyes flicker black. “Oh hun. I’m the damn queen of hell. And you have no room to speak. You married the devil himself.”

“He’s changed. Haven’t you babe?” Elly asked, patting his arm.

“I am still the prince of darkness. I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Lucifer answered as if he were still trying to be the bad boy he once was. But I knew better.

“You’ve been dethroned. I sit on the throne now, black bird,” I stated coldly.

“What about Crowley?” Elly questioned, trying to move the conversation away from our arguing..

“He’s relaxing in a secret condo somewhere in the remote islands of Hawaii.”

“Please stop ignoring me!” the kid grumbled, getting up from the couch and moving over to one of the windows. “Are you three just going to keep on fighting? I need to know what’s going on.”

“Alex-”

“And I don’t want to hear it from you, mother,” the girl shot back, folding her arms over her chest.

Elly looked shocked and at a loss for words. “I need another drink,” she muttered, getting to her feet and swiftly leaving the room.

Lucifer got to his feet moving after her. “Elizabeth, we need to talk about this.”

I looked over the kid I had been left alone with. She looked like she was about ready to cry again as she clutched her arms around herself. I had to say something to break this awkward silence that was in the air. “Your mom once saved my life,” I explained to the prettier and younger version of Elly. “Actually, more than once.”
“She did? She never seemed to be that type of person,” the kid sighed, looking around and to me with those brilliant blue eyes. No wonder Lucifer had called her Sapphire. “But I guess there’s a lot I don’t know.”

I laughed a little. “Yeah, when she first came to my world I never thought she’d save my life either.” I leaned back against the couch. “But there we were, fighting off some werewolves and I got over run. Your mother placed three shots into the monster. A head shot, and two in the chest.” I laughed more. “That was when I decided to make a bet Dean thought he would never lose.”

“My mom can shoot a gun? I’ve never seen her be violent ever.”

I sighed and stood. “That’s because they never wanted a hunting life for you. I’m assuming you know what hunting is if you watched the show.” I walked to the window and looked out. “The life I lead was and is full of death and destruction. My brothers and I have died more times than anyone but death can count.”

“You can come back to life? Has my mom done that?”

“Yes. Your father saved her once. It was kinda my fault.”

“He did?” She came over beside me. “I... I don’t know what to think about him anymore... Am...” She sighed heavily again and lowered her head against the window. “Am I really the daughter of Satan?”

I turned a little and smiled. “And what’s so wrong about that?” I ruffled her hair. “In my world you’d be worshiped like the princess you are.” I left out the part about her being hunted for being a nephilim.

“Princess?” she scoffed. “I was ditched for homecoming. I couldn't be a princess. And a princess of what? You? You said you were a queen. How would I compare?”

“Kid, I never went to homecoming. I was a hunter from the moment I was born. My dad tried to keep me from it but trouble and monsters kept following me.” I sighed. “My position in Hell is temporary. If your parents come back to my world, like I need them to, then your dad can take his spot back if he really wants it. And even if he doesn’t...” I slid my hand under her chin and pulled her face up so that she was looking at me. “You are a princess to them. You are the most beautiful young woman I’ve ever seen and no matter what happens, you will always be their princess. You will never compare to me because you are already above me.”

“I don’t feel above you. I couldn't even save myself from being kidnapped. And is hell a democracy or something. How can you just give it back to him?”

I couldn’t help but laugh. “And how do you think I became a demon in the first place?” I laughed more. “And hell doesn’t even listen to me most days, but your dad scared the shit out of them.”

“He... He couldn’t hurt a fly. He gets a little loud whenever he’s drunk, but he’s never once yelled at me. He’s the most gentle person I’ve ever met. More so than my mom. How did he control all of hell?”

“He ruled hell with an iron fist. Your dad was once the most feared person in the world. They even locked him away in a-” I stopped and looked up at where Elly and Lucifer were in the kitchen, their voices raised in a fight. “I don’t remember them fighting. Do they fight often?” I asked softly.

“Not usually. They fought less when we lived in our old house,” she explained to me, watching her parents as well. “I always felt like they didn’t fit here. This wasn’t the life they were supposed to
lead. Money doesn’t suit them.”

She was keen. I could give her that. She had the sass of her father and the strength and beautify of her mother. And I had to agree with her. “It doesn’t suit them,” I repeated with a nod. “It looks like they might be a while.”

“They’ll start making out soon enough. I try to ignore them.”

I laughed and looked over Sapphire. “You shouldn’t be so hard on your mom.”

“Don’t tell me what to do. I don’t even know you. And you’re supposed to be dead.” She sighed and wiped at her eyes again. She exhaled deeply and a hand went to her head. “I always knew they were keeping secrets. My dad’s name, the business trips, the gun safe, the books on monsters around the house, the rooms they won’t let me in and keep locked... I just thought maybe they were secretly doomsday preppers or something.”

“No, they’re just hunters. Well...” I shrugged. “Your mother is.”

“And you’re a demon? I always expected them to be more-more...” she looked like she was searching for the right word, almost looking like she didn’t want to offend me.

“Evil?” I offered, a smile covering my lips. Alex gave a small nod. “I prefer the term business woman.”

“Sapphire?” came Lucifer’s voice from the kitchen. “Will you come here, please?”

She left my side and moved towards her parents, Lucifer wrapping his arms around her. She shrugged out of it and Lucifer shoved his hands into his pockets sadly. They spoke for a bit, softer than I could hear, until the kid threw her arms down angrily.

“No!” she shouted loudly.

“Sapph-”

“Don’t Sapphire me!”

“Ali, let’s talk about this.” Elly did her best to try to calm the young girl. “Alex would only be here-”

“I’m not going! I have a life here, I have friends, school, a job! You already dragged me out here for your work! I’m not being dragged somewhere else I don’t have a say in.”

“We’re not fighting over this. We’re not leaving you here,” Lucifer said sternly.

“You don’t even know what she wants! She’s a demon for crying out loud!”

“And I’m the fucking Devil. Do we have to go through this again?”

Sapphire fell silent and stepped away from her parents before heading to the stairs and racing up them. I saw Elly sink into one of the chairs at the counter, head in her hands. Lucifer rubbed her back and I hesitantly walked over.

“I didn’t mean to-”

“We know, Alex,” Elly muttered from behind her hands. “I just didn’t think we’d ever have to tell her.”
“Why are you here? How did you get here?” Lucifer questioned with a deep breath, still holding to Elly’s shoulder. I was happy to see that they were still together. I wasn’t sure what would have happened if Elly had left Lucifer. If monsters were now real here, then I was worried about how much strength he would have.

“We opened up another rift,” I explained. “Crowley and I.”

“Where’d you find the grace?”

“Crowley had some stored away from when Asmodeus was still around. We used that. Thought that you would be able to get us back.” I leaned against the counter and took one of Elly’s hands in mine. She gave me a pained smile and a squeeze of my hand. “But it doesn’t look like you’re in a state to open a portal.”

He bit his lip and sighed. “I don’t have much of it left now. I used a good portion of it tonight. But we can always try.”

“What’s wrong Alex? It’s been 17 years. Why now?” Elly questioned, still holding to my hand almost like she was afraid I would disappear.

“We need you to come back El.” I started, “Hoarded of monsters have started to show up and hunters are scarce and I….I can’t keep up.”

“You have all of hell, why do you need me? I wasn’t even that good to begin with.”

“You’re a better shot than all of my world and you know that. Plus Dean and Sam are out so I needed someone else I can trust.” I bit my lip before continuing, “And you have, feathers over there, and a nephilim….”

“Go talk to Dean and Sam and Jack. They’re who you need. Not me.” Elly rose from her chair and took her cup to the sink to begin washing it. “I stopped hunting a long time ago.”

“That’s not what I saw tonight.” I said, desperately trying to make my point. “What I saw was a woman who still knew how to take down a pack of werewolves. That’s not a skill you just forget, El.”

“Why do you need a nephilim? What’s so special about my daughter that we have to risk her life for you?”

“Elizabeth,” Lucifer warned. He went around the counter and to the sink. “We’ve just agreed we’d all go. That’s what we told Sapphire.”

“She’s the best chance we have at ending this El. She can help my cause.” I said, ignoring Lucifer’s comment as I tried to convince her.

“She’s not just going to walk through and magically know how to use her powers. She doesn’t have them in this world. I think that’s the only way I was able to survive.” Elly sighed and turned off the facet, placing the cup on a drying rack.

“Then we’ll go back and find Jack. I need to talk to Dean anyway and while we’re there Jack can show her everything she needs to know.”

“Alec,” she whispered, not looking at me.

“Please, El. I need you.”
“I don’t want her becoming me.”

“You?” I said, cocking an eyebrow, “You mean a strong, independant, sassy woman who doesn’t give a fuck? That doesn’t sound like a bad thing to me.”

“She can be all that without having to kill things.”

I stepped closer to her and rested a hand on her back. “You told me not an hour ago that you felt normal hunting. She’ll fit in. You know she will. That’s her world.”

“Alec does have a point,” Lucifer spoke up, doing his best to help. “She does belong there. I belong there. You belong there.”

Elly dried her hands on her pants and turned back to me with sad eyes. She gave a small nod. “I’ll go help her pack.”

I smiled, but it was short lived. Now we had to find a way back. I sighed and went back to the counter, putting my head in my hands.

“Do you know where to get the rest of the stuff we need?” I asked Lucifer.

He laughed. “I wasn’t the one who got us through the rift the first time. It was all her.”

I let out a low groan, “Well that’s helpful.”

“As I remember,” Elly said, walking past me and to her husband. She placed her hands on his chest. “An apple, some blood and a shiny rock, right?” She kissed him. It must have been an inside joke, because I didn’t understand. “I’m sure we have some stuff somewhere. You can take her to the study. I’ll start packing.”

I smirked as she headed for the stairs after slapping his ass as she passed. I loved that they were together. They reminded me of...I didn’t let that thought continue. It was one that would hurt me. Instead I smiled a knowing smile at Lucifer.

“She’s a keeper huh?” I asked, not really expecting an answer.

His smile dropped and he pushed past me and through the dining room, beckoning me to follow. I continued on through the house that somehow just seemed to just get bigger and bigger. Eventually we came to a set of doors and Lucifer pulled a set of keys from his pocket, unlocking the doors and pushing them open.

We walked in and I felt my jaw go slack. It was huge. All four walls were lined floor to ceiling with shelves of books and documents and artifacts. Stairs and ladders lined the walls, twisting and turning up and up so that you could reach the highest books without issue if you so desired to read one of them. Golden wood pillars lined to corners and marble statues of angels, the ones that looked so alive they could be breathing, sat motionlessly in small arches carved into two walls. One the furthest back wall was a smooth pillar of white stone, a fireplace cut out of the bottom and some small chairs sat in front of it along with a small table and a lamp.

“You stopped hunting my ass,” I muttered, stepping further into the room and turning to take in more of it. “You make money legally?”

“Elizabeth would never allow me to make money illegally. You know that,” he replied, moving into the room as well. “Everything’s alphabetized.”
I moved over to where he was pointing and began skimming my fingers over the books. “You’ve let her fuck with you, Lucifer. You don’t have a man card anymore.”

“Oh please,” he scoffed. “You’re not worth the dirt they used to bury you.”

“You’re not worth those shiny rocks you loved to make so much,” I shot back.

“At least I actually made somewhat of a difference in this world.”

“Was that before or after you fucked Eve and tricked Adam?”

“You weren’t even good enough to fuck, Doll.”

“You’re the one that was done before we even got started.”

“What are you talking about?” Elly asked from the doorway.

“Nothing dear,” I replied giving her a smile. I finally reached the first self of artifacts and dug through them until I found a vile of blood that was labeled as from a Most Holy Man. “He and I just butt heads. Always have and always will. You’re the only thing that we can agree on.”

“She doesn’t want to talk to me,” Elly explained to Lucifer as I moved across the room and to another shelf. I pulled a ladder to me and climbed up it to get a better look at the higher shelves. “As usual.” She sounded so disappointed. “Will you go talk to her, please?” There wasn’t an answer, but I could hear Lucifer’s footsteps leave the room.

“You’ve changed him, El. Made him a dad,” I called down from where I was.

“He was the one who wanted to be a dad. I...” El fell silent and I glanced down to see her sitting at one of the tables, rubbing her elbow. “I didn’t want her. Does that make me a horrible person, Alex?”

“Of course not, hun. No one wants to be a parent the first time around.” I said, trying to comfort her.

“Third shelf down is what you’re looking for.” I looked back at the ladder and climbed a bit higher, looking through the third shelf until I found some old, dried up fruit. “She’s an amazing girl. I love her so much. But... she doesn’t much care for me. I have no idea what to do about that.” I grabbed the fruit and climbed back down the ladder. “When she was little, I was a hero to her. She wanted nothing to do with Lucy. And then it just changed over night. She wanted him to read her bedtime stories. She wanted to play catch with him in the yard. Learn guitar with me dad. Let’s go see a movie dad. I just...” She huffed and looked to the ground.

I wasn’t sure what to do here. I had never wanted to be a parent. Never even wanted my brothers to have kids. And I never had the best parents in the first place so who was I to tell her that she was doing everything she was supposed to do? I had nothing to say here.

“I...uh. I’m sorry, El. I think you’re a great mom,” I got out, looking around the room for the crystal.

“In the S’s.”

“Why do you have all this stuff?”

“Just in case,” she answered softly. Or maybe her voice was just further away now as I went to yet
another shelf of items to dig through.

“Where did you even find it all? I thought this world didn’t have anything like this?”

“We found the bunker. It’s still all intact. And we’ve just been adding on the more we find. I honestly don’t know how it all got here.”

“Wait. This use to be the bunker?” I asked, finding a chain. I pulled it to me, thinking it was the seal and almost burst out laughing at a set of nipple clamps. I glanced back, doing everything I could to keep from smiling. So this was what they were into? Was this more of a sex room than a library? I turned back to the shelf, exhaling deeply, my cheeks red, finally finding the crystal and turning back to her as I picked it up.

She gave a small laugh. “I think it’s our fault there’s a subdivision here now. We built over it. Made this house. The rest of the bunker is under us. We just moved everything up here because it was easier to say we were going to the study than stay out of the basement. Wouldn’t you be more interested in some weird basement you weren’t allowed into?”

“You know I would’ve been, love.” I said, smiling at her. “Then again I was always the trouble child.”

She nodded, still seeming out of it. I stepped closer and watched her quickly wipe a tear away. She gave me a smile. “I’ve missed you.”

“I missed you too, El.” I said, pulling her up from her chair and into a hug.

“Alright Alex. Spill the beans. Why are you really here? That story about the monsters is bull shit.” She pulled away from our hug.

“It’s not bullshit. We really are being over run. And my cause needs help. That’s why I’m really here, El.” I sighed, “I may be a demon but I’m not lying.”

“You’ve never been over run before, and you’ve killed most of the Alpha’s, haven’t you?”

“Yes, but they’ve been teaming up and getting better at making new monsters faster than we can drop them. It’s like they’re preparing for something.” I said, “I’m not sure what else to do. There’s no one else I can call.”

“Are we just talking easy shit, like vamps and wolves? Or are we talking like leviathans?” I could see the spark in her eyes now, no longer sad, just hungry.

It made me laugh, she had never once given up hunting. Maybe she had swallowed it down to be a family but once you were a hunter, you never really stopped. “No, no leviathans. But it’s more than just the vampires and werewolves too. We’re seeing increases in monsters that we thought went extinct millions of years ago. Like Kitsunes. I cut down four of them before trying to come get you.”

“Are you talking about pokemon?” she asked, her face screwed up in confusion. “Those nine tailed dog things?”

“What are pokemon?” I asked curiously. Her face turned to one of disbelief. “I told you to stop making up words. They’re like werefoxes.”

“But you don’t know-”
“Of course I know what Pokemon are!” I said, watching her face relax, “I was teasing you because of all the stuff you told me about sailing or whatever.”

“Ships,” she corrected with a smile.

“Now, I must know.” I stepped closer to her and took her hands in mine, pulling her close to me. “Do you still dabble in the magical art of writing gay porn about my brothers?”

“You what?” came Lucifer’s voice from the door, making me frown.

“Nice timing, Morning Star,” I grumbled, pushing away from Elly and turned to see young Alex in the doorway with a look of dislike across her face, a bag in tow. “Everyone ready to go then? No PTSA meetings or bake sales to go to?”

“I’d rather go to a bake sale,” Sapphire grumbled, obviously not impressed with the library, making me think that she had been more than curious and had discovered the room a while ago.

“And I’d rather burn at the stake, which might happen if we run into witches.” I snatched a decorative bowl from the table and began dropping all of the ingredients into it. I looked back up and laughed at the shock that had flooded over the young girl. “Don’t be so scared kid,” I said, grinning towards her. “The trick is to burn them first.”

“She’s joking, Sapphire.” Lucifer said, reassuring the kid.

“I wish.” I mumbled, I took the crystal in my hand and looked up to Lucifer, “Grace please.”

He stepped forward and pulled a knife from his pocket, flicking it open. I put it to his neck and pulled, watching the beautiful blue grace flow from the gash and into the bowl. I glanced back at a gasp from Sapphire and saw her with her hands over her mouth.

“You’re all fucking crazy!”

Lucifer’s still young blue eyes turned to ones of sadness as he healed himself up. This must have been so hard on both of them. I couldn’t blame the poor girl, it was a lot to go through in one night and it made me think of the night that we had banished the demon from Elly and how absolutely messed up she was for the longest time. But we couldn’t worry about that now. We had bigger things to worry about. I took the knife and ran it along my arm, sending a small shaving of my hair into the bowl.

“Koth Munto Notox.” I said softly as I held the crystal above the bowl.

In a small flash a gold light shot from the crystal and a thin line of golden rift appeared in mid air. I set the bowl down on the table and looked back to the family of three. I smiled and took a backwards step towards the rift.

“Just follow my lead.” I said, letting myself fall backwards into the dancing golden thread.
Chapter 2

I tossed my bag into a chair and turned back to see the girl come through the rift first. She looked around and stumbled out of the way. Her eyes wandered the room and I knew she recognized it.

“Is this my basement?”

“You got into the basement?” I asked with a small laugh.

“My parents think I’m such a goodie two shoes. It gets difficult to keep up. I have keys to all of the rooms in the house. It wasn’t hard to sneak it from them.” She ran her hands over the bookshelves. “The furniture is different though.”

“There was an accident with some fire.” I said sadly, “What else do you do that your parents don’t know about?” I asked, moving to the kitchen and finding a beer. It was more of a habit than anything else. It did nothing for me anymore to drink. Comfort overtook need.

“I have a tattoo?” she offered, her arms folded as she continued to look around. My eyebrows rose. She was a little young. “I liked my mom’s so much, I got it done as well. The star in the sun. It’s on my ankle.”

“Well, that’s one thing out of the way,” I muttered, taking a sip of the beer and walking back to where the rift was. “What is taking your parents?”

The blonde shrugged in reply. “So, I’m named after you?” I nodded, sitting on the edge of a table, facing the rift. I was starting to worry. I wasn’t one for babysitting. My brothers were enough work as it was. “How’d you die?”

I was taken aback by the question and coughed on my drink. “Which time?” An extremely confused look was my answer.

There was a whooshing and I watched as Lucifer tripped through, falling to the ground. There was a deep slash down his arm, blood pouring down his arm. “Sunbeam?” he called at the golden light. Elly stepped through, the crack of a gunshot filling the bunker and making Sapphire clasp her hands over her ears. She fired a few more shots through the rift blindly while shouting the spell that would close the rift before the 24 hours was up. “Panto Koth Munto!” The rift quickly disappeared and she lowered her gun, breathing hard. I stood questioningly and looked over the two of them. “The pack followed us.”

“I thought we ditched them.” Guilt pooled through me. “I’m really sorry, Elly. I didn’t mean to-”

“We can always move, Alex. It’s not a problem,” Elly assured, setting her gun down on the table. “Looks like you’ve got it all back to the way it was.” Her eyes fell on Lucifer and she swiftly moved to him. “You alright?” she asked, dropping to her knees beside them. They were still the same. Still just as protective and concerned over each other. Still just as in love and ready to take on the world. Had they ever really grown up?

“It’s just a scratch,” he replied through clenched teeth. His grace must have been lower than I initially thought. We had to have been just lucky enough to just get through the rift. “I’ll be ok.”

“Come on, pigeon.” I stooped down and grabbed his good arm, pulling him to his feet with ease. “Stop getting hurt. It keeps putting us in situations where I have to pretend to like you.” I healed
him yet again and he mumbled a small thank you. “How are you holding up kid?”


“How are you feeling, Ali?” Elly asked, trying to move over to her daughter.

Her daughter stepped back. “Stay away from me,” the girl whispered threateningly. “Both of you.”

“No!” she screamed, making the lights around us flicker. Her face turned to one of surprise as she looked around. “What else are you not telling me?” she asked brokenly.

Both Elly and Lucifer traded looks and seemed like they were struggling with how to explain anything. I took a deep breath. “I got this,” I threw out, walking over and wrapping my arm around her shoulders. “I’ll get her a room and we’ll have a talk.” Elly looked like she wanted to say something against it, but at a shake of Lucifer’s head she stayed silent. I pulled the girl with me down the hall and to an empty bedroom. We walked in and she took to the bed, sitting on the edge. “Look, Kid,” I said while closing the door. “They only did what they thought was best for you.”

“I don’t care.” She kicked her foot out as if she were knocking something invisible over. “They’ve lied to me my whole life. How do you think I feel?”

“I’m sure it’s fucking shit, but that does not give you the right to treat them this way. The people who have loved and raised you, fed you and kept you safe. You are such a spoiled little brat. Maybe that kidnapping was a good thing. Maybe you need to wake up and realize how much your parents actually love you. How long were you strapped in that chair in that barn? An hour, tops?” I moved closer to her, pointing to the door behind me. “And they barely laid a hand on you before your parents came to save your ass. Your father put his life on the line to save you! What are you not understanding about that?”

She was silent, her eyes to the floor in anger. She knew I was right.

“Now, did they handle this the right way? I can’t say.” I moved over and took a seat beside her on the bed with a sigh. “They’ve only ever had you in mind. Your father is worried sick about you. You can see it in his eyes. And your mother would move mountains to do anything you could ever ask for. They love you so much.”

“How could they keep all of this from me? What am I? What did I do out there?” She looked calmer now as she pulled her hair back into a pony tale. God, she looked so much like Elly had when she had first come here.

“You’re a nephilim,” I answered, clasping my hands together between my knees as I leaned forward.

“You said that before. Half angel, half human.”

“Right.” I gave a nod. “You have a human soul mixed with angelic grace. You have powers that go beyond that of an angels, even one as strong as your father.”

“He’s an archangel, right? My family has never been very religious. I don’t know much about a lot of those type of things.”

“No, I wouldn’t expect them to be very religious.” It almost made me laugh at the idea of Lucifer sitting in a church while a priest spoke of fire and brimstone. “And yes. He’s an archangel.
They’re the only ones who can open the rift and there aren’t many of them left. But more about you.” I gave her a side smile, but she didn’t return it. “Your kind is extremely rare. There’s only one other in existence.”

“Why are they so rare?” she asked curiously, finally seeming interested.

“They’re forbidden by the laws of heaven. If you come into your full powers, it could destroy worlds.”

“That actually sounds pretty badass.”

I laughed. “I agree. I’m nowhere near as powerful. But you need to watch your emotions until you learn to control your powers. Jack, the other nephilim, was the same way. But it’s very important that you remember this. Don’t get mad, don’t be upset. You could seriously hurt someone. Do you understand?”

She nodded in reply and gave a thoughtful look with her stunning blue eyes. “And this Jack. Whose kid is he? You said angel. How many angels would break the laws of heaven?”

“I’ll give you a guess,” I muttered, waiting for the explosion, but it didn’t come. My eyes wandered over her and she had a calm look about her face.

“I have a brother then?” I gave a nod. She wasn’t stupid in the slightest. “And I’m assuming he is much older than me?”

I shrugged. “Eh, maybe about a year or two physically. Not much. Time here is very different than in your world.”

“And I have magical powers?”

“If that helps you make sense of them, then sure.”

“Any other long lost family secrets I need to know about?” She sighed and fell back on the bed, staring up at the ceiling the way Elly had so many times.

“If any come to mind I will be sure to let you know.” I patted her knee and got to my feet.

“Alex?” I turned back at my name, my hands sliding into my pockets. “Was my father really as horrible as everything makes it out to be?”

I chewed on my tongue for a moment, unsure of how to answer. “I think your father now is a better representation of a man to be proud of and it is the now that you should focus on and care about. Everyone makes mistakes, even angels. No one is absolutely perfect. Now, get some rest. I’m sure today has been a lot for you.”

With that I left the room and closed the door behind me before making my way back into the map room. I stopped in the hall and looked over the scene. Elly was cleaning her gun with a frustrated air about her and Lucifer was trying to make himself look busy at one of the many bookshelves that had no comparison to their library.

“I hope I’m not interrupting something,” I said, cautiously stepping into the room.

“Not at all,” Elly grumbled as she tossed her gun aside with a loud huff of air. The gun clinked on the table. “We’re quite done.”
Lucifer glanced back over his shoulder before returning to the bookshelf. Was I the reason they were fighting so badly? I had asked them to do a lot for me, someone who was supposed to be dead for the last 20 years of their life. Tonight had to be just as hard on them as it had been on their daughter. It must have taken a lot of convincing to leave everything they had behind and come here.

I took a seat beside El and pulled my beer back to me. “Alright, explain something to me.” Elly leaned forward in her chair, fully focused on me, the frustration leaving the room, gratefully. “You never really stopped hunting, did you?”

“We did,” she said defensively. “The night we found out I was pregnant. We put all of that aside and Lucy began working and that’s been our life since.”

“You wouldn’t have that study if you stopped hunting. The kid mentioned business trips.”

Elly rubbed the back of her neck and gave a small laugh. “Ok, maybe we didn’t stop completely. But it was only to make sure that no one came after Ali.” The justification came out quickly and I smiled. “It really has been a while, though.”

“And how are you holding up, mesothelioma?” I heard Elly snort at the name and Lucifer turned around sharply, eyes deep and dark.

“It’s Mephistopheles, Mother Superior,” he said back nastily, obviously not liking my nickname. But Elly continued to laugh. “I’ll have my grace back soon enough. Found dumb and dumber yet?”

“Sam’s somewhere south of here and Dean is just in the town over, as far as I am aware,” I answered.

“So close?” Elly sat up fully and looked between Lucifer and me. “This whole time, you didn’t go see them?”

I made my eyes turn black and pointed at my face. “In case you couldn’t tell, I’d be shot on site.”

“Well, they all thought you would be coming back anyway, didn’t they?” Elly’s voice held excitement in it. “They don’t have to know you’re a demon at first.”

I snickered. “You kidding? They’d smell me coming a mile away.”

“The stench of Hell isn’t easy to get rid of.” Lucifer came and took a seat at the table, but stayed a chair away from Elly, the air between them thick. What had they been fighting about that they were both still so pissed about? “Speaking of which, what have you done to it?”

“What do you mean done to it? I’m making it thrive. Soul counts are up, torture is eternal, your image is still frowned upon. I personally think I’m doing a fantastic job at running the place, no thanks to you.” I took a drink of my beer and pushed the empty bottle away from me, resting my arms on the table. “I may have spruced up the decor from your dreary medieval shit to something more pleasant, but it is all still intact. Completely ready for you.”

“What?” Lucifer’s demeanor changed swiftly to something softer. “Ready for me? We aren’t- we aren’t staying here.”

“Hell needs a king, not a steward.”

The two of them fell very quiet and glanced to each other, both startled at the offer. I felt like I was left out of the loop and that somehow they were having a silent conversation between themselves.
Maybe he could read her thoughts. It wasn’t such an outlandish idea now that I had my own form of powers. There were a lot of strange things out there.

“We’re not in any position to-”

“The offer still stands,” I interrupted Elly, waving my hand. “I wasn’t made to rule something. It’s quite literally hell.” I laughed a little and received a disapproving glance from the angel. “I just want to hunt.”

“For the rest of your lifetime?” Elly questioned me, causing the words to escape me. “You know you’re stuck like this forever now, right? You’re just a ghost with an ego.” It was Lucifer’s time to smirk. It was going to take everything in me to put up with him for however long we would be stuck together. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean-”

“You’re not wrong, hun.” I gave her a smile, though something in my stomach was churning uncomfortably. Maybe I shouldn’t have brought them here. But I didn’t really have any other choice. I was losing my grip on Hell; the demons wouldn’t hardly listen to me on a good day if there was such a thing. Crowley was nowhere to be found and I had no contact with my family. And Ketch was still missing...or dead. Elly was completely my best bet. I needed any help that I could get. Anything at all. “Why don’t you two get some sleep? We’ll take care of finding Sam and Dean tomorrow.”

Lucifer stood from his chair and Elly shook her head at the offer of his hand. There must have still be something between them from the fight earlier that I missed. He quickly ran his hand through his hair and left the room.

“Did he say something?” I questioned when he was out of the room. Elly just shrugged and rested back in her chair, placing her feet up on the table. “What did he do, El?”

“What about Jack-oh!” Realization came over me and I nodded. “Ok, so. You’re his new mom. No big.”

“I’m not his mom.”

I bit my tongue, wanting to swallow my words. She had a sharp tongue. She had changed so much since we had last talked. Maybe she had never been ready to be a parent. She was so young when everything happened. It must have messed her up so badly, in ways that I would never understand. “Then.... You can’t just ignore him. You were so good with him the last time you were here.” She was quiet, avoiding my eyes. “Elly, he might not be your kid, but he is your family. And he’s an amazing kid. You just have to give him a chance.”

She shook her head. “I didn’t think I’d ever have to deal with this. I didn’t think I’d be jealous or upset, but he’s some other woman’s child. I can’t just come in and be his mom. Besides, he’s not a kid. And he didn’t like Lucy very much when we left as it was. I don’t think his feelings would have changed much since then.”

“I didn’t think I’d ever have to deal with this. I didn’t think I’d be jealous or upset, but he’s some other woman’s child. I can’t just come in and be his mom. Besides, he’s not a kid. And he didn’t like Lucy very much when we left as it was. I don’t think his feelings would have changed much since then.”

“Only you know what their relationship was when you left.” I took her hand and her eyes met mine before quickly looking away from me. “I’m here for you to talk to, Elly. That hasn’t changed. I... I’m not a mom, so I don’t know if I will ever have any good advice for you, but I’m here to listen. I feel like... You never had anyone to talk to back home.”

“Who could I talk to?” she scoffed. “My mother’s certifiably insane, I could have probably told
her. She wouldn’t know any better anymore. But…. I couldn’t go to a book club. I was weird because I wanted to read Dracula and Frankenstein instead of To Kill a Mockingbird. Instead I got a gun permit and had men hit on me. That’s not exactly good conversations.”

“Men still flirt with you, huh?” I teased. “I can’t say I blame them.” I trailed my eyes down her body before meeting her eyes and licking my lips. She laughed heartily, lowering her feet from the table. “Come to bed with me, sexy?” My hand took her face and I pulled her closer, hearing her heartbeat speed up. “It’s been a while since we shared one and I don’t need much sleep. We can stay up all night. Especially now that I know what you like after what I found in the study.” Her eyes flickered between mine and I could sense her questioning if I was being serious. I leaned closer and could feel my lips brush hers.

“Alex, get away from her before I stab you,” Lucifer’s voice said from behind me, making me sit back in my chair with a laugh.

“I’m sorry. You can have your wife back.” Lucifer stopped in reaching for his phone that he had left on the table and both of them were silent and traded glances. “What?” I asked.

“We- uh....” Elly trailed off.

“We’re not married,” Lucifer finished for her.

“You’re not married?” I asked confusedly.

“We just never got around to it,” Elly answered with a shrug. “We’re domestic partners.” I snorted, almost falling from my chair. “Lucifer, domestic?! How far you have fallen.”

“Fine, I will take you up on that offer.” His temper was visible. “I want my Hell back.”

“You should be put back in that cage, princey. Let the real ruler take over.”

“Real ruler?” Lucifer scoffed. “You’re just a glorified rat.”

“Return to daycare, daddy dearest. Two growing kids is a lot to handle.”

“Guys, what the fuck?” Elly asked from where she had stood up. “I’m going to bed. I don’t want to listen to anymore bickering.”

“Night Elly,” I called as she left the room.

“Night Sunbeam.”

“You sleep, duck?” I questioned, resting back in my chair again now that my fun was gone.

“I did back home. I don’t feel like I need to now, though. I haven’t felt this good in a long time.” He slid his phone into his pocket. “Give me another day or two and I’ll be back to normal.”

“That would have scared me in the past, but now it doesn’t.” I inhaled deeply and smiled as he stared at me. “You’re tamed now, lamb. There’s no more lion.”

He sighed and rolled his eyes, shoving his hands into his pockets. “See you tomorrow, Doll. Thanks for your help with Sapphire.”

“She’s a good kid.”
He nodded and left the room, following after Elly. I sighed, feeling very alone again. That was a common feeling now. Empty and alone. I closed my eyes and when I opened them again, I was in my throne room in hell. They didn’t need me in the bunker and there was no point in being there while the majority of them slept.

I swung my feet over the arm of my chair and folded my arms over my chest. “Mehak!” I shouted, my voice bouncing off the wall of the empty room. “Mehak!”

“Y-Yes?” a voice asked, a head popping through the large oak doors at the end of the hall.

“Get Charlton for me. I’m a bit bored tonight.”

“Of course.”

The door closed behind him and I unhooked the latch on my necklace, tossing the ring aside and to where I wouldn’t see it. I couldn’t bare to wear it. It made me feel like I was cheating on him even though I still had no clue if he was still alive or not.

I jumped as the door opened and Charlton strode in. He wasn’t as afraid of me as the others were, though that wasn’t really much at all. I stood up and waited for him to reach me before dragging him to me and into a kiss.

“Good morning!” I called as Elly wandered into the map room. She rubbed at her eyes tiredly with a yawn and sat down at the table, laying her head down on it. Parts of her hair stuck up in odd places having been either forced there from physical activities or sleeping on it weird. “Late night?”

She nodded, her face still pressed into the table. I smiled. She was so cute. I placed a plate beside her with some eggs and bacon. It was about all I could cook without the food turning out burnt. Dean had definitely been blessed with the cooking gene.

“I think we should hit up Dean first. He’s closer and Cas will keep him calm.”

She simply hummed and pulled a piece of bacon to her mouth, lowering her hand back under the table and just slowly pulling the bacon into her mouth with her lips. I couldn’t help but laugh.

“Is anyone else awake?”

“Lucy didn’t sleep last night. Must be getting his,” -she yawned- “his grace back.”

“I’m sure.”

“We didn’t have sex.”

“What do you mean we didn’t have sex?” Lucifer demanded, stepping into the room, pulling a shirt over his head. “It was amazing make up sex and you know it.” He placed a kiss to her head and took the second piece of bacon from her plate. “Is Sapphire up yet?”

“No,” I answered, taking the bacon from his hand and putting it back on her plate. “You can get your own food.”

“Not like I need to eat anyway.” Lucifer pouted before trotting off towards the kitchen to retrieve his own plate.
I rolled my eyes after him. “Like I was saying.” I took a seat next to Elly, “Cas will calm Dean down so he’s our best bet. I’d go find Sam but I’m not sure where exactly he is and I’d rather not surprise him alone.”

Elly finally sat up full, running her fingers through her knotted sex hair. “That sounds good. Would you want me to go in first? Maybe my shock will blind him to your shock?”

“As much as I’d love to use you as a human shield,” I said, smiling as she tried to push a strand of hair out of her face, “I think that’s a bad idea. But I do think that as long as you’re there I won’t be killed immediately after the holy water test.”

There was a snicker. “That’ll be fun to watch.” I shot a dirty look at Lucifer who was eating like he needed to.

“Dear, would you go get Ali?”

“Ya, feathers. The grown ups are talking.” I said with a smirk as I wiped eggs off his face. He snatched my arm quickly. At least he still had his reflexes.

“Don’t ever touch me again.”

“Afraid I’ll take you down again?” I tested.

He scoffed, releasing my arm. “Take me down? Please.”

“Dear, go get Alex please,” Elly spoke up, again coming between us.

I stared into his eyes, challenging him silently. For a split second his eyes began to go more red and felt mine flicker to black. Even with Elly there between us I could feel our power in the air, making it electric and tense as we silently challenged each other. It was like a tornado challenging a hurricane.

“Are you two going to be this annoying the whole time?” Elly pushed against Lucifer’s chest. “Go get Alex before I ask you a fourth time. You know how I hate repeating myself. And Alex,” I was a tad shocked as she turned to me next. “Stop antagonizing him. You two are being childish.”

“I’m just having a little fun, El.” I watched Lucifer leave the room, “It’s been a while since I’ve had competition.”

“Well, it makes it so I have to deal with him later.”

I smirked at that. “Whips and chains?”

“Oh, shut up.”

I smirked. “You should go get ready too, El. We’ll leave once everyone is ready to go.”

“Fine, but I’m taking this with me.” She grabbed her plate and fork and left to get dressed.

She made me laugh. God it was so good to have her back.

“I need you to take care of some of the hound souls while I’m out today, Mehak.” I said, I’d called the smaller demon to the bunker to discuss things with him while the others got ready, “There’s three or four that come due today and I won’t be able to send the hounds after their treats.”
“And….and you trust they won’t eat me first?” He asked nervously.

“They only reap the souls, Mehak,” a different voice said from the hall. I didn’t need this right now. Why him?

“Is…is…..is….?!” Mehak tried to get out.

“Yes.” I sighed, pinching the bridge of my nose. “Yes that is Lucifer.”

“I….I…..I-” the lesser demon continued to stammer.

I picked him up by his collar, “The only thing you need to do is prepare the hounds.” I lifted him higher and let some of my demon slip into my words and eyes, “And if anyone finds out that he is here, I will know exactly who to kill and I will not hesitate to do it. Understood?”

Mehak was gone before I could put him back onto the ground. I lowered my arm and turned to face the fallen angel.

“Thank you for that. Now I’ll have to explain my plan to him later.”

“You’re losing your grip. He’s too afraid to do anything against you anyways. You don’t have to be so hard on him,” Lucifer explained, making me roll my eyes. “He responds better to praise now and then.”

“I do praise Mehak, when he’s done a good job.” I fell into a chair, “But lately he’s been responsible for 4 lost soul contracts and-”

“I thought you said souls were at a high. Four is not acceptable. Maybe it is better if I take back the reins, princess.”

I eyed him, “Don’t call me that. I’m no princess.”

“You like Doll better then?” He stepped closer to me, his index finger pushing my chin to look fully up at him. “You used to like Doll. Made you shiver, if I recall.”

“It use to.” I narrowed my eyes, “Like when I use to call you Dragon. Or was Apollyon your favorite?” I smiled as he licked his lips and pulled away from me, a hand going to the back of his neck. “What’s the matter? That one still get to you?” He still didn’t reply, just turned away from me. Finally, I was having fun. I pushed myself from my chair and stepped up behind him. “Does Apollyon remind you of that time I tracked you to Jamaica?” I whispered in his ear.

It was almost as if the whole room had sucked in its breath as he avoided me, trying to step further away. But I snatched at the back of his shirt and pulled him back to me. I was going to use this against him as long as I could. I spun him with little force so that he was looking me in the eyes again at least.

“Oh come on. You have to remember that.” I put a hand under his chin, running my thumb along his jaw, “The sand, the water hitting the beach, the way the air hit soft skin.”

He closed his eyes and sighed. “Alex, stop. P-Please.”

I had the king of hell in my hands. I smirked and pulled him closer to me, “Just roar for me lion. Like you did all those years ago.” I was having fun with him now. His hands trembled as he tried to push mine away, but I knew him too well. I could hold him here for the rest of time if I wanted to, and I wasn’t sure if it was just because I was bored or lonely or missing a certain Brit, but I wanted
to. I wanted to keep him here and make him weak. I took a step forward and whispered in his ear, “Make me a sinner, Lucifer.” I said his name slowly, like I had on that beach. I heard him suck in a breath as if he’d been holding his. I smirked, beginning to hear steps coming from the hall, and pushed away from him. I took a good few steps to give a few feet in between us before the others joined us.

“So we’re going to see her brothers?” Sapphire asked as she and Elly entered the room, holding hands. Maybe the kid had actually listened to me.

“Brother, we’re going to….” Elly paused in what she was saying and I turned to face her. She was eyeing Lucifer. “What happened?”

“Just talking about old times, old hunts,” I explained, almost not feeling guilty for what I had done. I held in a laugh as daggers were shot at me from Lucifer. “I reminded him of the Godzilla scare he started.”

“Jack the Ripper was already taken.” Lucifer cleared his throat, receiving an odd look from Elly.

“And you instead went with a giant, fire breathing, lizard.” I said, walking closer to the group once again, “But enough about that. We should get going.”

I reached out for Elly and Lucifer’s shoulders and blinked. Then we were there. I looked up at the small house Cas and Dean had been renting. It had always struck me as odd that none of them had ever come back to the bunker. Maybe they just thought that it was too far gone to salvage.

The house was one story with attached garage. It was a very light blue on the outside and had only one door leading in. The space around it was open but a few yards away on the left, right, and behind it was lush forest. It was the perfect spot for a hunter, but still something I never expected them to settle in. I still half expected to turn up at a dingy motel or something instead. But here it was, cozy and hidden. I took a deep breath and started for the door, hoping the others would follow me. I reached a hand out to knock on the door but didn’t have to as it opened before I could.

Wide candy apple green eyes stared at me. The golden blonde hair had traveled down his face and across his chin in some impressive scruff. He stood in a mostly buttoned flannel and sweatpants, as if we’d woken him up at two in the afternoon.

“Hi, Dean.” I said, “Miss me?”

He pointed a shaking finger at me. “Who-the hell are you? Because you sure aren’t Alex.”

“I promise it’s me Dean. I haven’t changed that much have I?” I laughed under my breath, this was making me nervous. What did he want me to say? “I….I can prove it if you want. I know things about you that no one else would….”

“What did I say to you when we first met?” He interrupted me.

“What?” I asked, not sure he was being serious.

“What did I say to you when we first met.” Dean’s eyes were cold and very serious.

I paused for a second. Biting my lip before answering even though I knew what to say. “You said you’re not welcome here and we will never love you. You said that because you thought if you made me feel unwelcome that I’d leave.” I smiled, “Boy were you wrong huh?”

Without another word, my older brother pulled me into a tight hug. “We burned your body.” he
said, a small sob in his voice, “How are you here?”

I pushed against his chest lightly, pushing away from the hug enough to look at his face again. “That's a long story, and one you're not going to like.” I had to be honest with him. He was my brother. “Can we go inside?”

“We?” Dean looked past me and for the first time focused on the others. “Elly? I thought we…”

“You did. She brought us back for some important thing.” Elly said, stepping towards us. “It's good to see you again Dean.”

Dean smiled, his eyes turning warm. “You can come in.” he said, releasing me and backing into the house, “But Lucifer stays outside.”

With a smirk back at the glaring angel, I followed Dean inside the small house, followed by Elly. I looked back outside at Ali but she seemed to be still processing how we'd gotten here so I let her be.

Once inside I found that the living room was attached to a dining room and the kitchen was only separated from them by a half wall in the back of the room. On the other side of the house was a small cut out that lead to three doors. One of them was open to reveal a bathroom, so I assumed the other two were bedrooms. I was still right about the place, small and cozy. Perfect for hunters who were never really here but still weird to see my brother in some place like it.

“Have a seat, Cas and Jack are out practicing so they won't be back for a bit.” Dean said as he moved past a leather couch.

“Well that's actually why we came. We need to talk about Jack.”

“We can talk about that after you explain how you came back.” Dean took a seat in a small recliner next to the couch and leaned forward onto his knees, like he always did when he was waiting for something.

I sighed as I sat down across from him, keeping to the edge of the couch so I could bolt if needed. “You're really not gonna like it.” I started. I felt the couch dip next to me as Elly sat down as well. This gave me some comfort but I wasn't sure it would help much. “Crowley brought me back, Dean.”

“So you had some sort of deal?” he asked, “That's not that hard to explain.”

“That's just it Dean. My deal with Crowley was that I got a limited number of lives and then I was to take his place.”

“Take his place? You mean in Hell?”

“Yes.”

“So what? You're a demon?”

“Yes.” There was no point in lying to him anymore. I had for years when I was human but now that time was up so I didn't need to anymore.

“But you knew…” he seemed stumped.

“Because I'm still me, Dean. The only thing that changed is that I'm not...human.”
“Then I should kill you.” I saw his hand tense on his leg.

“Now wait. I'm not here to-”

There was a cup of water thrown in my face and I was forced to close my eyes as it burned my skin. “Son of a bitch!” I yelled out, my hands going to my face to try and wipe the holy water out of my eyes. It burned like acid and clouded my vision when I tried to open my eyes again. “Do you just carry around an open cup for fun?!”

“Dean!” Elly yelled from beside me. I felt her push me to the side as I continued to try and clear my face. “That was uncalled for!”

“You knew?!”

“Yes and I gave her time to explain herself and speak before I decided if I wanted to kill her or not!” Elly defended me, she was always so good at that, “I'm still deciding on that last part but right now I have no reason to kill her.”

“The hordes.” I said, able to speak without holy water dripping into my mouth now, “The hordes, Dean. I know you've noticed them.”

My brother was silent. I opened one eye and looked at him. He was standing, demon blade in hand, ready to kill me, but he hadn't. He had paused in his movements.

“What about them?”

“I'm trying to stop them.” I sat up, pushing Elly from in front of me, “My cause is anyway.”

“Your cause? I thought demons only cared about souls and torture.” Dean scoffed. “Since when does hell care about a little pick up of monsters?”

“It doesn't. My cause is a small group of hunters that I've met over the last year and a half. They form a small group that hunts down these increased groups of monsters and kills them.” I said, “We're trying to rid the world of monsters Dean.”

“That's too good to be true. You know that. They already tried that, Alex.” he swung the blade around in his hand, it made me nervous.

“That was before the numbers were increasing like this.” I stood and put my hand on the one of his that held the knife. “You've noticed haven't you? I can't be the only one that's suddenly had ghouls and shapeshifters show up left and right.”

Dean dropped the knife onto the floor. “Cas and I took out three dragons last week. And before that it was a group of dijin.” He knew I was right.

“Exactly. That's what my cause is trying to stop. We're trying to stop whatever this sudden burst is and make it the last we ever see of some of these monsters.”

“Take monsters out of the states.” Dean laughed, “That's bold.”

“Not just the states. That's just where we want to start. Eventually we want to whole world to be monster free.” I said, patting Dean's shoulder, “That's what we need you, Cas, and Jack for.”

“The six of us aren't going to be able to do much to stop this. You have to have a better plan.”

“My daughters here. She might be able to help,” Elly offered out, still standing strongly between
the two of us to block me.

Dean's eyes wandered over Elly, obviously taking in the age difference of her now. “You have a daughter? With that thing?”

She took on an air of defense. “Yes, with him. Which means you have another nephilim to help, ass hole. I can go back home if you'd rather. We have jobs and school and a life outside of this we left just for you.”

He fell back down into his chair with a tired expression. He was getting older now. I had never thought about it, but the beard was really starting to sink that into me. He had been through so much shit, I wasn't sure how much more he could take before he finally snapped and I wasn't adding any bonus.

“And Lucifer?”

“He's very well behaved,” I supplied, getting to my feet and trying to shake off my shirt carefully due to it still burning me slightly. “You don't need to worry.”

“Elly, do you want to ask them to come inside?” Dean asked softly, a hand rubbing over his eyes and then moving to play with his beard.

“How can you tell?” she replied in a quiet, but threatening voice. “You can invite them in if you would like.”

“El, I'm ok,” I whispered over to her as assuredly as I could.

She glanced back at me, her eyes sharp. She stooped down and snatched the knife up off the ground, then moved to Dean. She reached into his flannel and pulled a gun from a hidden holster he had. She then dropped to her knees, pulling up the leg of his sweats. There was a rip of velcro and the blade of a knife caught the sunlight from an open window. She stood back up and held out her hand impatiently. How could she tell?

Dean rolled his eyes and reached into one of his pockets, putting another vial of what I guessed was holy water into her hand.

She seemed to approve, because she left the small sitting area with the weapons in tow. I hesitantly sat back down on the couch and felt small as Dean stared at me, his hand over his mouth in thought.

“Have-Have you and Cas been doing well? And Jack?”

“Cut the shit, Alex,” he answered harshly, his eyes still digging into me. “I'm going to have a long talk with Cas. One word from him and you are never to come back here again, do I make myself clear?”

I swallowed, a lump forming in my throat. I hadn't-who was I kidding? I had expected exactly this. I knew this is exactly how he would have reacted. Maybe I should have gone after Sam first. I could win him in a fair fight if I needed to. Dean was a completely different creature, set very hard in his ways.

I could the conflict in those usually bright green eyes, turning them dark and clouded. There was a breath of air that was let back into the room as Elly returned, daughter and lover behind her.

She was no longer carrying any of the weapons and it made me think that she had possibly hid
them somewhere outside in the many bushes along the front of the house.

“Dean,” Elly said calmly. Maybe Lucifer had talked her down from her fight mode she had been in not a moment ago. “This is my daughter, Ali.”

“It's Alex, mom,” she grumbled, pushing her long hair behind her ear. She stepped closer to my brother and held out her hand. He rose to his feet and took it firmly with a single shake. “It's nice to meet you. Sorry if this sounds weird, but I feel like I've known you my whole life.”

Dean looked from the younger Elly and to the hunter. “She's seen the show then?” Elly nodded. “Right.” His focus moved to the archangel who looked stronger now than he had last night. He stood upright with a bright aura about him. “Lucifer.”

“Dean,” he replied with just as much dislike in his voice.

“Cas should be home soon with Jack. Please.” His voice tightened like he was trying very hard to keep his cool. “Make yourself at home.”

Alex came and sat beside me. She was in a better mood today. Maybe everything had finally set in for her. She reminded me of Claire, just like Elly had. Opinionated and taking no shit. She would do exactly what she wanted if she wanted to.

“What happened to you?” Lucifer snorted, shoving his hands into his pocket. “Get a little wet?”

“Shut up angel dust,” I grumbled, watching Elly lean into him.

I caught his eyes that were a dull blue as they looked over her and a shine came to them as he met my gaze. I bit my lip with a smile. I had him wrapped around my finger.

I shouldn't have been doing this. This was Elly's love and life. I would be tearing her whole world apart, but for some odd reason, I just didn't care.

“So you're a nephilim?” Dean questioned, taking his seat again, but sitting at the edge and resting his elbows on his knees, his attention fully on Sapphire.

“I suppose so.” She scratched her head and sighed. “I just found out last night.”

“I suppose so.” She scratched her head and sighed. “I just found out last night.”

“Great.” Dean gave a huff, throwing his arms up. “You never told her?”

“There was never a need to,” Lucifer explained in a soft voice.

“So she can't even use her powers yet. We don't have the time to train her.” Dean's hand again went to his beard as if it were his new comfort.

“We thought that maybe Jack would be able to teach her,” I said carefully, almost afraid of my brother's reactions.

“I already know a lot about hunting between the show and all of the books in the study, and the classes I've taken with my dad,” Alex said with a bubbly smile.

Elly stood upright. “What do you mean the books in the study?”

“You couldn't possibly think that I didn't know about the study. I've probably read a good half of that place. I read when I can't sleep,” Alex explained, not meeting her mother's gaze. “I thought it was just a bunch of stupid mythology stuff.”
“Classes?” I asked curiously.

She nodded. “Yeah, my dad and I took self defense classes and he's taken me shooting a few times.”

“You already know how to use a gun?” Dean questioned with a tone of relief in his voice.

“I'm not the best, but sure. They aren't complicated.” Alex gave a shrug. She looked back to her parents. “All of it makes a lot more sense now. I thought I was crazy because I was the only girl who could take down a boy in gym and for some reason we have a whole entire room stuffed to the brim with salt. I knew it wasn't for food storage. I'm not as stupid as you thought I was. We were never a normal family.”

“We never thought you were stupid,” Elly whispered.

“Save it,” Alex said, focusing back on Dean. She took a deep breath. “What do we need to do?”

She was almost a completely different person from last night. There was still a bit of fear and nervousness in her demeanor and she was back to not caring much for Elly, but she was ready to do whatever needed to be done. Excited almost, like it was a challenge she was ready for, had been hungry for for a long time. Something physically and mentally demanding.

There was a flutter of wings and I looked up at the two new figures that were in the room. Cas still wore that tie and trench coat. I didn't expect him to wear anything different. Nothing else would really ever fit him.

And Jack. He had grown a bit taller and had taken more to wearing Dean's clothing. A simple t-shirt with a flannel and jeans.

“Lucifer,” Cas stated in his deep and gravelly voice.

“Castiel,” Lucifer greeted with a nod of his head. Elly shifted uncomfortably, stepping away from Lucifer. “Jack.”

Jack stared curiously. “Dad?” Lucifer smiled at this and I could only imagine that he had been waiting for this moment for a long time believing that he would never get it.

“Let's not get too chummy, alright?” Dean got to his feet and took Cas’ arm, pulling him roughly from the room.

“What are you doing here?” Jack asked, cautiously stepping further into the room. “All of you?”

“We need help hunting,” I answered, getting to my feet, ready to leave if the welcome was no longer extended.

“How are you alive? We burned your body and what's burned stays dead.” Jack had been taught so well, but there was always a loophole.

“That's a long story Jack.” I tried to get a glance to where Dean and Cas had gone, but wasn't able to see them from where I stood. “I'd prefer to tell it when we are all together.”

“It's nice to see you Elly,” Jack gave a nod.

“You as well, Jack.” Elly looked very uncomfortable and out of place. She wanted the focus off of her quickly. “Jack, this is my daughter. We thought that maybe you two would be able to get
acquainted.”

“Daughter?” Jack questioned, looking over Ali for the first time. She had an awkward blush over her face and didn’t meet his gaze. “And you two...” He pointed between Lucifer and Elly. They both nodded and his face changed to one of realization. “So... Then we’re...”

“Nice to meet you Jack,” Ali said softly, embarrassment thick around her.

I took a step back towards the door as Dean and Cas reentered the room. It felt so weird to be afraid of my brother.

“Dean has informed me of the situation,” Cas said, his hands clasping in front of him. “And we will be playing it by ear.” Dean gave a small smile at Cas trying to use the term. “But as for right now, we will be more than happy to help.”

“Then, do we want to reconvene at the bunker?” I asked nervously, wanting to be somewhere I recognized. Somewhere I felt safe.

“The bunker? It was burnt to a crisp,” Dean said.

“I fixed it up.” I shrunk back even further and Elly reached out, taking my hand protectively.

“Do you know where Sam lives now?” Elly tried to change the subject and take the focus off of me.

“I’ll be sure to grab him. It would be better if he heard this from me,” Dean answered with a nod.

“I’ll have beers.” I laughed nervously.

Elly gave me a confused look, her perfect eyebrows furrowed as I pulled on her hand. I could never explain to her how badly I wanted to leave this place. Especially now that there were more angels here. Bird brain I could deal with, but the other was a different story. I didn't want to fight him if I could help it. He reminded me of Cael in a way. Not physically, but in the way that they wouldn't give up until they were literally dying on their hands and knees.

“We'll be there later then,” Jack said kindly. I wasn't sure if he just couldn't read the situation or if he was just trying to lighten the mood, but it gave me the excuse I needed to leave.

“See you then.” I nodded, turning to leave the house. Elly quickly followed after me, closing the door behind her as she chased me down the walkway.

“What the hell was that?” she asked, pointing with her thumb behind her at the house. “I have never seen you that afraid of anything in my whole entire life.”

“I didn't want another face full of holy water,” I answered, not stopping in my walking. I didn't want to be here anymore. It was no longer inviting, not that it had been for very long to begin with.

“That was shitty, I agree, but you were trembling in your boots.”

“They said that they'd help. Isn't that what you wanted?”

“If you don't stop talking, I'm gonna leave your asses here.” I turned around, making her stop and stagger back abruptly at how close she was to me. Behind her waited the rest of her family and Jack was trailing behind, talking with Ali. “This isn't something I am going to continue to discuss,” I hissed, my face close to hers.
“Your hair looks cute longer,” she teased. I knew deep down that she was trying to be funny, but it just pissed me off all the more.

“Jack, are you coming with us?” I called.

“If that is alright with you,” he answered brightly. I snapped my fingers and the bunker materialized around us. I could just make out Jack saying to Alex, “You will be able to do that too.”

“Really?” Alex asked excitedly.

I quickly raced from the room and ran to my room, slamming the door behind me. I locked it before running to the bathroom.

My hands took the sink and I stared at myself. My hair wasn't much longer, but it had grown out, now tickling my ears. I hadn't put much thought into it because I just hadn't cared. But for some reason, it was making me angry. She was making me angry.

I couldn't think of a time when I had been angrier. I got angry easier now a days. Maybe it was the demon that was pumping through me.

Regardless of what it was, I wanted her gone. All she had ever done was try to help me and make me smile and I loved her as my best friend, but I wanted her to hurt. I wanted her to go through hell and high water and I couldn't make the feelings go away.

I ripped open several of the drawers until I found an old pair of scissors and immediately began cutting off all of the new length.
I came back into the room and saw several boxes of pizza on the large table, unopened and waiting. Jack and Alex were at the other table, talking softly and Elly was sitting on Lucifer's lap, laughing.

There was a spark of jealousy.

My fingers reached up and snatched the ring around my neck. I pulled on the chain, snapping it and shoving the ring into my pocket where it didn't quite feel so heavy.

“Hey Alex,” Elly said with a kind smile. “They should all be here soon.”

“Great.” I plopped down in a chair and folded my arms.

“Your hair looks nice.”

“Great,” I repeated again. Elly's smile dropped and I think she finally grasped that I didn't want to talk to her.

There was a sound of a door opening and footsteps. I rose to my feet and sighed, waiting for the worst. But that's not what happened.

Sam stepped in and took a long look at me, the room eerily quiet. He looked good. Must have just come from work because he wore a suit and tie.

He rushed over to me and dragged me up against his large form, hugging me tightly in a hug of someone who had missed me. I could feel him kiss the top of my head and he exhaled deeply.

“I'm so happy you're safe,” he whispered to me before pulling back, his hands taking my shoulders so he could look over me. His smile was bright. “You look good. How have you been?”

I couldn't help but smile at the acceptance that was finally coming my way. It felt so good to have someone back in my life that loved me.

“I'm much better now,” I answered. “And looks like you finally finished school. How'd you manage that?”

“Had to smudge some birth dates and social security numbers,” he answered with a shrug. He reached up and loosened his tie. “But yeah, finished school.”

“I'm so proud of you.”

My eyes left my younger brother and went to my older who was now clean shaven and dressed in his normal clothing. He had his hands in his pocket and was looking around the bunker with a blank face.

He caught my eyes and slowly moved passed Cas and over to me. He rubbed at the back of his neck and sighed. “Look, Alex. I...” He trailed off and snatched up my arm, pulling me into a hug as well. “I thought I lost you,” he whispered. “Demon or not, you are still my sister. I'm sorry about the holy water.”

“Don't get sappy,” I warned, hugging him back tightly. I released him and inhaled deeply. “I believe the pizza is for everyone?”
Elly just nodded, removing herself from Lucifer's lap and leaving the room swiftly. We all looked after her, but didn't say anything. Lucifer winced as a door slammed, but he didn't chase after her.

“Well, I'll eat if no one else will,” Dean said, breaking up the tense air as he snatched up a box to keep for himself. He took a seat and flung his feet over the arm of the chair, shoving half a piece into his mouth.

Everyone took their share and a light conversation filled up the bunker, making everything feel like it used to. It was so familiar and yet there was something that was very different about it.

“I-I did it!” Alex's excited voice carried over to us.

“You did it!” Jack hugged her and she was only smiles.

“I moved the pencil, Dad!”

“That's great, Alex,” Lucifer replied halfheartedly, almost as if he hadn't been listening at all.

“Yeah,” she whispered, looking at her lap. She had wanted a much bigger reaction than he had given her. It made me think that usually they were much closer than they were at the moment.

I moved over to where she was sitting with Jack and placed a hand on her shoulder. “You're doing well.” I said, “Jack didn't even learn that fast.” I gave the other nephilim a wink, hoping he'd just go with it to make Ali feel better. “You're very strong and it shows.”

“Thanks Alex.” Her voice was small and she flicked the pencil away boredly.

“Wanna try teleporting?” I asked her softly, not wanting anyone else to hear me. “You can go anywhere you want.”

“Alex that's not…” Jack started to say, but I held a finger to my mouth and he went silent.

“It'll be fine. I'll go with her.” I said, “How's about it, kid?”

“Anywhere?” she asked, curiosity sparkling in her eyes.

“Anywhere.” I nodded.

“Like, the Tower of London?”

“We could go to the top of Mount Everest if you really wanted, but I wouldn't advise it.”

“Why not?”

“Because the yeti is real and he'll rip your arms off faster than we can get out of there.”

“There's no yeti,” Jack mumbled, confusion on his face as he tried to remember if yetis were real.

“Wanna go to Las Vegas?” I asked with a wink.

“I'm not 21. Is there anything there I could do?” she questioned, her head tipping to the side.

“Hun, I can convince people to let you do whatever you wanted to do.” I smiled, remembering my own first time in Vegas, I certainly hadn’t been 21, “What do you say? And if you wanna leave I'll tell you how.” I stuck my hand out to her.
“Alex-”

“Come on Ali,” I interrupted Jack again with a smile. I saw her look hesitantly towards her father who was lost in a conversation with Castiel. She bit her bottom lip and slowly slid her hand into mine.

“Perfect.” With a flick of my fingers we were in the middle of Caesars Palace. I smiled at her as she quickly spun around to take in her surroundings, her blue eyes catching the millions of lights.

“This is amazing,” she said breathlessly with a laugh. “I wish I could do this at home. It would have come in handy. Beats running away to my room or the park.” She focused back on me. “How did you do that?”

“I will let you take us back,” I replied smiling at how happy she was again. It was like she was seeing snow for the first time. “For now, let’s go have some fun. What are cool aunts for if we don’t go have fun?”

I smiled at her more, it was like a kid in a candy store and I for one, wasn’t going to let her stop feeling that way. I took her by the shoulder and led her deeper into the casino. We came to the slots and I pulled the chair out for her.

“Ever wanted to win at one of these?” I said, leaning up against the machine.

“You kidding?” She quickly took to the seat, eyes alight. “I think everyone has.”

I didn’t need to, but just to impress, I waved my hand through the air and passed her some change that I had moved from my pocket to my hand. She grinned and took the money from my hand, putting it into the slot machine. She shook out her hands and reached out for the lever, trading glances with me. I simply nodded and she pulled down on the lever. Video game like sounds brought the quiet machine to life, lights flashing through the smoke filled room. I pressed my hand to the side of the machine and closed my eyes, mentally working my way through the mechanics and forced the dials to stop spinning. Jackpot.

The dials stopped on three images of the casinos logo, they all looked exactly the same. With that came a blaring sound and confetti shooting out of the sides of the machine. Lights flashed and thousands of coins began to run out of the bottom of a shoot. Ali and I scrambled to find something to put them all in. I snatched up an empty beer stein from a nearby game and Ali’s eyebrows rose.

“What?” I’m gonna use it to put the coins in, not magically refill it.” I said, laughing.

“Could you magically refill it?” she asked curiously, helping me scoop the money into the glass.

“I’m not that talented.” I said, “But I can do this.” I tapped a waiter on the shoulder as he passed by. “Would you please bring my friend and I a free drink for winning?” Without a word of disagreement or question, the waiter nodded and moved away towards a pair of revolving doors. “Let’s see if you’re better at drinking than your mother.”

The waiter came back with two glasses of beer and handed one to each of us. I looked at Ali as she stared at the glass with wide eyes. I smiled and put the cool glass to my lips, chugging down the drink quickly and hoping she’d follow my example. When I lowered my glass, I found that she had downed at least half of hers.

I laughed a little, “Here,” I pushed a hand under her chin and pushed it up, “Don’t think about how much is going into your mouth, just let it slide down.”
“It’s bitter.”

“It gets less bitter the more you drink.”

She didn’t look like she believed me, but when I released her chin, she put the cup to her lips and finished off the rest of it. “You lied,” she said with a cough. “The bottom was worse.”

I laughed. “Would you have finished it if I’d told you the truth?”

“No.” She set the stein aside. “Aren’t there supposed to be good drinks? Like Sex on the Beach or something?”

“You’d want to try that? It’s got vodka in it.” I was surprised she even knew what that was.

“My parents aren’t here, and for some reason I’ve never raided their bar. I’m up for whatever. Teach me?” Her smile was almost flirty as she brushed her long blonde hair up into a ponytails, showing off her angelicly crafted face.

“Deal.” I grabbed her hand and towed her towards the actual bar, which was a few yards away, out winnings jingling around in pockets and the empty stein glass.

I pulled the kid up to the bar and flagged over the bartender. He gave us a questioning look as he walked over, cleaning out an empty glass with a wet towel.

“How can I help you?” He asked.

“We’re gonna try whatever the kid wants. It’s her birthday and I want to spoil her.” I put a hand on his arm gingerly, “Pretty please?”

“Can I have some ID?” he questioned, placing the glass aside,

“I don’t think you need any ID, do you dear?” I gave him a gentle smile.

“I suppose not. What can I get for you?”

I looked back to Ali who looked a little lost as to what she was supposed to be doing. I giggled. “Let’s have a Sex on the Beach for the kid and I’ll have a Shirley Temple.” The bartender nodded and set to work.

“How did you do that?” she whispered over to me.

“Practice,” I said. “I was just like you, I had to grow into my abilities.”

Her eyes widened yet again as a sunset colored drink was set in front of her with a slice of pineapple on rim. My red drink decorated with cherries was placed in front of me. I rested against the bar and passed my drink over to her as well.

“Drink up sweetheart, it won’t affect me anyway.”

She reached out and took her drink and sipped on the staw, swiftly emptying the glass. She winced, a hand going to head. “Brain freeze,” she whispered, exhaling sharply.

I reached over and pulled the glass from her cold hands, before replacing it with the second. I ran my fingers over her cheek and then across her icy lips. I swiftly pulled back my hand and looked away. “Finish up. We have some more things to go see before I show you how to get back.”
We stumbled back into the bunker, a very drunk Ali being supported by my arm around her waist and her arm laid across the back of my neck. I was laughing too hard to notice all the angry looks at first. Ali was giggling uncontrollably, even as she looked up into the eyes of her parents.

“I was so worried about you,” Elly said, the worry coming through the anger.

“Why? She was with me.” I said, still laughing.

“You left without telling anyone,” Lucifer shot back, arms folded.

“We told Jack.” I said, putting Ali down in a chair, making sure she’d stay up right before letting her go. “Besides, you were all too busy ignoring her to pay attention even if I had told you.”

“Is she drunk?” Elly raced over and took Ali’s face in her hands, looking over the giggling girl. “Alex, she’s sixteen!”

“I was fifteen when I had my first drink.” I shrugged, “Big deal. I let her have a little fun. It was better than being bored here all day. Especially in a world that only confuses her and makes her angry.”

“Alex-”

“You told me you were fourteen when you first had drugs. How is this different?” I interrupted again.

“You were fourteen?” Ali asked with a snicker. “I am so tired of secrets.”

I pointed at the poor girl, who had unknowingly just made my point stronger. I eyed both of them. “And it’s not like you have much to say here either, nightwing, you spent most of your life in a cage after pissing off daddy dearest.”

“Elizabeth, take her to bed. We’ll discuss her punishment in the morning,” Lucifer instructed. “She needs to sleep this off.”

“I agree. And you might wanna stay with her. Who knows what the alcohol will make her do.” I said, crossing my arms over my chest. Elly shot me a dirty look before pulling her daughter from the chair I had placed her in.

I watched as Elly carefully helped her very drunk daughter out of the room and towards the hallway. Once out of ear shot I started to snicker, and before long I was laughing again. This was too funny to me. How could people full of so many sins be so hard on their kid? They were just going to make her worse if they kept sheltering her. I took a seat at the table and propped my feet on top of it, still laughing to myself.

“This isn’t funny Alex.”

“It’s hilarious, morning star.” I said, smiling at the devil.

“You could have seriously hurt her!”

“You’d think I’d hurt a kid?” I said, suddenly serious. “You really think I’d hurt her?”

“You’ve hurt plenty before you were a mass of blackness, doll.”
There was that name again, the one that made me want to make him regret ever calling me that to begin with. “Don’t call me that, Apollyon.”

I could see the gears come to a halt as he tried to speak again. “Thi-This is about my daughter. Not about some nickname.”

“And you know I’d never hurt her, end of story.” I stood and walked closer to him, putting a finger against his chest. “And it’s not just some nickname. You continue to call me that.” I pushed harder with my finger, pushing him back into a chair. “Over and over again.” I leaned down, sliding my finger up his chest to his chin, hooking it so that he had to look at me. “I’m beginning to think you want to continue where Jamaica left off, Apollyon.” I wouldn’t even call it a fight as he tried to pull his face from my grip unsuccessfully. There was no anger, but the fire was still very prominent in his eyes. I leaned closer until my lips where a whisper from his. “Do you?”

“I-I..” He licked his lips and I could feel his warm breath against mine.

“Don’t lie to me.” A small nod was my answer. I smiled. Who knew the devil was such a fun thing to play with?

I leaned forward and kissed him, eyes closing as it got deeper. I could sense his hands wanting to move from where he held them tightly at his sides. I dropped my hand from his chin and took one of his, putting it on my waist.

It was as if I had given him permission. His other hand swiftly jumped to my face, caressing it as he pulled me closer. I stumbled slightly, placing my knee between his legs on the chair to keep my balance. I had never felt him this hungry before. It was like he’d been starved of something like this for a long time. It made my head spin.

I pushed more, wanting more, needing more to fill this gap. Elly would be mad if she ever knew, she’d never forgive me. I fed off that danger, moving my knee and placing it to the side of the chair so that I could straddle Lucifer's lap. I put my hands against the back of the chair to steady myself as his hands took charge at my hips, moving them in a precise way to we both could enjoy. His touch was addicting as his hands traveled up my sides, making my skin ice cold. They were rough with me and, if I were human, they certainly would've left bruises. I broke the kiss and nipped at his neck, leaving a bruise for only a second.

“We…shouldn't be doing this.” he panted.

“No.” I agreed, “But I don't see you wanting to stop either.”

I leaned up and looked into his eyes, they glowed the faintest bit of red, still mostly blue. We panted, our breath warm and skin hot. I smiled at the way he looked at me. It was like he wanted to go on but still knew how bad the consequences would be if we got caught.

“We could always go to hell if that would make it better.” I almost purred, “After all, I've always wanted to do more than sign deals and listen to boring meetings in that room.”

“To hell with us then.” Lucifer said, bringing a hand up to bring my lips to his again.

I was going to really enjoy having him wrapped around my fingers.

I stared up towards the ceiling, stretched out across the bed that I didn't really need, fingers grasping across the cold fabric and to all of the empty spaces that were there.
I sighed. What was wrong with me? What was I doing? This wasn't like me at all. When had I ever done something this idiotically stupid that would hurt another person?

Was I really no better than a demon? Was I really just one of them now? Angry all the time. Not giving a single flying fuck. Just completely empty.

I sat up, catching the shine of the red ring on my bedside table. I groaned, rubbing my eyes.

“Shit.”

I pushed myself from my bed and got ready for the day. I couldn’t mess around today. I had a meeting I needed to go to before I went back to the bunker. And I wasn’t sure how to make myself go back to the bunker. Not now.

I left my room and wandered down the twisting maze like hallways and to the meeting room. I pushed open the door to find all of the demons already around the conference table. I strode in and glanced around at all of the faces, my hand playing with Charlton’s hair as I passed him. I took my seat and sighed.

“Give it to me,” I said, rubbing at my eyes, already bored with the meeting.

“This week’s numbers are up,” Charlton said, speaking for the group. I glanced up at him and could see him playing with his tie, not meeting my gaze. “But one of the hounds was hurt.”

“What do you mean it was hurt?”

“A hunter. But we took care of it. We’ll just be down a hound for a bit.”

“Do you know the hunter?” I questioned, sitting up a little straighter. “You got their soul, right?”

Charlton cleared his throat and smiled, the grin brightening his eyes. “No. We did not get his soul. He wasn’t the one the deal was made with. He was protecting the one who made the deal. But we did retrieve their soul.”

“And the hunter got away then?”

“Yes.” Charlton nodded.

I looked around the table at all of the others who were staring off in different directions. Why was Charlton the one that was braver than the rest? Maybe he had been this way around Crowley as well.

“And the hunter? Do we have a name? Anything? We can’t keep having them take out the hounds.” The room was silent and I again glanced around. “Thanks to those god damn Winchesters, everyone can see them now.”

“I can’t say any of us knew the hunter, ma’am,” another spoke up, a nervousness in his voice. Was I really that terrifying that no one could talk directly to me? It was starting to get on my nerves.

“Anything at all? What did he look like? Any tattoos? Anything?” Again the room was silent and I was becoming frustrated. I slammed my fist down on the table causing most of the group to jump.

“Uh-uh- he called himself Alexander. But we have all the hunters on records. We do not know of one named Alexander,” a woman replied swiftly.

“Alexander,” I whispered, racking my brain for a time I had come across an Alexander. But I
couldn’t come up with a time that I had. It wasn’t like it mattered. There were new hunters popping up all of the time. He could have just been someone new. “Nothing else?”

“I’m afraid not.”

I nodded, leaning back in my chair. “See if we can track him down. We need to keep an eye on him.” There were mutters of agreement around the room. “And we found someone to pick up the slack on those several unfulfilled contracts?”

“Yes. They were taken care of,” Charlton answered me, leaning back in his chair and sharing a long look with me.

I cleared my throat and turned my gaze away from him. “Let’s move on then.”

I slowly pushed my way into the bunker and closed the door behind me. I paused on the steps down to the map room at the site of Elly sitting at one of the tables. She had her head in her hands and looked distressed. Could she possibly know?

I took a deep breath, but it didn’t feel like it did anything to help me. “El, I’m sorry,” I said as strongly as I could. She jumped and looked up at me. “It was wrong of me to do that with your daughter. I had no right.” Her face was pale and she had a ring of purple under each eye. “Did you sleep at all?” She gave me a simple shake of her head, her hair falling into her eyes. “Where’s the angel?” She shrugged. I gave a confused look. We hadn’t been long.

“He eventually came back and he looked so worked up. All disheveled and-and... I thought that you two had just had another fight. He’s always like that when he’s upset. He just left. I haven’t heard from him since. Figured he needed to be alone.” She looked towards the hallway as if she were hoping that he would come back.

“And the kid?” I questioned carefully. I moved closer to her, watching for some sign that I should stop. But none came.

“Was up all night sick.” She gave a pathetic and tired laugh. “I shouldn’t have brought her here. We should have just stayed home.”

“You can’t keep sheltering her.” I reached out to touch her shoulder, but quickly shoved my hands back into my pockets as I figured it was better to not push my luck too much. She pushed her hair back and nodded. I liked being right. It was empowering. “She is old enough to handle this. She was even able to teleport us last night. Jack didn’t even get a hold of that until just recently. Every time he did it he was extremely emotional.”

“She’s always been naturally gifted in a lot of aspects. Maybe I shouldn’t have always been so secretive. I just-”

“She didn’t need to know,” I agreed taking a seat beside my friend. “I get it. You didn’t do anything wrong.”

“Alex, I know you’d never do anything to hurt her, but you scared me so badly last night. She is the light of my world.”

“And you’d do anything to get her back. I know.”

She grumbled something in response that I didn’t quite catch, but I didn’t bother trying to figure out
what she had said. She placed her cheek in her hand and looked over at me, her cheek squishing against her hand.

“I hope he wasn’t too difficult last night. He can get pretty brutal when he’s upset.”

I couldn’t stop my mind from slipping to what had happened after Elly had left. Teeth, nails, gasps. I felt like I could still taste him on my lips and the thought alone made me dizzy with want.

“Nothing I can’t handle,” I responded, trying to keep the lust from my voice. My nails dug into my palms in an attempt to keep me sane, keep me here and not there.

She sighed. “Well, I don’t know when he’ll be back and I think Ali is going to be in bed all day—"

“-I’m sorry-"

“Do you want to hunt?”

“I-” I stopped abruptly in trying to explain myself and looked over her, relieved that last night was behind us. At least for now. I was sure it would come back around when Lucifer finally showed up. “Of course I would love to go hunting. Charlie’s angels back together again.”

She laughed, getting to her feet. “Charlie’s angels got nothing on us.” She pushed her chair back in and stretched. “Let me get cleaned up. You wanna find something?”

“Yes.” I gave her a smile as she left the room and I pulled my phone from my pocket to start searching through it for a new case. It honestly didn’t take me long at all. So much shit had been happening that it was simple enough to locate something close by. It was about a 40 minute drive.

Something had been eating humans. People were having large chunks missing from their bodies when they were found and then, after the bodies were found, the same people had been reappearing as if nothing had happened to them. There had been at least ten confirmed cases in the last month alone. Maybe a shapeshifter or a few in this case. Another group. And it looked like they were trying to somehow enter society through these others that they were killing off, or that was my best guess. Either way we needed to check it out and it’d be fun to hunt with Elly again, it was something that I’d missed. I perked up as she came back into the room, smiling with a backpack strapped to her back, ready to go.

“I think I found us a good one. There’s a pack of shifters or something about forty minutes from here. We could hit it up and take them out in a few days.” I said, smiling, “We could take our time too if you really wanted to.”

She glanced back down the hallway and bit her lip.

“They can handle themselves,” I pushed. “They’re both old enough to take care of themselves.”

She sighed and turned back with a smile. “A few days sounds wonderful.”

I found myself smiling widely. This was going to be so much fun, I could get away from Hell and the recent drama of the bunker for a few days and just kill shit. And most importantly, I’d be killing shit with my best friend by my side again.

“You sure you can handle this? I’ve got more skill on you now.” I teased, knowing she was already ready to murder something.

“I have been aching to do this for the last three years.”
“I knew it hadn’t been that long since your last hunt!” I said, excitedly smacking her on the shoulder, “Let’s go! We’ll take my car.”

Her eyes lit up and she raced towards the garage. “I’ve missed your car!”

I laughed as I followed after her, “Me too.”

It felt so normal. So familiar. So good to be back in some old, stained, sex smelling motel room. I jumped onto the first bed and laughed as it gave a lot of resistance to my attempt at bouncing. It was rock hard and smelled like old cigarettes. Damn did this bring back memories. I laid back and remembered my first hunt with my brothers. He dragged me in, sat me on the bed, looked me in the eyes, said Stay here with Sammy, and left with John to kill something I didn’t know about yet. I remember the door closing and little Sam walking over to me shyly. I remember smiling at him and asking if he’d like to watch tv with me. I remember watching pokemon and scooby-doo until we both fell asleep. I really always had been closer to Sam, we just seemed to understand each other better sometimes. I heard Elly lay her stuff on the other bed and it brought me back to reality.

“We can get started in a bit.” I said, sitting up, “Are you hungry at all?”

“I honestly just want to get started. Send me the news reports and I’ll read over them. If you want to grab a burger or something, I can research there.”

“I...don’t eat, El.” I reminded her.

“Oh. Right. Sorry.” She teasingly hit herself in the head with a laugh. “Forgot.”

“It’s ok,” I cleared my throat and took my laptop from my bag, opening it and retrieving the files and reports. “What do you want me to send them to?”

“Phone is fine. Same number.”

“K.” I said, getting to work sending her everything before scanning the police radar and local news sites for any new activity. In a few minutes I had a hit, “We got one, El. Body just found about a mile into town, torn to shreds, heart and frontal lobe missing. Sounds like an us thing.”

“You got your ID ready to go?”

“I have mine. I don’t think I have-”

“I have some,” she smiled, pointing to her bag. “Sheriff or FBI?”

“Think we could rock state officials?” I teased.

“Fuck yes.”

“Let’s go state troopers then. I have fed threads in the trunk.” I said.

“I’m so excited!”

I rolled up the sleeves of the dark blue state trooper shirt I wore as Elly and I walked up to the group of other officers who were already on site. It was a nice fit but I’d never liked wearing the
sleeves the way you were supposed to. Jody would be proud of the way I was dressed though, shirt tucked into the black dress pants and everything. I nudged Elly with my elbow.

“You remember the plan?” I asked softly.

“Of course,” she answered back, a sarcastic smile on her face. “We kill everyone, loot their bodies and sell everything at a pawn shop.”

“Perfect.” I laughed. It was so good to be back with her.

“Can I help you ladies?” We’d gotten close enough for the county sheriff to take his attention off the body. He was very old country. Dean would have been gushing over him. White stenson, jeans with his vest over a button up shirt. He had a mustache that had begun to go salt and peppered with his age.

“We were actually wondering if we could help you.” I said, coming to a stop and putting my hands in my pockets, “We were in the area and heard about the body turning up, figured we’d come check it out.”

Elly pulled out her badge, flipping it open quickly, just enough to see it but not read it, before she shoved it back into her pocket. “Heard you’ve been having a rather high spark in dead people turning up. The higher ups were concerned. We understand. The small town, the short staffing. We’re just here to help pick up any slack.”

The sheriff narrowed his eyes at us but stuck his hand out to shake mine anyway. I took it, we shook hands, and he stood to the side so we could take a closer look at the body.

“Can’t really make sense of it,” he said, removing his hat and scratching his head. “All the bodies look like this, ‘cept they all have different parts missing.”

“Different parts?” I questioned.

“Yea. Sometimes they’ll have no hearts and a missing lung, other times it’ll be a missing kidney and the eyes will be gouged out.”

“So the heart isn’t always gone?” Elly asked what we were both thinking.

“Nope. We’ve only had a heart gone from two of the bodies.”

This ruled out werewolves, which was good, but it was odd for Shapeshifters to leave their victims like this. They were usually much more discreet about their killings and hid the bodies before taking over people’s lives. This more struck me as a ghoul, and I needed to tell Elly that, after I saw the body.

“Would you mind?” Elly motioned to the body and the sheriff shook his head, moving out of the way. She walked around to the other side and crouched down beside it, sliding her sunglasses onto her head and tipping her head one way and then the other. She looked up and squinted into the sun. “Has anything weird been happening at the cemeteries?”

“Like what?” the sheriff asked, flabbergasted.

Elly hummed in thought. “Cold spots, uh... possibly dead ground around certain grave stones. Anything?”

“Does turning up alive count?”
“Alive?” Elly sounded surprised and I couldn’t tell if maybe she had just skimmed the articles that I had sent her or that she was just a very amazing actor.

“Yes. We process the crime scene and then send the body to the morgue and the next thing we know, it’s as if the body just gets up and walks away. We have documentation of the body at the morgue, but then it just poofs into thin air.”

“Poof?” I questioned, my eyebrows furrowed together. I traded glances with Elly who just gave a shrug and stood back up.

“But that’s not the weirdest part,” he continued on, hands on his hips. “They turn back up at work or church and they’re perfectly fine. All in one piece. And we just can’t figure it.”

“And you’re sure it’s them?”

“We’ve been checking all of their fingerprints and so far they’ve all matched. We just can’t figure it out.”

“Is there a camera in the morgue?” Elly asked, sliding her sunglasses back on.

“There is and I’ve checked the footage myself. Nothing is tampered with, there’s not footage missing. They’re put in the coolers, locked up for the night and then when they go in the next morning the bodies are gone.”

“Would you mind showing us to the morgue?” I stepped back and away from the body whose tattered remains were slick and glistening with blood in the sunlight. This attack had to have been recent. The blood was still wet. But it didn’t look like there was any sign of the attacker.

“Of course,” the sheriff answered, putting his hat back on his head before nodding us away from the body that the forensics team was starting to take care of.

Elly and I went back to my car and we climbed in, beginning to follow the sheriff back into town.

“Ghouls?” she asked me.

“I was thinking the same exact thing.”

I stepped into the morgue and looked around. Elly looked cold, but I had stopped being bothered by that a while ago. It was small. There were only a few drawers for the cooler and only one table to inspect the bodies on.

I glanced around. Nothing seemed off. The mortician stood beside us, a file clutched to her chest. I looked towards Elly who traded a look with me. “Willing to play dead body?” I asked. Elly simply shrugged and we walked over to the cooler.

“Is it unlocked?” Elly questioned, looking back towards the doctor. She nodded, her short bob moving with her head. I turned the handle and opened one of the cooler doors. I tugged on the table and pulled it out. Elly sat on the edge and lifted herself onto the table, laying down with a shiver. She pulled her phone from her pocket and nodded. I pushed her into the cooler and I saw a light come on as she turned on the flashlight on her phone.

“See anything?” I asked, leaning against the door.
“Where do the ducts lead?” she asked, her voice echoing around in the metal box.

“Where do the air ducts lead?” I asked again in the direction of where the doctor stood beside the sheriff.

“They lead up to the roof. But you shouldn't be able to see the ducts,” the doctor explained.

“I'm going up,” Elly called out to me.

“She’s going up.” I said so everyone could hear me, “How do you usually get up to the roof?”

“There's a ladder outside that leads up to the roof, but you need a key to get through the gate.”

“Show me.”

The doctor looked taken aback, but nodded and lead me from the room and outside. We rounded a corner and came to a single rusted ladder. I took to it and began climbing up. I took the ladder all the way to the roof and hopped over the small ledge.

“El?” I called out across the flat concrete.

“I'm here.” She hoisted herself from the duct unit and walked over to the fence, taking it in her hands and looking over it. “This wouldn't be hard to climb. But you'd need help to get a body over.”

“So there’s multiples then. That’s not unusual.” I thought for a few seconds, “Although, the last time we tracked one down there was just the one but it’s not impossible for a pack.” I squatted and took a closer look at the duct, “You’d have to be pretty skinny to fit through there, and shorter than me at least.”

“I'll take that as a compliment. Not bad for being 35.”

“You are not 35. The math doesn't add up.”

“Shut up,” she grumbled. “My real age...” She trailed off as her attention was pulled somewhere else. She walked over to another part of the fence and stooped down, pulling up a corner that had been cut free.

“Well, there we go then.” I walked over to the opposite side, where the sheriff and doctor were waiting. “Sheriff! You’ve got a body snatcher on your hands!”

“That doesn't explain why they're taking them,” Elly said, slipping under the fence to stand beside me.

“Ghouls need to keep parts of the body they’re disguised as, just in case they want to come back to an older one.” I thought about that, “That could mean we’re only dealing with two or three of them.”

“What do they share the body then? They only need the body to switch back if they change forms. If they’re trying to take over the person’s life, why would they keep the body around?”

That stumped me, “Maybe they’re not. Maybe they’re hiding them somewhere.”

“Let’s get down. I don’t much care for heights.”

“Right.” I stepped aside and watched as she carefully climbed down the ladder before following
after her.

Her phone started ringing and Elly gave an apologetic look, pulling her phone from her pocket and stepped away to answer it. “Hi hun,” I could hear her say before she was out of earshot. I could feel my heart speed up. If it was Lucifer, would he tell her? I hadn’t thought about that. Would he feel guilty when it finally came down to it?

“A body snatcher?” the sheriff asked, hands back on his hip.

“Ya,” He’d pulled me back to reality, “We found a hole in the fence on the other side of the roof. Perfect size to squeeze a body through if someone was waiting down below.”

“So. Two body snatchers?” The doctor asked.

“Or more, most likely.”

“Sorry. That was my husband,” Elly said as she came back. She clapped her hands and exhaled sharply, anger present in the breath.

“I was just filling them in on what we found.” I told her, giving her a worried look.

“Good.” She shook her head, “Are we done here then?”

“I uhh..” The sheriff stammered.

“Great!” Elly began walking to the front of the morgue where my car was parked, “Let’s go then.”

I apologized to the sheriff and the doctor before following after her quickly. I jogged to keep up as she slammed the passenger door closed after she got into the seat. I pulled the driver’s door open and got in slowly and quietly, not wanting to upset her more, especially if I was the one she was upset with. I closed the door softly and turned to her as I started the car.

“El...are you…?”

“He just makes me so angry sometimes!” She blurted out.

“What did he....?”

“He was mad that I left without saying anything! I’m a grown adult and I don’t need to tell him fuck all about where I’m going!” She was fuming, “He likes to think that I’m still this little girl he has to protect!”

“I’m sorry, El.” I said, putting a hand on her leg. “He’s just being a dick.”

“A major fucking dick. God. Let’s just go. I need something to eat or I might punch something.”

I laughed nervously. “There should be a diner-”

“I don’t care. Just go.”

I didn’t say anything else, just started the engine and drove away. It took about ten minutes to get to the diner I’d been trying to tell her about. I parked and we went inside, quickly finding a booth away from everyone else where we could talk about the case more.

“So if it’s multiple ghouls I was thinking we could try the houses in the neighborhood of the victims.” I took a sip out of the water glass the waiter had brought us as we’d sat down.
“Sounds good,” she said in disinterest, her fingernails tapping on the table.

“Did... Did he say anything else, El?” I asked, taking another nervous sip of my water.

“Excuse me,” she called out to a passing waiter. “I’d like to order. I would like the most greasy bacon burger you can make with extra bacon and then a beer. And I don’t give a fuck if you don’t serve beer here, go get me a beer.”

I laughed nervously at the waiter’s scared look. “I think a soda would be fine, wouldn’t it Elly?”

“God damn it, I want a beer.”

She totally knew. “El, what’s wrong?” I asked cautiously. I didn’t know if she really did know or not but it felt like she did. It felt like this anger and aggression was aimed at me. And it made me feel alive, the guilt I felt wasn’t matching the way it felt to have her know I had played her little black bird. It was almost pride. I felt hurt that I had hurt her but at the same time it felt amazing to have her know I had taken her place for one night. But I played it safe, I wanted to hear her say it. I wanted her to tell me she knew.

“Sorry Alex,” she whispered as the waiter rushed away to the counter to pass her order to the chef. “I shouldn’t be taking this out on you. It wasn’t you. It’s just him. I feel like I know him less and less and being here has changed that so much. He’s... so proud now that he has his grace back. Like he’s ready to take back over hell. He’s not the sarcastic asshole anymore. He’s just... the devil.”

“That’s what happens when you forget about the power you once had and then suddenly get it back.” I said, leaning back into the booth.

“Maybe I’m just being stupid. I did leave without telling him. He was probably just worried.”

“Why would he be worried?” I took another drink, “You’re with me, how bad could it get?” I smiled and winked at her over the rim of the cup.

“Don’t say that. You know that’s a jinx. It will always get worse. And you know exactly why he is worried I’m with you.”

“Cause I’m so sexyly irresistible?” I said, chuckling.

“I would have totally slept with you before him.” She leaned back in the booth, more relaxed now.

“Really?” I said, cocking an eyebrow at her, “I always thought you preferred my man in a suit.”

“The nickname he gave me had extremely sexual undertones, but he wasn’t what caught my eyes. But I have Lucy now. I don’t need to ruin that with a moment of weak judgment.” I couldn’t find words to say. I felt like it was a jab at me. Almost as a roundabout way of telling me she knew everything. Her plate was set in front of her and a glass of beer. She smiled with a thank you and began drinking.

“Whoa,” I was surprised by how quickly she was drinking the beer, “El, slow down. I thought you hated drinking.”

She held up her finger and finished off the tall glass. She set it down with a loud clunk. “I am not the same person I was the last time we met, Alex. It’s been sixteen years for me. I’ve drank my fair share of liquor stores.”

“Isn’t that how old the kid is...?” Elly glared at me and I knew my answer, “Ah. So this case...”
“What about it?” Elly said as she eyed the burger in front of her.

“The houses the victims lived in are probably our best bet of finding the pack.” I pulled my tablet out of my bag and showed her a map of the area, “This is where the first body showed up.” I made a red dot appear on the screen by poking it, “That was Jeffrey Murgatroyd. He’s got a family that lives here.” I made an x on the screen a few inches from the red dot. “He disappeared one night a few weeks back, they found his body the next morning down that dirt road and then the day after that he’s walking up to the front door good as new.” I put the tablet down on the table. “I think that’s where we start. First appearance, probably pack leader.”

She took a bite of her burger and immediately reached for some napkins to wipe off her hands. “Should we scout out the house first?” she asked through her mouthful. “Does he have a wife? Maybe we should try to talk to her first without him there.”

“He’s got a wife and a kid. I agree that we should talk to them first. They may know something.”

“Sounds like a plan. First thing tomorrow then?”

“Sure.” I leaned forward onto my elbows, “I’ll scout the place out and you can relax or do whatever it is you do now.” I laughed a little.

“I drink more, Alex. It’s not like I took up snorting drugs and water polo.” She laughed at her own joke and took another large bite.

“You can come stake out the house then if you want.” I suggested, “You seemed pretty annoyed earlier though, so you don’t have to.”

“Oh.” She shrunk back. “I’m sorry for yelling at you.”

“It’s ok, El. I’ve been yelled at worse by Crowley.” I smiled at her.

“Maybe I should just go back to the motel room. I didn’t get any sleep, I’m losing my temper.” She lowered her head into her hands. “I’m just a wreck. Midlife crisis.” She laughed.

I half-heartedly smiled. “Come with me tonight, I’m not gonna let you sit alone all night.”

“You worried I’ll hurt myself or something?” she asked curiously, her hand going over her mouth.

She continued on before I could speak and it made me a bit worried. “I’m teasing. I will come with you.”

“Alright.” Only slightly less worried about her now.

“So, it looks like her yoga class is an hour and a half long. And if I remember correctly, school is out about 2:30. The nearest elementary school is about a five minute walk from here,” Elly listed off, answering yet another text that had blown up her phone. “I’m about to turn this thing off.”

“Don’t. I made need to call you.” I said from my position in a tree on a hill behind the house in question. We had been using coms to talk to each other but they weren’t the most reliable thing. I could just see Elly standing in her spot on the sidewalk. “Plus you’re supposed to be acting like you need help.”

“We could have just stayed in the car. Why did you have to go all special secret agent? I feel like the mission impossible theme should be playing.”
I hummed the theme song for a few bars before responding. “Because then we can be in both places, I can watch for anything weird going on inside and you can look out for the kid.”

“She’s here. Be quiet,” Elly ordered softly. She shoved her phone back into her pocket and approached the car that had just pulled up into the driveway of the house. “Hi, excuse me,” Elly said in a bright and bubbly voice.

“Hello?” she asked curiously.

“Hi. My name is Elly. I just moved in down the street. I was just trying to introduce myself to the neighbors.”

“Oh, very nice to meet you. I’m Hailey You must have moved into the Calvarie’s house.”

“Yeah,” Elly answered kindly with a nod.

“Would you like to come in? I can make us some lemonade if you would like.”

“That would be very nice. Thank you.” Elly disappeared from my view and I rolled my eyes. That wasn’t what we had agreed to. “You have a lovely house.”

“Elly, I don’t like not having you in sight. Try to…” I paused, there was movement in an upstairs window, “Hang on.”

“That’s very kind of you,” Hailey replied. “Do you have any kids?”

“I have a daughter,” Elly said back. “And a son. But they’re both a bit older now. One’s still in highschool and the other is starting college.”

“Oh.” Hailey sounded surprised. “I didn’t think you were that old.”

“The older one is from a different marriage.”

“Elly, he’s in the house,” I said, watching the figure move around upstairs.

“In the house? What do you mean he’s in the house?!” she whisper yelled at me.

“Calm down,” I said, eyes still on the figure, voice calm, “You can’t let her know you know. Just keep talking to her. If he comes down stairs you know what to do.”

“Here you are,” Hailey said. She must have brought out some lemonade because Elly thanked her. “How are you liking the neighborhood so far?”

“It’s absolutely darling.”

The figure had stopped moving now. He had most likely heard the voices down below.

“So, you said a second marriage?”

“Oh, yes. My husband was married before we met.”

“He knows you’re there, but there’s no way he could possibly know you’re a hunter,” I said to Elly, leaning further back into the branches so the figure wouldn’t see me.

“And does your husband work?”
“He’s the owner of a law firm.”

“The king of hell is not a lawyer,” I grumbled. “And if he was he’d be the scumiest of them all.”

My attention was dragged back to the upstairs window, he was moving again. I watched him move around and then disappear.

“El, I lost him. He could be coming down stairs. Get the vamponite ready.”

“Oh! I’m so sorry!” Elly gasped out. “I’m so clumsy.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll go grab a towel.”

“I can’t just stab him in the middle of the living room.” Her voice was low and rushed.

“You don’t have to stab him, he just has to touch the blood.” I could see him in another window now on the first floor. “Fake a paper cut or something.”

“Fine! Get your ass out of the tree. He’ll probably run.” Her voice changed to something perkier again, “Do you mind getting me a bandaid? I cut my finger on the glass.”

I climbed out of the tree slowly, making sure I didn’t bring attention to myself. I’d lost him again. “El be careful.”

“Honey, when did you get home?” Hailey asked. “Elly, this is my husband, Jeffrey.”

“Very nice to meet you,” Elly answered. “I’ll let you two get back to your day. Thank you for the lemonade.”

“Did you get it?” I questioned, straightening my shirt.

In a few quick seconds I got my answer as a man bolted out the back door of the house. I slid behind the tree trunk and waited for him to run by, closetinning him as he shot past and sending him to the ground. I walked to his side and dug my shoe into his shirt, pinning him to the ground with very little effort.

“Stay down.” I said.

“Bite me.” the monster hissed, struggling under my shoe.


I looked over the ghouls as I waited for Elly to join me. The form it was using was maybe thirty years old. Gray flecks in his red hair, and gold bands in his green eyes. Freckles were sprinkled across his cheeks and nose. He was medium build, but more on the side of dad bod than anything. As it wiggled and struggled beneath me, it caused me to grind my shoe into a rather nice sweater vest.

“Will you stop fighting? We already know what you are.” I told it.

“Then why haven't you killed me yet?” It asked.

“Because we need to know some things.” Elly said as she climbed the hill to join us. “The wife is fine, didn't see anything but we should probably move before she checks out back.”
I nodded, removing my foot from the ghoul’s chest only to pick it up by the collar in one swift motion and drag it along with me towards the side road I’d parked my car on. Elly must have gotten some of the blood on him because the closer we got to my car, the more he stummbled and was unable to pull himself upright. I shoved him into the back seat of my car and Elly got in beside him, gun in hand as a precaution. Elly had been smart and we had gotten a separate motel room at a different location so that he wouldn’t know exactly where we were staying.

The car ride was quiet until we made it to the motel. The second the car was put in park, I could see a blur in my rear view mirror and caught the ghoul racing from my car. The next figure was Elly, chasing him down. I was surprised at how fast she was now that she was older. It wasn’t like she played soccer anymore. I got from the car and chased after them. It didn’t take her long to catch him around the waist and drag him back. He lost balance and fell to the ground and Elly swiftly had her gun trained on him, blowing a strand of hair from her face.

I caught up and pulled him from the ground and to the motel room. Elly followed and closed the door behind us. I shoved the ghoul into a chair and Elly’s gun was back on him. I went to my bag that was on a nearby table and pulled out some rope and went to work tying him down to the chair.

“Let me go,” he hissed, looking between the two of us. “Now.”

“How many of you are there?” I asked, sitting on the edge of the table and folding my arms over my chest. “You don’t scare either of us.”

“The others will know I’m missing. They’ll come for you.”

“Please,” I scoffed, rolling my eyes. I removed myself from the table and stepped around him, looking the stolen body over. “I am the queen of hell and her boyfriend is Lucifer. Even if they do, I don’t think you have a chance.”

“Queen of hell my ass. The boyfriend is a bit more believable, but he hasn’t been heard from in years.” He chuckled but his smile dropped and he rolled his eyes with a huff of disgust. “You’re that Winchester bitch Crowley took a liking to.”

“Yes. I’m the bitch Crowley took a liking to.” I snatched up a handful of his hair and pulled his head back. “And believe me when I say that he taught me how to torture extremely well.”

“You don’t have the balls.”

I looked up to Elly who was standing silently, gun up and still ready. She met my gaze before looking back to the man, and I couldn’t read what her eyes were telling me. I shoved his head forward and made my way back to my bag, shuffling through it. I pulled out what I had been looking for and kept it down by my side, moving back around him.

“How many of you are there?” I asked. He tried to glance back at me as if trying to decide if I were really going to do something. “I’m starting to lose my patience. How many of you are there?” His eyes searched over me, but he seemed settled on staying silent. “Elly, lock the door. Turn on the TV.”

She hesitated but did slowly lower her gun. She locked the door and then found the remote, turning on the TV. It was some medical commercial. She glanced back at me unsure, but at a nod, she turned up the TV so that the sound filled the room and would easily block out any other sounds. She came back and lifted the gun back up. I could see her hands tremble slightly as she took aim again, not that she really needed to.
I turned the metal around in my hand to the angle that I needed it. In one swift movement I easily shoved the large meat hook into his shoulder before pulling upwards on it to make sure it wasn’t going to come out. There was a moment before the recognition came to him, split seconds of silence until there was a sharp exhale from his nose and a sound caught in his throat as I dragged against it.

I saw Elly flinch, her eyes closing for a moment before they reopened. They were shining and wet as if she wanted to cry. She licked her lips and steadied her shaking hands.

The man was attempting to lean over, but I held him upright. He was huffing sharp breaths of air through his teeth. “Seven,” he hissed out.

“No, that wasn’t so hard, was it?” I asked, my grip and pull still taut on the hook. From where I stood I could see bright red covering the glowing silver of the metal. “Why are you killing people?”

“We-We ran out of food.” It was only going to hurt more if he kept struggling against me, but it’s not like I cared. He couldn’t move from this chair. He was weak from the vampronite. It made him as good as human in this case.

“There’s thousands of graveyards, how did you run out of food?”

“There’s no more bodies. They’re all gone. We’ve been traveling from cemetery to cemetery. There’s nothing.”

“What do you mean gone?”

“That’s why we have been taking the bodies from the morgue. We need the food.”

“Why do you take them from the morgue?” I asked.

He was silent for a moment. “I don't know.” I yanked on the hook and he screamed through his clenched teeth. “I don't know! I-I don't know!”

I let up a bit on my hold and could see Elly wince, the dislike very present on her face.

“What do you mean?” I asked again for what felt like the hundredth time.

“Our leader has us leave the bodies until they're found. I don't know why?” he was gasping through the pain.

“Why are you taking over the peoples’ lives?” Elly questioned, her gun lowering as her arms gave out. She looked pale and sick.

“Have you seen what we really look like?” I twisted the hook in my hand, getting bored. I wanted to do more to him, but he was talking. I wanted to make him scream. “And we can't all be strangers just randomly showing up in town.” His voice was tight.

“Why not?” I asked, tugging at the hook. “She pretended to,” I nodded towards Elly, “Why would new people showing up be strange?”

“Fuck.” He threw his head back, his face scrunched up in pain. “Seven randos? They’d catch on, like you did. Humans aren’t as stupid as everyone seems to think.”

“No, but you have to give them some credit.” I tugged on the meat hook harder, really pulling up
the flap of skin it was under now. “And it was much stranger to have people come back from the
dead than it would’ve to have a few new people in town.”

He was crying now, head bowed low, breathing hard.

“Alex,” Elly warned, her voice thin and fragile.

“I just fo-follow orders.” He swallowed and whimpered. “I don’t know anything else.”

“Who’s the leader?” I demanded. I was pulling so hard now that I might as well have had my foot
shoved into the back of the chair to give me more leverage. He let out a scream.

“Alex!” Elly said again, her voice wavering and on the edge of tears. “Stop!”

I relaxed my grip, letting the hook relax under the skin. I looked back at her, memories coming
back to me. *It feels so real. I wake up gasping and screaming in pain.* I let the meat hook drop from
my hand, leaving it to dangle in the monsters skin. *So much pain. They’re driving me insane.* What
was I doing? Why was I being so insensitive? Elly had gone through exactly what I was doing to
this thing, I could imagine that it was like she was watching it again. *And he fixes it.* Fuck me.

I pulled the meat hook free in one quick pull, causing the thing to yell out once more. “I’m done.” I
said simply. “You can finish with him.” I placed the bloody thing in my bag and walked outside.

I took a deep breath of the cool evening air. What was happening to me? One second I didn’t care
if she knew I had betrayed her trust, and the next it made me sick to think about. *And he fixes it.*
There were those words again, banging around in my head. What the fuck was wrong with me?!
I’d never do that to a friend. Certainly not Elly. I loved her and I knew she cared for Lucifer a lot
more than I did or ever had. Did I really miss the attention that much that I had even considered
this?

I sat down on the curb and put my head in my hands. I let out a deep sigh and let warm tears flow
from my eyes. I didn’t even know I was capable of feeling like this anymore. Everything else had
just developed into anger or lust. I wasn’t human anymore so why should I feel human things? I sat
silently and listened, and listened, and listened. There was nothing to hear but cars on a street
nearby and some dog barking somewhere. I couldn’t hear my heartbeat. I felt sick. What was I
becoming?

It made me wonder what the other demons had been like before this. Had they stayed human much
longer than me? What was I supposed to do now? I knew this feeling would change as quickly as it
had come. I never felt anything but anger and lust anymore. Soon, I wouldn’t care. But right now
my stomach was churning and making me want to puke. I wasn’t sure what I would be able to
bring up because I hadn’t eaten in months, but the feeling was still there. This felt so wrong.

I had to tell her.
Minutes passed before I heard the motel room door open. And then I felt her hand on my shoulder and watched out of the corner of my eye as she sat next to me.

“El, I’m so sorry. I….I forgot…” I kept my head down, not wanting to look her in the eyes.

“He’s losing a lot of blood. We should take him to the hospital.” I couldn’t decide if she was choosing to ignore me or just hadn’t heard for some reason. But I couldn’t bring myself to look up at her to know.

“Why?” I asked, emotions leaving me, “We’re going to kill him anyway.”

“We need him to tell us where to reach the leader. We can’t do that if he’s dead. And he’s passed out so I can’t ask.” She sighed. “I stopped the flow as best as I could.”

So she had ignored me, great. “I can heal him.”

“Then hop to it,” she replied, leaning over and kissing my cheek. “Thank you for apologizing.” She got to her feet and I listened to her go back into the motel room.

I sat there for a few more seconds, stunned. And then I started to laugh. She had gotten good at masking her emotions. I was proud of her.

I stood and went to the door, pushing it open and walking slowly up to the unconscious body. I put a hand on his shoulder, feeling the edge of a towel wrapped around it. Elly must have tied it there to stop the bleeding. I sighed and took a step back, snapping my fingers to instantly heal the man.

“He should wake up once his blood supply regenerates.”

“We need to clean the room. Do you have stuff in your car?” Elly asked, coming to stand beside me.

“Ya, there’s some cleaning materials in the trunk.” I walked to a bed and sat on the edge of it, “Should be borax, bleach and a few rags. You know he wasn’t going to die, right?”

“Yep.” She went to the door. “But you needed to fix what you did.”

I laughed. “I don’t know if I should be mad or proud.”

“I’d take the proud.” She left the room, closing the door behind her as she went to get the cleaners. I couldn’t help but smile.

It took us about twenty minutes to clean up the blood off of the floor and chair. But it did waste time before the monster woke up again. He began to stir as I threw the last rag into the bag to be cleaned when we got back.

I stepped closer to him and pushed his head up so I could see his face better. He was no longer ghostly pale, the color having returned to his cheeks. “Come on,” I muttered, patting his cheek a few times. He groaned. “There we are. Rise and shine. We have some more questions.”
His eyes widened at this and he looked to Elly, who had obviously been the kinder one out of the two of us. “Please don’t let her hurt me.” He whimpered.

“She won’t hurt you,” Elly assured. “Right?” It was directed at me.

“As long as you answer the questions we have.” I said, “Now.” I put a hand on the shoulder I’d dug the hook into, “Who is the leader?”

“He’s the third body we took over. His name’s Chris.”

“Chris…” I thought for a second, “Is there a Chris in the files, El?”

She stepped towards her bag that was in the corner and began digging through it until she pulled out a folder and handed it to me. I opened it up and began to skim through it. “The dead one isn’t named Chris,” Elly explained. “But that’s the third body they found.”

“Not the body,” the ghoul clarified. “Our leader. His name is Chris.”

“And he’s the one who came up with everything?” I questioned, turning to a new page in the file.

“Yes. Won’t tell any of us.”

“You’re going to take us to him.”

“And if I don’t?”

Elly stepped forward and rested her elbow on my shoulder, using me for balance. “Because if you don’t then I will take over the torture aspect. And you do not want to know what Lucifer has taught me.”

“Ok, ok,” he said quickly.

Elly pushed herself off of me and I turned towards her, whispering, “What did he teach you?”

“I mostly know how to tie knots for pleasure,” she replied back in a soft voice. “Like he would ever teach me anything torture related.”

“And I thought I was kinky.” I said, smirking at her.

It was late. Maybe 3am. I wasn’t sure. Elly sat in the passenger seat of my car, both of us silent as we watched and waited for something to happen.

“You sure this is the place they were supposed to show?”

“I’ll kill him myself if not,” Elly grumbled, again dropping the magazine from her gun and shoving it back in boredly.

“Maybe we’re just early.” I said, picking my nails with the end of my knife.

I looked up as her hand hit my arm, making my knife jump and nick my finger. I put my finger in my mouth, the metallic tang of my blood bathing my tongue, and looked over at her darkly, but her attention was focused outside of the window where there was finally movement. I looked to where she was looking and saw two figures move from a tree line about a yard away. They were hunched over and wore hoods so we couldn’t see their faces, but there was no doubt they were who we were
waiting for.

“We should wait for the others.” I said, popping my finger out of my mouth.

“I don’t like waiting,” she grumbled, falling back into her seat and slumping down and began playing with her gun again.

I looked over her, the way she was impatient reminded me of my first real hunt. “You know I was the same way once.” I smiled, watching the tree line as I talked.

She snorted. “I’m sure.”

“I mean it El. I couldn’t wait to get out there. Dean was threatening to knock me out if I didn’t sit still.” I laughed, “I almost got us killed because I rushed in.”

“Dean’s a party pooper.” She sat up again at another figure moving in the direction the others went. “And we don’t know if fake Jeffery is going to tell them that we’re here or not.”

“Obviously he hasn’t.” I sat up as well, “They would’ve swarmed us by now if he did.” I turned to her and touched her shoulder, “I’m serious about this, El. I could’ve gotten us both killed that night and I would rather not get you killed tonight because you’re so eager to just kill something. Please just be patient.”

“This isn’t my first hunt Alex.” She paused for a moment and my eyebrows rose. Her voice dropped to a grumble. “Fine. I might have gotten Lucy and I in some tough spots.”

“That’s one point for me.” I chuckled, “And another good reason to wait is that we don’t know how many are waiting in the tree line. It could be an ambush if we go now.”

“He said there were only seven of them. I can drop seven easily.” She cocked her gun to make a show of it, side smiling at me.

“Uh huh.” I sighed, “Look. We’ve already seen six including Jeff. That leaves one more to wait for. I’m sure you can wait a few more minutes before going in guns blazing.”

“When did you get serious?” she questioned. “I was teasing.” She uncocked the gun and lowered it into her lap.

“I got serious after I died saving you.” I said, “But now I’ve come back as an irresistible demon babe.” I smirked at her, attempting to lighten the mood I’d accidentally created.

She again sat up in her chair, slowly, eyes on me. “I-I...” She looked like she was trying to shrink away from me. “I-I...” She looked like she was trying to shrink away from me. “I..”

My smirk fell. Had I said something wrong? “Sorry, El.” I said quickly. I went to apologize more but thankfully another figure walked down the road and disappeared around the corner like all the others had. “Oh thank god,” I muttered, “Let’s go.”

“I’ll catch up with you,” she whispered, looking away from me.

I nodded and left the car. I held my knife at the ready and slunk over to the edge of the building everyone had disappeared behind. As I got closer I began to hear voices, they were whispering about something.

“You did what?!” One of them said, it was hard to tell if they were male or female.
“They were holding me hostage! What was I supposed to do?!” That was Jeffery. The son of a bitch had told them. That wasn’t good.

“Great, so now we have hunters after us that know where to find us?” This voice was definitely male.

“That’s the thing.” Jeffery again, “I led them right to us, and there are more of us than them.”

Shit, shit, shit. This punk was gonna rat us out to all of these ghouls and then have them ambush us. I felt a small ball of anger beginning to grow in me, I wish I would’ve killed him after he’d told us where they were going to meet. I should’ve killed him. We’d gotten all the info we needed out of him. There had been no reason to spare him.

“How many of them are there?”

“There’s only two of them,” Jeffery answered. “They’re both girls. We can easily take them.”

“They jumped you.”

Girls? I almost wanted to save him for last now so he could see how girls could wipe his group out completely. It wouldn’t be hard. Especially if they were all like him.

“They had vamptonite. It was a lucky shot.”

“Do you not hear yourself?” This must have been Chris. His voice was rising the same way his temper was. “Do you know how fucking rare vamptonite is? They’re not just normal hunters. You know who they are.” There was a crack that sounded like a punch. There was a moan and the sound of spitting.

“One said she was Lucifer’s girlfriend.” There was more spitting. “But that’s the most fucking ridiculous thing I’d ever heard. It’s not true.”

“And the other?”

“Winchester.”

I took that as my time to come around the corner. “Ya, the dead one.” I said, standing with knife ready, “Oh ya.” I let my eyes change, “And she doesn’t like snitches.”

There was a rush of footsteps behind me and it was easy enough to step out of the way, using the man’s extra momentum against him. My hands helped shove him to the ground. This was too easy. Maybe I didn’t need Elly’s help after all. Her moody ass could stay in the car for all I cared.

I moved my knife to my dominant hand and threw it. There was a clink as the blade met with the floor. But I hadn’t missed. I stepped towards the body that now lay on the ground, blood pooling across the concrete floor. My boot took to his face as I bent down and used the extra leverage to pull the knife from his skull. There was a sickening suction sound as the blade came free. I looked over it and could see that I had snapped the tip of the knife when it had embedded itself into the ground.

“Next?” I asked, a little bored. This was easier than I thought it would have been. Where was the fun in that? I wanted a challenge. I wanted to feel the edge of pain, the rush of blood, the excitement of the fight. I looked around at the six that still stood around, now more weary and with their own weapons in hand. Knives mostly. “No takers?”
There was a crackle and a rush of air by me ear and something slick trickled down my face. I raised a finger to my cheek and wiped it across, confused when it came back cover in slick blood. I glanced behind me and could see a bullet hole chipped into the concrete wall.

A smile came to my lips and I laughed. This would be fun now.

I picked the one closest to me and again threw my knife. It easily snatched up the fabric of her shirt sleeve and pinned her to large wooden crate. I raced over and grabbed the knife that had clattered to the floor.

In the corner of my eyes I could see someone approaching. In a single swift movement, I dragged the blade of the knife across the back of their ankle. The man’s body crumbled to the ground giving me enough time to return to the woman who was desperately trying to rip my knife from the crate.

I raised the new knife in my hand over my head and brought it down and into the top of her head. Blood splattered across my face and a shot of joy went through me as she twitched and squirmed before falling stil, eyes wide open and lifeless.

I took my knife and pulled it from the wood it was embedded in, letting another body join the pile. I turned back to the man that was trying to crawl across the floor. His achilles tendon was severed. He would never walk again. Not that I was planning on letting him live much longer.

A bright white light exploded from somewhere behind my eyes. Pain came in all directions to assault my head. There was a ringing in my ears and the white faded into a deep black.

There was a glowing light that slowly got brighter the further I was pulled from the darkness. I felt like a prisoner in the pain that was in my own head. There were colorful spots among the soft orange glow I had woken to, making me crave darkness.

I was finally able to force my eyes open, though I couldn’t hear anything over the ringing that still lingered in my ears. Fire was alight and burning brightly in a circle around me and all I could think was that they had somehow set a holy fire around me. Beyond the fire was a thick line of salt, stark against the concrete floor.

I sat up and groaned, the pain still prominent in the front of my head. I put my head in my hands and rubbed my eyes. What the fuck had happened? I had dropped two ghouls and had gone for a third and then….nothing. I didn’t remember anything but pain. But there was this feeling in my gut that left me uneasy. What was I forgetting? Why did I feel like I was forgetting something? What..Elly! I pushed myself to standing, immediately putting a hand to my head and and closing my eyes as the pain increased momentarily.

“Elly!” I yelled out, eyes still closed tight.

“Shut up.” It was that voice from earlier. Caleb or something. Fuck. My knees gave way and I dropped to the floor with a groan, both hands going to my head trying to hold it together before it split in two. “Who knew demons were so easy to take out? Something as simple as iron knocks you for a loop.”

“E-Elly.” I wanted to scream the name, but it barely left me in a breath of air.

“We searched the whole warehouse and surrounding area. There was no one else.”
I pushed my head up so I could look out over the room again. Four stood beyond the flames, wavering in and out of view. I wished I knew if that was from the spinning of my head or if it was from the heat rising off of the flames. Where was the fifth? Not that it mattered. He wasn’t moving much of anywhere.

I couldn’t hold my head up any longer. I lowered myself to the cold floor, letting the coldness numb the brilliant pain as best it could. My eyes focused above me at something moving. I could just make out a shadow of a figure in the stairwell of a walkway that lined the walls so that people could reach the crates that were on higher shelves. I could feel myself drifting back into the darkness I’d tried so hard to escape from.

“El…?” It was barely a whisper.

I blinked, and one of the four were missing a head. But I was too weak in this circle of flames to do anything. I couldn’t fight it. I blinked again, and Elly was shoving the barrel of her gun under the chin of another ghoul, blowing a clean hole straight through the top of it’s head. I watched, sight beginning to go fuzzy once again, as the last two ghouls tried to jump her, but she shoved one off into the fire and shot a bullet through the eye of the other. I blinked again and the last head was rolling by me. She’d done it.

“El…” I tried again, “Elly.”

“My phone died and I forgot a charger,” she explained between kisses. “I missed you.”

“He needs help. I think she got hit with something. And then she was trapped in holy fire. In the show it can kill a demon if they’re in it for too long. I don’t know how long she was in it, but she hasn’t been conscious the whole ride home.”

“What? She looks fi-"
“Will you just fix me?” I grumbled, one hand on my head and the other still grabbing the ring. “I’ll need more than what he’s got though, El.”

“Anything I can do?” Elly asked hurriedly.

“Go to my room. There’s a lockbox on the dresser. Open it.” It was hard to think like this, “In it you’ll find a few vials of a grey substance that looks like it’s floating. Bring me one of those. Please.”

“Um. Sure.” She sounded hesitant. “Do I need a key?”

“No, I left it unlocked the other day.”

“Ok. I’ll be right back.” She stood on her tiptoes and gave the angel another quick kiss before disappearing into the hallway.

I opened my eyes again as I felt a hand touch my head. I was met with grey blue eyes.

“Thank you.” I mumbled as I began to feel the pain leave me.

“What the fuck happened?” His hand moved from my head to my cheeks, his other hand joining the first. He carefully looked over me.

“Ghouls are apparently smarter than they look.” I said, a small laugh bubbling up from my chest. “One got a nice hit on me with something and then I was in the holy fire.”

“You’re lucky that didn’t kill you.” His fingers traced the fresh bullet wound and a chill filled the place as he closed the wound up.

I sighed as the pain left me. “Who knew you had such a soft touch?” I teased.

“I was an angel first and foremost. I can be gentle when the time calls for it.” His eyes flickered over my face. “Anything else? Anything broken? Aching?”

“My jaw hurts a little still.” I said, not really wanting him to leave just yet. “Here.” I pointed at a random spot with my finger. My breath was stolen from me as he softly kissed across my skin where I had indicated.

I looked at him when he pulled away again. “Here too.” I put my finger against my bottom lip. With a smile, the devil kissed me. It was soft and gentle. Sweet and deep. But it was turning lustful and hot. My hand went to his cheek and pulled him down to me, my tongue pushing his lips apart so that I could wrestle it with his. This was hot and demanding. I was sure we both wanted this. It was so wrong, but so right. This was…

“WHAT THE FUCK??!” Elly had returned from my room.

Lucifer jumped away from me, abruptly ending the kiss, leaving my head swimming and my breath hot and heavy. I blinked a few times and looked from the fallen angel to my friend. Her eyes held many emotions. Confusion, hurt, sadness, but mostly anger. She held a vial of a partial soul in her hand, it was clenched so tightly I feared the glass would break in her hand.

“El…” I started, not completely sure how to explain this and not really sure if I should.

“Don’t you El me!” She yelled, “What the fuck??!”

“It’s not what you think.”
She laughed, but it wasn’t her pleasant bubbly laugh. It was the laugh of someone who wanted to kill something else. An angry laugh that was forced through nose and teeth. “It’s not—it’s not what it looks like?” I watched as her grip on the vile tightened. “Then tell me. Tell me what it is, Alex. What is it? Because it sure fucking looks like you’re fucking my boyfriend.”

“Well. That wasn’t fucking.” It felt so strangely good that she had caught us like that. “That was making out hun.” I could see the anger in her grow as I tested her, “I needed some of his grace. Things got out of hand.” I lied.

“Bull fucking shit.” There was the sound of glass cracking and breaking and I watched as blood dripped from her hand.

Lucifer took a step towards her. “Eliza—”

“Don’t you dare fucking touch me!” she shouted, shoving him back and away from her, blood painted across his shirt.

“Relax El.” I watched as the bit of soul floated around the room. I stuck my hand out, palm up, and watched as it came to me. I sucked it in through my nose and exhaled heavily as I felt a surge of power go through me. “It wasn’t that bad.”

“It wasn’t that bad?” She snorted and shook her head. “You think I didn’t know? Is that it? I was just hoping I was wrong.”

“Ya, it’s not like I stole him from you.” I kicked my feet up onto the table, feeling fully restored now.

“He’s my boyfriend! We have a daughter!”

“So what? It wasn’t like you were giving him any attention and I was bored.”

“That’s your excuse?! You were bored?!”

“Well ya,” I closed my eyes and smiled a bit, “The demons in hell aren’t the best to pick from and who doesn’t want to sleep with the devil himself?”

“We didn’t get that far, doll.” Lucifer piped up from where he’d been standing shocked.

“That’s true. We didn’t get further than my shirt coming off. He chickened out. Said Something about you. But I was too busy with my hands down his pants.”

“You still tried to fuck him behind my back!” Elly was very angry. And she seemed to be an angry crier. Tears were welding up in her eyes as she yelled at me.

“That’s true. I did.”

“You’re just going to own up to it? You’re not even sorry are you?”

"Not one bit hun." I smirked. I reached for my knife, but I came up empty. Had I lost it in the scuffle or had Elly put it somewhere in my car?

"You fucking bitch! I should’ve killed you that night! I should’ve let Dean carve you with that knife! I should’ve left you to the damn ghouls!" Her hands went to her head, turning her hair a crimson color where the blood had touched. The blood had also smeared across her forehead to join the rest that had speckled her skin from earlier.

"Easy, love. I kissed him. I didn't steal him from you." I swung my feet down from the table and leaned over my knees. “It’s not like he was really yours anyways, right? Just because you have a
daughter doesn’t mean that he belongs to you. You’re not even married, for heaven’s sake.”
"Married has nothing to do with this."
I glanced to Lucifer who looked like he really wanted to say something, but knew it was better to not utter a word as Elly’s world crumbled down around her.

“I didn’t steal him,” I repeated strongly.

“Right. Because you're not like that. You would never steal anything. You just got bored because your physco fiance, who has a higher kill count than you, is lying dead and naked in a ditch somewhere and you're probably the reason he's there!"
This shut me up. This sent a pang through my chest. My mouth clamped shut, the smile immediately falling from my lips. This brought up anger I didn’t know I was holding down, making my body burn with fire. "Don't you dare bring him into this."
"Why? Because you still have feelings?" Elly smirked through her tears. She knew she had the upper hand now. Something that would completely crush me, just like what I had done to her. “As if! You tried to steal the love of my life! You tried to take my daughter from me! You're nothing but a sad little girl with a god complex!"
I had pushed her up against the wall before any of us could blink, my hand against her throat. I lifted her high off the ground, my grip tightening as she clawed at my fist. I felt my eyes shift and the anger in me grow. It was heavy and hot and I couldn't control it any longer. Not that I even wanted to at this moment anyway. I squeezed her throat harder and watched as her eyes widened with fear and her hands continued to claw at my wrist, the blood making her grip slip. I felt a laugh come through me that wasn't my own, it was deep and demonic and sickening. I squeezed harder and smiled. I could feel her heartbeat now.
"Alex!” Lucifer’s voice rang out, shaking the room and causing the wall to crack in two. Or maybe that was just from how hard I had been holding this pathetic tiny human. I couldn’t tell.
I let Elly drop from my grip. I heard her gasp for air as she hit the ground. I spun on the fallen angel that spoke, my anger not leaving me, only growing. I couldn't be here. I would kill them all.

I took a step forward and was instead in a clear forest. Somewhere where I couldn’t hurt anyone. Somewhere where I could run and not hurt anyone. I took off in one direction and kept going until I found an abandoned mine shaft. Of course it was a mine shaft. I could be alone there and my body and mind knew that. But I wasn’t alone yet. I could hear them. All thirty of them. Growling, laughing, eating. I could hear the werewolves inside the mine. They’d just come back from a hunt. I smiled and felt a twitch run up my spine. I could kill them. I could torture them. I could hurt them all I wanted to. They were monsters after all. I stepped closer towards the shaft opening and took a deep breath.

“Hey!” I yelled.

I could hear them stop. No more eating. No more talking or laughing. No more growling. And then there was a lot of growling as they began to run out at me. I was quick to pull a spare silver knife from around my ankle and ready for a fight. I felt my smile grow as I decapitated the first wolf to come at me. Then there was more and more and more. My blade was quickly dripping in blood as I mowed down the pack, most of them not getting close to touching me, and the ones that did, I killed quicker than the others. I swung left and right, my silver blade cutting through them like they were made of nothing but air. I felt a laugh bubble up inside of me again. This time it was joyful and free. I could feel my anger subsiding and being replaced by the adrenaline that now fueled me. I felt lighter the more I cut through, until I only had a few left. I pushed my blade through one's heart, killing it quickly, and swung around to kill another presence I felt behind me but stopped. My blade halted short of cutting this neck. Instead it made a small cut, and I watched as a small line of blood joined that of the many werewolves I’d killed. I felt my hands start to shake as I
looked over this figure. I looked over the heavy scruff on his face. I looked over the unkempt hair that seemed darker than the last time I saw it. I shook as I found eyes as silver as my knife.

“Hello, love. It’s been a while”
His silver eyes didn’t shine as much. The scruff on his face was thick and untrimmed. His clothing was casual instead of business like. He held a smoking gun in one hand.

I couldn’t be here. I couldn’t be around him. I just couldn’t. I needed to get out of here. I turned away and attempted to run, but his reflexes were still swift and he snatched up my arm and pulled me back around.

“You don’t get out of this that easily,” Ketch grumbled, his eyebrows furrowing as he looked over me. “I need answers.”

I tried to open my mouth to speak but the words alluded me and panic took over. In a whiff of black smoke I opened my eyes and was met with my throne room. I took a deep shaky breath and collapsed into my chair. My head was swimming, my heart was pounding for the first time in years.

I had tortured so many souls, beaten so many monsters. I was the fucking Queen of Hell for fucks sake. And yet.... His voice still made me shiver. Being held even briefly by him made my heart go crazy. I thought he was dead. He thought I was dead. I couldn’t go back there now. I couldn’t finish that fight. I....

“Ma’am?” Mehak spoke up behind me. I tried to collect my breathing, not turning to face him.

“What is it?” I asked, trying to make my voice sound stronger than I felt.

“We... We assumed you’d be out all afternoon. You missed the soul meeting,” he said, clearing his throat a little.

“I’ll hear your notes later. For now, leave me alone;” I muttered, my voice shaking at the end.

“Ma’am-”

“I said leave!” I shouted, my voice echoing back at myself through the room. This time the demon had slipped into my voice, making it deeper and more monstrous.

I felt him leave as I began to play with the engagement ring that I still wore around my neck for some reason, the red jewel just as bright as it was before I had died.

Now Ketch knew where I was. I had given it away with the magic trick. And he knew how to enter hell. We’d done it together previously. He would come to find me. And until then I needed to prepare myself for battle. He wasn’t going to get to me like he used to.

I didn't need him. This was my kingdom. All of it was mine. And not even Lucifer himself would rip it away from me.

“Charlton!” I shouted, my voice coming back to me in a lonely way.

The door opened and he stepped in, closing the door behind him before he came up to where I sat. He gave me a questioning look, waiting for an order, but I didn't know what to say.

I bit my finger, making it bleed as the room held its tense silence. Finally I sighed.

“I need someone to look into something for me. Recently came to my knowledge that graveyards
are turning up empty. I want to know why.”

“You do not know why?”

“Let’s just say that my contact may have lost his head,” I replied with a tight and fake smile.

“I will make sure someone checks it out.” He glanced back behind him towards the door. “Is that all you needed from me?”

I gave a nod and he bowed his head slightly, turning and heading for the door. My fingers tapped on the arm of the chair and my chest swirled with so many feelings that I couldn’t pin them down or name them.

“Wait,” I called. Maybe I just didn’t want to be alone. Maybe there was something wrong with me. Maybe being happy about destroying your supposed best friend’s life wasn’t supposed to make me feel joy. “I need something else.”

“Yes?” Charlton quickly turned back with a kind smile and gleam in his eyes.

“Fuck me.”

“You do seem stressed. Any particular reason?”

“I need to forget for a bit. Anything to separate my mind from my body.” I got to my feet and moved towards him. “Fuck me.”

“You don’t need to ask twice, darling,” he said, his fingers lacing through mine.

I sat slumped in my throne, head resting in my hand lazily. It had been hours of soul talk, hours of numbers going up and hounds bringing in large amounts of deals. I ran my other hand down the back of a pup I had resting in my lap. The hounds might have been scary as a human, but when you were their handler they were no more than a house pet. I gave a bored look to Mehak as he continued spouting off about numbers and new deals.

“We also have more information about the Alexander.” This caught my attention and I sat up straighter, being careful not to disturb the pup.

“What information?” My curiosity was piqued. This man had taken out three of my hounds in the last two days. Only a hunter could do that, a strong one at that.

“Well. To be precise my queen.” Mehak looked nervous. “We have him here.”

“Did you capture him?” I raised an eyebrow in disbelief, “A man that managed to kill my hounds and escape my demons multiple times. You captured him?”

“Well actually,” The lesser demon gave a nervous laugh. “He turned himself in to us.”

“And why would he do that?”

“We’re not sure, but he-”

“Bring him to me.” I demanded, “I’d like to see this man before the torturing begins.”
“Right away ma’am.” Mehak disappeared in a puff of smoke.

I sat back in my chair again, the hound pup jumping from my lap and pacing in front of the chair. I watched the demonic animal curiously. It was nervous.

“What’s wrong Niak?” I asked it.

Maybe it could sense that this man was the one that had killed it’s friends, it’s family even. Maybe it felt it was in danger. I didn’t understand why, the hounds were never afraid like this. I stood from my throne and pushed the pup to a door in the back of the room, leading it out so that it could return to the pins where we held the rest. I then stepped to the middle of the room and waited. I didn’t have to wait long before the large wooden doors opened in front of me and a man was brought in. His head was bowed, hands bound behind his back, thrown onto his knees to face me.

“So you’re the one that thinks he can kill my hounds and get away with it.” I stood my ground, trying to intimidate the man, “What do you have to say for yourself?”

The man was silent.

“Answer me.” I walked towards him, my boots tapping across the floor in the quiet room.

He remained silent.

“I said answer me!” I forced his face up to look at me.

Those eyes met mine. Those silver eyes that I had never forgotten. I held his chin in place, too stunned to move. A smile crept across his lips. I felt my heart flutter in my long dead chest.

“Leave us.” I didn’t have to repeat myself.

We were alone. I took a breath as I ran my thumb across his jaw line. He closed his eyes as I caressed his face. He was alive. He was here in front of me. I fell to my knees and threw my arms around his neck.

“You were dead.”

“So were you, love.” Ketch said.

God it was so good to hear his voice. It made me feel warm inside for the first time in the last year. It made me feel human.

I pulled back and looked at his face again. There were nothing but small changes. A few new scars, untamed scruff, a dull look to those silver eyes I loved so much. I couldn’t help myself as I leaned forward and pulled him into a kiss. It was exactly what I’d been missing. The piece of me that had been missing had found its way back. I pulled away from this and rested my forehead against his.

“What have you been? Not even Crowley could find you.” I asked.

“You looked for me?”

“Of course I did. As soon as I came to I started.”

“Why did you stop?”

“I had Hell to run. And I was trapped in Elly’s world for a while before I found a way back.” I
couldn’t lie to him.

“Why did you go back there?”

“I needed her kid’s help.” I opened my eyes and looked into his. God I’d missed them. I felt a pang in my heart as I continued to look into them. “I missed you.”

The smile came across his lips again. “You’ll never know how much I missed you, love.”

I snapped my fingers and watched his arms go slack as the restraints around his wrists disappeared.

“Show me then.” I whispered.

Ketch’s hand came up to my face and I relaxed into it, sighing and closing my eyes. His touch was soft and gentle. I felt him pull me close and then kiss me softly. I wrapped my arms around his neck again and fell back to the ground, pulling him down with me. Our kiss broke as his arms went out to steady himself. I reached up for his face and brought it back to mine, leaving our lips a whisper apart.

“Do you still love me like this?” I asked the question that would always burn me.

“I never stopped loving you.”

I searched his eyes for a lie but found none. That filled me with incredible joy. I brought his lips to mine again and let the hunger that I had kept pent up flow through me and into my movements. I would never be able to get enough of this. I would never again have enough of him. I wanted this ache so badly as I kissed him harder, his hand roaming over my sides and under my shirt. We explored each other, remembering spots that made the other crazy. Like when I traced my finger over a thin scar that ran over his chest, from his second rib to just below the waist of his jeans. Or when he ran his finger over my nipple, sending a shiver through my body. I wanted him. I needed him.

His hands tugged off my shirt over my head, breaking us apart for only a few seconds. But this time my lips found his neck, stalling momentarily as the cold floor hit my back and made me arch into him. I pulled him closer to me, bit at the side of his neck, and licked up to where I found his pulse. His heartbeat matched mine. This made me smile. I wanted him in me. I wanted the ache from him. I wanted to watch his face. I pushed up on his chest, pushing him to a sitting position. I smiled, letting my lust take the position of thought and reason. I sat up and pushed on his chest again, hard enough to send him back onto his ass.

“I thought I was the one in charge.” Ketch smirked.

“Not anymore.” I got on top of him.

It’d been a while since I’d done this, I’d let everyone else take control. But this was mine. He was mine. And it was my turn to be in control and show just how much I needed this.

My teeth took to his neck. I didn't need to be gentle with him. He wouldn't mind the bruising later. And I was going to mark him as mine so everyone knew. No one would ever touch him again.

I pushed his riding jacket from his shoulders and to the floor. He swiftly pulled me back to him in a kiss, his scruff scratching against my cheeks. I would have to make him at least trim that later. It would be distracting if I kept running my hands through it.

I pulled back, breathing hard, searching his eyes. They were bright again, molten liquid. It
awakened something in me. Something deep. Something that pushed all other feeling away. I just wanted him and I wanted it now.

I ripped his shirt over his head and pushed him back against the cold floor. He gasped as he made contact with it, but it just made me smile.

I kissed down his chest, biting in places to make him squirm and gasp. His hands kept a steady hold on my hips as my fingers traced over scars. I bit along the subtle v that dipped down below his jeans. He needed to know that I was never going to let him leave my side again.

He inhaled sharply, his fingers digging into my hips. “Don't do that.”

“What?” It made me smile. “This?” I licked back up the way I’d bitten, being slow with it. His head fell back and a long moan came from his chest. My smiled widened. “Or this?” I laid butterfly kisses back down the same way, running my hands along the inside of his thighs for added pleasure.

“I-I said to stop that,” he said through clenched teeth. I was sure if I were human his fingers would have left blue and purple across my skin. Maybe I'd let him.

“You want me to stop?” I teased. My tongue dipped under the waistline of his jeans and he groaned deeply.

I didn’t give him a chance to answer. I unzipped his jeans and forced my fingers inside, tracing around the tip as my mouth went back to his chest. Biting, licking, softly kissing everything I could get at. I was going to drive him insane. My fingers working to just barely tease and touch. His fingers lost their grip as I continued to please him.

I had missed this. Fucking hell, I had missed this. No one would ever compare to anything he could do or be. Not Charlton, not Lucifer. No demon or angel. Nothing.

“Pedicabo me…” Ketch groaned.

I laughed a little and looked up at him. “Did you just say fuck me now in Latin?”

“Yes.” he more or less growled, “And I meant it. Stop teasing me.”

I could agree with that. While teasing was fun, the ache I felt was strong and I knew he was the only thing that was going to help it. I pushed his hands from my hips and slowly stripped myself of my own jeans and the silky lace that adorned the rest of my body. His hands went back to my hips but I swatted them away.

“Wait your turn.” I instructed. He whimpered in dislike, but he didn't fight me as I pushed his hands back down to his sides. He liked that I was taking control. “Be a good play thing.”

I stripped him of those jeans as slowly as I could, dragging my fingers up the inside of his legs when they were gone. I had control here. I could play all I wanted. But I needed him too. I needed him inside me already. Or I would lose that control like I always did when I played these games with him. I always lost. And it wouldn't do. I wasn't going to be pushed around anymore.

“Alex, I will pin you down if you don't hurry up.”

I laughed and leaned back down, my teeth grazing over his hip. His back arched and his hands became fists. “I told you to behave.” I looked into those eyes again, they were as molten as liquid iron.
I pinched the edges of his boxers and dragged them down his hips slowly, dragging my fingers behind them. I smiled as I crawled back over him, giving his tool a slow lick on the way up. He groaned again, whispering more dirty things in Latin.

The ache I had for him was growing and I wanted it gone. I couldn't imagine how he felt. I positioned myself correctly before going down, letting out a well deserved moan as he filled me, making me whole again. I let his hands take control of my hips again, driving them up and down, stroking us both.

“Arthur…” I moaned, wanting more and knowing that would drive him faster.

To my satisfaction it still did. He pushed in harder and harder, replacing the ache I felt with a growing warmth in my gut. In and out again, over and over and over until we were moaning each others names left and right. Until there was no more to build up to. Until there was only bliss and I fell to his chest.

Nothing could compare to that. Nothing would ever compare to that. Nothing would ever replace what I just felt and I was never going to let myself lose it again.

“Why do you need her daughter?” Ketch asked as he ate a french fry.

“She's a nephilim,” I replied, watching his every movement. I wanted to memorize him and his actions. I felt like I had forgotten them. Forgotten him. Pushed the memory of him so far away when I had lost hope of finding him. “But that doesn't matter now. I won't ever be allowed near any of them again.”

He tipped his head to the side curiously as he sipped on his milk shake. He set the cup aside and I couldn't help but pick it up. I didn't need to eat anymore. I didn't feel hunger anymore. And I hadn't tried to eat since I had woken. But I was curious. I'd be lying if I said that I didn't miss the taste of fast food.

I took a sip and immediately regretted it. Maybe this was punishment. Maybe I deserve this. It was a little funny that alcohol seemed to be the only thing I could drink, though it did nothing. It was like I had eaten a mouthful of cement or just shoved my face into a firepit and tried to eat the charcoal. I pushed the drink away sadly, my nostalgia fading away quickly.

I looked up at Ketch who was quietly munching on his fries, waiting for me to speak i rolled my eyes with a sigh.

“I fucked up, Ketch. I fucked up so very hard.”

He chuckled. “I'm sure that's not true.”

“I was very irresponsible when you were gone.” I lowered my face into my hands and sighed before meeting his questioning gaze. “I might have tried to sleep with her boyfriend.”

He choked on the bite of burger he had, coughing and sputtering. “You-you what?” he gasped out.

“I might have slept around while you were gone.” His eyebrows furrowed and he looked like he was chewing on his tongue. “I thought you were dead!” I blurted out defensively, wanting to sink away, disappear somewhere else. But I couldn't do that to him. Not again.
“You slept with a demon?” It was a complete guess on his part, but he had never been slow in any means.

“I thought you were dead!” I repeated, hiding behind my hands again.

“You tried to sleep with Lucifer?”

“I thought you were dead.”

It was like I was a broken record. It was the only thing I could think to say. The only defense I had, though it wasn't much.

“You still have the ring?”

The words stopped me. I peaked up through my fingers to meet cool eyes. I glanced down to where it hung around my neck before returning my attention to his newly shaved face. He was waiting patiently for my answer.

It took a moment to get the feeling back into my face enough to speak. “I've never taken it off.”

“Why?”

The word clung to the air around us, drilling into my ears. It made my chest tight.

“It's been the only thing that has keep me from going full demon crazy psycho bitch. I came close so many times. I could never live without it. It was all I had of you.” My hand clutched to the ring and chain. “It kept me in check. It kept me sane. I-I loved you Arthur.” I shrunk down in the booth. “I still love you. I never stopped.”

“Then you better begin wearing it correctly.”

I blinked several times taking in his words. My fingers moved to the clasp and easily unhooked the chain like I had so many times before. I slipped the ring off of the chain and looked over the square red gem that caught the fluorescent lighting.

I held it out in the palm of my hand towards Ketch who looked confused as he took it from me. I held out my left hand to him and he seemed to catch on because he pulled my hand to his lips and kissed it before slowly sliding the ring onto my finger.

“You’re not mad at me?” I asked shyly.

“You joking?” He laughed. “I'm furious. But...” His hand still held mine gently. “But I think I can overlook it.”

“I’ll never be able to make it up to you.” I said, “Pretty sure I’ll never be me again either.”

“What do you mean, love? You seem right as rain to me.”

“Never mind.” I sighed, not wanting to ruin this moment anymore than I already had. “What have you been doing? Not even my hounds could find you until you were running around killing them.”

“You were sending those mutts after me?”

“I didn’t know it was you, Alexander .” I said, defending myself. “And I was sending them after people who I needed to collect from. You just happened to be in the same place.”
“Then you know what I've been doing for the last year or so.”

“Not quite. You’ve only been on our radar the last few days.” I picked up a fork and began to pick my nails with it as my knife was probably somewhere back in the throne room with my underwear that I hadn't been able to find.

“I've been trying to take care of the monsters that have been popping up. Been trying to protect those being hunted by your dogs.”

“Protect them?” I looked at him questioningly. “Why?”

“I'm sure you remember what it felt like.” He pushed his finished tray aside. “You've been on both sides. I think you can see what I was trying to do.”

“They're eternally binding contracts,” I shot back with a smile. It was the only thing I could come up with to do with my face. “You can't break those contracts.”

“Might I remind you that you have destroyed multiple of those contracts, breaking your own yourself.”

I opened my mouth to make another comment before closing it again. He was right and there was no way I could get around it. “You have a point.” I mumbled.

He simply nodded in agreement. “So why the nephilim?”

“She can help in my own cause.” I said, leaning my face against my hand and looking him over. I was nice to see him so casual. The suits were classy and sexy but this version was closer to the hunter I’d always thought I’d fall for.

“And what would that be love?”

“Before I died, Cael told me that God had a plan for me. Something I had to do.”

He laughed. “For a demon?”

“I don't know,” I replied back. “But ever since I've started trying to end all of the monsters that I could, I've felt right somehow. Like I was always meant to do this.”

His face became serious. “Alright.” He nodded. “I might not be a nephilim, but I’m here. What can I do to help?”

“You mean you'll still help me?”

“For better or for worse,” was my answer. “Come on. Let's get going. You can explain more to me in the car and maybe we can come up with something you can do to apologize to El.”

I nodded and slid from the booth. He followed and held open the door for me. I stepped out into the night and I felt his hand slip into my pocket and steal my car keys from me. He quickened his pace to get to my car door before me. The perfect gentleman.

I paused in my step as my eyes caught sight of fabric hanging from his back pocket. I snatched it up and he turned to look at me.

“What is this?” I asked as a blush came to my cheeks. “You stole my underwear?”

“It didn't seem like you needed it,” was his reply.
“You cheeky fucking bastard. You took my underwear.” I smacked him across the arm with the lace and he snatched up my arm, pulling me into his chest. “You had these hanging out of your pocket all night?”

“ Took you long enough to catch on, love.” He kissed me deeply as if we had never been apart. As if everything were oh so normal.

I pushed him away with a laugh. “You're impossible. “ He opened the passenger door for me and helped me in. “I'm keeping these.”

“That's fine.” He took the door in his hand and it took a moment for me to make out the words he said before the door closed. “But I get to keep your virginity.”

Ketch pulled my car into the bunkers garage and I put my hand on his arm.

“Before we go in.” I took a deep breath, “Dean has gotten a little edgier, and they’re probably all going to be super mad at me.”

“I thought he would have mellowed with age,” Ketch hummed in thought.

“You and everyone else.” I said, taking another deep breath. “You first. They're less likely to kill you.”

“I am not anywhere near their favors, in case you've forgotten. And I doubt that they will take kindly to me after the way I left when you didn't come back.”

“What do you mean?” I asked. I didn’t think my death had been that big of a deal.

“I couldn't stay. I gave it a day and then packed up and left. I didn't say a word. I didn't help with the funeral. I just couldn't. I... Left.” He kept his gaze down and played with my car keys. He glanced up at me and nodded towards the door. “We'll face this together.”

I nodded and got from the car a bit numb. I hadn't thought about what my death would do to the others. What was wrong with me? Had I really thought that no one would care if I died? I took a step but immediately turned and hugged Ketch instead of continuing inside.

“I’m sorry.” I said softly. I didn’t try to explain it.

“There's no need to apologize.” He kissed the top of my head, sending a warmth all the way down to my toes. “There's no point of delaying the inevitable. Time to put a smile on.”

“Right.” I let him go, except for his hand. I held that tightly.

We walked down into the main room. It was empty. No angels, no Elly, no brothers. I breathed a sigh of relief, and then Dean came out of the kitchen.

“Hey, Alex.” He said walking past us with a plate of bacon and eggs in his hands, “Hey Ketch.”

Dean began to walk down the hallway and I took another deep breath as he disappeared. And then I heard his footsteps stop and quickly come back up the hallway.

“You fucking British bastard!” He yelled, plate now balancing in one hand as he gestured with the other, “Why the fuck did you come back here!!”
“Just on a jolly holiday,” he replied dully, shoving his hands into his jean pockets. “Are you that thick?”

“Who said you could come back here?” Dean demanded.

“I did,” I shot back with a roll of my eyes. “Will you chill out, please? What are you even doing here?”

Dean’s eyes stayed stuck in Ketch as he answered. “Elly called. Was completely in tears, distraught. She won’t tell me what happened. Finally drugged her so she could calm down. She’s asleep. Care to explain?”

“I… I…” I shifted back and forth, not sure how to respond or even begin to tell him.

“I think it’d be best if you left,” Dean said softly, pain in his voice.

“She came to apologize. I think we can allow her the opportunity.”

“Shut your mouth you lousy tea drinker.”

“What room is she in?” I asked, trying to break up their bantering.

“No. No way.” Dean put his plate down on one of the tables and stood tall. “I am not going to let you anywhere near her, unless you tell me what the hell happened.”

I could feel the anger building in me again. This wasn’t the time for this. “I fucked up ok?!” My brother was silent. I blinked and tried to calm myself. “I fucked up, Dean. I ruined something I shouldn’t have touched in the first place. I broke her heart and now…”

I could feel the anger turning into an emotion I hadn’t felt in a long time. I started to cry. What was this? It was like I was experiencing this all over again for the first time and I wasn’t sure how to react. It was like I’d gone from one extreme to the other.

“Dean please just tell me where she’s at.” I said softly, trying to keep the emotion out of my voice.

He looked stunned. Shocked. “You…. She…” He closed his eyes, his stance softening. “She’s in Ali’s room.”

I nodded and pushed past him. “Don’t kill him.” I said on my way by.

I walked slowly down the hall, trying to prepare myself for what I was going to say as long as she didn’t kill me on entrance. I took a deep breath and reminded myself that what I’d done was wrong and that somewhere in my body I had to feel bad about it. I paced outside the door, not wanting to walk inside but knowing I had to.

When I finally worked up the courage, I pushed the door open and stepped into the room. There was a single lamp clicked on from one of the bedside tables.

On the bed, clutching to a pillow was a sleeping Elly. Her hand was bandaged in white. She looked restless. Like she wasn't sleeping well. And I couldn't blame her. How long had it been since she had slept? And Dean had mentioned drugs. How badly had I hurt her that he had to subdue her?

I slowly moved over to the bed and sat down on the edge, my mouth dry. I still had no idea what to say. I wasn't even sure if I should wake her. I let out a long sigh. Talking to her while she was sleeping would be easier than talking to er while she was awake. But I didn’t want to be a coward. I
saw her phone on the side table and grabbed it. There was a way to do this without waking her. I opened her phone and found the camera, turning on the recorder before talking.

"El, I….” I sighed again, “I don’t know if you’ll find this or even listen to it when you do find it but…I have to say it.” I took the biggest breath I could. “I’m sorry. I know those words will never be enough to heal what I did to you. I know nothing I ever do will be enough.”

I could feel my eyes beginning to wet with tears again, “I don’t know why I did it, El. And I hate myself for it. I’m a bigger monster than anything we’ve ever faced together.” I lowered my voice so I could keep it steady, “I broke your heart and your trust and I will never deserve it again. And I’m….I’m just so sorry, El.”

I was crying now, “You saved my life and cared for me so much and all I did to pay you back was betray you like that.” I could feel myself shaking as I talked now. “I don’t deserve your forgiveness. I don’t deserve your trust. I don’t deserve you as my best friend.” I stopped for a second and shifted so that I could see her. “You’re so beautiful, El. And not only by looks. You have a beautiful soul too, I can see it now. It’s bright and cheerful and I’m not going to corrupt it anymore.” I sniffed. “I love you, Elly.” I couldn’t think of anything else to say, so I left it with that and stopped recording.

I placed the phone back onto the stand it had been on, but continued to sit there a minute longer. I watched as she twitched and moved around in her sleep. It didn’t look happy. I wanted to help her.

I stood and put my hand just above her forehead. I closed my eyes and thought about giving her something happy to think about. I thought about her love for penguins and my brothers. I thought about how happy Lucifer made her before they came here. I thought about how proud she must be of her daughter. And I gave her these thoughts. I opened my eyes and watched as her body relaxed into a better sleep. I took my hand back and left the room, turning off the lamp as I went.

“Did you take care of what you needed to?” Dean asked, making me jump.

My hand went to my chest. “No. But it's done and.... She can at least sleep happy for a night.” I moved back up the hall and to where Ketch would be in the map room. “You'll watch over her and the kid, right?”

“You're leaving then?”

“I don't know what else to do. Was Lucifer here when you got here?” I stepped into the room and stopped looking over Ketch who had found a bottle of beer.

“No. I didn't see him,” Dean replied.

“I never saw you as a beer person.” I said, walking up to Ketch and wrapping an arm around his waist as I leaned into him.

“You don’t have anything else to choose from.” He said, kissing my forehead.

“Save the love fest for elsewhere,” Dean grumbled. “Where are you planning on going exactly?”

“We're going to do what I said I was going to. Kill monster hoards.” I said plainly. “You and Sam and whoever else are free to go after whatever hunts you want. I'll let you know if we need help.”

“So you're just going to go out without any other help and try to rid the world of monsters?” Dean questioned.
“That’s been the plan the whole time.” I shrugged.

“And you’ll be safe?”

I looked at my brother, moments ago he was mad at me for something he didn’t have all the details of. And little more than a day ago he was trying to kill me. And now he was worried about my safety? “I’ll have Arthur. I’ll be fine.” I said with a small smile, trying to reassure him. “I just can’t be here right now Dean. I’ll just hurt her more.”

“Why did you come back here then?”

“I needed to apologize and get more supplies.” I sighed and let go of Ketch to pull my brother into a hug. “You’re not going to lose me again, Dean. I promise.”

Dean sighed and I felt his arms wrap around me. “Just be safe. No more than like fifteen baddies at a time ok?”

I laughed into his chest. “Ok, Dean.”
Chapter 6

My car sat in front of an old building, it was abandoned and quiet for the most part. The day around us was eerily silent and still. It was unnerving.

“Are you sure this is where the djinn should be?” Ketch asked from the passenger seat, file open and in hand.

“This is where I tracked one to earlier.” I kept my eyes on the building in front of us.

“You sure it was a djinn?”

“Your lack of confidence in my hunting skills is hurtful.” I said, giving him a side smirk.

He looked up from the documents at me. “I’m sure you’re hunting skills are fine.” He smiled, “I just want to make sure we have the right person.”

“Right, like yesterday when I was right about the kitsune?”

“That was one time, love.” He chuckled.

I smiled and refocused on the building. I wasn’t sure what I was waiting for but I was sure I’d know when I saw it. But so far there was nothing.

It had been a week since we left the bunker in Dean’s hands. Sam had called in a couple of days ago to make sure I was ok, and Dean texted every morning. But I still had nothing from Elly, not that I expected anything from her anyway. I had hurt her deeply, she shouldn’t want to talk to me ever again. And... if that made her happy... If that healed her in anyway... then I would accept it.

I focused again on the building as a light shone from one of the old, boarded up windows. That was what I’d been looking for. The light was blue and faint, a sign that it was probably a djinn powering up.

“Time to move in.” I said, I didn’t bother bringing a knife with me. They would be afraid of me as is once they knew who I was.

We got out of my car and stalked towards the building as quietly as we could across the gravel covered ground. We reached a corner and I peeked around it. I could make out one figure standing at the door, most likely keeping watch. He would be easy enough to take out.

I closed my eyes at a painful tinge in my chest. Why was I thinking of this now? I was supposed to be hunting. Why did he have to be covered in tattoos? Would everything remind me of Elly? Why couldn’t I get her out of my fucking head? I wanted to bash it in just to have a moment’s peace, but this was my punishment. I knew it was.

A hand on my shoulder startled me and I turned to Ketch who was giving me a concerned look. “We can wait another day if you’re not ready,” he said lowly. “I know that look, love. It’s her. And you’re going to be distracted this whole hunt. Do we need to wait?”

“No. If we wait another day they kill another missing person.” I sighed. “I’ll be fine. All I need is you by my side.”

I smiled at him to emphasize that I was fine and could finish this hunt. He didn’t look convinced,
but he gave a nod. He pulled back the hammer on his gun, causing the djinn look over. A suppressed thud filled the air as a silver and lamb blood bullet decorated his head, making him sink to the gravel.

“I call the next kill.” I said, giving a side look to the gun that was pointed over my shoulder. “You’ve gotten better.”

“I’ve had a lot of practice,” he replied, his face serious. He wouldn’t tease me right now. Not until we were done with what we had come here to do. It made me sad in a way. I missed the lightness of the hunts with- Fuck! “Let’s crack on.”

“Right.” I pushed forward, walking quickly to the door.

I stood to one side of it and waited until Ketch stood at the other side before shouldering through it. I slammed my body into the door and pushed through into the first floor. Ketch and I looked around and a edge set over me. There weren’t any djinn here. There were nine people who had been missing. Some of them I hadn’t known were missing. They were all lined up, hands tied above their heads. They were all as pale as milk, their veins dark through the translucence of their skin.

“We need to help them,” I mumbled, taking a step towards the victims. “Do we have enough of the antidote? I didn’t think there would be this many. I thought it was only the four.” My fingers went to the neck of the first one a faint pulse greeting my fingertips. I carefully pulled the needle that was in their neck and used my hand to heal up the incision.

“We’ll just have to make it stretch. It takes too long to make up a batch. They’d be dead by the time we were able to,” Ketch said back, opening up the pack he had and digging through it.

He tossed me a knife and I began to cut down the teenage girl. Her name was Amanda. She liked playing the piano and was on her high school debate team. I could see her file in my head. I had memorized every word on every page of every file. I had read them over and over again at night while Ketch slept soundly. While I had nothing but my head for company and at the moment, it wasn’t the company that I wanted.

I carefully lowered her to the ground and moved onto the next, doing the same for him. But I didn’t know his name. He looked kind though. Probably a father.

And the next was also unfamiliar to me. She was only ten at most. So young.

And then was Peter. Repairing cars and racing them.

Carly. Tennis. Starbucks.

Megan. Single mother of 2. Loved to cook.

Sadly, I didn’t know the story of the other four. Three men and a woman. People that someone somewhere was missing. Someone somewhere loved them. Was looking for them.

I looked to Ketch who had tossed aside the first of two bottles. I watched as he injected a syringe full of milky blue liquid into Carly’s arm. He only had the one needle and I sighed. We should have planned this out a little better. I moved back to the second person I had cut down, a hand going to their head. I did the same thing for all of the others, healing them and making sure that they wouldn’t end up sick if we were able to get them all out of here.

“What are we supposed to do with all of them?” I asked, a hand going to my head while the other
took my waist. “We can’t fit them all in my car.”

“Maybe we just need to call an ambulance. They would be able to take care of them better than we could.” Ketch stood back up, and looked over everyone the way I was.

“Where are they Ketch?” I strode over to the other side of all of the people, trying to get a better glimpse of the large room. “A single djinn doesn't need nine people.” But I couldn't see anything. It was completely empty. No boxes, no furnerature, nothing. But we were on the first floor. There was a set of metal stairs that lead up to a door that must have been to the second floor. “Call 911. Give me your gun.”

He didn’t look like he approved of what I was doing, but he passed his gun over to me, taking the knife back and fished into his pocket for his phone. I gave him a nod of assurance and ran over to the staircase and starting up it. The metal groaned underfoot as if it hadn’t been used in years and wasn’t sure how to hold a person’s weight any more.

I got to the door and turned the handle. The door swung open and revealed another set of stairs, these ones hardwood. I glanced back down to where Ketch was with his phone to his ear. WIth a deep breath I made my way up the stairs.

They came out to a landing that was nothing but windows for walls. It was quiet. A dense quiet that made it so that I could hear my footsteps echoing like sirens whenever they made contact with the floor.

I turned swiftly, gun ready, but came face to face with nothing. The floor was just as large and empty as the bottom floor had been. But there was one more door beside the stairs. It looked almost like a closet of sorts.

I hesitated, but went to the door. There was a tremor in my hand as I took the doorknob. Unless there really had been only one djinn, they were all in this room. It wasn’t like djinn to come out in the middle of the day. And if they had heard us at all, they would have hidden away.

I turned the doorknob and pulled the door open. But before I could even calculate what was happening, my feet had left the floor as I was pushed backwards. I tumbled to the ground, my hand empty now.

I sat up to meet the eyes of at least 12 djinn. I scrambled backwards trying to locate where the gun had gone without taking my eyes off of the monsters that were before me. At a wave of a hand from one of them, a good handful left for the stairs. I wanted to call out to Ketch, but I didn’t have the chance.

My fingers stumbled upon my gun and I felt my back press up against the cool glass of one of the many windows. I took aim and was able to get one shot off, nailing the one closest to me. Their body collapsed to the floor and I got to my feet. It was a short lived victory.

A body rammed against mine and my shoulder hit glass. The glass gave way, shattering as if that’s what it had been made to do. And for a moment, a split second it felt like my body was defying gravity before my stomach rose as I fell.

There was the sound of wind in my ears that covered up any other sound that would have been possible to hear. And the immediate impact with the gravel below didn’t hurt. Glass tinkled around me as the pain finally began to set in.

I gasped for air, my lungs void of any oxygen. The side I had landed on was stuck and punctured
more from the rocks than the glass. My head swam from how hard it had hit the ground and there was a radiating pain that was beginning to fill my right wrist. I pushed myself up with my left, doing my best to get to my feet, but the spinning in my head made me stumble and fall back into the gravel and glass.

There were three of them in front of me now. Or maybe it was one. My vision was a blur. Maybe I was seeing things. I was going to be sick. I did my best to raise my gun, but my arm didn’t want to move. Most likely because it was tapped back under me.

A strong hand took my shirt and ripped me from the ground and there was a glowing blue light. I couldn’t let it touch me. We didn’t have any more antidote. The words kept repeating in my head on a loop.

*Don’t let it touch you.*

*Don’t let it touch you.*

*Don’t let it touch you.*

I lifted the gun and thrusted it against the djinn’s chest, pulling the trigger. There was an explosion in my hand and I screamed as razor blades shot through my arm. The djinn dropped me back to the earth before he fell himself.

“Elly....” I gasped out, tears rolling down my cheeks. “Help.”

I could make out another figure racing to me. I raised the gun that somehow felt a hundred times heavier than it should have and took aim shakily.

“Don’t!” a voice ordered through an accent. “It’s me, Alex. Don’t shoot.”

“Arthur?” My voice cracked and I used the back of my arm to wipe at the tears on my cheeks. “Ar-”

“Yes love. There’s help coming for the others. We’ll take a look at you soon. We need to get out of here before the police show up.” The next thing I knew I was scooped from the ground and being carried.

“What-about the others?” My head felt heavy as it connected to his shoulder. I just wanted to sleep. He was warm. He was safe. He wasn’t a 15 foot fall. He would protect me.

I was placed into the passenger side of my car and Ketch put my seatbelt on for me. I wasn’t sure I could have done it myself. My body felt like jello, save for the hot burning flames that were licking my wrist.

I was in and out of a daze until I came to as the car came to a jarring halt. My car door was flung open and I looked over the Brit whose face was nothing but concern.

“You need to let go of the gun,” he instructed, gingerly taking my right hand into his. I gasped, teeth clenched. His fingers were pins and needles.

“What happened to the rest of them?”

“Dead. Let go of the gun, Alex.”

I could feel his fingers working to pry my own fingers from where they held tightly to the gun. But
I couldn’t make them move. I whimpered, my head thrown back as he unlatched my grip.

I gasped at a bright light that shone right into my eyes.

“Your wrist is broken. And I’m pretty sure you have a concussion.”

“Ta-take me to hell,” I ordered, trying to clear my head as much as I could as it pounded dangerously. “Charlton can heal-” I inhaled sharply through my teeth as he rested my arm back in my lap. “Can heal me.” The tears were falling freely now.

“Oh love. Don’t pass out, ok? You need to stay awake for me.”

And then the car was moving again. The engine singing sweetly among the more jarring noises that I was almost sure I was the only one hearing.

“I want Elly.”

“I know. I know. It’s ok, love,” an accent said back. “We’ll heal you up in a second.”

“What happened to her?” This voice was different.

I opened my eyes, trying to make sense of the room I was in. It was dark, only lit by maybe a lamp. It was my best guess. And I was on something soft. Pillowy. Feather like. A bed possibly. My bed?

“She was knocked out of a window.”

“I’ll see what I can do.”

A scream clawed its way up my throat. Fingers were touching, prouding, poking at my wrist. I glanced down to where Charlton’s hands were touching swollen black and blue skin. There was something in my arm. Something pushing, pulling, dragging my bones back into place. It was agonizing. My other hand was twisted into the sheet of my bed.

“Elly!”

Why did I keep saying her name? Why did I want her? Not Charlton, not Dean, not Sam, not Lucifer, not Ketch, just Elly. Her kind smile that held the heat of fire. Her hair of spun gold. Her laugh that was the very essence of summer. Every time she appeared the day never ended and smiles never faded. She was a siren leading everyone to sudden happiness. The beauty with the forever young ocean blue eyes.

She was a goddess of the sun and I wanted to be burnt by her. Anything from her that would save me from the ghosts that were hiding inside of my head. Anything to drag me from this pit of eternal darkness that clung to me with every fiber of its being. Anything to shake the cold winter that had chipped away at my bones. Anything to even see her again.

“She should be fine now. She’ll be a little tired. I don’t have the same healing as she does. Mine isn’t instant. Mine uses stamina from the body to speed up the healing process. The best thing for her to do now is to attempt to sleep. I’m not sure if she will, but rest is what she needs.”

I released a breath of air I hadn’t known that I was holding and my body relaxed into the mattress. An aching filled my limbs, something that I hadn’t felt in a very long time. Something I honestly couldn’t place.

And then I was wrapped up in something warm. Something that smelt like hard work and tea. And
it wasn’t the sun, but a warm spring breeze that caressed me gently, lulling me into a safe darkness.

“Alex?”

I shot up from my bed, startling the sleeping body beside mine. Ketch jumped up as well, a knife already in his hand.

My body was sore and a bright ache was present in my bones. Another strange thing I couldn't remember feeling for a long time.


Her hand was tangled in her hair as she spoke. “I know my dad left after a fight, but now my mom's gone.”

“Gone? What do you mean gone?” I moved to the side of my bed and got up.

“Mom went on a hunting trip... and she hasn't been home in a few days.”

Those words shook something in me. Something from so long ago. Something that had made my life what it had been today. Words that brought Sam and me back to Dean.

“Ketch, where's my phone?” I asked, looking around the room desperately.

“Bag,” he replied, getting from where he sat as well and moving over to Ali.

I went to my bag that was tossed aside and dug through it until I found my phone. I looked up and could see Ketch sitting beside Ali on the bed, gently comforting her with words I couldn't hear.

I turned on the screen and looked over the mass of texts and calls that I had waiting for me. I couldn't have been out for more than a few hours, right?

“How did you get here?” I asked again, speed reading the words on my screen. “How did you get to hell?”

“I just transported here. I-I don't know,” she replied, taking a deep and calming breath. “You're the only person I could think of that could help me.”

“What about Sam and Dean?”

“Sam is stuck at work and Dean is with Cas and Jack hunting down a swarm of fairies in Minnesota.”

“They left you alone?” Ketch questioned.

“They were only supposed to be gone for a few days. And my mom was there. But they've been gone longer than they said too, but they've been texting me. I can't get ahold of my mom. She left her phone behind.” She was speaking so quickly that it all almost sounded like one word instead of a string of multiple words. She was breathing rapidly and Ketch held her shoulders, shushing her.

“And your mom went alone?” I demanded, anger flooding me.

“I woke up and found a note beside my bed saying she'd be back from a hunt by the next day or so,
but it's been longer.” How stupid could she possibly be? She knew it was rule number one that you never ever broke if you could help it. She knew hunting alone was a death wish.

A death wish.....

“You worried I’ll hurt myself or something?”

“Elly,” I whispered. “You foolish stupid girl.”

All of Dean's and Sam's messages were all about Ali and Elly. Asking for help because they couldn't break away. And both reasons were valid. Sam was on his last leg at work, his job on the line because of how often he has dropped work to help with a hunt. I knew how much this job had meant to him. Had always meant to him. And Dean was hunting down a pack of killer fairies that had made the murder rate skyrocket. They needed to be stopped. And I was sure that no one knew where Lucifer could be at all. And I was positive he wouldn't help even if we asked. Why would he? Nothing I could ever say would fix what happened.

So it was down to Ketch and me. Or... Maybe just Ketch.... Maybe Ali could help. I wasn't sure I could bring myself to go. How would I be able to do anything but make things worse? That seemed to be all I was good for.

What was I talking about? She needed me and I would do absolutely anything to make sure she was safe.

“Ready for your first hunt, kid?” I asked.

I rummaged through all of the things that Elly had left behind in her room, hoping for some clue as to where she had gone, but I couldn't seem to find one.

I was stumped. I didn't know what to do. And it wouldn't be easy to find her. She had left her phone behind as well. And there was nothing there. It was like she hadn't even looked at it. When I opened the screen, the camera stared back at me from the last time I had used it. In the corner was my video.

“Alex!” Ali called from outside of the room. I raced out and to the map room of the bunker where she and Ketch were huddled around Elly's laptop.

She was looking over the search history. There was a map search for some town called Kittery, Maine. At least we knew she had at least attempted to go there.

A few searches further down, after a bunch of sad youtube music videos, I finally came to the name of a band.

“Jefferson Starships,” I whispered. “Ketch, those are supposed to be extinct.”

“So are the kitsune,” Ketch pointed out. “They were always good at hiding. They could possibly have hidden away.”

“She is so stupid and impulsive! She's like a new hunter.” I pushed myself off of the back of the chair I had been leaning on. “Why would she take something as dangerous as them on?”

“Do they suck like the band or something?” Ali questioned making me smile.
“Yes. They're horrible and hard to kill,” I answered, quoting my brother. “Ok, decapitation and heart removal. Unless the kid here can turn them to dust.”

“I can what?” she asked, looking back at Ketch and me.

“I'm sure we'll teach you soon,” I muttered, brushing off her comment. “Why don't you go get packed kid? We'll probably be gone for a day or two.”

“Alright,” she replied, getting from the chair and leaving the room.

“Is it smart to bring her on a hunt like this? They aren't exactly the easiest—”

“Every hunt is dangerous, Ketch,” I interrupted, heading to one of the many cabinets in the room and grabbing an extra set of weapons for the girl. “She has to learn. This is the world she was meant to live in. She can't ignore it.”

“She's never been before.”

“She already knows how to shoot a gun, she knows self defense. She's better off than I was on my first hunt.”

I checked to see if the gun I had was loaded and finding that it wasn't, I grabbed a small box of bullets to load it.

Ketch wore a disapproving look and had his arms folded across his chest as he watched me push bullets down into the clip.

“What?” I asked.

“She's not ready.”

“I'm going,” her voice interrupted as she came back into the room, tossing her backpack onto the table. She came over to me and took the clip from my hand and the remaining bullets, loading them herself. “I might not get along or like my mom very much, but she is family and I'm going to help get her back.”

I glanced from her and to Ketch who looked irritated, but was silent. He knew better than to fight back. If Ali was anything like her mother, it would be a fight.

“You don't know how to use your powers,” Ketch tried yet again.

“I know enough to know how to control them.” She stopped her work and met his gaze, her eyes just as stealy as it. “Besides, you don't have powers. If hunters normally can handle monsters without supernatural powers, then I can too.”

That shut Ketch up. She had a point. He simply nodded approvingly and tossed my car keys at me. I caught them and he was smiling.

“If you think you're so ready, then it's time to go ladies.”

I pulled into a gas station and turned off the car. “Ketch, can you pass me my box?” He reached into the glove box and pulled out an old and worn box. I dug through it until I found the badge that I was wanting before handing him back the box. “Do you mind filling her up while I go in?”
“Sure,” he replied, getting out of the car.

I followed his example, promising I'd get a snack for Ali. I walked into the store and grabbed a few things for the two of them and went to the counter.

“You from around here?” The cashier asked as she started ringing me up.

“I'm from out of town. Actually, I'm under cover right now.” I pulled out my badge and showed it to her. “I've been tracking down someone for a while and had a tip she came this way.” I pulled out my phone and opened up a picture I had of Elly. “Have you seen her at all? It could have possibly been a few days ago that she came in.”

The cashier paused in her work and looked over the picture. “Yeah. I remember her. She's pretty.”

“How long ago was that?”

“Um...15.26.” I pulled out a 20 dollar bill and passed it to her. “It would have been more towards Monday night. Maybe Sunday?”

“Did she say anything?”

“No. She was very quiet.” She passed me my change and the bag of items I had bought. “Odd though.”

“How so?” I questioned as I got resituated.

“She came in with these two guys. Scary looking. Big, leather jackets, tats. She seemed nervous. Almost like they had forced her in here or something.”

“So she didn't look like she was here willingly?”

“No. She just bought something and left without a word. The men stuck very close by her.”

“Did you see which way they went?”

“Heading towards Kittery.”

“Thank you.” I turned to leave, but was called back as she continued taking.

“Why are you tracking her down?”

“Kidnapped. Been missing for about a week,” I replied, giving a smile. “Thank you for your help.”

I left the store and made my way back to my car. “Anything?” Ketch asked as I got closer.

“She was here. Two guys were with her.”

“Starships?” There was a look of dislike. “I hate that name.”

“I think it's funny.” I gave him a kiss and passed him the bag of snacks. “Let's keep going.”

I went and got into the driver's seat, turned my car back on and watched as the gas spindle went back to full.

“Was my mom here?”

“Sure was kid,” I answered. “Don't worry. We'll find her.”
“Alex?”

“Yes?” I smiled as Ketch’s hand slipped into mine.

“How do you plan to kill all of the monsters? They're all over the world, aren't they?”

I paused in thought. “I don't know,” I admitted. “I have no idea at all. But I have to keep trying. It's something that needs to happen.”

“And those who don't hurt humans? There has to be some that are good.”

I laughed, no idea how to answer. “You ask some tough questions, kid.”

“Sorry. I just- I would like to help, but... I just want to make sure I'm doing it right. I don't want to hurt anyone or anything that doesn't need to be.”

What an angel. She might have her mood swings, but what teenager didn't? She was bright and brilliant and definitely took after the angel that was in her.

“Ok, rest up. We’ll start tomorrow,” I instructed, tossing my bag aside in the hotel room that was a touch nicer than what I was used to. But Ketch had refused to stay in another motel and he was willing to pay, so I didn’t have anything against that. I would need to make some more money in pool or a drag race, I was running low. But that was something for another time.

“What are you going?” Ketch asked me as I pulled my car keys from my pocket and went for the door.

“Just going to grab a drink,” I answered. “You know I don’t sleep.” His eyebrow cocked and Ali looked at me curiously. “Demons don’t need sleep, dear. You probably don’t need any,” I explained, clearing away the curious look for a moment before one of confusion set back in. “I’ll be back in a few hours,” I assured. Ketch simply motioned to the door and I smiled, leaving the room.

I didn’t really need my car. I wasn’t sure why I had taken my keys with me. The night was nice enough and I needed to walk. Something to help clear my head. The town was cute and small. The buildings were old and had a hint of a European feel to them. And the sound of the ocean was a comfort through the night.

Eventually I did find a bar and made my way in. The beer was passed to me quickly and I took a sip, motioning the bartender over to me. He leaned over the bar questioningly and I pushed my badge across the counter. He picked it up and looked over it.

“Am I supposed to find this impressive?” he asked boredly, tossing it back towards me.

“I’ve been trying to find someone. She was kidnapped and I tracked her here. I was wondering if you had seen her at all?” I showed him the picture from my phone and he took the device and looked over it for a moment before giving my phone back to me and shaking his head.

“Can’t say I have. Hope you find her soon. Now excuse me.” He turned towards where the bell on the door had called him. “What can I get for you folks?”

I sighed and took a drink. Had I missed her? Maybe the cashier had been mistaken. There were plenty of blood women around the world. She had to be here. All of the signs had pointed here.
“Excuse me?” The bartender sighed with a roll of his eyes and leaned back up against the bar to face me. “Has there been anything weird happening in town?”

“Lady, I do not get enough tips to notice if anything weird happens in this town.”

I dug into my pocket and pulled out my wallet, passing a hundred across the counter. He gave an odd look, but took the bill and held it up to the light to make sure it was real. It better have been. That was my last one.

“There’s been a few rumors around town,” he replied, shoving the money into his pocket. He motioned me in closer and spoke in a low voice. “There have been bodies turning up on the beach. There’s been a new one every week for about a month, but recently there have been several turning up every few nights. But the local PD won’t give out any details. We don’t even know some of the names of the bodies. They’re being kept under wraps.”

“Any idea who the killers are?” I asked softly.

“I don’t know.” I sighed and rolled my eyes. Why was he going to be like this? I was low on funds. I found a few twenties and passed them over, making him smile. “People think it’s the new drug trade that came in.”

“Drug trade?”

“Yeah. There’s been a new drug showing up at parties and other places. Some hardcore form of ecstasy or something. My cousin said he saw someone die from it. She started bleeding from her eyes and was complaining about it being hot before she collapsed. The coroner said that the cause of death was that her brain boiled itself. Some crazy fever of like 108 or 9.”

“And those are the bodies turning up?”

“To the best of my knowledge.” He glanced back up as the door rang again. “I’ll be with you in a moment folks.”

“Do you know where the drugs are coming from?”

“I have other customers to help.” I groaned and pulled the last bit of cash from my wallet, handing it over to him. “I’ll give my cousin’s number after I help these people. He would know better than me.”

After how much I’d paid him, the number better have a new lead.

"Why aren't you asleep?" I asked as I entered the hotel room as quietly as I could. The young girl was sitting in a chair by the window with her legs pulled up to her chest. Ketch was fast asleep in one of the two beds.

"I can't sleep," she replied quietly, sounding like she was on the verge of tears. I moved over to where she sat, pulling another chair over to sit beside her. Her eyes were red and cloudy as she hugged her legs in tighter to her. "It's my fault."

"What is?" I asked softly, my hand reaching out for her knee. I gave it a small squeeze, trying to encourage her to speak.
"That my mom left."

"She's a big girl, Ali." I gave her a kind smile. "Your mom can make her own decisions."

"I said some really mean things to her before she left." The young girl wiped at her cheeks and sniffed. "I blamed her for my dad leaving."

I winced. There was a dull ache somewhere deep inside of me. What had I destroyed? What had I ruined?

"A-Ali," I muttered, trying to pull myself together and get this worked out. "Your dad left because of me." Her eyes met mine and I gave a half hearted smile. "I did something very-uh-very bad and they’re fighting because of me. But I’m going to fix it.” What was I talking about? I couldn't fix it. Why was I telling her that I could? “I promise.” Great. Why did I have to say those words. It was like they had to break through my teeth. Like half of me was fighting the other tooth and nail.

“What did you do?”

“I think that’s a story for another time. Why don’t you go take a bath and relax and then get some sleep,” I suggested, patting her knee and getting from my chair. I turned away, but my feet froze and my heart stopped at her next words.

“You and my dad were close, weren’t you?”

It took me a moment to answer. “It was a monster and hunter relationship.”

There wasn’t a reply. She simply walked passed me and disappeared into the bathroom. A relief came over me when I heard the water start. I didn’t want her to know, though I was sure she already did. I was already on such thin ice with all of them and I wanted to prove that I wasn’t the demon I had been acting like. That I really was still me. Somewhere.... Somehow.

The hours dragged on and soon enough Ali was asleep as well. Night was always so difficult. There was nothing for me to do. And so as soon as the sun was pouring into the room and it was a slightly decent hour and night time tv had driven me to hell and back, I called that number.

It rang for longer than what made me comfortable, but then a very upset sounding teen answered. “What the fuck do you want? It's like 8 in the morning!”

“Hi, is this Carter? Luke gave me your number last night.”

He seemed to perk up at that. “Did he now? What can I do for you miss? Need someone to hold on a lonely day?”

I laughed. “No. Drugs.”

“Oh, you're one of those phone calls. No fun. I'll set you up with my dealer. What you looking for?”

“The new stuff. Heard it's killer.” I waited for his answer as the phone fell silent. I could hear movement on the other line before there was a small sound of hesitation.

“You sure, missy? That's some pretty hard stuff. I wouldn't touch it.”

I glanced up as Ketch began stirring from his sleep. I lowered my voice. “I’m sure I can handle it.”
“Ok,” he muttered reluctantly. “If it kills ya, it’s not coming back on me.”

“Did you see someone die?” I asked in a curious and innocent voice. “On the drug I mean.”

“Did Luke tell you?” There was a groan and the rustle of fabric from what I assumed was him stretching. “It’s like him to say stupid shit. Yeah, I did. I don’t like to talk about it. Still have nightmares. And that’s not why you called.”

“Fair enough. Where can we meet up?” Ketch sat up, hair messy. I gave him a smile, holding up an index finger so he’d let me be for a moment.

“Just meet me at Luke’s bar in an hour. I have a key.”

“See you there.” I lowered the phone and stood from the chair by the window, going to jump onto the bed beside Ketch. I rested my head in his lap and he ran his fingers through my hair. “I have a lead.”

He yawned and gave a nod. “Alright. Is the kid coming?”

“I’m not gonna stop her from coming on part of a hunt. She needs to learn.”

“We go in there and you stay quiet,” I instructed to Ali as we made our way up the street and towards the bar. “You are here to watch. Do you understand?”

She nodded, huddling herself against the cool morning sea breeze that had picked up. I watched as Ketch pulled off his riding jacket and draped it over the girl’s shoulders. She gratefully took it and slide her arms into place, the sleeves falling past her hands. It made me smile. I was glad she’d came with us. I let the smile fall from my face as we pushed through the doors of the bar, adopting a more serious look to my face. There were a few stragglers, mostly older people who had nothing to do with their lives and so spent it pent up in bars. There was a quiet buzz from a TV that was on with a local news station and behind the bar was Luke who was talking with whom I could only imagine was his cousin, Carter. I walked up confidently, Ketch and Ali following after me.

“Carter?” I asked.

He turned to look at me from where he sat, a drink already in hand. He looked like he hadn’t slept at all last night. His face was grey and unshaven and eyes were bloodshot with purple rings under them. Possibly hungover or slowly crashing from a high.

“What’s with the muscle?” He asked in a tired voice.


The other man nodded but didn’t answer. He looked tired as well and was wearing the same clothes, though it might have just been a uniform. Did he ever get to go home? Had there even been last calls?

“What’s with the muscle?” He asked in a tired voice.


The other man nodded but didn’t answer. He looked tired as well and was wearing the same clothes, though it might have just been a uniform. Did he ever get to go home? Had there even been last calls?

“Alright, here.” Carter held out his hand to me. In it was a small bag with several pills and then a waddled up piece of paper that looked like it had something written across it. “Meet him there, pay him for the drugs. And you better not skip out, because then he’ll take it out on me. And then he won’t be happy, I won’t be happy, you won’t be happy. Let’s not make it a mess.”
“Deal.” I said. “How much do I owe him?”

“$125.”

“For five pills?” I asked, in disbelief.

“What did you expect? It’s not like this shit is over the counter or something.”

“Right, right.” I mumbled. “Thanks.”

I waved and shoved the bag into my pocket as I turned to leave, but the news anchor pulled my attention back to the screen. It was live feed from the beach. I stepped closer so I could hear a bit better. Across the screen was a row of dead bodies. Most teens or young adults.

“It looks like there was a beach party going on here last night,” the anchor said, trying to push her hair away that kept blowing into her face. “And as you can see, there are at least 15 dead right here. They are continuing to pull more from the water as the tide continues to recede. It’s very possible that these are connected to the other bodies that have been washing up on shore that are a part with a new drug that has been going around.”

“You see, missy?” Carter called from behind me. “I wouldn’t touch this shit. You’re getting yourself into some hardcore fuckery.”

“Do you think one of them is my mom?” Ali’s small voice said from beside me where she now stood.

“No. She’s smarter than that.” I said in a low voice, putting my arm around her shoulders. “She wouldn’t let herself get that far.”

“Are you sure?” She ran a hand through her hair before trying to pull it back into a ponytail, only to pull it back out again and then trying to redo it. “Can-can we check?”

“You want to go look for your…” I didn’t finish what I was going to say. The kid needed this. She needed to know that her mom was alive somewhere. I couldn’t blame her. “Sure. We’ll go check.” She only nodded, her hands still knotting themselves deep into her blonde hair.

I hugged her to me gently and walked out the door with her. I was sure we’d find Elly perfectly ok. Or at least….not dead.

We walked our way to the beach, the wind really beginning to pick up and rain begging to fall. I glanced back to Ketch who looked like he was just following to be nice. He could just go back to the room, especially since Ali still wore his jacket, but he didn’t seem bothered. Maybe the weather was more like in the UK. Maybe he was just used to it.

We reached the beach and began onto the sand, only to pause when Ali stopped moving. In the distance was the new crew as well as what I guessed was the entire police force and the ever growing row of bodies.

“You ok?”

“What if she is there?” Ali whispered.

“Then we’ll give her a hunters bural.” I said, taking her hand.
“What’s that?” Her eyes were a dull blue eyes, fear behind them.

“It’s the highest honor we could ever give to anyone.” I tried to get her to look at me but she seemed to be looking past me. “It means she was a hero and the bravest woman I have ever met.”

She took a deep breath and then moved from my grasp and making her way through the sand to get a closer look at the line of bodies. I watched her for a few minutes waiting for Ketch to catch up before continuing.

“You think she’ll be ok?” I asked.

“You said this was something she had to learn,” he replied, wrapping his arm around me.

“I know. But that was about hunting. Losing your mother is a whole nother level.”

“It’s still something that everyone has to live through.”

I almost asked if he had before remembering how all agents of the BMOL actually became agents. It was cruel, what they did to those kids. Taking them in and making them kill one another to prove they deserved to stay, just to turn them into monsters. And if you didn’t become a mindless drone, they turned you into an analytics expert and kept you in a room filled with monitors, like Mich. I wonder if Ketch felt bad for what happened between them. After all, you never really forget shooting your friend in the head. I knew from experience. I’d shot Elly.

“If Elly is there, what do you want to do with the kid? I don’t think Lucifer is coming back,” I muttered, watching her walk along the line of the dead.

“We could take care of her.” Ketch suggested.

I looked at him like he’d grown rabbit ears all of a sudden. What the fuck kind of response was that? I was a demon. That was the only reason I needed to disagree with what he’d just said. Since when did taking care of a kid sound like a good idea to him?

“That was funny.” I said, laughing it off. “I didn’t know you made jokes.”

“I wasn’t joking.” He placed a kiss to my head. “But if you think you can’t handle it, I’m sure one of your brothers would be willing.”

“I think Sam would be the best. Dean has his hands full with Jack and I’m sure he wouldn’t want another kid around so soon, especially since Cas can be a handful too.”

“You wouldn’t take in your best friend’s daughter?” he asked curiously, not at all in a disapproving tone.

“I’m a demon, Arthur.” I said, “I wouldn’t be the best parent in the world and she needs someone better. She needs a good place to grow up in.”

“We can discuss this later. She’s coming back.”

I looked up to where the kid was indeed walking back to us. She seemed to be happier than she had been a few minutes ago.

“Was she wasn’t one of the bodies?”

Ali exhaled deeply in relief. “Nope.”
“Well that’s good. Now we can start looking for her alive somewhere.” I said with a small smile, messing up her wind blown hair more than it already was. “We have a drug dealer to meet.”
I looked at the crumbled paper in my hand again, and then back up at the empty parking lot we were supposed to meet the dealer in. I checked the machete that was attached to my hip again, making sure it was still secure. I took a deep breath and looked into the rearview mirror, looking at Ali.

“You remember the plan?” I asked her as a nice looking and new Ford pickup pulled into the lot. She gave me a nod. “I’ll be back in a moment.” I got from the car and made my way towards the truck, looking for some small sign that Ketch was nearby. But of course there was none, he was too good at his job to leave any trace of himself.

A single man stepped from the truck, at least as tall as Sam. He had broad shoulders and a wide gate as he walked. There were tattoos across almost every inch of him that wasn’t covered, making him look dirty. I understood why Carter was afraid of the dealer. The situation was making me nervous, even if there really wasn’t a reason for me to be.

“You Chris?” I asked him, still a good twenty feet away.

“Yeah. You the one Carter sent over?” His voice was deeper than I imagined and for some reason it took me back to the gas station out of town. He had to be one of the guys that the clerk had described. I nodded in answer. “Then pay up. I have another meet up I’m late to.”

“Actually,” I said, taking a slow step towards him, “I was hoping we could talk for a bit.” I pushed forward and in a second I had him pinned against his truck with my machete at his neck. “You’re gonna tell me where you’re keeping my friend.” I let my eyes flicker to black. “And if you don’t I’m going to cut your head off.”

He smiled with a small laugh. “Not many demons in these parts. What brings you here? It’s not the drugs, is it? You don’t feel a thing.”

“I told you. I’m here for my friend.” I pushed the blade into his neck slightly, watching a small red line appear along it. “Her name is Elly. She would’ve come here about a week ago. Blonde. Smart mouthed. Beautiful.”

“You talking about the hunter we caught?” He was still smiling brightly. “We took care of her. She was past her usefulness. You should be grateful if she was hunting you too. You weren’t friends.”

“Just tell me where she is.” I was getting angry now, “I know she’s not dead. I checked the beach already.”

“We wouldn’t leave a hunter on the beach. That’s so the world knows that we’re still cleaning it for our creator. Making the world how it was before her. Why would we want trash destroying the beauty?”

“Your creator is dead.” I said, “I helped kill her. She was easy. A werewolf is more of a challenge then she was.” I pushed my hand under his chin, making it easier to begin slicing through his neck, “Where’s the hunter? I won’t ask again.”

“The lab. Good luck.”

I didn’t care what that meant. In one motion, I sliced clean through his neck. The blood splattered on my face and across the window of the truck. I wiped a hand across my face, really only
smudging the blood instead of removing it. I squatted down and went through the pockets on the Jefferson’s body, finding his keys and a wallet with a decent amount of money in it, I assumed from the drug selling. It would keep Ketch and I from being broke for a while. I pocketed the money and stood, turning back towards my car. I opened the driver’s door but didn’t get in.

“Arthur!” I yelled, watching as he silently emerged from the shadows a few feet away. “You are way too good at that.”

“I’ve been trained since I was a boy, love,” he replied, coming to get into the car. “The lab, huh? What did he mean by that?”

“I haven’t the faintest,” I muttered, getting into the car. Ketch followed after me. I glanced in the rearview mirror and caught Ali with green tinted skin. “You alright?” I asked, turning in my chair to get a better look at her.

“Y-you-you....” she stuttered, her eyes set dead ahead to where the truck was. “Did you-”

“Ali, deep breath,” Ketch instructed, now turned back in his seat. “He was the monster that made all of those people wash up on the beach. If he wasn’t killed, then more would have shown up. Do you understand?”

“I-I understand....” She still looked like she was going to be sick though. “But how do you make yourself do that? How do you live after? Do you not feel guilt?”

“Not when he would have killed us,” I answered back softly. “It’s not easy. It never has been and never will be, but sacrificing yourself to save many others is what it means to be a hunter. You have to do everything to protect those fortunate enough to not know about our world.”

She nodded and pulled Ketch’s jacket closer around her. “Where do we need to go now?” she asked softly.

“I don’t know,” I replied. “He said your mom was at the lab, but that could mean anything.”

“Have you never done anything with drugs? Watched anything about drugs?” Ali questioned from behind the collar of the jacket.

I thought for a moment. “No, not really. Ketch?” He shook his head. “Wasn’t there a show called like... Making Good or something?”

“Breaking Bad,” she corrected with a questioning look on her face.

“I don’t watch much TV,” I muttered, feeling a little like I had done something wrong.

“Well, the lab is where everything is made. If we can find where the drugs are made, then we find my mom.”

I pulled my phone from my center console and found Carter's number, giving it a call. It was answered almost immediately.

“Please do not tell me you ditched the meet up.” His voice was rushed and worried.

“I did not ditch the meet up,” I replied. “But I do need your help with something.”

“This better not be a normal thing with you,” he grumbled. “What do you need?”

“The reason I needed to meet your dealer is because one of my friends got wrapped up in it and I've
been trying to find her. Chris said she was at the lab. Do you have any idea where that is?"

He groaned. “You did not hear this from me. I don't even know why I'm fucking helping you.” He sighed heavily. “There's an old school, out by the railroad tracks. It's abandoned. It's in the cafeteria. Do not,” -there was a sharp emphasis on the word- “tell them I told you. They will kill me.”

“I wouldn’t worry about that too much.” I said.

“What’s that suppose-” I hung up the phone before he finished.

“The lab is an abandoned school out by the railroad.” I said.

“I found it.” Ali said, handing me her phone. The map on it was hovered over a spot a good six miles to the south.

“That was quick.” I mumbled.

“It’s on this website called The top 10 most haunted sites in Maine.” Ali said, “It was pretty easy to find when you said abandoned school.”

“I doubt it’s still haunted if that’s where they’re hiding out though.” I commented. “Either way let’s be careful when we get there. Jefferson Starships are one thing, adding in ghosts is a whole nother.”

“You might be faster than Sam,” Ketch muttered, still seeming surprised at how quickly Ali had found the information.

I laughed a little. That gave me a good idea for another bet.

I held my arm out to stop the eager teen. I put a finger to my lips to keep her quiet before moving to the other side of the double doors of the old school’s cafeteria. I caught Ketch’s gaze and he gave a small nod. We both reached out and pushed one of the heavy steel doors open.

I stepped in first, gun up and ready, but the room looked pretty empty. There were several foldable plastic tables around the room, some with different sized containers with brightly colored powders, others had blenders and scales. Beakers, bunsen burners, empty chemical bottles strewn everywhere, and hundreds of loose pills over every surface.

“Mom?” Ali asked, running back behind one of the tables.

I lowered my gun and nodded towards the door. Ketch moved towards it, pulling one of the many tables in front of it in a type of very superficial barricade. It wouldn’t hold long at all. I raced after Ali and to where a body was collapsed among the discarded chemical bottles.

I knelt down beside Elly’s body and helped Ali push her onto her back. Her skin was pale and when I touched her forehead, it burned my fingers. “Ali, go get me a wet rag or something,” I instructed. She nodded and left my side. I placed my fingers to her flushed skin and did my best to search out her pulse. It was faint and fluttering like a hummingbird’s. I patted her face and she moaned, her head turning away from my hand. But I couldn’t get much more of a reaction out of her. Ali passed me a wet bandana and I pressed it to Elly’s head in a hope to help lower her body temperature, though I wasn’t sure how much help it would be.
Bruising decorated her body like wallpaper patterns. One over her eye, several disappearing below the collar of her tank top, some down her arms and around her wrists where she had been bound, and I was sure there were more under her pants that I just couldn’t see.

“Is she going to be alright?” Ali asked.

There was a loud crash and I jumped to see that the table in front of the door had been thrown aside and Ketch was leaning against the doors, trying to keep them closed from the horde of starships that were trying to get in.

“Sometime today love,” he called over in a strained voice.

I glanced back over Elly and quickly tried to block her face from her daughter as blood began to run from her eyes. This wasn’t good. I put my hand on her chest and closed my eyes, trying my best to restart her heart in hopes of helping her. It wasn’t working. Whatever she had taken…it was like it was blocking out my healing abilities. I tried again to heal her in anyway I could. Bring down her fever, no. Stop the bleeding, nothing. Help her breathe, not even a little. I was losing her and I was beginning to freak out over it. I couldn’t lose her. Not again.

“Kid I…” I stammered, not sure of what to tell her or how, “I’m not sure I can..”

“How do you do it?” she asked, dropping to her knees. There was a gunshot behind us and I glanced back to see Ketch aiming through one of the small glass windows that had broken from one of the monster’s wraith spikes. We didn’t have time for this. “Alex! Teach me how to heal my mom!”

“I don’t know!” I wasn’t lying. “I grew into it. No one ever told me how, I could just do it!”

She pushed me aside slightly and placed her hand to her mother’s chest. “I just have to want it, right? Like transporting to wherever I want?” Tears were rolling down her cheeks.

I put my hand on her shoulder. “Even if you could.” I said softly, “I don’t think…”

She looked up at me with shining eyes. “Then make a deal with me. You can do that, can’t you?”

“What?!” I was completely taken aback by her request.

“It was in the show. You can bring her back if I trade my soul, right?” She jumped at another gunshot.

“Yes, but that’s a lifelong payment.” I tried to reason with her. “I couldn’t do that to her.”

“Ladies, the slumber party needs to end!” Ketch called out after another crack.

“Yes, but that’s a lifelong payment.” I tried to reason with her. “I couldn’t do that to her.”

“Ladies, the slumber party needs to end!” Ketch called out after another crack.

“It’s what you want anyways, right?” She laughed sadly. “A nephilim in your back pocket?”

“Ali…” I was running out of things to keep her from doing this. “I don’t need your soul. I…I can’t take it from you.”

“Yeah, yeah. Some bullshit line about how my mom would be upset. Well, she won’t be upset if I don’t do this and I’d rather have her be mad at me than not have her at all. Make the deal, Alex.”

I couldn’t argue with her anymore. “You’re sure about this?”

“Just make the deal!” She yelled at me, making me jump.
“Say what you want!” I yelled back finally giving in. We didn’t have another option.

“I want my mom back!”

That was good enough. I grabbed her collar and pulled her into a kiss. It wasn’t long but I had to give it to the girl, she was a good kisser. In a few seconds I heard Elly take a deep breath next to us and I pushed Ali away from me, she could tell her mother about the deal another time.

“Elly!?” I said, pulling her into my lap, “You stupid bitch!” I was nervously laughing at this point, using the cloth to wipe the blood from her face, “Why did you do something so stupid?!”

She was coughing and trembling against me. “I hate you.”

My heart broke. I had just saved her life, and she still hated me. She had said it. She hated me. I had just risked two lives, and taken a soul to save her and all she could say was that she hated me. I could only feel the pain in my chest from her words. And her words echoed in my head.

“Oh..” Is all I could say.

I was pulled from her and to the door that had finally smashed open. Ketch was racing over and grabbed Ali’s arm, pulling her form the floor. “Time to go. This place is going to go up any second.

“Leave me,” Elly whispered softly, hidden in my chest.

I felt a flame light inside of me, dulling some of the numbness. “Your daughter did not just fuck up her life so you can die here, you selfish bastard.” I hissed. I got to my feet, pulling her with me. Ketch scooped her still weak body up into his arms and she didn’t fight against him.

I looked over at Ali as her own gun went off, hitting one of the starships in the knee and making him fall to the ground. She hadn’t lied. She wasn’t the best shot, but she still got the job done. I took her arm and pulled her with me, following Ketch towards another set of doors.

“You set up a bomb?” I questioned as we pushed outside.

“I had to do something while you were conversing,” Ketch replied gruffly, heading in the direction of the car, after Ali took a nearby two by four and used it to jimmy the door shut.

“How long before it goes off?” I asked, pulling my keys from my pocket to unlock my car before we got to it.

“We got about a minute now,” Ketch replied, resting Elly in the backseat with her daughter.

I started my car and as soon as Ketch’s feet were in the car, I slammed on the gas, threw my car into gear and raced through the gravel road and over the railroad tracks, making the whole car shake before I finally hit asphalt. We only got a few feet down the road before a large explosion happened behind us.

The building ignited in a fiery ball of yellow flame, billowing outwards, escaping through the sections destroyed by the blast wave. The noise had reverberated over the sleepy town as efficiently as a thunder clap and by now the police department’s finest would be on their way, siren's blazing.

I swerved as a blast of energy hit my car, and with a squeal of tires, gained control of the car again before racing down the road, way above the 35 miles per hour sign.
“How’s she doing?” I asked with a deep breath of relief as I glanced in the mirror. I felt a kick to the back of my seat and I bit my lip with a nod. I would just have take that as a good.

No. I wasn’t going to take that as good. I made a sharp right and screeched to a halt down a gravel and dirt road. I took a deep breath before trying to say anything, knowing if I didn’t that it was just going to be a big mess of horribly mean words, and I was trying to make things better, not worse.

“Listen, El.” I started, looking at her in the rearview mirror. “That was an utterly stupid and selfish thing to do. And you’re right. I should’ve left you there to die. But I’m not going to because your kid needs you and I’m not going to leave her alone anytime soon.” I took another deep breath, “So woman the fuck up and stop being so fucking selfish with your life because it’s not just yours anymore.”

“You think I took the drugs for fun?” she scoffed. “Fuck you.”

“Fuck me?! You’re the one who left your daughter alone in a whole new world to go on a suicide mission!” I felt the anger boiling up in me again, “Fuck you!”

“I want out of this car.”

“I doubt you can walk yet, El. You’re body is going to be working off those drugs for a while.”

She grumbled something else and slouched into her seat, her arms over her chest. She was staring daggers at me with those fiery blue eyes. They had life back in them, rage.

“I’m taking you back to the bunker.” I said, glaring back at her.

“Why? You know I’ll just leave again. Why did you even come and find me at all? If I wanted to come back to the bunker, I would have.”

“I came because Ali came to us. She found us because she was scared that you were dead somewhere and never coming back.” I sighed and looked away from her, this was all my fault after all. Why should I be bringing her back? “Leave again if you want to, but I’m just going to help find you. Over and over again.”

“Why the fuck would you want to?!?”

“Because I love you, you psychotic bitch!” I threw the car into park and turned around in my seat. “Because I would go to the ends of the earth to make sure you’re safe and happy!”

“Happy my ass!” She was leaning forwards now, hand on my head rest, strength finally coming back to her.

“I might have ruined something! I admit it!!” I was exasperated. I didn't want to fight anymore. Why couldn't she just let me help her? Why did she have to be so headstrong? “I may have fucked up your marriage forever and I am so fucking sorry! But that does not mean that you get to abandon your daughter and the rest of your family to go play russian roulette with your life!”

“I can do whatever the hell I want. You are not the boss of me, Alex.” But her voice had softened. Maybe she was finally seeing my point.

“Look at your daughter, damn it!” I hissed through my teeth. But Elly didn't. Maybe she was afraid of looking. Maybe she didn't want to see the tears that were silently rolling down Ali’s cheeks as all she heard was that her mother didn't care about her. “You have no idea what she gave up for you. You have no idea what she went through to find you. You have no idea how hard her next few
years are going to be. And it's all because of you. She did everything for you. So grow up and stop being a child."

“What the hell are you talking about?” Elly's voice had risen again. We were going back and forth and it was making me regret saving her more and more. “She doesn't need me! She's never needed me! She's never liked me, never wanted me! I'm just some lady who gives her rules that she doesn't fucking listen to. I do everything for her! Everything I have ever done has been for her and I have never once been thanked! I am done! It's time for me to get my life back!”

“She's sitting right there!” I yelled back, pointing at Ali who was still freely crying. “Tell her how much you love her!”

“She won't care! She never has!”

“She sold her soul to fucking save you! How could she not love you?!”

The car fell deathly silent and light left Elly's eyes as she finally turned to look at her daughter.

“She sold me her soul because she wouldn’t leave you there to die.” My own voice softened, now just telling rather than yelling. “If she didn’t love you she would’ve never showed up at my bedside crying because you left her alone. If she didn’t love you she’d have accepted her fate and left you alone to die.” I looked at the heartbroken child, “She loves you more than I’ve ever seen a kid love their mother in this entire world.”

The car remained silent until the sound of sirens reached our ears. I jumped as Ketch touched my leg, I’d been too caught up in yelling at Elly that I’d forgotten he was there. I looked into his cool silver eyes and knew that he was silently telling me it was time to move on before we got caught. I nodded, turned back in my seat, and put my car into drive.

There was no way we were going to make it back in one day, at least not with a healing Elly. She needed sleep and there wasn’t a good chance that she would in the car. And the long drive had been completely silent and I was pretty sure that she and her daughter needed to talk. And it was my fault again. I should have let the kid tell her. I shouldn’t have brought them here in the first place.

I pulled into the parking lot of the hotel we’d been staying at and helped Elly out of the car, even though she struggled against me I was still stronger than she was.

“I’m going to have Ketch man handle you, if you don’t let me help you,” I said under my breath.

I got her inside the door and let go of her, letting her fall forward and catch herself on the corner of a bed. I walked to the mini fridge and looked through it, pulling out the small bottles of alcohol. I slammed it closed and leaned against the wall as the others walked through the door, popping open one of the bottles and chugging it. The liquid was harsh and bitter. It left a fire in my throat but seemed to cool the anger that was still built up in me.

I glanced around at everyone as the room filled up. Ali had locked herself in the bathroom and I could hear the water running now. And Ketch was dropping bags on a corner and taking a seat in one of the chairs. And Elly was sitting on the corner of the bed with her head in her hands, her hair curtaining her face. I slammed back another one of the tiny bottles and frowned at how little there was in it. I needed more, much much more.

“I need a drink.” I said, walking to the door. “Don’t run away while I’m gone.”
“You do not get to leave me,” Ketch grumbled from where he sat. “You left me alone with Lucifer, you are not leaving me alone with her. Lucifer is predictable.”

There was a laugh from Elly, but she didn't look up from where she was.

“I wouldn’t imagine a night in a bar without you.” I said, taking his hand and pulling him out the door with me, “Don’t leave her alone again, El. She needs you.” I said before the door closed.

“Should we really be leaving her alone? We don't even know if she's really suicidal or not,” Ketch said as we started walking down the street.

“She’ll be fine. If she tries anything stupid the kid will call us.” I shrugged a little, “And I doubt she’ll leave again, hoping the guilt trip worked for that.”

Ketch rubbed the back of his head and sighed. “Did the kid really...?” He trailed off.

“Sell her soul?” I glanced at him, “Ya. She did. Hell of a kisser.”

He gave me a sideways glance, but I couldn't quite read his eyes. “You let her?” he finally settled on.

“Not without a fight.” I put my hands on my hips, “But she wasn’t giving up until I made the deal.”

“And you tried to heal her?”

I stopped and looked down at my hands, I remember feeling so useless in that moment. “Ya. And I couldn’t do it. The drug was blocking me or something,” I sighed. “I still feel so useless.”

“The drug...? I've never heard of anything like that.”

“Me either.”

“And you're not useless.”

I smiled at him, “Well of course you think that.” I said, waving around the hand that had the ring on it, “You have to.”

“Still wanting to marry me?” He gave a teasing exhale. “You sure?”

“Am I sure I want to marry a James Bond better clone? Hell ya.” I started laughing, “You should be the one worried about wanting to marry me.”

“I’m up for the challenge.” He shot me a bright smile. “You can’t scare me off that easily love. Plus, how many people can say they made love to a demon?”

“Both of my brothers.” I laughed harder knowing that was all too true.

“Both of your brother’s together could not make one full idiot.”

I laughed harder and took his hand again. “The may be true but they did kill you once.”

“I let them.” He looked offended, but still had a smile on his face. “Would I have had the spell if that wasn’t the plan?”

“Uh huh. And that’s why you ran around as Alexander instead of just coming after them.” I continued to tease.
“Now wait a moment. Do you really think-” He broke off as my phone rang and I gave an apologetic look as I pulled it from my pocket. If it was Sam or Dean I would just ignore it, but that wasn’t the number staring back at me.

“It’s the kid, something must have happened.” I answered the call, putting the phone to my ear, “What’s wrong?”

“I don’t exactly know, but I think she’s high. Maybe,” Ali replied back.

“High?” I closed my eyes and pinched the bridge of my nose. “Do you see any of those pills anywhere?”

“I saw her take something. I thought it was just medicine, but she’s being weird. I don’t see anymore at all.”

“Being weird how?”

“She’s overly happy? I don’t know. I just know it isn’t normal.” She sighed. “Come help me, please.”

“We’re not that far away. We’ll be back in a few minutes.” I said, looking at Ketch before starting to walk back the way we’d came. “Don’t let her take anymore.”

“I wasn’t planning on it.”

I hung up the phone and started to walk a little faster.

I pushed open the door and immediately stopped, causing Ketch to run into me. What I saw made me question ever thinking it was a good idea to leave them alone. Ali and Elly were locked in a fight, Ali trying to wrestle a small bottle out of Elly’s hands. There was yelling and hair pulling and arm bending and uncontrollable laughter from Elly. I couldn’t believe it had fallen this far in the last five minutes.

“What the fuck is going on?!” I yelled, causing their fight to come to a screaming halt. It wasn’t long lived though.

“Give me the pills,” Ali ordered, trying to reach for the bottle again, but Elly held it out of her grasp.

Ketch moved passed me and into the room, easily snatching the bottle from Elly’s hand and tossing it to me. I caught it and looked over the clear bottle with several colorful pills. Several were odd shapes as well. Things like shields and hearts and stars and others were simple circles with smiley faces on them and several were just rectangles.

I looked up to see Ali straightening herself and flopping onto the edge of the bed with a breathless huff. Ketch took Elly’s arm and easily helped her from the floor as she laughed. She used the palms of her hands to push her messy blonde hair from her face only to have it fall back into her dilated eyes.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” I asked her. “We just got you away from that shit. Did your daughter’s soul mean that little to you that you used again? You’re totally addicted, aren’t you?”

She just kept laughing. Overly happy. “I was crashing. I needed a bump.”
“You need to get off of this shit.” I said, “I’m throwing it in the gutter.”

“No!” She bounced around in a small pout. “They’re mine!”

“They’re dangerous and I’m not letting you have anymore.” I started walking towards the bathroom. I was going to flush these before she could take anymore. She was going to kill herself. I had saved her, not made her indestructible.

“Give them back.” She tried to move towards me, but Ketch swiftly caught her up and wouldn’t let her go.

“Make her watch if you have to.” I said as I dumped the pills into the toilet bowl and flushed them. “There, all gone.”

“Alex!” she shouted, fighting against Ketch’s hold weakly and loosely as if her body were jello. “Give them back.”

“Nope!” I marched back to her, “They’re gone. This is your last high. I’d say enjoy it but I really don’t want you to.”

“I don’t want to be sober,” she grumbled, pushing at Ketch’s hand on her wrist.

“Elly, this is no way to act in front of your daughter,” I shot back harshly. “You told me you hated drugs.”

“I did. I do. They doped me up when they found out I was a hunter. Give them back Alex. Or I’ll fuck your dead boyfriend and find some more.”

“They’re gone, El.” I waved my ringed finger in front of her face, “And good luck with that last part.”

“Oh that’s sweet. Real sweet.” She looked up at Ketch who honestly just looked annoyed and tired of being a bodyguard. “Didn’t stop you, did it?” She had completely stopped fighting against Ketch and was now leaning into him. “Arthur and I can have some fun. It’s only fair, right?”

I rolled my eyes, getting annoyed with her myself. Whatever they’d done to her, or whatever she’d done to herself, wasn’t healthy and she wasn’t going to let us help unless we forced it on her. “Just try to get some sleep.” I said, emotionally exhausted myself. “Or I’ll put you to sleep.”

“Oh I’ll get some sleep alright.” Elly smiled a smile that made me nervous.

I watched as Elly spun in Ketch’s arms, tiptoed up to kiss him, and stuck a hand down the front of his pants. Lucky for me, he was quicker to react than I was and before I knew it she was on her ass on the floor.

“That’s it!” Ketch said, hands in the air, “I’m getting my own room. I will see you ladies in the morning, good night.”

With that he walked out the door and left the rest of us in silence. As soon as the door was closed I turned on Elly. She was smiling like an idiot, completely happy with what she’d done.

“I’m done with this shit, El.” I grabbed her by the arm and pulled her to her feet. “You are staying in this bed all night and we are taking you back to the bunker tomorrow.” I shoved her on the bed opposite of her daughter. She glared at me. “And if you leave that bed at all, I will tie you down and so help me god. I would kill you if your daughter and I didn’t love you so goddamn much.”
Elly didn’t say anything. She sat herself up against the headboard, arms crossed over her chest, her face flushed either from all of the excitement or the drugs. Maybe a mixture of both.

I sighed and sat in one of the chairs, rubbing at my eyes and the bridge of my nose as a headache began to set in. “Ali, go find Ketch.”

“But he-”

“I don’t want you in this room right now. This is no place for you. He will be more than happy to share his room because if he isn’t then we will have words after your mother and I are done here.”

Ali hesitated, but got to her feet, still wrapped up in Ketch’s jacket, and left the room into the early night air. The door closed behind her and a thick and tense silence fell over the room, a darkness radiating off of Elly.

Anger. It was etched into every inch of her skin. There was a torment in her head, you could see it in those clouded blue eyes. And then there was a tenseness in her muscles. Her arms were held tightly over her chest, having caused more hurt than her words ever had.

I hadn’t believed that she would ever in a million years do something like that to me. How badly had I broken her? What had happened after Lucifer left her? Had she been left in a depression? Sam and Dean never mentioned anything about it. They said that she was doing alright. Had they been lying?

“Look, El.” I sighed, we had to start somewhere. “I’m sorry about what happened, I don’t know what made me do it.” She kept her head turned away from me, her eyes towards the window that had its curtains closed. After another moment of silence, I bit my bottom lip in thought. She wasn’t going to be easy to get through. And now with more drugs in her system, I wasn’t sure if maybe it was them that was making her act like this. It was possible that as soon as she was sober she would just be sad. And I could understand why. “Did you see the message I left you?”

Again, silence. She did look like she was trying very hard not to speak though. As if she wanted to say something, but her mouth had been wired shut.

I stood and walked towards her, placing a finger on her forehead. “Relax.” I spoke calmly. I watched as her eyes closed and her body relaxed. Yet she still didn’t say anything. “Ok. Well, you might not like what comes next but I’m not going to sit here and get ignored all night.” I closed my own eyes and pictured myself inside her head. The memory was a little difficult to find, but I was sure it was just the drugs making it so everything was a jumbled mess instead of neatly organized. But eventually I did find the memory I wanted.

Everything was blurred and bright, moving in an emotional hazy rush. I watched as Elly’s hands shook as she watched my video. I could feel her heart shatter through the whole room. There were so many emotions swirling around her so quickly that I wasn’t sure if I could pin any single one down and name it.

“And I’m….I’m just so sorry, El,” my voice said in tears through the little speaker on the phone.

Her shaking became uncontrollable and she shot up from the bed. She chucked the phone with all of her might against the wall, and let out a pained scream, tears streaming down her face. And it hurt. God, it hurt to watch her grab at her hair. It hurt to watch her crumble to the floor. It hurt to hear her sob as she curled up, clutching herself into as small a shape as she possibly could. It hurt to see how much I had hurt her. And it fucking hurt to see her pretending.
She played happy so well it was scary. The swirling tornado inside of her, masked by a smile that everyone believed. A smile that I would have believed if I had been present. You would have never known the mosaic of pain she hid. She was flawless.

I pushed deeper, finding that night she found Lucifer and I locked at the lips. I found them fighting, her spitting venom and him crying as he tried to explain. I didn’t know it was possible for him to cry, but the more I saw the more I knew I had destroyed something good. I had destroyed love. I pushed again, going forward until I found the days following my message. They were filled with a numbing routine, one that consisted of barely getting out of bed and not eating. I could hear Ali calling for her mother, but getting no response until the day Elly left out of nowhere.

Ali had entered the main room of the bunker and given a confused look at the plate of food that had been made for her. Elly came in from the kitchen, wiping her wet hands on her pants.

“Good morning, Alex. You sleep well?” Ali simply stared in disbelief, unable to answer. It made me wish I knew what had been going through her head as well. Her mom was finally out of bed for the first time in days. Cooking. Smiling. Kind. Loving. Mother. “I found a case out of town that’s gotten a little out of hand,” Elly explained as she grabbed a bag that was on one of the tables and slung it over her shoulder. “I’ll be gone for a day or two. If you need anything, Sam is just a phone call away. Can you handle me being away for a moment?”

“I-I guess so?” The young girl took a seat at the table in front of the plate. “Where’s dad again?”

“I told you Alex,” Elly sighed. “We had a fight. He’s gone away for a bit.”

“You mean you made him leave,” Ali accused.

I could feel a course of anger fly through Elly. It was like she knew her daughter was right but wanted to be mad at her for it all the same. That was followed by an immediate painful sadness that I had never felt before, the only way to describe it was like being shot in the heart multiple times and living to tell the tale. It made my head spin, my stomach churn. No wonder Elly had been sleeping on the bathroom floor, when she could sleep, for access to the toilet. She had been sick this whole time.

Elly gave a small smile and moved over to her daughter. She pulled Ali’s head into her chest in a hug and placed a kiss to her daughter’s head. “Stay here. Call Sam if anything happens. I love you.” She placed another kiss on the girl’s head, ignoring the annoyed feeling from the teen. “I’ll be back in a few days.”

She really had had every intention of coming back. She hadn't left planning to just stay gone. She just needed to get away for a bit. It was so clear in her head, heart and soul. She just needed time to herself to feel normal again.

I pulled from her head and stumbled back slightly. Elly was breathing hard, her face scrunched up in pain. Her skin was flushed and she was sweating.

“It’s hot, Alex,” she whispered.

I placed a hand to her head that was burning up. “You shouldn't have taken those pills,” I replied back, heading over to the mini fridge. I pulled out a water bottle and passed it to her. She opened it and drank some before placing the bottle against the inside of one of her wrists. Even high, she was able to pull herself through the fog enough to be smart. The artery would pull the cool blood back through her body. “You didn’t come here to die, did you?”
“Of course not, Alex.” She sighed deeply, licking her lips. “I wouldn't do that to Ali. I'm not stupid.”

“Are you willing to talk to me now?” I sat on the edge of the bed beside her and tried to take her hand. She pulled it from my grasp and I sighed. I'd never get her back. There was no way I ever would. But I would go to the ends if the earth to make sure she still knew how much I loved her and how sorry I was. “What happened when you got here, El?”

“Normal hunt. I was driving here, stopped at a cafe for breakfast, the barista commented on my tattoo and as I got outside I was bagged.”

“Can I...?” I motioned to her and she rolled her eyes, bit leaned back, closing her eyes and relaxing. I hesitantly reached out and touched her forehead again, pushing through until I found the memory.

The cash register dinged as Elly pushed her money and tip across the counter and her coffee was handed to her.

“I like your tattoo. I've never seen something like that before,” the girl at the counter commented. She was young. It must have been a Saturday or she would have been at school.

“Thank you,” Elly replied kindly with a smile that was sunny. It felt real and it didn't feel like it was pretend. “It's from some old TV show from when I was younger.” She laughed. “Have a good day.”

Elly turned from the counter and left the cafe, pulling a set of keys from her pocket and crossing the street to where a motorcycle was waiting. That was Ketch's bike. I had found it and moved it to the bunker. She had taken it? I didn't know she could ride one. But there was a lot I didn't know.

She didn't get very far across the street before two men left the cafe as well, following after her. One of them I recognized as Chris from the drug trade.

There was a syringe pushed into her neck and drained into her bloodstream and then a bag was shoved over her head. I could feel her grow dizzy before she blacked out.

There were small snippets of clarity that only lasted for a moment or two, one being of the gas station clerk, before they were washed away again.

And when she came fully to, she was in the cafeteria, tied up and tossed into a corner.

Chris walked over to her and knelt down beside her, dragging her closer by her hair. She winced. “Here’s what we’re going to do, hunter,” he said with a cocky smile. “We’re going to use you to test our new drugs. Doesn’t that sound fun?”

Elly didn’t answer, just glared with those piercing blue eyes. Chris chuckled, yanking her hair back and making her gasp.

“Don’t be like that, sweetheart.”

And I couldn’t help her. I couldn’t save her as the other came over and forced her mouth open, putting pills into her mouth. She struggled against them, but Chris quickly slapped a hand over her mouth, the other plugging her nose.

When her body grew weak, they finally released her and she gasped for air, coughing and sputtering.
She hadn’t lied. They really had drugged her. Almost the whole time she had been gone, she had been drugged.

Why hadn’t I been there for her? Watching as the days dragged on, forcing her every few hours to try more or different things because soon the ecstasy wasn’t fun for them anymore. She wasn’t reacting to the high. She wasn’t entertaining enough.

And I stared in horror, through drug fogged memories, as she was hyped up with clear liquids through needles or with a gun to her head as she was forced to smoke or snuff powders of who knows what. And some things that they did to her were so blurred and distorted from her trying to forget that I was only left to guess at what they had done to her.

The drugs had to have been hard because the rest of the memories were spotty and blurred at best, almost impossible to make sense of.

And as I pulled myself from her head once again, I wanted to cry for her. She hadn’t deserved any of this. She couldn’t control it. And she was going to come crashing down hard. It was going to be fucking hell. But I’d be there with her through all of it.

“Alex, I need those drugs,” Elly whispered, laying down and pulling a pillow to her bruised chest. “Please.”

I took a deep breath and looked over her small form. It hadn’t occurred to me, but she was thinner than she had been. How long had it been since she had eaten?

“No more drugs,” I whispered, reaching out and carefully petting her hair. When she didn’t fight or pull away, I moved a bit closer and continued to run my fingers over her hair.

“They made me withdrawal before giving me more. Please. Please give me the drugs. I’d rather be tortured by Asmodeus again.”

I flinched at her begging. Was it really that horrible? What else had they given her?

“We are going to get through this together,” I said softly. “And I will do my best to make sure you’re comfortable.”

“Please...” She curled up closer to me.

“How long has it been since you ate?” Maybe if I could distract her we could at least get through the next hour. She shrugged. “I could order something if you would like.” She shook her head. “You need to eat something,” I pressed gently.

“Can I tell Ketch something?” she asked in such a quiet voice that I almost didn’t hear her.

“I don’t think-”

“Please?”

I sighed and pulled my phone from my pocket. I dialed Ketch’s phone and he picked up.

“Yes?” he sounded stressed, his voice tight.

“Is the kid ok?”

“Fine. She’s asleep. What do you want Alex?”
I frowned at how harsh my name was said. It stung a little, though I knew it wasn’t my fault. “She wants to talk to you.”

“No.”

“Arthur,” I hissed. “Please talk to her.”

“No, Alex.”

I rolled my eyes and placed the phone to Elly’s ear. “I’m sorry!” she blurted out. “I’m so sorry!”

I pulled the phone back and put it to my ear. The line was silent. “I’ll talk to you tomorrow. I love you. Goodnight.”

“Night,” he said distantly.

I shoved my phone back into my pocket and got to my feet, pulling Elly with me. “Come on hun,” I muttered. “We’re going to get you showered and you can borrow some of my clothes. I’ll order some pizza and we can watch a movie like old times.”

I helped her stumble into the bathroom and just like all those years ago, I helped her undress. She wasn’t as shy as she had been the first time, but her body looked the same as it had that night. There were bruises everywhere. Across her stomach that had stretch marks on it from being pregnant so long ago. There were fingerprints in her hips, so dark that they hid another tattoo that she had there. And then there were bite marks over her chest that faded into the purple bruising. Her back had nail marks down it, some still extremely fresh and open. And the bites and bruising continued down her legs.

“Elly, what did they do to you?” I asked breathlessly. What were in those destroyed images she wouldn’t let me see?

She didn’t reply, just turned on the shower and got in. Steam quickly filled the room and I rushed over, shoving my hand into the water. It was boiling. Far too hot. I quickly turned it down, but Elly didn’t seem to like that I did.

“I need it to burn me,” she whispered, turning it back up as hot as she had it. I swiftly turned it back down and watched as she sunk to the shower floor. “Alex, I need the feeling of them gone. Please! I feel so dirty!”

I stepped back, unsure of what to do. I was speechless. Completely lost for words. I gave in. There was nothing more I could do. Nothing to help her. I left the bathroom and closed the door behind me to let her be.

I paced the room several times before I finally pulled my phone from my pocket and found Lucifer’s number. I called it and it immediately went to voicemail. I tried again with the same result.

“Lucifer, you need to come back,” I said, my hand in my hair. “I-I don’t know what to do. Elly’s hurt. Badly. I think-I think....” I couldn’t even say it, it was so horrible. It was the only conclusion I could come up with. “She needs you. Please! I-I don’t think I can help her anymore. I don’t know what to do.”

I ended the call and sighed. I really didn’t know what else to do. I called Ketch and he agreed to get me some medical supplies and then I ordered a pizza. And Ketch had returned and the pizza came before I finally decided that Elly had had enough time in the shower.
I knocked on the door before pushing my way into the steam filled, sauna like room. I turned off the water and knelt down beside Elly who hadn't moved. Her skin was red from the heat of the water and she was staring off into space.

I reached out a hand to her and touched her shoulder and she jumped as if I had woke her from a trance.

“Alex....” she whispered.

I helped her from the shower and passed her a towel and lead her out into the main room where I had clothes laid out for her.

At a snail's pace, she dried herself and went and sat on the bed. I went and sat beside her, pulling a bag of medicine and bandages to me.

She let me clean and put medicine on each bite mark and then she turned for me to look at her back.

I put more peroxide on a cloth and placed it to her back. She arched away from me with a gasp.

“It burns,” she got out through clenched teeth.

“You don't want to get infected, do you?” I asked softly. “I can get you some pizza to take you mind off it if you'd like. You should really eat.”

She shook her head and I bit my lip before going back to trying to clean her back. She squirmed and groaned and tried to move away from me, but I easily held her tired and weak body in place and eventually was able to start wrapping all of the nail marks.

I helped her dress and then made her eat a slice of pizza before she curled up in the bed, holding the blankets tightly around her.

I went and lied beside her, my eyes widening as she snuggled in as close as she could to my side, her head coming to rest on my shoulder.

Tears were quietly rolling down her cheeks as she hid her face against me. “Why-why didn't you leave me there?” she asked through her tears.

“I-I couldn't,” I answered softly, pulling her body closer to mine and holding her tightly.

This poor broken girl. I understood now why she wanted to be left there to die. It was like somebody reached inside to her soul, and was forcing it to slowly die.

And I could feel her fading. It was like she wasn't her anymore. Her body wasn't even her body anymore. It belonged to them. And there were so many emotions swirling around her. She was angry, confused, terrified, scared, powerless. Why do people do horrible things?

“You should have left me.”

“Never.” I pressed a kiss to her forehead. It was going to be a long night. “I'm never going to leave you alone again. I am so sorry about everything. I've done a lot of things that I would understand if you never forgave them. But I am never going to leave you alone ever again. I'm here for you.”

She shook her head and somehow curled further into me, her shoulders heaving as she cried.

“No one is ever going to hurt you ever again.”
By the time morning had come, I was exhausted. Elly was finally asleep though, clutching tightly
to me. I had just given up and made her sleep. It was better for her than being sick and in pain.

Elly had been crying most of the night, shaking, shivering, throwing up. She must have had so much going through her system. So much to crash down from. And eventually I couldn't watch her suffer anymore. It wasn't fair to her.

There was a knock at the door and I carefully pulled myself from her grip, going to it. I opened it and was met with silver eyes.

“Hi,” I said softly.

“Hi,” he replied back, staring at the ground. “Um... How is she? I'm guessing it was a hard night.”

“Just barely fell asleep. I think maybe we should wait another day. Let her and the kid get some rest. I'm sure she's pretty messed up too.”

“She's still sleeping. I didn't want to wake her.”

“Arthur, about last night, she's really sorry. She spent almost the whole night crying over it.”

“It's behind us now. Let's just forget and move on.” He gave a deep exhale. “I was thinking we should go back and check out the school and see if we might have missed any. I figured we'd be staying another day.”

I bit my lip and glanced behind me and to where Elly was still curled up. “I-I don't think we should leave her alone.”

“I could take the kid then,” he suggested with a shrug. “Sure she'd be up for it.”

“Don't push her.” I sighed, a hand to my head. “I'm worried about her. Our whole deal thing has me on edge.”

“Well, she'll be fine. She's got another ten years and when we send her back, she'll be safe.”

“I don't know. Never mind.” I glanced back again, running through everything that had happened last night. “Arthur, they did really horrible things to her.”

“They gave her drugs,” he agreed with a nod.

“Not just that,” I whispered, lowering my voice even further so he had to lean in. “She has bite marks everywhere, scratches down her back, and these bruises on her hips....” I trailed off for a moment. “I was looking through her memories and she wouldn't let me see what happened.”

“They-they..?” He tried to look into the room. “If I would have known, I wouldn't have shoved her over...”

“And I've been trying to get a hold of Lucifer all night, but he must have his phone off. He's not answering.”

“I don't think he'll be answering any time soon,” Ketch muttered. “You mind if I come in? It's a bit nippy.” I moved out of the way and let him into the room, closing the door behind him. He stepped
closer to Elly and looked over her. “Is there anything I can do to help?”

“I think we just need to let her sleep,” I answered softly, taking his hand. “But I could use your help with something.”

“What’s that?”

I pulled him passed the bed and towards the bathroom. “Want to shower with me?”

He just smiled and shook his head as I pulled him into the bathroom and closed and locked the door. “I thought you said we should let her sleep.”

“I can be quiet. Can you?” I shoved him up against the bathroom door, kissing him. It felt like lifetimes since I had.

I pushed at the hem of his t-shirt and gave a complaining groan when I had to break the kiss to pull it off of him. “I miss your suits,” I grumbled, throwing his shirt aside.

“Why is that love?” he asked with a smirk, dragging me back against him to kiss me again.

“I have to stop touching you to undress you,” I replied back against his lips as my hands went to work on his pants. He gasped against my lips as my fingers teased at him as I unzipped his jeans. “If you can't be quiet, we'll have to stop.”

At those words, he grabbed at my shoulders and slammed me up against the door. “We'll stop when I'm done with you,” he hissed against my ear before he bit at the back of my jaw unforgivingly. My heart fluttered and I bit my lip to keep silent as a shiver ran through me. It didn't help much as a whimper left my lips.

He chuckled and pulled away from me. I wanted to argue, but he gave me another small kiss before going to turn on the water for the shower.

I pulled my shirt over my head and he turned back with a disapproving look. “Love,” he sighed, causing me to stop. “You know I like to watch you when I can't do it myself.”

I rolled my eyes. It was always a fight for power with him. But I enjoyed it. It was fun to make him weak, but I knew it had to go both ways. He loved to control just as much as I did.

He leaned against the wall, arms over his bare chest, watching me intently, waiting for me to continue.

A light blush came to my cheeks as I tossed my shirt at him. He caught it and smiled. “Play along love,” he instructed. “You know what I'll do to you if you don't.”

I bit my tongue, unable to stop my smile. He was impossible. But two could play this game. He'd trapped himself in a corner.

I unlatched my bra and teasingly slipped my bra straps from my shoulders and trailed my fingers over my collar as the fabric slowly fell to the ground.

His eyes wandered over me and I smirked at the lust that was clouding them. He was too easy to read. Too easy to control.

I finished undressing and stepped into the shower, the water warm against my skin. He pushed himself off of the wall, but I shook my head, closing the glass door before he could get in.
“Finish undressing and then sit and watch like a good boy,” I ordered with a smile. He gave a displeased look, but did as I said. He pulled off the rest of his clothes and sat himself against the counter. “If I catch you looking away, you'll be punished.”

He wanted to watch, then he could watch.

I would make him wait though. Make him want it. Make him work for it. Beg for it.

And the best way I could think to do that was to just shower. I took my time washing my hair, glancing out at him every once in a while to make sure his eyes were still on me.

He was very good at obeying when it benefited him.

And he was being good. I could reward him.

I ran my hands over my body, watching as his eyes followed where my hands played. A shiver ran through me at the hunger in that silver. I bit my lip as I watched him adjust himself as I rubbed against myself. God, that desire in his stance made me weak and moan. Maybe I couldn't tease him as long as I had wanted to. Maybe I just needed him now.

But I could last a little longer if it meant making this ache I felt for him worse. I could play a little longer. I ran my hands up my sides as slow as I could, dragging a shiver out of me. I cupped my breasts with my hands and bounced them a little, watching the water fall off if them. I bit my lip again as I squeezed and played with them, keeping another moan inside. My eyes shifted to Ketch again as he once again adjusted. I smiled and teased my nipples, watching his eyes watching me.

I turned away from him. He'd seen enough of my front. I stepped back towards the glass door and ran my hands down from the sides of my breasts to my ankles, slowly bending over until I felt my ass press against the glass. Then I slowly trailed my hands back up until I was standing tall again.

This was dangerously fun. This was fun to tease him. It was fun to have control in this one moment.

I turned to face him again, a hand trailing down my chest and stomach while the other grabbed a breast again. Both hands teased and played with me. I pushed myself up against the back wall, closing my eyes as I continued to please myself and make this ache grow.

He cleared his throat and I smiled, taking my hands off of me and pressing into the fogged glass, the glass cold against my breasts. “Arthur?” I asked softly, calling his eyes back to my face. “I need you.”

“I'm allowed to move now, am I?” he asked, his voice low and gravely.

I closed my eyes with a shiver and nodded, licking my lips. “Yes.”

I moved back away from the glass and he made his way into the shower. He looked over me for a moment, as if deciding what to do to me and he quickly pushed me up against the wall of the shower. The stone was icy against my back and I gasped, arching into him. He took the opportunity to bite at my neck, making my legs go weak under me.

His hands played at my breasts and I couldn't help but moan lightly at the feeling of finally being touched by him. He pushed my back flat against the wall and I shivered as his lips stole my breath from me and if I was human I was sure my lungs would be burning and I would be gasping for air.

I had sold my soul to a three piece suit and I would never regret it.
His hands wandered down to my hips and pulled me closer to him so my hips could grind against him. A sweetness filled my head and I felt my knees give way. He easily picked me up, allowing my legs to wrap around him as he shoved me back against the wall to help hold some of my weight.

“Ar-Arthur,” I whispered as he kissed down my chest. “Stop teasing me. Please.”

He just laughed, his fingers running teasingly over my entrance and making me clutch tightly to him. He was going to teach me a lesson now. I knew it. His soft kisses mixed with the heat of the water as he drowned me in mind numbing teases with his fingers.

“Arthur,” I moaned, my fingers tangling into his hair as it was the only thing I could get a hold of as he finally gave into my ache and slipped a finger or two into me. A familiar heat was pooling in my stomach, hot and tense. “Fuck, Arthur.”

“You’re supposed to be quiet,” he taunted, biting at my collar.

My eyes slid closed and I could barely breathe through the steam. “How-How am I supposed to stay quiet when you- Arthur.” I shuddered, hiding my face into his neck. “Stop.”

“We’ll stop when I’m done with you,” he repeated.

I shook my head unable to hold back the sounds that wanted to rip through me. I could feel the heat finally reaching its peak and the only way I could stay quiet was to bite down on his shoulder. My mind was blank and my body felt immediately weak. My nails dug into his back.

He didn’t let me relax long before he replaced his fingers with every last inch of him. I bit down harder with a cry. This wasn’t fair. Not fair at all. He shouldn’t be able to make me this weak. He wasn’t allowed to make me feel like this.

“You don’t get to tease me without punishment, love,” he whispered to me, making me shake and shiver as his hips moved up and into me.

“Arthur.” It was the only word I could make myself say. It was the only clear thought I had.

I leaned back, my head resting against the wall, searching out something cold for my flushed and sensitive skin. My legs were trembling as I tried to keep a hold on him. He didn’t seem to have a problem holding my weight though. And that was probably for the best. I wasn’t sure if my legs would hold me up anymore.

And it wasn’t long before I was right at the edge again. This time with him.

And when the bliss finally hit us, there was so much pleasure, the only thing I could do as feel my body react. Shaking through a wave of hot and calm, all strength and energy being sucked from my toes and fingertips. It was confusing and consuming and if I had been on my feet, I would have collapsed.

My vision was a blur and I was light headed. And Arthur must have taken care of me, because the next thing that was clear was being dressed and laying beside him in bed, those silver eyes still looking hungrily over me, before his lips took my lips again, his tongue darting out to taste me.

He needed to make my head stop spinning. I would never think clearly again. Fucking hell. His hands needed to pick a place to stay. They couldn’t keep touching and teasing and working me up again. I was going to be a panting mess. He needed to stop. Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!
A knock at the door broke Arthur away from me and I couldn’t stop myself from whimpering at the lack of contact. It made me realize that I liked the fuzziness of my brain.

“Hey kid. Come in,” he said.

I sat up and watched as Ali entered the room, glancing around. “Do you have any food?”

I cleared my throat. “There’s some pizza in the fridge.”

How on earth was I thinking clearly after all of that?

She raced for the fridge and immediately turned back with a mouthful of pizza. “Is my mom ok?” she asked in a muffled voice.

“She was up all night,” I replied, getting from the other bed and coming over to stand by the kid. I rubbed at her head, messing up her blonde hair. “Don’t worry kid. We’re just gonna let her rest today and we’ll head home tomorrow.”

“You and I can go out today if you would like,” Ketch offered kindly. “Just a standard clean up.”

“So, there might be more?” Ali asked excitedly. “Fuck yes, I want to go. Yesterday was so cool.”

“Cool?” I asked with a smile. “So you like hunting then?”

“Yes,” she replied with her own bright smile. “Will you be coming Alex?”

“I think I should stay here with your mother, kid. She’s going to need someone here when she wakes up. It was a hard night.”

“Alex?” Ali’s smile fell and I gave a questioning look. “My dad won’t answer my calls or texts. He’s never not replied before. Did...” She trailed off, looking at the ground. “Did he leave for good?”

“Of course not kid,” I answered, pulling her into a tight hug. “He loves you so much. He’ll come back. There’s just a lot that needs to be figured out and worked through.”

“I’m sure he’s just off on a holiday for a bit,” Ketch added in with a kind smile and a shrug.

“Ali?” a soft voice asked. I pulled away from the kid and looked over to where Elly was now sitting up in bed. A half smile covered my lips and I gently pushed the kid towards her mom. Ali hesitantly walked over and sat on the edge of the bed. Elly pulled her into a tight hug. “I love you.”

I almost felt like I was intruding on a moment. Like I didn’t belong in the room right now. But there wasn’t much of an option for where to go.

“I love you too, Mom,” Ali replied back, hugging Elly.

“When we get home, we’re gonna talk about this deal you made.” Elly released the girl from the hug, brushing her daughter’s hair behind one of her ears. She glanced back at me and I knew I was going to be part of that conversation. Ali simply nodded. “But for now, thank you.” Elly looked to Ketch who was standing beside me. “I’m sorry, Ketch. Really, I am.”

“Don’t mention it.” He kindly waved the words away. “Everything’s good between us, pet.”

Elly smiled lightly, obviously still very tired and ill looking. I quickly walked over and took Ali’s shoulders, moving her from the bed. “I think we should let your mother get some more sleep,” I
said, directing the kid towards Ketch. “How about you two get going. And Ketch, your motorcycle might be in a pound somewhere nearby. Maybe you can go pick it up.”

“My bike?” he asked in a confused tone. “Why is my bike-”

“I might have borrowed it,” Elly admitted softly, laying back against the headboard, her eyes closing. She was so weak. “I’m sorry.”

Ketch moved over to the bed and sat beside her, taking her hand. He leaned over and whispered something to her. Her eyes shot open and she laughed, sunshine filling the room. No wonder Lucifer had given her that name. She really was a sunbeam. Ketch leaned over and placed a kiss to Elly’s head.

“I will take good care of her,” he assured, patting her hand before getting from the bed. “Alright kid. Let’s go.”

“Does this mean that I get to drive the car?” Ali asked excitedly.

Ketch stopped and looked back at Elly who shook her head. “You do not have a licence,” she said as strongly as she could, but it was weak at best. “You only have your permit.”

“The police don’t know that,” Ketch teased with a grin. “Let’s go kid.” They both headed for the door and I saw Elly roll her eyes. “We’re also getting you a jumper or something because I want my parka back,” Ketch said as he closed the door behind them.

“He’ll take good care of her,” I repeated into the room. Elly had yet again rested against the headboard, breathing deeply. Her skin was pale and glistened with sweat. I stepped towards the bed and sat next to her. “How are you feeling today?” She gave a shrug, not looking at me. “We should clean and rebandage you. And then you should eat something. I’m sure this place has some toast or eggs. That would be gentle on you.”

“Ok,” she whispered.

She had lost a lot of her fight the night before. She hardly argued with me, and I wasn't sure if I was grateful or if it made me worried. It was nice to not fight with her tooth and nail, but she had never really been one to just do as anyone said unless she knew it was for her benefit.

I got the medical supplies from the night before and she slowly undressed and lied on her stomach on the bed.

I pulled the bandages off, some bloodied. I frowned as she bit on the pillow she was cuddling beneath herself. I wished there was more I could do.

I cleaned the nail marking and she cried through her mouthful of pillow. She hid her face into the cotton and my hands froze. How could I do this without hurting her? I had already tried to heal them, but there was something blocking my abilities. She was bound to have more drugs in her system.

“Elly?” I asked softly. She didn't move or reply. “I could put you back to sleep if you'd like. I'm not sure how else to make you not hurt.” She shook her head and let me keep working on her.

When I had finally finished and she was redressed, I sat her back down and took her hand.

“Elly, I think I can help you. But it's going to be asking a lot from you.”
"What is it Alex?" There were tear stains down her cheeks, but she had stopped crying.

"I can erase what happened," I offered. "I've only done it once, but... It would help."

"And what do you need from me to make that happen?" Her eyes opened up curiously. There was a spark of hope in them, but I knew I would crush it.

"You need to let me see what happened. I can't just go erasing things willy-nilly. What if I erase something important?"

"No." Her voice was stern as she closed her eyes and rested again.

"Elly, I could make what they did to you go away. No one would ever blame you if I made you forget. I can only guess, but I'm pretty sure I know what they did."

"What gave it away?" she snapped at me, making me pull my hand away from hers. She exhaled heavily and opened her eyes. "I am not letting you see the horrible things they did to me."

"But-"

"I said no, Alex."

"But Elly-"

"You want to watch them rape me?" she demanded, making my skin go cold. Her eyes were somehow fire and ice as they challenged me. So, I had been right. "You want to watch them do that day in and day out for however long I was trapped there? I don't even know how many there were or how often they did it. I was so fucked up on whatever shit they made me take that I don't know which ones did it."

She was breathing hard now, her hands tangling in her hair as she began to rock back and forth. I wanted to reach out to comfort her, but I had no idea what to do.

"All I know is that it hurt and it still hurts. I might not know who did it, or how many times, but each touch, each finger print, each disgusting bit of bodily fluid- I can feel all of it. It's seared into my skin."

"Elly," I whispered, trying to break her out of her head. But I honestly wasn't sure how to help or what to do. What was I supposed to say to something that horrific? "Elly, it's alright. It's over how. They're all dead."

"And I screamed for him. I prayed to him. And he didn't come Alex. He left me there."

"I-I'm sure that's not true." I was scrambling for words to say. Anything to say. And I couldn't stop my heart from cracking as I thought about them. "Maybe he just didn't hear you."

"Didn't hear me?" She looked up from between her arms, eyes dark. "Fucking hell, he didn't hear me!" One of her arms shot out and her fist collided with the head bored, sending a loud crack through the room. I jumped. "He ignored me, Alex! Ignored everything I said. Ignored my begging, my pleading, asking for him to kill me to make it all stop!" She was hyperventilating now, but I had no way of stopping her.

"I'm sure he's just busy on a hunt or trying to take Hell out from under me." That last bit was a lie, I would've heard whispers of him by now if it were true. "I'm sure he would've come ASAP if he'd known."
“He let it happen.” She was rocking back and forth now. “He let them touch me, violate me. He let them Alex. He was supposed to protect me.”

“Please, Elly. Let me erase it. Let me take it all away,” I begged, reaching out and taking her fist from the headboard and gently prying her fingers apart. “I can take it all back. I can make you happy again.” I pulled her face to look up at mine. Her eyes were red and puffy and she was trembling. “Let me help you. Please.” It was a whisper now as I carefully pulled her to me in a hug, holding her tightly. “You won't have to hurt anymore.”

“I don't want him to touch me ever again.”

“I can fix that. Let me in.”

“I don't want to look at him.”

“Elly, let me see the memories.”

“No.”

I couldn't fight her anymore. She would never let anyone know. She would never let anyone else suffer with her. She would never forget.

I just clutched her tighter to me. “We'll get through this,” I whispered, rubbing her back. “I promise I'll fix it all. Everything that was my fault. I'll fix it.”

“I hate him, bastard.”

“No, you don't,” I attempted. But she shook her head. “You love him and I am going to fix it.”

“There's nothing you could ever do to fix this.”

“Please let me in.” I pushed her back to look into the dull blue eyes. Eyes that had given up the fight. I couldn't push her anymore without breaking her. This was the line. “Let me see.”

She shook her head and lied down into my lap. “I just want to burn Alex. I want it all to be burnt away. Make me hurt so badly, I forget the original pain.”

“Stop talking like that,” I ordered in a whisper, my own tears coming from my eyes.

“Alex, call an ambulance.”

The words had me taken aback. “What? Why? What did you do Elly?”

“When you were in the shower, I found them.”

“They?” I demanded, looking around the room. “What on earth are you-?” The rest of the sentence got stuck in my mouth as I spotted a little plastic bag on the bedside table. My eyes widened and I looked down at her pale face. She had found the drugs that I had bought. I had completely forgotten they existed. “What the fuck were you thinking?”

I carefully pushed her from me and began digging through all of my things to try to find where in the hell my phone had gone.

“Did you take all of them?”

She didn't answer. She was just laying there now, eyes open and glossy. Fuck!
I found my phone and immediately called 911, unable to keep my voice calm when someone finally answered.

“911, what's your emergency?”

“My friend took a bunch of ecstasy!” I almost shouted into the receiver. “She's unconscious. I need medical help.”

“Alright. Everything going to be ok. Calm down for me.” I hated how sweet the female voice was on the other side. Made me sick. “Where are you?” I blurted out the location, rushing back to Elly to take her pulse. It was weak and fluttering again. I didn't have another soul to save her. What the hell was the hospital going to do? “And you are positive that it was ecstasy?”

“Yes, I'm fucking sure! Get someone here now!”

I paced in the lobby of the hospital. I couldn't stop moving. I just had to somehow work through all of the nervous energy I had.

They were pumping her stomach. That's all they had told me. And I hoped that that was enough to help her.

If it didn't, what could I possibly do? Maybe I could bend the rules of the deal? There was always a loophole. The kid never said how long she wanted her mom back for. Would that work? God, I didn't know.

I had told Ketch what had happened and he had promised not to tell Ali, but Lucifer still wasn't picking up.

I had lost track of how many times I had called him, but it was enough that his mailbox was full and all I could do was text.

And I was as bad as someone who was drunk and texting their ex. I needed to stop, but I couldn't. I knew he wasn't going to answer, but I fucking needed to try.

“Ketch?”

My feet paused in their pacing as I looked up to a nurse who looked like she had been working a double shift. I figured less people would know the name Ketch, especially if my plan worked. I raced over, waiting for anything she had to say.

“We have her stabilized,” she replied with a tired but kind smile. “She's awake.”

“Can I see her?” I asked hurriedly, trying to look up the hallway as if I would see my friend.

“In a moment,” the nurse replied. “We want to keep her over night. She told us that she had purposely overdosed in a suicide attempt.”

I froze. I had guessed as much, but it hurt to hear it out loud.

“We're going to put her on a watch and see how she is in the morning.”

“Ok,” I whispered, unable to find more of my voice.

“And we were also curious about the rest of the markings on her. She looks very badly battered.”
“She was sexually assaulted,” I admitted softly. “We already told the police, but she doesn't remember who did it.”

“I see.” The nurse looked sad and patted my arm. “We'll take care of her. It can be hard to move away from what happened when it's that traumatic.”

If only she knew. Elly had survived being tortured for months. She survived being shot. She survived being possessed. She survived demons and vampires and angels and werewolves and ghouls and and the goddamn devil himself, but she couldn't survive this. Not by herself.

And I could never understand. All I could use to gauge how she felt was the fact that she would have rather have been tortured again. That had to make whatever she suffered completely life ruining and I wish I could do more to help her forget.

“You can see her now.” The nurse led me down the hall and motioned to an open doorway.

I stepped into the room and hesitated. She looked over and smiled at me weakly. I raced over to the bed and snatched up her hand. I couldn't help myself. There was no other way for me to explain any of the emotions running through me.

I pulled her to me in a kiss. Just a quick one that made her eyes go wide when I pulled back. “Don't you ever fucking do that ever again,” I hissed, tears coming to my eyes. “Do you understand me?” She nodded, the shock still too present for her to speak. “And don't you dare tell Ketch I did that. He'll kill me.” I pulled her into a tight hug, trying to push the tears away. “Stop scaring me like that. Fucking hell.”

“It's not fun, is it?” Her tone teased. “Imagine how the rest of us felt when you kept dying.”

“This isn't the same,” I shot back. But I could understand now. It must have been horrible for all of them. “Fuck you Elly.”

“You've already kissed me. It's the only logical next step.”

She actually sounded happy. She sounded normal. And I wasn't sure what had done it. But I was glad that some part of her was back. Even if it was her sarcastic humor.

“Later love. You're such a tease.” I pulled back and looked over her, my hands searching over her as much as my eyes were. “I was so scared.”


“She doesn't know. Ketch has her.”

“Thank you.” She was smiling brightly, but it dropped. “I'm so sorry. This was unfair to all of you. I just...”

“Do you at least feel better?”

I pulled my hands from hers taking her face again as I looked over her. She had color back to her face. Her cheeks bright and rosy, not a fever flushed red. She closed her eyes and relaxed into my hands with a nod.

“Still going to have withdrawals,” she whispered to me. “If you're ready to help me with that.”

“To the moon and back,” I answered softly. “We've got to get you out of here first.”
“I'm on suicide watch. They aren't just going to let me go.”

“We'll get you out,” I whispered. “Besides, I don't have thousands of dollars to pay for your mistake.”

“I'm sorry.” She rested her forehead against mine. “I promise not to do anything like that again.”

“Damn straight. I will kill you myself.”

She laughed at that and hugged me.

We had to wait until after visit hours when I was kicked out. There had been too many nurses checking on her for us to slip away. But now Ketch was outside with the car and we finally had a moment's rest.

“You ready to get out of here?” I asked, grabbing my bag from one of the chairs in the room.

“This place is miserable. Get me out of here,” she answered with a nod.

I moved over and took her hand, zapping us out to the front of the hospital. The car was waiting for us, running.

We raced down to it and climbed in, and I couldn't help but laugh. Ali sat behind the wheel, looking pleased. Elly sighed as she took to the back seat.

“I told you no,” she said with a laughing sigh. “Where's Ketch?”

“He's coming now,” Ali replied, acknowledging the sound of a motorcycle behind us. Ketch pulled up beside us and Ali rolled down her window.

“I told you not to race off,” he said, leaning over the handlebars so he could look into the car. Ali rolled her eyes making him chuckle and shake his head. “It's over a 30 hour drive back. Can you do it?”

“Can you keep up?” Ali shot back, cranking up the radio so Go Your Own Way by Fleetwood Mac was blaring through the car.

“Be kind to my car,” I instructed, getting from the seat and racing around the car and to where Ketch was, climbing on behind him.

“Hello love,” he said back to me. “Been a while.”

I smiled and tucked my arms around him watching as Ali shot off from the curb and raced through the parking lot like she had been driving for years.

“Can you keep up?” I teased.

He just glanced back at me and rolled his eyes. “You holding on?” Before I could answer, he sped away from the curb and after my car.

I stepped back into the bunker, finally releasing a breath I didn't know I had been holding. There was a tenseness from my shoulders that was released as the feeling of home washed over me.
It felt good not to be straddling anything anymore. Well, at least I was tired of the motorcycle. Ketch was a different story.

Elly tried to walk passed me and I snatched her up. “You never told me you could ride a motorcycle.”

“I didn't think it important,” she laughed, pushing me off of her. It was good to have part of her back, even if it was small. “I learned when we went back. I thought I wanted one, but once I got my licence, I decided against it.”

“You found out your were pregnant, huh?” I teased, poking her stomach.

“Yeah. Decided a car was safer.” Elly grabbed Ali as she walked through the door, hugging her. “She's better than any motorcycle.”

“Thanks?” Ali laughed questioningly.

“I should let my brothers know you’re ok,” I muttered as I passed the two of them. “I’ll be back in a few.” I gave Ketch a kiss as I passed him and pulled my phone from my pocket as I shut myself into my bedroom.

I sighed at the blank screen. Where in the fucking hell was Lucifer? I couldn’t do this alone. There was no way in hell I could take care of his family. And I knew Ketch was getting restless as well.

We weren’t meant to be babysitters.

I dialed Dean’s number and waited as it rang “Hey,” he finally answered. “Was getting worried about you. You find Elly?”

“More or less,” I whispered, sitting on the edge of my bed.

“More or less?” he asked, concern in his voice.

“Some...” I struggled for a word. “Difficult stuff happened that we’re trying to fix.”

“Is there anything I can do to help?”

I rubbed at my eyes with a sigh. “I don’t know. Heard anything about Lucifer at all?”

“No. Why?” he asked suspiciously. “What did he do?”

“Nothing. That’s the problem.” I lied back on my bed, staring at the ceiling. “Hasn’t been answering his phone or her prayers.”

“I’ll see if I can find out anything.”

“Thanks,” I inhaled deeply. “Take care of the fairies?”

“Nasty bitches, but yeah. What was she after?”

“Jefferson Starships.”

There was a moment of silence over the line that made me think that he had possibly hung up.

“They’re supposed to be dead.”
“Yes,” I answered with a nod, even though I knew he couldn’t see me. There was a knock on my
door and I groaned, sitting up. “I got to go. Let Sam know we’re safe. I have some things I need to
take care of.”

Before he could answer, I ended the call and got from my bed and opening my door. Young blonde
hair and blue eyes greeted me. “What’s up kid?” I really didn’t want to be bothered at the moment.
I was tired of everything and everything and I was sure I would be with Elly through whatever
withdrawals were coming.

“Alex, can you...” She seemed to hesitate. “Can you please teach me how to heal?”

“I already told you—”

“Please?” she begged. “I couldn’t help my mom, but maybe I can help others in the future.”

I sighed. I wasn’t sure how to teach her. I really had just figured it out on my own. “How about we
get settled and then I’ll call Jack.”

“Ok.” She gave a sad nod, but understood. “Thanks.” She slowly turned and left down the hall and
I closed my door.

This wasn’t exactly my area of expertise. I was better at destroying than I was at fixing. And I was
a demon. Not a nephilim. What if I told her something wrong? What if I screwed up everything up
more? Made everything worse. All this shit was already my fault anyways.

I stepped out into the hall way and watched as Ali stumbled into the doorway of her room. She
caught herself against the door frame and concern filled me. Was she ok? Maybe she was just tired.
She had driven almost the whole way home.

“Ok.” I opened my knife blade and placed it to my wrist. “Ready?”

Ali nodded, sitting close to Jack. I pulled the blade over my wrist, blood easily starting to roll from
my skin and onto the table.

Ali reached out, her fingers touching my palm and she took a deep breath and closed her eyes.

“Do you feel where the flow of blood is coming from?” Jack asked.

“I think so,” she replied, crinkling her nose up in thought.

“Ok. Find a way to stop the flow,” Jack continued on. “Feel the body's energy trying to heal and
speed up the process.”

“H-How do you feel that?”

I smiled. He was better at teaching than I was. I would never have been able to show her. But she
needed to hurry up or I was just going to heal myself.

“You know how you can see Dad's wings? His halo?”

I gave an odd look. They could see that? And good ol’ Lu still had a halo, huh?

“And Alex has horns. What about it?”
My free hand went to my head. I did? I didn't even know that. Did all the demons have horns? Did I have a pointy tail too?

“Then you should be able to feel and see the energy in people. Their soul is usually in their chest. You can see that glow, can't you?’’

“Yes.”

So they could see souls too?

“Do you see how the glow has moved to where she's hurt. Your soul is what heals you. That's why if you get too badly hurt, you can't heal. Your soul will burn itself out,” Jack explained. I wasn't sure how he knew, but it made sense. “You need to feel its warmth. Help it work. Let it use you to help heal.”

I looked down at my wrist as a cooling feeling filled it and I watched as my skin came back together with a soft blue glow. That same blue glow that came from Lucifer's healing.

“Good job kid,” I muttered, holding my wrist up to look at it. “You're a natural.”

“That was small. How do I do something bigger?” she questioned. It caught me off guard a bit. Why did she want something more? I must not have hid my look well enough because her sapphire eyes met mine and she continued on. “How do I help my mom?”

“She's fine now, kid,” I lied. She wouldn't be fine. Not for a long time. I had Ketch keeping an eye on her as we spoke. She would be with someone twenty-four seven until I knew that she wouldn't hurt herself. “You don't need to trouble yourself. I'm here in the meantime.”

“Alex, she is completely shattered,” Ali said in a sharp tone. “You didn't have to drive all the way home because she was crying and in pain. There is more happening in her head than she will tell me. But she told you. I know she did. I need to help her. And I will find out how if you two won't show me.”

Her words held strength to them. Determination. It worried me if I were being honest. There was an edge to her. Something that said that no matter what the cost, she would find a way to accomplish this. If it cost her her life, she would do it. She had already given me her soul, I had to take her seriously. She would protect those she loved until her last breath.

They had taught the kid well. This kid was strong and rebellious and a fighter. She would bounce back from anything. Just like Elly. Almost... Like Elly.

“Let's not get ahead of ourselves,” I tried again.

“We have to start small,” Jack agreed with a nod. “You can't just rush into things.”

“Watch me.”
The hug from Dean had a tightness to it that said he had been worried. “You're all back? All safe?”

“As safe as we can be,” I replied before hugging Cas myself.

“The kid?” Cas questioned.

I bit my lip, unanswering. Cas gave a curious look, but Dean continued on before he could comment.

“And where's Elly?” He pushed his way further into the bunker.

“She's been in her room. I can't get her to leave it,” I explained, sighing deeply. I wished that I could. I wanted her back to her normal self. But I could only do as much as she would let me.

“Can I talk to her?”

He didn't wait for my reply before heading to the hall and knocking on her door and letting himself in.

“The girl,” Cas pressed now that we were alone. “What happened to Alex?”

I stayed silent, my head battling in telling the truth or a lie. I rolled my eyes. I couldn't lie to him. The moment he saw the kid, he would know. Her soul was already dulling and fading. I wasn't sure if that's how it normally worked, I had never stayed around someone who had made a deal.

“Cas, we couldn't save El. There was something wrong, I don't know what it was, but I couldn't heal her.”

“You couldn't heal her?” He gave an odd look, turning to fully face me. “How bad was she hurt?”

“The kid sold her soul.”

His blue eyes widened and he looked towards the hall as if he knew where she was. But the two kids had both gone into town to get lunch. They weren't here. Maybe he was searching for Dean.

“What on earth are you talking about?”

“To save El, the kid sold me her soul. It was the only way.”

“You didn't try to stop her?”

“I couldn't, Cas!” I sighed, my hands going to my hips. “You weren't there. You wouldn't understand.”

“You took a nephilim's soul.” He started pacing, his trench coat catching the air and floating behind him. “Do you even know what that could do?”

“Of course I don't Cas. No one does. It wasn't ideal, but what else could we have done?”

“Alex, you are testing the balance of the world exponentially. They aren't even supposed to be alive. They're both unnatural abominations that can destroy the universe if we aren't careful!”
“Big deal!” It was a lie. This was a big deal. This was a problem. I knew it was, but I just wanted to sweep it under the rug. It was easier to ignore it than to face it.

“A Alex, do you remember how Sam was after he lost his soul? Do you have any idea how bad that could be for a nephilim? Especially the child of Lucifer? Jack was nerve racking enough. But the girl without a soul...” he trailed off.

“It’s not that bad,” I tried again.

He stopped in his pacing and looked back at me. “It’s not that bad?” he asked in disbelief. “It’s not that bad?”

“We’ll get her back home and everything will be fixed. There’s hardly any monsters there. There won’t be anything to come after her there.”

“You don’t know that.”

“My hounds can’t jump dimensions. It’ll be fine.”

“You have hounds?” Ali’s voice said somewhere behind me. I turned to see Jack and her with several pizzas in hand for everyone. “Can I play with them? I’ve always wanted a dog.”

“Maybe I can let you play with them,” I said with a smile. “They don’t look like normal dogs though.”

“They three headed or something?” she asked, setting her several boxes on the table. Jack followed suit.

“Three headed dogs?” Jack asked curiously.

“Jack, why don’t you go get Dean and Ketch and Elly?” I suggested, taking his shoulders and pushing him towards the hall. “They’re in Elly’s room.”

“O-Ok,” he said, going to the door and opening it before disappearing behind it.

I turned back to the two that were left in the room, Ali giving me a confused expression. Cas looked angry if that were possible for the angel to feel. “Did I do something wrong?” the kid asked, looking at the angel’s whose eyes were tightly on her.

“Her soul’s fading, Alex,” Cas grumbled out.

“I did sell it.” Ali gave a shrug and I winced. She really should have been taking this more seriously. “I had to save my mom somehow. And it worked, didn’t it? And that’s the point of hunting. Saving people, hunting things, the family business.”

“That’s not how it works,” Cas shot back, continuing on before I could get a word in. “You keep your soul until your years are up. Then the hounds come and collect. It doesn’t fade away over time.”

I put a hand to my head and growled deeply making Cas shift uncomfortably. Interesting. Still didn’t like the fact that I was a demon. That could be fun to play with if things ever calmed down enough for all of us to have a moment of normal fun.

“So then I’m dying,” Ali mumbled, a grim expression over her face.

“Not necessarily,” I cut in. “You can live without your soul, but you won’t like it. You’ll be
heartless and cruel.”

Ali nodded and I glanced behind me at a door opening. Jack and Ketch stepped out, but that was all. Though, I was grateful for that. This fight could be pushed off for another time. I moved passed them as they dug into the pizza and went for the bedroom. I knocked on the door before slowly pushing it open.

Dean leaned up against the wall, holding Elly tightly on his lap. His fingers were playing with her hair as they quietly laid there. Elly didn’t seem to be crying at all, but her hand was a fist in his shirt, her head right over his heart beat. She looked more relaxed than she had in a long time. Dean had always been good at being a father figure. And I knew Elly needed it, having grown up without her’s.

“There’s pizza for lunch, if either of you were hungry,” I said as kindly as I could. “Elly, I can get you something else if you would like. I know we have some soup somewhere if that would be better.”

“I can cook you something too,” Dean offered gently, fingers still playing with her blonde locks. “I don’t mind.”

Elly shook her head and I frowned. I couldn’t remember the last time she had eaten. But she needed to. She couldn’t keep doing this. She needed to get out of here. She needed to do something. I wasn't sure what, but I would figure it out after lunch.

“El, you need to eat something. Even if it’s just some toast. It’s been days. Come on.”

She again shook her head and Dean’s eyes met mine in question. Had she told him anything? How much did he know? How badly did he think of me now?

“Elizabeth, we’re going to go eat now,” Dean instructed, order in his tone that was kind but also said that she did not have the choice.

Elly finally gave a nod and I watched as Dean found his way to the edge of the bed and got up, her still held in his arms. We made our way back to the main room where everyone was sitting and chatting, save for Cas who was still looking over Ali.

Ali jumped to her feet as Dean came into the room with Elly. “Is she ok?” Ali went around the table but stopped at a nod from Dean.

“Just tired,” he replied, taking a chair and sitting in it with Elly in his lap once again. She stayed curled up into him as he pulled a pizza box close to him. Ali sat back down and I took my own seat. “Time to eat, Elizabeth.”

She slowly sat up and brushed her hair from her face that needed a wash. But Dean wasn’t complaining. He passed her a piece of pizza and the whole room waited for her to take a bite before they began talking again.

“After lunch, I was thinking that we could go to the range,” I suggested, calling El’s attention to me. She didn’t answer though. Just looked at me blankly. “I have a few knives that I’ve sharpened up,” I lied. “Throwing gets rid of anger more than pulling a trigger, if you’re up for it.”

“I-I don’t know, Alex,” she whispered, shrinking a little further back into Dean. “I'm not in the mood.”

“It'll make you feel better,” I pressed.
Elly sighed. “Alright. I’ll shower and we’ll throw knives.”

“Can I try?” Ali spoke up. “It would be nice to do something fun for a change.”

I passed a knife to Elly who looked over it in her hand before pointing her attention to the target down range. She pulled her arm back before throwing the knife. There was a loud thunk and I smiled. She wasn’t as good with a knife as she was with a gun, but she had still hit the target. Just the very outer ring.

I stepped over to the kid and held out a knife to her as Elly came back to get another. Ali hesitated, but took it in her hand. I lead her in front of the target and guided her by her shoulders into the stance she should be in.

“I’ve never done this before.”

“I’ll teach you, kid. Keep your back straight,” I instructed. “Your body should be relaxed. And your left foot should be behind your right.” I nudged her foot with mine until she was standing correctly. “Holding the knife is just as important.” I pulled my own from my pocket and flicked it open. “You want to hold it like you would a hammer, ok?” I held out my hand for her to see. She nodded. “Now, you want to put it over your right shoulder, the point facing behind you.” I stepped back and away from her. “Don’t twerk your wrist too much. The more spin you put on it, the harder it is to make it stick.”

She took a deep breath and Elly came to stand beside me with a deep breath. This wasn’t helping her as much as I thought it would. But at least she was trying. She was out of the blasted bedroom, even if we were still in the bunker, it was a step forward.

Ali stood still for a moment in thought. Her arm slowly pulled back and she released the knife. It would be a lie if I said I wasn’t shocked. There was a thud and I blinked several times before laughing. Ali turned back with an excited air about her, though her face was more surprised than anything else.

“Bull fucking shit,” I laughed, receiving a disapproving look from Elly. I pushed the look off and grabbed another knife from the set, moving over to the kid. “Do it again.”

She hesitantly took the knife and turned back to look at the most perfect bullseye I had ever seen. I don’t even think that I could have thrown that well. With a deep breath, she took the stance that I had put her in and threw the knife.

Another echoing thud and the ring of metal on metal sounded through the room, I had to take a step or two forward to see what had happened. The first blade had fallen to the floor, the second blade perfectly in the same spot the first one had been.

I went over to the target and scooped the knife from the floor to see a large crack down the blade from how hard she had thrown the second. I pulled Elly’s several knives free and then went for Ali’s and struggled. I had to adjust my grip several times before I could pull the knife free from the block of wood.

“Again,” I said in disbelief passing her one of knives I held.

She nodded and waited for me to move out of the way before throwing it again. I looked to Elly who had a small, but real smile on her lips.
“She's a mini you,” I whispered softly as Ali fetched another knife from the set with a bright smile.

“I can't throw knives,” she said with a tiny laugh. “This is all her.”

“She's naturally gifted like you though.”

Elly shrugged. “My dad taught me to use a gun. You guys were the ones surprised when I could actually shoot. You wouldn't let me have a gun, if I recall. I was too innocent. I couldn't handle one.”

I laughed. “And I'm sorry. You should have had a gun the whole time. I admit.”

There was a brightness in Elly's soul now. It wasn't much, but it was a start. We would get her back to normal.

I looked back to where Ali stood, all of the usable knives now lodged into the target, all within the center circle.

“Alright kid.” She looked up at me with a smirk. “New challenge. Go get the knives.” Her eyes wandered me curiously, but she did as I said before coming back to me. I shook my head and went down to the target, turning to face her. “Throw,” I instructed.

The kid laughed nervously and I saw Elly stand up right from her slouch, dislike in her beautiful eyes.

“I'm not throwing a knife at you,” Ali said strongly. “What if I hit you?”

“I can heal myself,” I replied. “Throw the knife.”

“At what?” Ali looked back at her mom, but Elly didn't change expression.

“Stop me,” I said, reaching for my holster and pulling my gun free. Ali's eyes widened as I lifted the gun and took aim at her. Elly took a step forward, but paused as I waved my hand discreetly. Ali jumped with a small squeak, eyes fearful as she stared at me. There was a chip in the concrete wall behind her head. “Stop me,” I repeated when the ringing of the gunshot had come to an end.

The gun rang out again, the bullet whizzing past the kid’s head. Her hands shook as she tried to get a hold on a knife. Elly wore a disapproving look, but stood where she was.

Elly knew the importance of this. Knew that Ali had to learn it sooner or later. Ali had to understand.

The third gunshot finally snapped Ali back to herself and she sloppily threw the knife, it clinking off the side of the target and to the floor.

“Stop me,” I ordered again, pulling the trigger. Ali again jumped. “You're not relaxed.”

“How the fuck am I supposed to relax?!” Ali demanded as her hands struggled with a blade before letting it tumble to the ground with a clatter. She reached for another knife and I again pulled the trigger. There was a loud crash and I watched Elly step closer to her daughter whose hand was now bleeding freely from the bullet having collided with the knife, sending it flying from her hand.

Her eyes met mine, one a deep red that matched Lucifer’s and the other a brilliant gold like Jack’s. I smirked with a scoff and again pulled the trigger. Ali didn’t budge this time, the bullet now
grazing her cheek and making her hair blow about. Blood dripped down her face as well from her hand, but she didn’t seem to care.

She grabbed a knife and pulled it behind her shoulder. I shot again, the gun going off in my hand, but the kick back was harder than what I was used to. My hand was immediately empty, my gun clattering to the ground. My eyes went to my arm where my coat was pinned to the target. I reached for the knife, trying to pull it from the wood, but gasped at a searing pain in the palm of my hand.

A glistening silver blade greeted me, embedded in my hand and through to the wood. Before I could even process what was happening, there was something cold to my neck and I turned to face those mismatched eyes glaring at me. I was knocked off balance as my right foot was kicked aside and I dropped to my knees, a tight pull on my hand that was trapped to the target. Ali’s hand was steady as it pressed the knife back against my neck.

“Stopped,” she said, breathing hard.

I nodded and she relaxed her stance, turning away from me. I stood back up, taking the knife in my hand and pulled on it, but it wouldn’t budge.

I went for the one in my shirt, pulled it free and looked up to see Ali heading to her mom backwards, eyes still on me. For some reason anger pooled through me more than the feeling of being shocked or impressed.

I threw the knife at Ali and stared as she caught it, blade in hand, causing more blood to drip down her arm. Her eyes still hadn’t turned back to their normal blue color as she smiled. I watched as the blade turned a bright red and melted away from her hand.

Elly’s eyes widened and came to my face, as shocked as I felt. Elly opened her mouth to speak, but no words came out. Ali was powerful. Gifted. Dangerous. Not even Jack had picked that up that quickly. She picked everything up too quickly.

“Dear, go-go release Alex,” Elly finally got out, trying to usher her daughter to me by gently pressing on her back.

Ali’s eyes tightened on me but she obeyed, her wounds healing easily as she stepped closer to me.

She stopped in front of the target and looked over the knife with a small and silent laugh. She reached out and took the handle, comfortably unlocking it from the wood as if it hadn’t been stuck at all.

I gasped as the blade twisted in my hand before being pulled straight out and dropped to the floor with a clink.

“Wanna play again, Alex?” she taunted softly enough that Elly wouldn’t be able to hear her. “Maybe I can aim towards your head like you did to me. Wouldn’t that be fun, Alex?”

“That’s enough for today,” I replied strongly, clutching my hand to my chest as I healed it.

The pulsing pain didn’t fade away though. I still could feel the twist that she had purposefully used when she freed me.

And she had removed the blade so easily, as if there were nothing to it when I couldn’t remove it, her strength was more present than I had originally guessed.

She looked over me again before blinking her eyes back to their natural blue. And she was back to
her happy self.

It struck me oddly. She was a completely different person. Not that I was much better. There was something about the emotions flowing through you that made you give yourself up to something dark and primal and powerful. And I did my best not to let it happen often. It terrified me.

“That was so cool!” she said with a grin. “Is your hand ok, Alex? I'm sorry.”

“Fine,” I replied softly, still clutching it to me.

“This wasn't normal, Ketch,” I replied, looking over my hand that no longer had a mark through it as I ran it over his bare chest. “There's something very wrong. I thought she'd be able to help, but the longer she's here, the longer I'm afraid I'm making it worse. Maybe I should have just used Jack.”

He tossed my shirt across the bed. I put my face in the crook of his neck, nipping it softly.

“I'm being serious,” I grumbled, licking his ear. “What do we do with her? We can't just wait for her to snap. It's going to happen sooner or later. You didn't see how strong she was.” I pushed back against his chest to look into his eyes.

“Are you scared?” Ketch teased with a wink.

I rolled my eyes but sighed. “Maybe a bit,” I admitted, looking away so that he slid a hand under my chin to pull my gaze back.

He nodded with a more serious look. “Ok. I'll think about a solution. As for now, we don’t have much time. I’m going out.”

My eyebrows furrowed. “Going out?”

“Yes.” It was matter of fact.

“Doing what?” I pressed, running my hands along his chest again. God, sometimes it was like pulling teeth to get anything out of him.

“One of my contacts has an update on Lucifer is all.”

I nodded. “Ok.” Why was that so hard for him to tell me? “I can come along, if you'd like.”

“No.” It was harsh and made me look up at him, my hands stilling on the laundry. “They can smell a demon a mile away. Besides, shouldn't you be here with Elly?”

“I-I suppose so,” I got out, unable to hide the shock from my voice.

He had never not let me come with him. I was always welcomed wherever he went, but maybe the demon thing was fair. I wasn't exactly welcomed anywhere now. I was lucky that my own family had only tried to kill me and hadn’t succeeded.

“Good. That's settled then.”

I nodded and went back to teasing him. “We should just get straight to it then.” I said, pushing him onto the bed.
I climbed over him and took to kissing down his chest while my hands went to work on undoing his pants. I scooted down his legs to pay full attention to what I was doing, but stopped when I got his pants open. I smiled and started to laugh.

“Wow! That’s very pink.” I tried to stifle my laugh as best I could, but it wasn’t working.

Ketch draped an arm over his face and groaned, “The kid slips one red sock into the wash and turns everything pink.”
“How are you doing today?” I asked with a smile as Elly wandered into the main room for the first time without someone coaxing her. I stood and pulled her into a tight hug. “It's good to see you.”

“You saw me yesterday,” she muttered softly. I pushed her back to look at her and a small smile was on her lips. I pushed her hair behind her ears and placed a kiss to her head.

“Yes, but I don't get to sleep away the missing that I feel like you can,” I pointed out, tapping her lightly on the nose.

“I’m doing ok,” she replied in answer to my earlier question. “Didn’t sleep well and not in the mood for food,” she quickly added to stop me from entering the kitchen to find her something to eat.

“I'm sorry you couldn't sleep. Should have come out here. I'm up all fucking night long.”

Elly tipped her head to the side curiously. “What do you do with Ketch?”

“Usually I'll just research beside him while he’s sleeping. But he hasn't come home yet.”

“He's still gone?”

I nodded and we both took a seat at the table. Elly's hand took mine and I gave a half smile.

“What was he doing?”

“Said he had a lead on where Lucifer went.” I bit my lip and wished I could swallow my words as she stiffened at the mention of the name.

“Oh.” She nodded and wouldn't meet my gaze. “I see.”

“El, I'm sorry. I should have thought-”

“It's ok. Who knows what horrible things he could be doing? It's best to find him before his grace goes to his head. He's insufferable when he's in control of something. A real dick.”

I couldn't help but laugh through my nose a bit at the words. “I thought you beat that out of him.”

“I could never change him Alex.” Elly sighed. “He's who he is. He's been that way for thousands of years. I can't change that. Besides, I like powerful men. They're attractive.”

“Are they now?” I teased, rubbing the back of her hand with my thumb. There was a brightness to her that I hadn't seen in so long and it made me realize how much I missed it. “So, the whole prince of darkness thing had you at the beginning?”

“I was his before he knew I existed.”

I snorted, a hand going to my mouth. “You liked him from the tv show?”

“Oh yeah,” she replied with a nod and a growing smile. “It destroyed me when Dean killed him. I'm just happy that didn't happen.”

“Thanks to you, a lot of things didn't happen.”
“I still got you killed.”

My smile dropped and I lowered my hand. “I shot you. I think we can call it even.”

“Right.” She gave my hand a squeeze.

“You're a fucking badass, you know that?”

“No I'm not.” She rolled her eyes at me.

“You stood up to Micheal. Not even my brothers would do that. I think Sam's still too afraid of Lucifer to try anything around him.”

“Again, a dick with power.”

My smile returned. “Of course.” I glanced up the hallway, making sure that there wasn't anyone there before changing the subject. “El, is the kid doing ok?”

She looked confused and gave a shrug. “She seems to be. But she doesn't really talk to me. Lucifer would be your best bet if you wanted to know how Alex is doing.”

“About the other day. I'm sorry I pulled my gun on her.”

“I think she was ok with it. Besides, I know that she needs to learn this. I didn't teach her like I should have.”

“How were you supposed to have known?” I questioned softly. Elly shrugged. But I needed to push a bit more. “Did you notice her reaction when I did that to her?”

“I'm sure it was nothing,” she answered, obviously trying to push the situation away.

“El, I know you noticed it too. She wasn't herself. I'm worried about her.”

“What am I supposed to do about it? She barely talks to me as is. And I don't know enough about nephilims to know what to do? I barely know enough about angels to keep dickbag in line. I don't know how to keep tabs on my daughter. I know that sounds stupid and horrible, but... What am I supposed to do? I can barely take care of myself...” she trailed off, tears coming to her eyes.

I hushed her quickly. “I'm sorry. I wasn't trying to—to make you sad. I don't want you sad. Please smile again.”

But it didn't return. Her free hand wiped at her cheeks as the tears slowly began to fall. I bit my lip. What the fuck was I supposed to do? I just ruined everything.

Foot steps pulled me to the hall and I felt some relief as Ketch entered the room. He looked tired, as if he had been working hard. And there was a small few drops of blood on his tie. Where had that come from?

“Good morning love,” he said, placing a kiss to me head. “Pet.” He placed one to Elly's head as well before kneeling in front of her. “How are we feeling today?”

Elly sniffed and wiped at her cheeks again. “I'm ok.”

“Poppycock,” he accused with a kind smile. “What can we do to stop those tears, hmm?” He placed a hand under her chin and tipped her head down to look at him more. “Let's see. We could dance? I'm sure Alex has some music on her phone.” Elly shook her head. “Alright then. We could
cook. I can teach you how to make a custard tart.”

“You can bake?” Elly asked quietly, voicing my question.

“I'm better at creme brulees, if I'm being honest,” he answered, gently caressing her cheek. “How about it? Want to mess up a tart with me?”

Elly again shook her head, but a small smile had finally returned to her lips.

Ketch sighed. “Unfortunately I can only think of one other thing to make you stop crying.”

Elly gave a confused look. Ketch swiftly reached for her and she jolted, her hand ripped from mine. Her laughter filled the room as she fought against Ketch who was tickling her mercilessly.

“Stop!” she gasped out through the giggles. She tried to shove and kick him away, but he didn't budge. I laughed along to her addicting sounds as I watched. Her laugh was contagious. “Arthur, stop!”

“What's the magic word?” he asked with his own cackle, dodging her kick.

“I'm going to shoot you!” She was gasping for air. “Arthur!”

“That's not very nice,” he shot back. “What's the magic word?”

“Please!”

Ketch stepped back, leaving Elly breathing heavily with an amazingly bright smile on her lips.

“There it is,” he whispered with a deep breath. “Charming.”

“Oh, shut up. You're full of shit,” she giggled breathlessly as she swatted at him, making him step closer to me.

I slipped my hand into his and smiled. It was so good to see her laugh. It made me feel like everything was almost normal again. As if nothing had ever happened. Like I had never invited her here in the first place.

The smile fell from my face as I thought about that again. This was all my fault. Everything that had happened to her. My greed. My disloyalty. My obsession to have everything be perfect. If I had never brought her here in the first place they would all still be together, they'd all be happy. A family like they should be.

“I should be dead…” I mumbled to myself, low enough that I was sure no one had heard except me. I needed to say it, and saying it made it real.

I dropped Ketch’ hand, and started to walk towards our shared room.

“I’m going to try calling….him again.” I said, “Keep her entertained for me for a bit longer?”

“Oh,” Ketch answered. “I'll tell you what I know later then.”

“Thank you Alex!” Elly called after me.

I gave her a weak smile and walked away, pulling my phone out and dialed a number I hadn’t dialed since I’d woken up a demon. I was going to be luckier if he answered than I ever would be if Lucifer called me back. He hadn’t answered me since I’d called him saying I was…. what I was. I
put the phone to my ear and waited to see if Cael would answer this time. It rang and rang and of course went to voicemail. I sighed.

“Cael. It’s me again. We need to talk.” I pinched the bridge of my nose. “Elly and Lucifer are back in town. And they brought another Nephilim with them. Their daughter.” I breathed, “She sold me her soul and I don’t know what’s happening to her but it’s draining away and I think she’s….” I paused, unable to find the words, “I think she’s in danger Cael. Please just call me or answer or just show up or something. We need your help.” I hung up and put the phone into my pocket. I doubt he would listen to what I’d said, he had been MIA since I’d woken up. Not even Cas could find him.

“I need you Cael,” I whispered, praying to him, “We’re in deep shit here and it was your idea to begin with.”

There was the soft whoosh of wings, “That’s all you needed to say, little star.”

I looked up into his dark eyes, “You ass! You were waiting for me to beg, weren’t you!”

“It would only be proper to wait for the demon queen to beg for an angel’s help.” He was being smug about this whole thing, “And it wasn’t my idea.”

“No, of course not.” I huffed, “It was Chuck’s idea.”

“What do you need, Alexandria?” He folded his tanned arms over his chest.

“Don’t call me that.” I poked a finger at his chest. “I don’t need your sass.”

“I thought that’s why you liked me. You wouldn’t keep calling me otherwise.”

“I like you because you saved my life.” I grumbled, “Not that that matters now.”

“That’s a little shallow. But I wouldn’t expect much more from a demon.” I jumped slightly as he pulled me into a hug. I wasn’t sure how to react or what would be appropriate to do.

But I didn’t fight his hold. Instead I eventually found myself relaxing into it and hugging him back. “I missed you too, Cael.” I said softly, “Answer your damn phone next time.”

“What would be the fun in that?” he asked in a quiet voice before finally releasing me. “You mentioned a nephilim? Someone besides Jack.”

“Yes, a girl named after me.” I said, serious again. “It was a complicated and very stressful situation and she sold me her soul. Since then it’s been….” It was hard to describe, “Deteriorating.”

“I’ve never heard of that happening before. Are you sure that’s right?”

“Yes. Cas has seen it happening.” I motioned for him to follow me back down the hall towards the main room, “And she’s been acting different. Harsher.”

“Like how your brother was?”

“Yes…” I stopped and looked back at him. “How do you know that?”

“You pray to me constantly. I can’t answer all of them. I’d never be able to leave your side,” he replied easily. “I do always listen, though. I know when something is too much for you and when you can handle it.”

“That’s why you ignored me for so long?” I questioned, “You were waiting until I couldn’t handle
“This time around, yes,” he replied with a nod, following me down the hall. “I didn’t much care for you in the beginning.”

“You were just following orders,” I nodded, “Right.”

We were getting close to the main room again and I halted our conversation about Ali. It could wait until he could see her face to face and until Elly was somewhat more stable.

“What’s wrong? I’m here to help, star.”

“Maybe now isn’t a good time,” I muttered, a hand going to my head. Maybe his presence wouldn’t be wanted. Maybe I didn’t really need his help right away. Maybe I could keep him in my back pocket until later.

“Are you sure?” His eyebrows rose as he looked over me.

“Alex, who are you talking to?” a small voice said from behind us.

We both turned to see Ali who was leaning against the door frame of her room, rubbing the sleep from her eyes. She wore a rather large shirt that fell off of one shoulder and I guessed it was probably her father’s.

I sighed. There was no escaping it now.

“Come here,” I whispered, motioning her to me. She slowly came over and I took her shoulders, turning her to face the angel. “This is Cael. He’s my angel, like Cas is to Dean.”

“Nice to meet you,” Ali said, holding her hand out to him. He looked over it curiously for a moment before reaching out to take it.

I watched them for a second, “He’s here to help with your training and help us get the monster count down.” I said, “He’ll be staying for a short while but will be on call otherwise.”

“So, I’m not training with Jack anymore?” She dropped his hand and looked towards me questioningly.

“You’ll be training with both. Jack is good with simple things like healing and teleporting out of bad situations, but Cael is a fighter. One of the first angels ever created after the arch’s.”

“Oh.” She smiled. “Well, I can’t say I won’t enjoy spending more time with you.”

My eyes widened slightly and I glanced between them. Cael didn’t seem to notice the tone in her voice. But I certainly had.

“Ali’s very good with knives, but she lacks in the gun department,” I explained, eyes tight on the girl.

“Has anything been hunting you?” Cael asked, pulling my attention back to him.

“Hunting me?” I asked quizzically, “Like what?”

“You have two nephilims hanging around. I’m surprised this place isn’t swarmed.”

“So more people want to kill me then?” Ali spoke up, wrapping her arms around her.
“As long as you’re in this world things will want to hunt you.” I said, “Learning everything you can is the only way to protect yourself.”

“I’m sure I can handle it.” Her facial expression shifted immediately to a cocky smile that matched Lucifer’s to a T.

“Good.” I nodded, “Cael I’ll show you to where everyone else is. I bet they’d love to see you again.”

He had seen enough of her to know what was happening by now. Or at least, he had an idea. I was sure that Elly would be happy to see him too. There was no point in not letting him see them now that Ali had.

We stepped into the room and Elly got to her feet in a heartbeat. “Cael?”

His eyes grew confused as he looked over her and I wasn't sure if it was because of the age difference or if he could tell she was on thin ice emotionally and physically, but he almost looked afraid to touch her as she came over. He timidly hugged her and she gave a grin.

“I never did get to thank you for everything,” Elly continued. “You saved me.”

“It was a pleasure, lamb.” He said softly.

A light blush came to her cheeks, giving them more color than I had seen in them in a long while. Maybe she needed to see him. Maybe seeing old faces would bring back memories of a better time.

“Alex been ringing your ear off?”

His eyebrows furrowed together as if he were trying to understand what she meant by that. Finally deciding on an answer, he nodded. Elly smiled.

“You going to be staying around for a bit?”

“I am here to help your daughter with her powers,” Cael explained, shoving his hands into his jeans pockets. “If that is alright with you.”

“Of course.” Elly nodded.

My attention was pulled away as Ketch snaked his arm around my waist. “She seems to be improving,” he whispered in my ear. I nodded in agreement, leaning into him slightly. He teasingly bit at my ear and I shivered. “And you shouldn't be dead.”

My eyes widened and I felt a dire need to shrink away. He had heard me. I didn't need him knowing that. He didn't need to know how I felt. That I wanted my very own destruction. That I was almost begging for it.

“You seem troubled, Elizabeth,” I caught Cael saying. “Is there anything I can help you with?”

“I'm ok,” she whispered quietly.

Cael shook his head and reached a hand out to her, gently touching her forehead. She closed her eyes and I could only guess what she was letting him see. And it made a spark of jealousy shoot through me that she was letting an almost stranger see more of her pain than she was letting me. But then again, I had torn apart her marriage and taken her daughter’s soul. It was only fair.

“I see,” Cael muttered softly, lowering his hand. “Can I help in any way?” Elly shook her head and
he nodded. “Let me know if there is.”

Curiosity had overtaken me enough that I wanted to watch Cael work. Despite everything that had happened between us, I didn't know much about him.

“When do we get to practice magic?” Ali asked, shaking out her hands and bouncing on the balls of her feet.

“Your powers aren't magic,” Cael grumbled with a roll of his dark eyes. “And before we use your powers,” -the word was still said in a correcting tone- “you need to know hand to hand combat.”

“I know hand to hand combat,” she replied boredly, stopping her movements. “My dad and I took classes.”

“But you have never used it before in an actual hunt, correct?”

“Only ever been on one.”

Cael glanced over me and I gave a shrug. “Elly didn't want her to,” I explained. Elly had taken to being in bed again today. And I couldn't blame her in the slightest.

“If you think you're ready, then show me.”

Ali looked a bit confused. But he seemed to have the same idea of teaching her that I did. It was better to just dive into it. Shove her into the situation. You could teach her, but she wouldn't really learn unless it was applied.

“Show you how?” she questioned, stepping away from the angel slightly. “I don't want to fight a friend.”

“I am not here to be your friend.” Cael rolled his eyes and I watched as Ali smirked a bit. “You will not like me, but the more you hate me the more you will learn.”

“I doubt you could make me hate you, pretty boy.”

Cael's head tipped to the side and he looked at her curiously. It almost made me smile. He had obviously never been hit on before.

“You can see my true form. You're not afraid?”

Ali shrugged. “No, not really. Besides, I can pick and choose what I want to see when it comes to angels. Your halo is bright and your wings are beautiful. They remind me of a hawk.”

“A hawk, huh?” I asked, “That’s fitting.”

I smiled a little as Cael’s face developed a slight blush. It was an odd thing for him but it seemed he understood that she was flirting with him now. Interesting.

“You said before that I have horns right?” I was curious now. “What else?”

Ali turned to face me and looked over me. “You didn’t know you had horns?”

“No,” I smiled, “I thought I just held the pitchfork.”
Ali’s eyes danced over me for a moment as if she were trying to decide what to say. “Well... When I take all of the filters away, your skin is ashen. Like you’ve been burnt. And you also have wings. But I think they’re more bat like than a bird. And your horns kind of spiral like a rams. And then...” She trailed off and pointed to her mouth as if she wasn’t sure how to explain it. “You have like... Cael, how do I describe that?”

“A smile full of knife like teeth that goes to her ears?” Cael offered with a huff.

“Yeah. That.” Ali gave a nod.

“Do I have a pointed tail too?” I was joking at this point, although what she was describing sounded pretty awesome.

“No.” Ali glanced back at Cael again as if asking for help, but turned back when he didn’t look like he was going to supply her with more. “But your eyes are like-ummm- they’re just fire. And they glow more when you’re upset. Like when my mom was hurt, the flames were huge.”

This made me think. I’d never seen my true form before, I’d been too afraid to look at it or I had just been avoiding it. “What do they look like now?”

“Just barely flickering,” Ali continued on. “They’re more piercing grey than anything else, but there’s a small golden flame flickering around the edges. Like it’s just waiting for more to fuel it. They also become blue flames after you’ve spent time with Ketch.”

“Spent time?” I questioned, immediately regretting the answer.

“Yeah. You know.” A blush came to Ali’s face as she scratched at her head.

I felt a blush creep across my cheeks as well, “That’s uh...I think that’s enough of that.” I turned to Cael, “Show her how quick an enemy can be.”

“Wait...” Ali had no other time to say anything else before Cael had knocked her to the ground. He crouched above her, hand resting inches above her throat. He wouldn’t hurt her, but she needed to see how quick he could be. I nodded and watched as he helped her back up.

“Don’t take your eyes off your enemy.” I said, sliding a chair from the table and straddling the back of it, “Again.”

And again, Cael took her down. He was faster than most of the other angels. More battle driven. He was going to be perfect for this lesson. I watched as again and again, Ali fell to the ground.

“Again.” I spoke for the tenth time.

Ali got to her feet, a light sweat over her face. Bruising had begun to form on her back where her tank top hadn’t been covering. She wiped a hand across her forehead before sweeping her long hair out of her face and into a ponytail. She shook out her hands a bit and stretched her neck before getting into a more ready stance. I smiled, she would get him this time. I knew she would.

And sure enough, this time when Cael rushed her, it was Cael that ended up on his ass instead. It had been almost too quick for me to see but Ali had ducked below his reaching hands and swiped her leg under his feet, making him lose balance. I smirked as he looked shocked. She was a very quick learner. I looked at the smile that spread across her face as she stood from where she’d been crouched.
“Great job, kid.” I congratulated her, “Do it again.”

She rolled her eyes, but held her hand out to the angel and helped him to his feet. His eyes were still surprised, but quickly shifted with a smirk. He didn’t give her time to react. In a blink, I would have missed it. She was back on the floor, Cael sitting over her with legs on either side of her, hands pinned above her head.

“Ass,” she grumbled as one of her legs locked around his and pulled, dragging his knee away from her body and making him falter slightly in his balance. Her other leg came up, her knee hitting him hard enough to make him collapse on top of her. She shoved him away and rolled onto him, knees pinning his upper arms down. One of her hands took a handful of his hair and ripped his head to the side and I saw him wince.

“Ali.” I was firm when I said her name, “That’s enough. I think we’re done with training for today.”

She didn’t move though. Kept him right there as she tried to catch her breath.

“Ali.” I said again, the demon now slipping into my voice.

She glanced up at me with those eyes again. The red and gold that made something in me uncomfortable.

“Let him go.” I stayed firm, she couldn’t know I felt that way, “Now.”

She exhaled deeply and her fist released and untangled itself from the angel’s light blonde hair that had grown out a bit more from the last time he had been around. She removed herself from his chest and stepped away from him, her arms clutching to herself as if she had returned to being Ali and not whatever she was when she had those eyes.

“Thank you, you can go rest somewhere if you’d like.” I stood from my chair, “I’d like to speak to Cael alone anyway.”

She didn’t speak, just left the room as quickly as she could.

“You see what I mean now, ya?” I asked as soon as she was out of earshot.

He sat up and an arm rested on his knee as he stared after her. He was quiet and looked like he was in thought. Finally he seemed to have found his voice. “You said you wanted strong. You’ve got it.”

“I didn’t want out of control.” I sighed, extending a hand to help him up, “And I’m afraid that’s where she’s heading.”

“Should we keep training her then?” I pulled him to his feet and had to adjust my stance to see his face as his height towered over me.

“Yes. She needs to know this stuff.” I took a step back, “We’ll just have to be careful not to push her over too much. I don’t need a broken Nephilim on my hands.”

“Did this start after the deal you made?”

“Yes. After she agreed to give me her soul.”

“Which part of her soul did you take?”
“What do you mean?” I was very confused by his question, “We take the whole soul, not parts.”

“She’s not human, Alex.” He moved away from me and to sit down.

“So what?” I turned to face him again, “She has more than just the one?”

“No. It’s a mix. Human and angel. Human souls you can’t split. But this one... You could potentially be leaving her with only angel left.” He folded his tan arms over his chest.

“Fuck,” A hand went to my head, “We only take human souls.” This was a problem. This was a huge problem.

“You could also be taking all of it.” He gave a shrug. “She could be struggling to keep hold of her grace, that could be her reaction to it being stripped away. She becomes angry and worked up.” That did nothing to make me feel better. What had I fucked up? What was I doing to her? What universes was I killing off? “But I’m not sure which one is more likely.” His eyes were still trained on the spot where she had been. “We just need to keep an eye on her. I see where your concern is coming from, but she’s a good kid.”

My eyebrows furrowed slightly. “Are you saying you like her?”

“What?” His eyes finally tore away from her shadow and came to my face.

“You like her.” I stated this time, “You have never said that about anyone before.”

“I never said I liked her. I don’t even like you most of the time.”

“But you do like me sometimes and that’s all I needed to know.” My tone switched to teasing. He looked confused. It was like he was still new to all of this, like Cas was at the beginning. “We have got to get you like a translator or something.”

“I am not good with emotions. They take me longer to process,” he explained softly. “I don’t spend much time around humans or other angels.”

“Well, get used to it. I’m gonna need you to stick around a bit longer.”

“Just for her or is there something else?”

“I want you to be part of our team, Cael.” I shrugged a little, “I could use another angel. A strong one too.”

“I’m not strong. If you want strong, get Lucifer back.”

“You’re stronger than Cas.”

He stared at me for a long moment. “I’ll stay as long as I feel necessary. You won’t need much of my help.”

I nodded and started to leave the room. “We’ll just have to see about that, huh?”

I shifted in the kitchen chair, reading through some old files again. It was just about the only thing I could do while everyone else was sleeping. My eyes shot up over the top of the folder as I heard footsteps down the hallway. Maybe Elly had had a nightmare again, she had been having them frequently. I stood to intercept her but froze in the light as I realized the steps were heavier than
hers. This wasn’t Elly. I quickly pushed myself against the wall of the kitchen and flicked the light off, blending into the stillness as much as I could to remain unseen. Who was this?

I steadied my breathing as they got closer, becoming as still as a statue as they passed the open door. I looked out after their steps were a few feet away from me. The figure was familiar to me. I scrunched my nose, where had he gone this time? I followed Ketch down to the room we shared, being sure to remain quiet and in the darkness.

I glanced around the doorframe as the bathroom light clicked on, making it the only light in the room. I watched as Ketch tossed his suit coat aside and began to unbutton his sleeves. In the dim lighting I could make out something dark coating his hands and his shirt seemed to be splattered in it as well. And he didn’t toss the clothes into the hamper, he threw them into the trash can by his dresser.

I could smell it now. The sickly rusted iron smell of blood. It was strong and could be the only thing that was covering him. What had he been doing?

His tie and pants followed the shirt, but the rest of what he was wearing was joining his coat. They must have been clean, or would be able to be washed later. He rummaged around in his dresser for a moment before a new light flickered on in the room and he tossed a match into the trash with his clothes before heading for the bathroom and turning on the shower. He came back and picked up the burning bin and took it into the bathroom as well.

I stalked into the room as quietly as I could. I took his jacket in my hands and ran my fingers over it. It wasn’t as covered as his shirt and hands had been but there were still small specs of blood here and there.

I could make out the sound of the shower water hitting the plastic of the trash bin. He must have been putting out the fire. Washing away the ashes and making a smell of synthetic fibers fill the air sickeningly. I slowly stepped towards the door and glanced in to see him using the shower head to clean the drain of the shower before slowly stepping in himself, rusty brown slowly unpainting his body and spilling onto the shower floor.

Had he been hunting? Why had he gone alone? Not that he couldn't handle himself, but it was always better to go in pairs. You never knew what could happen in a hunt if you weren't careful. I hid back behind the wall when he turned to face the doorway. I was overreacting. I was sure of it. He was probably just hunting. Maybe he had found a case to do. He had been looking bored lately. And I had been spending so much time with Elly and her daughter and the angel, I was sure he felt ignored and that wasn’t fair. I really should have been paying more attention to him. Maybe he and I could go on a hunt. Just the two of us. We hadn't really ever done that before. It would be fun and it would be nice to get out of the bunker. I couldn't remember the last time I had seen the sun. Not that I much enjoyed or cared for the sun in any way shape or form.

"Ketch, did you just get in?" I called as if I had just stepped into the room. "I didn't hear you come in."

"I'm sorry love. I should have told you. I'll be out in a moment. Wait for me like a good girl."

I gave a confused look, but ignored the words. Did he not want me in there? He had already burned everything. Was he still covered in blood? Why did he not want me to see?

"Arthur, you never did tell me about what you found out about Lucifer. What did your contact say?"
"Rumors that he's been trying to get into different places. Tried heaven again, but I'm sure I don't have to tell you about how they kept him out."

"So, they know he's back?"

"I would assume so love."

I went and sat down on the edge of my bed and sighed. "That's a problem then, isn't it? We're going to have angels all over the place."

"It's possible," he agreed.

The water hushed and I could hear the shower door open and him step out.

"And if heaven knows, then I'm sure that hell will know now as well." He didn't answer me. Just came into the room with a towel wrapped around his waist. Why was he hiding from me so often now? I felt like I didn't know anything about him anymore.

"It would make the most logical sense for that to be true."

"Arthur?" I asked, calling his attention fully to me. His name was a bitter sweet thing. I knew he only cared for it when we were having sex. Other times he knew that something serious was happening. His silver eyes looked uncomfortable and I was only able to think that maybe I was about to say something wrong. "Would you like to go on a hunt with me? Just us two?"

His features softened and a slight smile appeared on his face. "I would enjoy that love. Do you have one in mind?"

"Not yet. But I have all of time to find one. I'm sorry if I haven't been paying the most attention to you. I haven't meant to ignore you." I glanced down at my hands in my lap that had a bit of blood on them from messing with his jacket. I rubbed at the red streaks to make them disappear.

"Your friend needs you. I understand that."

"But it's not fair to you."

"Life isn't always fair." I glanced up at him and he came to sit beside me, his hand taking my knee. "It's a lot for you to focus on. I don't expect all of your attention all of the time. It's not fair to anyone if I steal you away."

"What if I want you to steal me?"

He chuckled sweetly, giving my knee a squeeze "What are you saying?"

My eyes flickered over the man I chose to love. Those poisonous mercury pools drowned me. And those hands that were rough with hard work and stained black with blood that were so gentle with me.

"Can I keep you?" I asked softly, feeling my chest grow tight as my heart fluttered. How did he always make me forget the serious conversations we were having? Why did I always feel like I was melting when I was near him?

His hand left my knee and slid up my body, adding enough pressure to make me lie back into the bed. His fingers slid over my pulse, holding me in place as his lips captured mine up. His body was warm as his weight blanketed over me.
“It’s not fair that you’re already undressed,” I teased, breaking the kiss and pulling lose the corner of the towel that was holding the rest closed.

“You’re right. We should fix that.” The words were almost a growl.

His hands roughly took to my waist, his lips taking mine. I was surprised when his tongue pushed past my lips, sending the sweet tang of whiskey with it. Had he been drinking again? We didn’t have anything that hard in the bunker. I reached a hand up to caress his chest but it was firmly grasped by the wrist and held to my side. We were already fighting for dominance. That was fine with me. I was quick to slip from his grasp and slide a hand down his chest and traced that slight V that was oh, so sensitive. His lips broke from mine, a groan whispering across them.

“Must you do that?” he breathed against my neck.

“I like watching you get all…” I traced a finger over his semi hard cock, “Bent out of shape.”

He stared down at me with deadly silver eyes, trying to control the lust in them as I continued to touch and tease. I smirked at him, reaching up to kiss his neck softly. Another groan passed his lips, it was low and sent a wonderful shiver through me.

I slipped my free hand into the pocket of the suit jacket that still sat on the bed next to us. I fished around for a bit while I kept him distracted with talented fingers and little nips. Soon enough I found what I’d been hoping for. A pair of silver handcuffs. I couldn’t keep the smirk off my face. I released him, receiving a displeased moan, but not waiting long enough for him to fully complain. I was quick to flip us, putting me on top. I was even quicker to slip the handcuffs around his wrists and between the slits of my headboard. I left a quick kiss on his lips when I’d succeeded, loving the look of surprise on his face.

“I can’t believe I let you do that.” Ketch mumbled.

“What do you want me to say, Arthur?” I straddled his hips, “I love seeing you all tied up and ready for me to play with.”

I watched his molten eyes as I slowly licked my hand, making sure it was more or less dripping before taking him in my hands again. I started slow. Lightly touching and teasing. I ran my fingers over him easily and softly, I watched as his hands tightened into fists as I took a turn to play with his balls. His eyes closed and he sucked a breath in. It was good to have this control over him. He was good, but I was the fiercer dom. I kissed just above his waist line.

“Alex..please.” It was a breathy moan.

“I’ve only just started.” I licked just above the tip.

I watched as his chest sharply rose as I gave a gentle kiss to the head. I kept one hand underneath, using it as support as I left soft kisses all the way along it. I kept my eyes on his as I kissed around the tip again, opening my lips just enough to squeeze around it. I watched his eyes close and loved the sound of the groan he made. It meant I was doing my job right. I licked my lips, making them as wet as I could, and ran them over the full length. Slow and steady, dragging out the motion to the point where I almost wasn’t moving. Still watching his every move, I pulled just the tip into my mouth, making a tight ‘O’ with my lips and dragging my tongue underneath as I sucked on it.

Slowly and slowly, I pulled more into my mouth, until I had the whole thing soaking wet. I bobbed my head back and forth, leaving my tongue to drag coarsely along the bottom and dragging every moan and plead out of this man. It was amazing to have this control. To be able to have him so
easily wrapped around my fingers that he slipped into Latin and broken Enochian while asking for more.

This was going to be almost too much fun for me.

“We’ll be out of town for a few days,” I explained to Elly and gave a kiss to her head. She nodded, hugging the pillow to her chest. “Ketch found us a hunt.” She frowned. “El, it’ll be ok. It’ll only be for a bit. I’ll kill the monster and come right back.”

“I know,” she whispered softly.

“El, you need to get out of this room. Go spend time with your daughter. I know she misses you and as much as she loves Jack and Dean, I don’t think she can stand another black and white western marathon with them.” Elly’s lips picked up in a small smile. “I bought you two tickets to a movie tonight. Go have fun. Forget about life for a while. You can use my car.”

“Ok. Thank you Alex.”

“You’re welcome, hun.” I ruffled her hair and she laughed. “Please try to stay out of bed. The bed is meant for sleeping only right now. Do you understand?” She nodded. “Good. I’ll text you when we get there.”

I left the room and took one of the bags that Ketch handed me. “Do you think she’ll be ok?” he asked in a whisper.

“Ali!” I heard El call from the bed room. “Want to see a movie?”

“I think she’ll be fine,” I answered softly with a smile.
I took a deep breath, attempting to still my racing heart. I clutched my gun tightly to my chest and licked my dry lips. I was huddled down below the window, and pushed myself up enough so that I could see into the house that Ketch had disappeared into earlier. It had been silent for what felt like ages as I had stayed by his bike boredly. Gun shots had awoken me from my stupor.

Through the lace curtains I could make out a figure moving, but I couldn't place who or what it was and I wanted to hit myself for not paying attention to what Ketch had said about what we were hunting.

I ducked back under the window as the figure turned to face me, as if they had sensed that I was there. I made myself as small as I could. I knew they would be coming to check the window. I closed my eyes, listening to my heart beat intensely in my chest, my breath held.

“I thought you read all of my notes,” Ketch accused.

“I may have lightly skimmed them.” I shot him a small smile in the mirror and he rolled his eyes before turning to face me.

“Let me handle them. No offense-”

“-If you say it’s because I’m a girl, I will-”

“-but I don’t want you hurt,” he continued on, making the words freeze in my mouth. I blushed slightly and gave a nod, brushing my bangs from my face.

Why hadn’t I read those notes? It wasn’t normal for me to not be prepared. But Ketch had been so insistent that he would take care of all of it that it hadn’t occurred to me that it might be something dangerous we were hunting. Not that any monster wasn’t dangerous, but with his confidence... Fuck.

After what felt like years, I opened my eyes and released my breath, my lungs recovering from their gentle burning. I dropped my clip from my gun, checking again if it was loaded even though I knew it was. My anxiety had taken over and was stronger than normal. Usually I could ignore it or push it down, but for some reason I was more worried about this hunt now.

I pushed up again to glance through the window once more and a scream caught in my throat at a pair of eyes that met mine. In a moment of instinct, I lifted my gun and fired, shattering the glass. I didn’t bother brushing it from my hair as I rose to my feet and climbed through the window.

My jaw clenched as my knee caught some glass in the window frame and blood began to run down my leg from my now torn jeans. I shoved the feeling of sticky warmth away and lifted my gun to face a now empty room.

My blood rushed in my ears as my eyes calculated my new surroundings. Small sitting room. Empty. As if there hadn’t been someone here. I exhaled a puff of air and silently made my way towards the kitchen, where a light was on.

With swift foot steps, I rounded the corner and came face to face with a gun. My stomach lurched and I raised mine, only to be met with resplendent eyes. I lowered my gun and Ketch lowered his.

“I thought I told you to stay by my bike,” he surmised.
“I heard gunshots. I got worried,” I answered in a clearly lower tone than what he was using.

“There’s nothing here. We need to go back to town and review what’s been going on.” Ketch strutted passed me, but halted when I didn’t follow. He turned back, his eyes searching over my being before he continued on. “If you can’t walk, I can carry you.”

It took a moment for understanding to come to me and I looked down at my knee and saw my jeans a deep maroon color. “I’m fine. Ketch, there’s something here.”

He strode back across the room and to me. “I thought I saw something too, but I didn’t. I cleared the whole house. We might need to lay low for a bit.”

“I saw it, Arthur. These eyes. In the window. That’s why I shot my gun.”

The use of his first name turned his expression serious and he lowered his voice. “You’re sure.”

“Yes,” I answered exasperatedly. “It was a woman. Clear as day.”

“ Alright. I’ll check again. Stay here.” His instructions were firm and I rolled my eyes.

“This isn’t my first hunt, Ketch.”

“You don’t even know what we’re hunting. You’re lucky it hasn’t killed you yet if what you said was right.”

“What are we hunting?”

Ketch exhaled sharply, deeply irritated that I hadn’t read all of the research he had provided me with before we had left the bunker. “A fucking Wraith. Alex, next time take this more seriously. What’s wrong with you?”

He turned away from me, leaving a pain in my chest. I bit my lip in shame and looked to my feet as his footsteps fell away. He was right. What was wrong with me? I was getting cocky. I was being stupid. If I was meant to rid the world of monsters, then why the hell was I not working hard on it? Maybe I had been too-

Stifled crying broke up my pity party and I curiously glanced around the room before my eyes settled on a kitchen cabinet beneath the sink. I walked towards it and knelt down, my fingers taking the wooden frame and pulling open the small door.

Scared blue pools stared at me, startled, and the crying immediately stopped. A young girl no older than five or six was holding her knees to her chest, her cheeks red and damp from the stream of tears.

“Don’t be scared,” I said quietly, a smile crossing my lips. “I’m here to help you. What’s your name, hun?”

“Maggie,” she whispered in a stronger voice than I had thought she’d use. “Where’s my mommy? She told me not to come out until she came back to get me.”

I glanced up at a creek in the floorboards above my head. “I’m sure she’s fine,” I answered softly. “Let’s get you out of here, ok?”

“Is the bad man gone?”

“Bad man?” I whispered, my eyes returning to the floor above me.
“Mommy said that a bad man had been paid to kill her because my daddy was mad.”

My eyes went back to the child’s face and I did my best to smile again. “A bad man isn’t going to hurt you or your mommy. Maggie, let’s get you outside, ok? We’ll see if we can find your mom. I’ll keep you safe until then, ok?”

Maggie nodded and held out her arms to me. I scooped her up from under the sink and carried her towards the front door and silently went outside. A million questions were running through my head as the young girl clung to me.

The eyes in the window matched the young girl’s. Just as frightened. And I had never known Wraiths to ever have children before. Maybe the Wraith wasn’t the woman in the house. Maybe the Wraith was another creature in the house and we had come just in time.

There was a loud echoing crack from a gunshot and the girl jumped in my arms, hiding her face into my shoulder. “Shh...” I cooed softly. “It’s alright.” She began crying again, whimpering about her mom. “Everything’s alright, Maggie.”

The front door opened and my arm shot up, my gun ready for whatever was going to come out of that house. But the form of Ketch relaxed me and I lowered my weapon, putting it back in my holster and shifting to get a better grip on the kid.

Ketch got closer and his steps faltered as he noticed the child I was holding. There was a flicker of something in those eyes. Some emotion that I couldn’t quite place.

“It’s taken care of,” he whispered as he reached me. “We need to get the kid to the police station. They can take care of it from there.”

“We can’t just leave her,” I shot back. A dark look covered his face and he rubbed at his chin. “I am not going to leave her alone. Especially-” I broke off and mouthed the remaining words to him. Especially if you just killed her mother.

“What are we going to tell the cops?” he demanded.

“Maggie, dear. Where is your father?” I asked as kindly as I could, brushing her dark curls from her face. She only hid further into my shoulder.

“He lives somewhere else. Mommy said they were fighting too much to live together anymore.”

“What if she’s a you know what?” Ketch grumbled over to me. “We need to take care of the job.”

“You are not-” I sighed, turning away from Ketch. “Maggie, I’m going to ask you to do a silly thing for me, can you do that?” She nodded and I again shifted my hold on her. She was getting heavy. “Ok. I’m going to have Arthur here give you a coin. I need you to tell me if it hurts when you touch it, ok?”

“Ok.” She sniffled and sat up a little bit, her tiny hand outstretched to Ketch who was digging through his jacket for something silver. When he found a few pieces of silver and placed one into her hand. She looked over it curiously and didn’t seem to be in any discomfort. “It doesn’t hurt.”

“Would you like to keep that?” She closed her hand rapidly and pulled it to her chest before Ketch had a chance to protest. I smiled. “Maggie, we’re going to call some police officers to come help and they’ll call your daddy to come get you.” I began walking off in the direction that Ketch’s bike was and he followed stiffly. “I need you to do something for me when the police officers do come though. They will be asking you a lot of questions, alright? I need you to tell them something for
me. Can you be a big girl and tell them for me?"

She nodded again.

“We just found her wandering down the road,” I explained to an officer at the nearest station. He’d introduced himself as Baker. He wrote down what I was saying into a notepad, eyes coming back to my face every now and then. “Said her mom had been hurt or something.”

“And what were you doing out there?”

“We were just on a ride. Thought it was odd for a young girl to just be out in the middle of nowhere all alone,” Ketch continued on for me.

"And how did you injure your knee?"

"Tripped."

There was the loud slamming of a door, making me jump as I looked up to see a very well put together man. He dropped to his knees as Maggie raced toward him and snatched her up in a hug as her cries of Daddy! echoed around the small station.

I felt a smile cover my lips, but the young girl’s words returned to me and my smile fell. Someone had paid a bad man to kill her mom. Maggie’s father didn’t look like the type to do such a thing, but humans could be monsters too. There had been more than a few cases we thought were monsters that ended up just being fucked up humans.

The man wandered over to where Ketch and I were standing and held out his free hand, his daughter in his other arm. I shook his hand and he extended his hand to Ketch who didn’t return the gesture. The man awkwardly lowered his hand, but still had a kind expression.

“Thank you for finding my daughter.”

“Of course,” Ketch answered, his stance a bit cold. There was something wrong here. What was wrong? Was the father a wraith too? How could Ketch tell without a mirror?

“Have you heard anything from Karen?”

“Not yet, Noah,” Officer Baker replied. “We sent a few officers over to do a wellness check. I’ll let you know as soon as I get any information back.”

“Thank you again,” Noah said, before looking down at his daughter.

“They gave me this cool coin. Look daddy!” Maggie held it out excitedly and Noah took it from her. I could tell Ketch was holding his breath just as I was. But he didn’t react to the silver.

“Well, that was very kind of them, wasn’t it? What do we say?”

“Thank you!” Maggie answered with a bright smile, her tears now gone.

A radio crackled to life from Office Baker and he stepped away from us to answer it. I could only make out a little bit of what was being said, but it was enough. D.O.A. I didn’t need to hear anymore.

“Ketch, it’s time for us to go,” I whispered. “This isn’t going to be good.”
“D.O.A.” Ketch asked softly of me. It must not have been a British thing. I took his hand and pulled him towards the door and got on my toes to whisper in his ear.

“Dead on arrival.”

He nodded in understanding before leaving my side to go to Officer Baker who looked a little uncomfortable with the information he had just received. I saw the officer nod at something that Ketch had said and with a nod of Ketch’s head to me, we made our way out and to his bike without a single goodbye.

I climbed on behind Ketch and his bike roared to life right in time to drown out the cries from Noah as the news about Karen was given to him.

"Sam, I don't know what to make of it," I muttered into the phone, my head in my hand. "Am I just overthinking this?"

"Little kids don't often lie," Sam answered, sounding distant. "I found that children will tell the truth far more during or after a trauma. It takes a bit to get them talking, but they do tell exactly what happened."

"I hope she doesn't. That places us at the crime."

"I can get the charges dropped if needs be," Sam offered. "I don't mean to brag, but I'm the greatest lawyer."

"I'm sure." I fell backwards onto the bed, staring up at the ceiling and groaned. "What do I do Sam?"

"I'm sure it's nothing. Don't worry about it for now. We'll deal with it when the time comes."

"That seems to be my whole life right now." The shower turned off and I sighed. "I gotta go Sam. Thanks for your help."

"Anytime," he answered, still sounding like he was busy working on something else.

"Love ya Sammy."

There was a pause on his side of the line for a moment as if what I had said was setting in.

"Love you too, sis."

I lowered the phone and closed my eyes. I was overthinking it. It was a monster. It wasn't just some hit. Ketch wouldn't do that. Not now. He had changed.

"Ketch, can we go home?"

He gave a curious look as he dried his hair with a towel, letting hot air pour out of the bathroom's open door.

"Of course, love. You sure you don't want to take another day or two just for us?"

"I'm still worried about Elly."

He could tell that wasn’t the full truth. I could see it in his stance. But he backed down and didn’t
push the matter. But I wasn’t sure as to why. He always liked to have the last word. He got dressed in silence and I glanced around the room awkwardly. I wasn’t sure what to say or do. There was an unusual air between us that I wasn’t used to.

I got up from the bed and went for the door, only to be stopped when his hand took my arm.

“Where are you going?” His tone was tighter than normal. I gave an inquisitive look when I turned back around. Had I offended him somehow?

“I have some things that I need to take care of,” I replied gently, carefully pulling his hand to me and lacing my fingers with his. “Are you ok?”

“What things?” He pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes with an exhale. What had I done to upset him?

“Hell still needs someone to rule it and I haven’t been there in a while. Without me it’ll fall apart. And we don’t want that to happen, I can promise you that. It would be literal hell on earth.” That got him to smile and I felt a bit of relief wash over me. “You just get to sleep. I’ll be back by morning and we can head home. Is that ok?”

“Yes.” He placed a kiss to my cheek and released my hand after a gentle squeeze. “Miss sleeping beside you.”

I laughed. “Maybe tomorrow night.” And with that, I left the room. I needed more time to think about what had happened. It was all too much.

"What the hell are you doing in my seat?!” I was furious just by looking at him. He looked like he owned the place. The fucking bastard had the nerve to show up here!

"I think you mean my seat, doll," he corrected with a toothy grin.

"You gave up your seat when you left this world." I marched over to him, "Get out of my seat."

"My seat," he said in a correcting tone. "And if you haven't noticed, I am here. This is mine."

"I don't see a crown." I mocked, "Plus most of Hell follows me anyway. You're just old news, grandpa."

He cocked his eyebrows with a chuckle. "Wanna bet? You've been gone for a while doll. You should have seen the shambles this place was in. They're grateful to have me back."

"You don't have the balls to rule down here anymore." I put my hands on my hips, "Or did you forget that your little daughter has made you soft?"

He grabbed my hips and dragged me down onto his lap. "I don't have to be soft with you, doll."

"We can't do this again, Lucifer." I said as I pushed away from him. As much as I wanted to, I was engaged and I had already ruined his relationship with Elly enough. I didn't need to ruin it more, along with ruining mine.

He held tightly to me with a smirk. "Who's soft now?" he whispered, kissing at my neck. "You fucked up my life, I'm gonna fuck up yours, doll."
How was he like this? Revenge had always been his thing but I never expected him to take it this far. I slapped him across the face.
"Snap out of it. You have a family who loves you," I said, finally pushing myself free of his grip, "I'm not going to fuck you and fuck it up again."

"Who said I was going to fuck you?" he sneered at me, hand taking mine tightly. "You would faint if you knew what I have planned for you."

"Let go of me." I let my eyes shift to black.

"You're not that scary, doll." He stood from where he had been lazily sitting, eyes turning a deep, cruel red. His hand held tightly to mine. "Let's not forget that I made all of this." His free hand motioned around the room. "And I made you. Without me, you wouldn't be here. Alive. Crowley wouldn't have given you cat lives and you'd just be dead in a grave somewhere. I am above you. I own you."

He twisted my arm behind me, causing me to crumble to my knees in pain.

"About time a Winchester learned their place. Don't you think, doll?" he taunted, keeping his grip tight on my wrist. So tight I swear I could hear it cracking.

I was quick to throw my weight and flip him over my shoulder. "I know my place. Maybe I should teach you yours."

He laughed deeply, a primal hunger to his eyes. What had I awoken? He was honestly terrifying when he was angry.

He sat up quickly and kissed me. A shock shot through me and I shoved him away from me, wiping at my lips.

"What the hell is wrong with you?!" I demanded.

In one swift movement, he quickly had me pinned against the floor, his knees going to my arms and holding them down as he sat on my chest.

I watched as a glow came to his finger tip and he gently caressed my cheek.

But what came next was anything but gentle. There was a deep pain that sliced through my skin and followed where he touched. And I could feel the warm stickiness of blood flow from the markings.

One across my chest, one against my ear. One over my lips. All of the places he had ever touched me with his own lips.

"You're such a turn on covered in your own blood." His red eyes looked over me boredly, betraying his words. "You used to enjoy when I cut you doll."

I struggled against his weight as another long slice was traced over my collar bone.

I let my anger fuel my movements and forced one of my hands up, catching him in the jaw with a right hook and effectively sending him across the room as well. I jumped to my feet faster than he could react and took a few steps towards him to add another punch to his temple.

"Don't you ever touch me like that again." I began to let my demon out, letting myself heal the cuts he'd made. "Don't get up."
He rubbed at his jaw as he sat up from my hits. He grinned, teeth a bright red from blood. "Reminds me of Jamaica." He stood back up, brushing imaginary dust from his clothes. "Don't you think?"

In a blink, I was flying across the room, my head aching as I smashed into the throne, making it crumble into pieces.

I spat a ball of blood onto the floor and smiled. "Lucky shot." I laughed, as I got to my feet.

"It wasn't luck, doll. Do not fuck with me when I have my full grace back." Lucifer dashed forward at me again, archangel blade out, but I was ready this time.

I moved to the side and caught him by the throat, essentially clothes lining him. I tightened my grip and threw him to the ground, taking a knee as I went to keep my fist around his neck. I heard the air push from his lungs and held him there.

"I'll say it once more." I was getting frustrated with this, "Don't get up."

"Fuck you," he said while trying to get his breath back.

"Oh, morning star. We're already past that." I picked him up by the neck and slammed him into the floor, creating a dent in the ground. "Don't." I let go of his neck and sent my left fist into his nose, probably breaking it, "Get." I stood and sent a kick to his ribs, definitely breaking a few of those, "Up."

He coughed, blood dripping from his nose and mouth, down his chin. He rolled onto his elbow, clutching to where I had kicked him. He attempted to sit up fuller and my boot connected with his ribs again, making him fall back to the floor.

He laughed through his coughing and I watched as he easily healed himself up.

I bit my lip. He had his grace. He was an archangel. I wasn't sure how long I could compete with him without losing myself to the darkness that was growing inside of me.

But I knew I could use it for a little longer.

"Just bow to me already, old man." I smirked, "You have a family, you don't need to rule Hell on top of that."

He snatched my boot up in one hand, effortlessly lifting my foot from the ground despite the weight I put on it. My eyes widened at the pure strength in his one hand. Maybe I had picked a bad fight. Maybe he had been going easy on me. I lost my balance and stumbled making it easy for him to get a good enough grip on my shoe to send me sliding across the floor and into a wall.

He got to his feet and a chill flooded through me as large white wings stretched out. I hadn't expected them to be white, if he had them at all. I had expected them to be black like Cas'.

"I thought you lost your wings," I gasped out.

"I did." He stretched himself out, stepping closer to me, those long wings dragging behind him on the floor. "The night I fell, they decayed. I clutched to star systems to slow the fall, but they only set fire to my wings. But grace can heal more than superficial wounds, doll."

With a single flap of his wings, he raced at me. I was ready for him, I jumped to my feet, my fist connected with an open hand mid air and didn't make it any further. His eyes glowed red and he
flapped his wings, he was showing off. I pushed my fist against his hand with all my might and sent
him flying backwards again. I landed standing and I watched as he skidded across the floor on his
knees.

"Please don't get up," I ordered, I was beginning to lose control. But again, he didn't listen. He got
to his feet and glared at me. "I asked nicely," I growled, letting my eyes flicker before I dashed
across the room towards him, my fist aimed for his gut.

And maybe he had given up or maybe I was losing it, but he leaned over, gasping for air.
I could see a darkness at the edges of my vision as something swarmed hungrily in my chest. I
needed to end this now before I messed something up further.

"Elly needs you." I grabbed a handful of his hair and pulled him to look up at me. "You are going
to go see her."

"If-" he coughed, still clutching himself. "If you forgot, we aren't on speaking terms. But it seems
you two are friends again. How sweet."

He thrust his hand out and I tumbled back and onto the floor. It wasn’t a hard push. Just hard
enough to get me off my feet. He stood up right and cracked his knuckles. "Fuck, I want to hurt
you. I want to tie you down and break every single bone in your body until they are dust and not
even Crowley dearest would be able to put you back together."

"Will you listen to me, before I hurt you more?" I asked, getting back to my feet. "Elizabeth needs
you. You know her? The beautiful blonde with the shining soul and bright smile?" He just stared
at me darkly. "Well, her soul isn’t shining anymore and her smile is completely decomposed."

“I wonder why, bitch.”

His wings spread out threateningly. He was ready to keep going. Ready to keep fighting. But if I
was going to keep this kingdom and fix everything that I had broken, then I needed to get him back
to the bunker.

“It wasn’t me.” My hands went up defensively and I winced as he chuckled. Wrong choice of
words. “Not all me. She went on a hunt and got hurt. I can’t help her. She won’t let me.”

“Why not doll? You’re all buddy buddy now.”

“No,” I muttered. “We’re not. Not really.”

His eyes narrowed as he looked over me.

I would get them back together if it killed me. They were made for one another. He needed her to
keep him grounded. And she needed him to strengthen her and hold her up when she was too tired
to do it. They made each other better. And god, I had fucked that up so hard for my own greedy
reasons.

“She won’t let me help her, Lucifer.” The desperateness in my voice shocked me a bit. “She can’t
sleep. She won’t eat. She is self medicating. She’s been on suicide watch at the hospital.”

“You’re lying. She’s never once been depressed.” His stance softened and he looked at his feet.
“That’s not her.”

“Lucifer, she needs you. She won’t admit it. But she cries for you when she thinks no one can hear
her. She prays to you more than I have ever seen Dean pray to Cas. She still loves you and you
need to go to her."

"Why would she let me help her if you can’t?"

"She’ll let you. I know she will and because she feels like she needs to live out this pain by herself." I let my hands fall to my sides and relaxed my position, "They drugged her up and did only she knows what to her. But they were horrible things L."

He appeared beside me, his hand taking my neck and squeezing tightly. "You let her get hurt?" he demanded.

"I didn't know she'd left!" I choked out, working my fingers between his hand so I could breathe, "Your kid had to come find me because El just up and left!"

"She wouldn't just leave!"

"Well she did!" I kicked up with one of my feet and caught him square in the pants. His grip fell from my neck and I took a deep breath as my feet finally met the floor. He stumbled back slightly and I sighed. "There was a three day difference between when she left and when the kid came and found me. By the time we got to El she was already their drug slave. I did the best I could." I sighed again, "Your kid gave up her soul to save Elly's life, Lu."

He looked uncomfortable, but glared through the pain. "What the fuck are you talking about?" he hissed out. "You took my daughter's soul?"

"She wouldn't let me tell her no." I shrugged, "And believe me. I tried. But she's as bull headed as you are." I walked away from him and to my throne, where I took a lazy seat among the rubble that still had some of a chair shape to it.

"How much more are you going to fuck up things that are mine?" He dropped to his knees and lowered his head into his hands with a heavy exhale. His wings slowly faded away leaving several beautiful white feathers fluttering to the floor.

I rolled my eyes. "It wasn't like I was given much of a choice. Elly was dying and I couldn't save her." I slouched in my seat and sighed, "Now all she needs is you and everything will be fine. Stop being so pathetic and go help her."

"Why didn't she call for me, Alex?" He got back to his feet, the fight gone from him now. Had I finally broken him down enough to get him to go back to her?

"She did, you asshole." I sat up, "She's been praying for you non stop since the moment they took her captive. You're the one not answering."

"I-I didn't hear her." He honestly looked like he was about to cry. He wasn't too far gone. I still had a chance of getting them back together. "Alex, why couldn't I hear her?"

"I have no idea." That wasn’t the full truth, but I only had a theory. I couldn’t heal her while she was on the drugs. Maybe he couldn’t hear her while she was drugged. "But you need to go to her now if you want any hope of her forgiving you."

A hand went to his head and he laughed hopelessly. "She's not going to forgive me. You didn't hear the things she told me when you left."

"She still loves you," I said calmly, "That much I know for sure."
"You're coming with me. I can't face her alone. I might be Hades, but she's persephone." He straightened up, strength back in his stance. "Those boring shitshows are still slacking. I took care of it. Your soul count should be up by the end of the day. No more of this four souls behind shit."

I blinked. He had got the soul count up? I had been trying to for the last year. We were always behind.

"And if anyone else hurts my dogs, I will come after them. Tell Alexander that for me."

"Of course I will. Although I think the pups like me more now." I smirked. "Let's go back to the bunker. She'll be waiting.

"Good morning," Ketch said brightly as I made my way back into the hotel room where he was putting the rest of his things away. He rapidly straightened up and pulled his gun from the bedside table. "You better have a good reason for being here, you pillock."

I rolled my eyes and glanced back at Lucifer who looked less than amused with the welcome that was shown to him. "Can it, Britannia," Lucifer grumbled, folding his arms over his chest.

"He is not coming with us," Ketch said sternly, gun at his side, but still held tightly.

"Both of you stop. We are all going back and we are going to fix everything with Elly. We need to." The tension waned slightly and I returned Ketch’s curious eyes with a solemn expression of my own.

"Are you sure she’s ready for this?"

"She doesn’t have a choice," I answered with a huff. "It’s going to hurt her either way. And we need to take care of this now before I can’t fix it."

"Alex, I don’t think we should bring him around. She’s just barely starting to talk again. Maybe it would be best."

"You shut your mouth!" Lucifer ordered, his hands thrown to his sides in fists. The lights flickered in the room, almost unnoticeable with the sunlight coming through the window. "You have no idea what would be best for her."

"Excuse me for having been the only one to make her smile in the last week," Ketch shot back fiercely. "Maybe if you hadn’t been so focused on yourself she wouldn’t be needing someone to watch her all hours of the night to make sure she doesn’t do anything stupid to hurt herself, you self centered sod!"

My hands reached out and caught Lucifer, pushing against his chest to stop him from going after Ketch. "Knock it off. Both of you! Or I will chain both of you together and drag you being the motorcycle for the whole way home and you fucking know I will!"

That seemed to quiet the room. Lucifer backed away from me and Ketch set the gun cautiously aside. The stiffness of the room wasn’t gone, but at least they were both quiet.

"Hey Alex," Ali greeted as we entered the bunker. She looked back to her playing cards and pulled one from the deck between her and Jack. She bit her lip and glanced up from her hand and to Jack.
“I’ll stay.”

“As will I,” Jack replied with a nod, laying his hand on the table top. “17.”

Ali laughed and rested her three cards down. “19. I win!”

“Black Jack?” I questioned dropping my bag onto a chair beside the blonde. I ruffled her hair and she laughed. “Yeah, thought I would teach him something for a change. Cael wouldn’t play with me either.”

Jack froze and I sighed, knowing what was coming. He slowly stood from his chair with curious golden eyes. “Lucifer?”

Ali immediately turned in her chair to see her father step into the room with Ketch behind him. She jumped from her chair, sending it crashing to the floor and raced forward.

“Dad!” He caught her against him in a hug and held her tightly. “I’ve missed you.”

“I’ve missed you too Sapphire,” he whispered, petting her head. “I’m sorry I left. I shouldn’t have. Please forgive me.”

“Of course dad,” she muttered back, the sound muffled by how tightly he was clutching her.

“Everything ok?” a new voice asked as someone entered the room. “I heard a loud-” Elly broke off, and slowly stepped into the room, looking like she was trying to walk across ice without slipping.

“Kids, let’s give the adults time to talk. Come on,” Ketch instructed, waving his hand toward the hallway. Lucifer released Ali and she gave a nod before heading to the hall with Jack and Ketch. The room fell eerily silent as I waited for something to happen.

I watched her glare at him. She was not happy to see him at all. In fact, it looked like she wanted to kill him. I stood back and watched.

"Hiya, sunbeam. Miss me?" He was way too cocky for this. Maybe I hadn’t knocked him down as much as I thought I had.

I saw Elly tense at her nickname. This wasn't going to be good. She marched forward, stiff and angry. I watched her hand come up to slap him. And I watched him grab her hand and pull her into a kiss. A kiss that said he had missed her. One that said he was sorry. One that said he loved her. I watched her relax into it for a single moment before pushing away and delivering a well deserved slap to Lucifer's cheek.

"You bitch! I hate you! God, I hate you!"

Lucifer gave a confused look, his hand to his cheek, but I doubt it honestly hurt. "Sunbeam-"

"Don't call me that. Don't you dare fucking call me that ever again. You have no idea what hell I have been through!"

I just stood against the wall, arms crossed over my chest, smirk on my face. It was about time someone put him in place and I was just sorry it wasn't me.

But they had to do this. They had to fight. And I knew I would be part of it sooner or later. It was my doing after all. But this was the only way for them to heal. It was a discussion that had to
happen. And I had promised Elly that I'd be here for her through it all.

“What are you talking about?” he asked softly, looking between the two of us.

“You didn't answer,” Elly replied through clenched teeth, tears coming to her eyes. I pushed myself from where I was and took a step towards her. It wasn't fair to make her remember. I wanted to erase those memories so badly. “You didn't hear me.”

“Hear you what?” he asked again, still as confused. He took a step towards her and she stumbled back and away from him. I raced over and took her shoulders. “Elizabeth?”

“It's ok,” I whispered to her. “You can do this.”

“I turned off my phone for a bit. What happened?” He really did look concerned and worried now.

“Not your phone, you dipshit,” Elly snapped back, tears now rolling down her cheeks. She trembled in my grasp. “I prayed to you, you winged freak!”

“I-I didn't know.” He stepped closer and Elly shrunk back further into me. “You have to believe me. I would have appeared the moment I heard your prayer.”

“Fuck you.” Her voice was small and broken now. “Fuck you. God, fuck you.” I tried to hold her up as her knees gave out, but we both dropped to the floor.

Hurt and confusion covered Lucifer's face as he came closer, slowly kneeling down beside us. “What happened?” He looked towards me, but I shook my head. This wasn't my fight. Not right now. “Is Sapphire ok?”

“She's fine,” I answered for Elly after a moment of silence.

“Elizabeth, what happened?” His hands shook as they reached out to her and gently pulled her from me. She didn't fight him and he pulled her onto his lap and held her tightly. “Whatever it was, I'm sorry I wasn't there. But we can fix it. I promise.”

I bit my lip as I watched them. He was going to be crushed when he found out. If he truly loved and cared for her, he would be shattered.

“Elizabeth?”

“I-I can't,” she cried, hiding into his chest. “You didn't help me.”

He looked up at me with shining blue eyes that were begging me for some sort of help. I looked over the broken Elly that I had been working so hard to build back up. She had crumbled in a second.

“El, if you can't tell him, let him see,” I pushed. We weren't going to get anywhere like this. Elly shook her head. “You can't just stay mad at him and not give him a reason.”

“See what?” He carefully pushed his crying sunbeam back. His hands took her cheeks so he could look over her. His thumbs wiped her tears away. “Elizabeth.” Her name was desperate. Hurting for her. “Please.”

She nodded slowly. It was a start. She still trusted him. After everything, he was going to be able to see what she would never show me. He was going to know what happened while I had to guess. And I wasn't sure which would be worse. Knowing or guessing.
He rested his head against her’s and I watched as she cried harder. I reached out and took her hand comfortingly, hoping she would feel me there with her through it all. Know that she wasn't alone as she relived the horrors.

He swiftly snatched her up, hugging her head against him tightly. He hid his face in her hair, but I could hear him crying as well for the only human he had ever loved.

“I'm sorry.” His voice cracked and shook. “I'm so sorry!” Elly’s hand grew tight on mine and I could only watch as the devil sobbed for her. Hurt for her. Clutched to her. “I'm sorry. I'm sorry.” He kept repeating the words over and over, seeming to be unable to say anything else.

He finally pushed her back and I watched as his tear filled eyes looked over her face. “What do I do, Elizabeth? How do I fix this?” He kissed her forehead. “How do I help you?”

She shook her head. Only time would fix this. Only time would ever do anything to help if she wasn't willing to let one of us delete the memories.

“No one will ever touch you again,” he whispered, pulling her closer to him so he could nussle his nose against hers. “From now on I will always be there. I won't turn off my phone. I will listen for your prayers. Please, please. I'm so sorry!”

His fingers had tangled into her hair and he hesitantly kissed her. I could see the fear in his movements. Worried that she would reject him. That he would hurt her in some way.

Elly slowly returned the kiss and it shocked me. Had this finally all come to an end? Was the fighting done?

There was no way they would be done fighting. We would all be discussing it later. There was no way to get around it. I had to explain that it was my fault and how I made him, how he didn't want to. What the fuck had I done?

He broke the kiss and pulled her back against him tightly and protectively. Through the tears I could see the rage building in his gaze, making his eyes fade into their dangerous red.

“You took care of them, didn't you?” he asked tightly, eyes meeting mine. I nodded. “All of them?”

“Yes,” I whispered in reply. “All of them are dead.”

“They fucking better be, or I will personally torture them myself for the rest of eternity.”
"You're doing it-"

"I know I'm still doing it wrong!" Ali shouted in exasperation. She began pacing with her hands on her head. I tipped my head to the side, watching her breathe in anger as she muttered to herself under her breath.

Cael rested his hands on his hips with a deep exhale. They had been at it for several hours and it was the first time I had ever seen her struggle with learning something.

But she had been through a lot. Her dad had come back. There was still fighting between her parents. It was probably oblivious to Cael, but I could tell that she liked him. She flirted too much not to like him. That made him a distraction.

"This could be a matter of life and death," Cael explained for at least the tenth time.

Ali turned sharply on him, her words coming through clenched teeth. "If you fucking say that again, I will not need to know how to do this to kill you!"

"You're making it more complicated than it needs to be," Cael tried again. He easily caught her arm as she walked by him and pulled her close. "Let's try again," he said softly to her. I couldn't help but smile at the blush that fluttered over her cheeks. He wrapped his arms around her. "You feel it here," he explained, a hand going to her torso. "Your core is the strongest part of your powers. You pull your power and strength from here."

"You better remove your hands from my daughter," a new voice said from the doorway of the training room. Ali jumped and Cael moved away from her.

"We had rules," I grumbled, getting to my feet and turning to Lucifer. "You are still refusing to follow them. You're not allowed in the training room."

"Quite cloven hooves," Lucifer hissed, his eyes dark on both Cael and me. He strode into the room easily, ignoring me. "Sapphire, come here."

I took his arm and he slowly turned back to face me. "You're not allowed to tamper with-"

"Why the fuck would I want to hurt my daughter?" he shot back hotly. "You're sick if you think I could do anything to hurt my family."

"More than you already have?"

Those words must have hit him hard. He yanked himself from my grip. "This is not the time for this fucking fight. We can discuss that later."

"Where's Elly?"

"Asleep, asshole."

The air was tense between us until Ali wandered over and took her father's hand. "Come teach me how?" She pulled on his hand and his eyes softened as he followed her over to where she had been standing with Cael.

"She has him wrapped around her finger, doesn't she?" I whispered over to Cael who looked a bit
confused at the comment. I rolled my eyes and turned back to the other two.

"You have to feel it. I'm sorry there's no better way to explain it. Your powers come from want and feeling," Lucifer explained to his daughter. "If you want it, you have to take it. You don't get anything for free. You have to snatch it while it yours. Do you understand?"

"I think so?" she answered cautiously.

"Good. Now take care of it." Lucifer pointed to where we had a sheet of metal that was cut out like a person. "You won't have time to prepare. You won't have time to think. You just have to do."

"No pressure?" She laughed. Lucifer placed a kiss to her head and stepped away from her, coming over by us.

"She's done it once before," I explained, looking down to my hand that had been burnt from our knife fight. "She should be able to do it again."

"She's strong, but maybe this isn't the right application," Lucifer threw out. "She works better under pressure, with real problems."

"Give her a chance," I threw out.

But maybe Lucifer had been right. As hard as Ali was trying, she just couldn't seem to melt the object ahead of her. Maybe she needed something more dangerous to challenge her. She had only ever been able to use her power when the situation was stressful and called for it.

I sighed. "I hate when you're right, old man." I got from where I was sitting and walked over to mini Elly. "Kid, what's going on? Why are you having trouble now? You scared the shit out of me with those knives. What did you do then?"

"I was mad. I don't know. I was emotional." She scratched the back of her head. "I honestly don't remember much when I use my powers. It's like there's someone else in me who does it."

"Like a monster?" I questioned softly, taking her shoulder in my hand.

"Yeah. It scares me. Makes me feel like I won't be able to come back. How did you know?"

I gave her a kind look and ruffled her hair. "I get it kid. It's not easy. But let the monster come out."

"I really don't want to Alex." Her tone was defiant and she pulled from my grip, folding her arms over her chest. "Besides, my mom doesn't have powers and she's apparently awesome. I haven't seen her hunt yet, but you always talk about how good she is. Why can't I be good like her? Why do I need to know how to do all this?"

She went over to her chair and snatched up her water bottle, taking a drink before sitting down.

"Because."

Ali rolled her eyes at the answer and lowered her head into her hands. "That's not a good enough answer, pitchfork and pointy tail."

She definitely was her father's daughter.

"Because you can't shoot a gun for shit," I finally blurted out. She glanced up with a shrug. What about this was she not understanding? "You're a god with knives, but you do not want to be in a
close hand to hand combat situation if you can help it. You have a larger chance of dying."

"I'm a whatever you call it. I doubt I can die."

"Nephilums can still die, you idiot." I knelt down beside her so I could see her face better. "You are not wanted in this world. You need to get this through your head. This is the whole reason we're training you. People know you're here, they are going to want to kill you. You are not safe here!"

"I thought you just needed me for your save the world project, Alex." The sarcasm was thick and choking. Ali got to her feet, chucking her water bottle aside roughly. "I'm done being your toy. I can take care of myself!"

I stood upright to be about the same height as her. Her mismatched eyes greeted me. This was a start. This was the monster that she was talking about. Ms. Hyde.

"I'm not your chosen one, Alex!"

There was a crackling sound and the metal sheet folded in on itself, red hot.

I had to test this. I needed to see what she could do. I needed to see what power she had, what I was working with, what I needed to do for the plan that was made for me.

"You don't have a choice anymore, kid," I antagonized. "You are going to help me, we are going to stop the monsters and I will use you as I see fit. Do I make myself clear?"

The metal had completely melted, now red hot liquid on the ground.

"Alex, stop," the fallen Angel's voice called out to me. Interesting. Daddy dearest wouldn't let her be hurt and learn like Elly would.

"I'm not going to wear your broken crown!" The lights flickered in the bunker as the floors shook. "I'm not a tool!"

"Alexandria," Lucifer said sharply. It was the first time I had ever heard him use her name before. "Calm down."

"No! I am tired of all of this! All the fighting and the secrets and the lies! I'm not going to be part of it anymore!"

"Kid." I stepped towards her. "Listen to your father."

Before I could contemplate what was happening, I could feel something smash into my spine and the back of my head with a deep pain. My vision was blurred and I tried to push myself up from the ground where I had been thrown.

Through the tears in my eyes, I could make out Lucifer trying to go to her, but she was strong. She was that monster I saw with her soul flickering like dying embers trying to stay alive. With a simple wave of her hand, Lucifer was shoved aside as easily as I was.

"Ali," Cael's soft voice said with much more feeling in it than he normally showed. He stepped over to her, unafraid. But emotions weren't his strong suit. "It's time to stop. You did what you were trying to do. Let's take a moment to process the feeling so we can use it later to practice."

"I'm not going to practice anymore! I'm done!"

"Ok, you can be done. Alex was just trying to upset you. She doesn't mean what she said, I think."
He finally stood in front of her and reached out to her, pulling her into a tight hug. "We can stop. We don't have to do this anymore."

"You promise?" I could barely make out her words.

"Promise."

The suffocating feeling left the room and the lights slowed in their flickering until they had stopped all together. She was hugging the angel back tightly, her hands holding fistfuls of his shirt.

I got to my feet and Lucifer shoved past me, making me stumble back into the wall with a wince.

"What the hell is wrong with you!" he demanded of me. "Thank god you're not a mother."

"Fuck off dad," Ali said softly.

Lucifer stopped in his tracks and looked shocked. He fell silent and all anger seemed to evaporate into thin air. I would have smiled if Ali didn't direct the next sentence at me.

"You too Alex. I'm going to get mom and go home. We don't need either of you."

She pushed herself away from Cael and left the room in a sprint.

"What did you two do to make her so unstable?" Cael questioned. Lucifer didn't reply and raced after his daughter. "You shouldn't taunt her like that."

"How the hell else is she going to use her powers?" I asked exasperatedly. "Nothing else is working."

"We can't keep putting her in stressful situations. She's not going to learn how to control them if she can only make random things happen under pressure. She has to understand where it comes from, how it works, how to apply it." Cael came close to me, looming over me with his full height. "If you actually want to follow your path, you need her. And she's not going to be able to do anything if we rush her and hurt her. Challenges are fine. We all grow, but not this way."

I sighed and nodded. "I'm just so stressed, Cael. You have no clue. I messed their family up. I fucked it up beyond repair and now I keep making things worse with their daughter. I think Ketch is contract killing again. My brothers keep disappearing on their own hunts. Which, I mean, is fine." I began pacing. "They're their own people. But I could sure use their fucking help. And then-and then I've been getting sick. Physically sick. How am I getting sick?"

"Humans are horribly made. You know this. It's amazing. The human form should collapse on itself."

"But I'm not human!" He just gave a shrug and I groaned, helplessness filling me. "Some guardian angel you are. Aren't you supposed to tell me what to do?"

"I'm a guardian angel, not a guidance angel."

I laughed lightly, stress still overwhelming me. But I could do what needed to be done. I was the queen of hell. I could do this. But right now I needed to stop them from leaving. If Ali was worked up she could easily own a portal if she wanted to go home badly enough.

"Cael, we need to stop them. I need them here. I can't do this without them."

"What am I supposed to do about it?" he asked, folding his tan arms over his chest.
"She likes you. She'll listen to you. Talk to her."

"I've told you that I am not good with human emotions."

"This isn't your first rodeo."

He gave me a confused expression, his eyebrows furrowed. "I've never been in a-

"It's an expression." I couldn't help but smile lightly. "Please stop her from leaving."

He gave a nod before leaving the room. I hesitated for a moment, afraid to follow. I didn't want to shove my foot in my mouth. Not again. Not like I did every time.

But I did follow. When I came to the map room I stumbled into an odd site. Lucifer sat at a table, his head in his hands, visibly bothered.

Elly looked worn, like she hadn't slept in days. She sat blankly beside Lucifer. She must not have been sleeping well again. There had been a lot of shit that had been pulled back up when the devil had returned.

And Cael was more in the kitchen with a blonde teen. They were speaking in hushed tones that I couldn't make out. Ali was shaking her head at something the angel was saying.

"I'm really sorry El." I placed my hand on her shoulder. "If you want to leave, I won't stop you."

"We're not leaving," she answered softly. "You just have to give us time to repair what's broken. I don't think we can save the world in one night."

"I pushed her too hard. It wasn't fair."

"She needs to learn," Lucifer offered. "We didn't teach her when we had the chance." He shifted and sat up a bit more. "I don't like him hanging around her."

"For once I agree with you," Elly commented. "He's still the same."

"It's only been two years here. Remember?" I pointed out, trying to read Cael's lips to see what the two of them were talking about. "And there's nothing wrong with him. Besides, you were more than happy to see him a week or so ago when he showed up."

"You hated him," Elly shot back. "And he's messing with my daughter. Not training her."

"He's better now. Besides, we have more important things to talk about than a crush."

Elly looked back at me with a look of disgust. None of us wanted to talk about it. None of us wanted to look at the other person. But we needed to. We couldn't sweep this under the rug. I needed to be able to be in the same room as both of them without feeling like I wanted to fade through a wall.

"I'm not having this conversation," Elly grumbled, getting to her feet. "I still haven't forgiven either of you enough to have it. You're lucky I'm talking to you." She pointed at me. "And you." Her finger turned to Lucifer. "You're fucking lucky I am letting you share my bed after everything that has happened."

"Elly, it was all my fault," I attempted to explain. Anything to help fix this.

"Oh please. He is just as guilty Alex. It takes two to cheat and you didn't rape him."
I fell quiet at the words. I couldn't think of anything to say. Especially now that the girl and the angel had fallen quiet to listen in.

Elly left the room in a hurry, embarrassed and not looking back. Lucifer had gotten to his feet to follow and took a few steps before he faltered to a stop.

"You..." Ali trailed off as she stepped from the kitchen into the main room. "That's why you left?! That's why mom's hurt? Because of you?"

"Ali-"

"No!" she interrupted me. "I don't know why my mom is hurt, but now I know it's because of you two." Ali turned toward the hallway and raced down it. "Mom!"

"What do we do?" Lucifer asked softly in broken voice that I had never heard before. "How do we fix it?"

"I don't know if we can," I admitted, a helpless feeling coming over me. "We can't work with someone who won't work with us."

Lucifer started towards the hall as well and disappeared most likely to be with his family.

"Cael," I said, calling the angels attention back to me. "Come spar with me. I need something to hit that won't get hurt."

Cael followed me back into the training room and I immediately went to the mats. Maybe I had been holding this in too long. All these emotions swirling inside of me.

Cael stood opposite me and tipped his head to the side curiously. "Maybe you shouldn't be exerting yourself," he offered in a kinder tone than he had ever used with me. He only ever used it with Ali.

"Why?"

He stood still for a moment, his eyes gazing over me calculatingly. I didn't like it. There was something he wasn't telling me. He shrugged and got into a ready stance.

My eyes narrowed and I raced to him. He easily blocked my punch and shoved me to the floor. He wore a bored look over his face.

I got back to my feet and went at him again. Again he blocked and pushed me hard enough to make me stumble and fall.

"You're rusty or Ali is much better than you," he commented in such a tone it sounded like he was trying to get under my skin on purpose.

And I had been so angry lately. Hiding it away to save face. Hiding it to try to hold what little sanity we had left together.

With a scream, I scrambled to my feet and rushed the tanned angel. I wasn't sure if he let me hit him this time or if I had gotten the upper hand, but my fist connected to his jaw and sent him tumbling back.

I turned the page of my book before reaching out and taking a drink of my beer. I had tried to get into different books, but they just weren't holding my interest like research did.
Romances just weren't my thing. They were the most unrealistic stories ever written.

I looked up at the patting of bare feet down the hallway. Elly stepped into the room, tears running down her cheeks as she pushed her hair back and out of her face and up into a ponytail.

I rose to my feet as she grabbed a beer from the fridge and struggled to pop the top. I took a few cautious steps towards her and reached a hand out. She passed me the beer and I opened the top, handing it back to her.

She downed the beer quickly, coughing as she choked a bit.

"El, are you ok?" I asked gingerly.

"I-I can't do it Alex," she gasped out, wiping at her chin where some beer had spilled.

"Can't do what?" I put a hand on her shoulder.

A deep blush came to her cheeks as more tears steadily fell. "Him touching me. I can't do it." She shook out her hands as if her fingers were numb and then clutched to herself.

"Touching you? Like..." I had to think for a moment. "Like sex?"

She bit her lip and nodded.

Oh.

She closed her eyes and leaned against the fridge before slowly dropping to the ground. She used the back of her hand to wipe at her nose.

"Just his breathing alone makes my anxiety jump," she gasped out.

"I'm so sorry El." I pulled her into a hug.

"I-I-I want to do it," she stuttered into my shoulder. "I want to be-be able to- be able to..." I hushed her as she cried. "I want to be normal. I don't want to be sc-scared anymore." She was breathing heavily, tears making my shirt wet. "And I hit him. With my gun. It was the only thing I could find. I felt trapped, like I was tied back up with their sweaty bodies pressing over the top of me. A-Alex.... Please..."

"Let me erase them Elly."

She shook her head, pushing me away and wiping at her nose again. It hurt to see her so small. "No. Nope. I am not letting you-letting you see that."

"That's the only way I can help you, Elly." I pulled her closer, "Please... share your pain with me. I'll erase it from my memories too. I promise."

"And what about him? He won't let anyone touch him. And I know you. You'll suffer with it. You wouldn't erase that from yourself."

I cupped her face in my hands, calling her eyes to my face. I pushed a blonde strand from her face and sighed.

"Elizabeth. If this is hurting you this badly then I swear on my demonic kingdom that I will erase all memory of this from both of us." I stroked a thumb across her cheek. "I don't want you to hurt anymore. It makes me sick to see you this way. Please. Just let me in."
"He has to agree," she finally whispered, giving me more than I thought she would. "This is about him too, Alex."

"Ok. Then we'll ask," I said, hugging her close to me again.

She nodded and I got to my feet, pulling her with me. I lead her back up the hall and to her room. I pushed open the ajar door to find Lucifer sitting on the edge of the bed, his head in his hands. He looked up at the sound of the door and I could tell he had been crying too. This must have been his literal fucking hell, causing her this much pain.

“Lucifer, we have a favor to ask you.”

I pushed Elly out from behind me and towards the bed. I took a seat and placed her between me and the angel. "Can..." Elly trailed off and looked to the floor.

"Can...?" Lucifer pressed softly, his hand reaching out for her chin and pulling her to look back at him. She just shook her head and pulled from his grip. He looked to me as Elly leaned into me.

"Can I erase her memories of what happened." I folded my arms over my chest, keeping my tone asking, but letting him know I was more demanding.

His eyes dropped to Elly, his hand reaching towards her, but faltering when she curled further into me.

"If it makes her happy," he whispered, tears in his eyes.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"I..." he trailed off, looking like he wasn't sure what to do. "I promised to do whatever I could to fix this, Elizabeth. Is this the solution you want?"

I watched as Elly nodded her head slowly. "Then you have to let me see, El," I whispered softly.

She slowly sat up and wiped at the tears on her cheeks. She exhaled deeply. "What about you?" she said through a dry mouth, looking at Lucifer. "You can't be angry over this for the rest of your life."

Surprise filled his eyes, almost as if he hadn't expected her to care about him.

But if she let me in, I could fix that. I could remove all of the fighting, all of the unkind words, all of the lies and the hurt. But... That was so much to remove. I couldn't just leave her with that big of a hole in her memory.

I knew what I would do. I would replace them. It wasn't ideal but making a false memory would be better than leaving her with a giant blank to fill in.

Something good. Something I didn't ruin. Something that still made sense as to why Lucifer had left and Ali wouldn't screw up. There was still going to have to be a fight. Lucifer was still going to have to leave and there was still going to have to be a hunt with drugs that still took Ali's soul, but... The assault would be gone. Me coming between them would be gone. She would be happy again.

"I can erase yours too," I offered to Lucifer. "Both of you can be whole again."

He looked over Elly, eyes searching for an answer from her, but none came. This was his decision.
It was up to him.

"Ok." He nodded in agreement.

"Good." I placed my hand on Elly's temple and closed my eyes. "Show me, El."

And I didn't have to guess anymore. I didn't have to wonder. And god, the wondering was easier than the knowing. It was no longer a question to me why she had tried to die so many times. I couldn't blame her for wanting to.

I felt dirty. I felt used. I felt trapped in my own body with no way out. Clawing, crying, begging.

Death was so easy. I wanted it for her. Fuck. I just wanted to curl up and die. Hide away until my body was finally clean.

And each bite and lick and suck and kiss and bruise and-and.... It stuck to me. Burned into my skin like a brand.

It made me go crazy. It made me want to personally kill each and every single one of them with my own two hands.

And when I was finally free, finally seeing every last part, some of it I was sure she had hidden from Lucifer, I understood why she didn't want me to see. Why she wouldn't let me in. Why she wanted to suffer quietly alone.

“Shhh,” I cooed, pulling her body to me as she whimpered. I wasn't sure of what else to say. I just had to get to work. Make her better. She never deserved anything like this. How could I have been so horrible to her? “Elly. Elly, look at me.” I pulled her face to look at mine. “Look at me, hun. I'm going to fix this now, ok?” She nodded against my hands. “Ok.” I placed a kiss to her forehead and tried to give her a kind smile as my own tears threatened to spill.

“You ready?” I asked softly, getting to my feet.

She again nodded and did her best to steady her breathing. She closed her eyes and I wiped the tears from her cheeks. I glanced back at Lucifer who had a hand tangled up in his hair nervously.

“Please be careful with her,” he whispered.

I nodded and my eyes returned to her tear stained face.

“I love you Elly.”

“You promised me,” she reminded me.

As if I could forget.

I nodded. “Yes. I promised.”

I gave her forehead another kiss, swallowed those feelings, and pushed forward.

I was happy to tear them from her. Rip them apart. Shred them. Burn them. All of them. Every last horrible thing and feeling, gone. And that was easy. My anger made it easy to make sure every last memory was nothing more than my own.

But the creating. It took time to pull something good from all that I had ruined. But I did. I recreated these memories, forming torture that she could heal from. Things that would leave no
scars like the ones she had. I healed her of those too, wiped her body clean as well as her mind.

And I recreated that night, the night I'd ruined everything. I took away her seeing what she'd seen. I replaced it with a fair hunt and a different reason for his disappearance. I made their fight about his growing grace and how he felt trapped here and about how she was free to make her own choices and decisions. I made it anything they could come back from, something they could still love after.

And she could be happy. They had both apologized. Both made up. Both loved each other and when I was done and everything was back to the way that it should be, they would be none the wiser.

I pulled from her mind and made her sleep before I fell to my knees. It had taken most of my energy to do that. To heal her. But it was worth it if she was happy.

"Come here," I said to Lucifer, holding out my hand to him. He looked torn, like he was fighting himself. "I can't stand."

“What did you promise her?” he asked softly, coming over to me.

“That I would forget,” I answered, reaching for him, but he stayed just out of my grasp.

“And will you?” he questioned, sitting on the bed beside Elly and reaching his hand out to me.

“I promised.”

When he was close enough I grabbed his hand and forced my way into his mind. His head was a mess. Emotions everywhere. And he had so much more to work through. Billions of years instead of half a lifetime. And I wish I could have browsed more. But that wasn't my job.

And I saw it all over again. The fight, the knowledge of what they'd done to her. I saw everything again. Every horrible detail. And I took it from his memory as well.

The erasing and creating was difficult for him. And I wasn't sure if it was because he was fighting against me or if It was because he was an angel, but soon all of those feelings of guilt and desperation were only mine.

I replaced the fight the way I had for her, giving the same details. I replaced his reason for coming back with missing her and realizing he had been wrong. I took away what she'd told him. He was like her. He only knew of a stupid fight and of Elly being drugged. Nothing more. Nothing about her being hurt. Nothing about me. Nothing about what we had done together.

All of it gone. Both of them finally free.

I let go of his hand, sending him to sleep as well. In the silent room, I let myself collapse fully to the floor. I was exhausted. I had never used that much power before. It hurt to be this weak, to have her memories. But I was too weak to remove them. So I laid there with them and let the hurt take me for a ride. I let the pain and suffering course through me and make me want to die all over again.

I closed my eyes and opened them again in Hell. I looked up at my ceiling and let the tears come. And I screamed, making the walls shake and things break. But I deserved this. I deserved to see what they'd...what I'd done to her. I wouldn't forget until I felt all of her pain. So I laid there and cried.

The night just dragged as I let the pain consume me fully. Sinking into the deepest depression I had
ever felt until I was wanting death myself to save me from it. The pain was crippling and all I could do was curl up, my hands pulling at my hair, wanting the pain to match the torment in my chest.

And years and years passed before I finally dragged myself in a zombie like state from the floor of my throne room. I forced myself into the bunker and sunk back to my knees in the map room. It took all of my strength to drag myself to a chair. I had to play the part. I had to pretend just for a while longer.

I picked my book back up, the pages holding no interest for me. The sound of bare feet on the floor snapped me from my pain for a moment; I immediately dropped my book and gave a pained smile at the sight of Elly.

“Good morning,” she said in a cheery voice that I had missed.

“Good morning,” I forced out. “Indulge me.” She gave me a questioning look. “What do you remember from last night?”

She thought about it for a moment before she shrugged. “Umm.... I remember sharing a beer with you before going to bed.”

“And of the starship hunt.”

She tensed at this and I felt my chest grow tight. Had I messed something up? Did she remember?

“Alex, please stop bringing up the drugs. I know I did a bunch of stupid shit.”

“That's all they did to you, right?”

She gave me a confused look. “What else would they have done?” I sighed and she stepped closer to me. “Are you ok? You seem off.”

“Are you mad at me?”

“Alex-”

“Are you mad at me?”

“Of course not,” she finally answered. “Why would I be mad at you?”

There was an aching in my chest and god, I wanted to tell her everything. But I couldn't.

“Why don't you get dressed? I'll make something to eat,” I suggested, getting up and pushing her to the hallway.

“Oh, ok.” Her feet finally moved on their own and she disappeared down the hall.

There was a relief that washed over me. It had worked. She was her again. The way she always should have been. And after a conversation with Lucifer, his had taken too. And they were all smiles and laughs. Tangled up in each other the way they had been when they had first gotten here.

I excused myself from the breakfast table when Ali wandered in and made my way into my own room. I went and lied in bed next to Ketch who stirred and pulled me close to him.

“Stay with me awhile,” he whispered to me before he dozed off again.
I closed my eyes, my hand going to my head. I would forget like I had promised. Not all of it. Someone still had to know in case there were questions. Incase Ali or Ketch mentioned something.

And so I would forget everything Elly had showed me. I would still know about it, and I would still know everything I had done to them. It was only fair that that was my punishment. But no one deserved to remember those fucking monsters and what they had stolen from my best friend. Except for maybe me.
"I'm coming over," I explained on the phone to my brother.

"Today might not be a good time," Dean answered.

"I haven't seen you in a long time and Ketch isn't around at the moment. I'm inviting Sam over."

"Alex-

"I'll bring food. See you then."

I hung up my phone and shoved it into my pocket. I really hadn't seen them in a long time and now that everything between Lucifer and Elly was fixed and Ketch had been disappearing almost every other night, I needed something to do. And besides, the parents needed to keep an eye on their future son-in-law.

I smiled at the thought. They had never been perfectly fine with Cael, but the moment their daughter started to show interest in him, they flipped completely. Hated him with every breath. And I was positive it wasn’t a deep hate. I think they were just afraid of her ending up hurt. Angels were dangerous things to get mixed up in. And who knew what a nephilim and an angel might do.

I pulled up to Dean’s house and parked my car. I pulled the pizza along with me as I got from the car, coming around to find Dean by the curb in a lawn chair. He had on a pair of sunglasses that reflected the heat of the sun, but he didn’t seem bothered by how hot it was outside. He took a sip of his icy beer and his face returned to a side smile, Fortunate Son blasting through a bluetooth speaker he had beside him.

I came to stand beside him and followed his gaze. Baby sat in the driveway, shining and dripping with water. I stepped to the other side of Dean so I could make out what he was looking at.

I felt a smile pull at my lips and I lowered my sunglasses to get a better look. Cas was leaning over the hood of baby, washing her. His white t-shirt was soaked through, showing off his perfectly toned muscles. His shorts were clinging to his legs like their life depended on it.

"Little hot today, Dean." I placed my sunglasses back on the bridge of my nose, but didn’t look
away from the angel at work.

“I like it.”

“I brought food.”

“It’s the only acceptable payment for making it so I can’t have my way with him today.”

“It’s your anniversary today, isn’t it? I totally forgot.” A bit of guilt passed through me at the thought. I shouldn’t have steam rolled over Dean’s wants. But I missed my family and my friends were a bit much for me at the moment. I needed something new.

Another car pulled up and Sam hurried over to stand by us. He wrapped his arm around my side and placed a kiss to my head before smacking Dean upside the head. Dean swatted at Sam’s hands and Sam laughed.

“You two are so mean to him,” Sam commented, loosening his tie. “Cas, you don’t have to keep cleaning that part of the car.”

Cas turned with a questioning look and stood upright, making Dean shift in his chair slightly. I laughed. “How did you know-” Cas broke off as realization hit him. After all these years, Dean could still play him like a fiddle. Cas just trusted Dean too much. “You wanted to watch me.” Dean gave a shrug and smiled. Cas sighed and went to get the running hose, spraying down the part he had been washing.

With swift movements, the hose was shot in our direction. I jumped out of the way, my shirt a bit wet. Sam looked a tad pissed as his suit got hit. But Dean was a whole other animal. He jumped from his chair, clothes dripping.

His expression was no less than pissed off as he shook his hands. "Castiel." His tone was dangerous. I laughed when Dean smiled and raced towards Cas, who did his best to use the hose for protection. Dean caught the angel up in his arms and Sam and I had to move as the hose sprayed back at us.

"Well, they seem to be doing well," I muttered to Sam. "How have you been?"

"Just busy like every other day," Sam explained. "Got some pretty interesting cases. Right now I'm working an insanity plea. We'll see how that goes."

"That does sound interesting. What did they do?"

"Said voices told him to rob a grave, but the grave was empty. And so the voices told him to kill the grounds keeper because it was his fault."

My smile dropped. "The grave was empty?"

Sam seemed more interested in Dean and Cas fighting over the hose than in me. "Yeah. Second case to have empty graves in the last few months. Kind of odd, but I figured it was just a coincidence."

"Can I talk to your client? And who is the groundskeeper? Is he still alive?"

Sam finally turned to look at me, eyebrows furrowed. "No, he isn't still alive. This is for a case, huh?"
"Yeah. Worked one where ghouls were killing because the graves were empty."

"That's unsettling. And it's not you?"

"Why would it be me?"

"I'm not exactly sure what you do in hell," Sam admitted, rubbing the back of his neck. "I just know the basics."

"You were trapped down there-"

"With Lucifer," he clarified. "That's all I knew. And I'm sure it's the same with Dean. We were tortured, not running it."

"Boys!" I called when the two of them had stopped fighting and were making out on the hood of baby. "Let's eat!" I pulled Sam with me towards the house. "Sam, can you get me in to see your client? I need a lead."

"I can see what I can do. No promises though," he replied. We passed by the car and Sam snatched at Dean's arm, pulling him off of Cas and into a headlock.

"Let go," Dean ordered, pushing at Sam's grip.

"Cas, turn off the hose and let's eat," I called him, nodding to the house.

"You can't get out?" Sam laughed, still holding Dean. "What happened big bro? Someone's not been working out." Dean grumbled and I watched as he tried to pull away from Sam. Sam chuckled. "Is something wrong?"

"Sammy, let go."

Cas walked passed me and opened the door to the house, letting us filter in. Jack looked up from the tv and stood up.

"Hi Alex." He smiled brightly. I passed him the pizza and he went to the kitchen to get plates for us.

"What have you been up to kid?"

"Just got back from Nevada. Some angry spirit," Jack explained, putting out plates for each of us. "That was fun. How's Ali?"

"I think she's ok. She got upset and hasn't spoken to me," I explained, sitting at the island.

"Sammy!"

I glanced back and could see Dean finally pulling himself free from Sam who just laughed and came to sit beside me after removing his suit coat. Dean smacked Sam and Sam laughed, taking a piece of pizza from the box. Dean disappeared after Cas who had gone to change, I assumed. I grabbed a piece of pizza and took a bite before speaking again.

"I'm sure your sister would love to hang out with you."

Jack shrugged. "I don't feel very welcome there. Elly doesn't seem to like me much."

I stopped eating and lowered my slice onto the plate in front of me. I sighed. "You just have to give
her time, kid. It's not personal."

"No. I understand. My dad doesn't like me much either."

Sam and I traded glances. "I don't think that's the case," Sam tried to explain. "In their world it’s been just them for almost 20 years. For us, it's only been two. It's not that they don't like you, they just need time to get to know you."

I nodded in agreement, unsure of what else to say. I knew what it felt like to not belong. John was never the kindest to me. And my mom hadn't wanted to see much of me since the Michael ordeal. She seemed more focused on her hunts than on us. But none of us had ever really known her, so maybe she had always been this way.

"We could all have a dinner or something some time," I offered, not knowing what else to say. "Spend some time together?"

"I can check my schedule," Sam offered with a kind smile.

"I don't think a dinner will do much to help," Jack muttered. "But we can try. It would be nice to try to connect."

A hand clapped my shoulder and I glanced back at Dean who was getting his own slice of pizza. "I'm up for a dinner. Better be home cooked though."

"Is there a case you're working? Been a while since we've all been together." Jack had taken a seat now too as Cas entered the kitchen.

"Not that I know of, but I'm sure that we could find one if that's something that everyone wants to do," Dean suggested, joy filling his voice. "Like old times."

"I don't know," I muttered, looking at my nails, not wanting to see the disappointment on my siblings face.

"British dog got you on a leash?" Dean shot at me, voice annoyed.

"Dean, knock it off," Sam instructed. There was a smack and an ow from Dean. "If she can't go hunting, don't get mad."

"No. I haven't heard from him in a while," I admitted, glancing back up. "I'm just worried about leaving Elly."

"Why? She can take care of herself." Sam reached for another slice of pizza.

"There was an accident on a hunt we were on. I'm just worried about her is all."

"What happened?" the boys chorused together.

“I don’t think it is for me to say,” I replied, though I couldn’t remember much. Just the basics. And that was for the best. I knew that much. “Dean, search for a hunt. Let’s do something fun. I need a distraction from my life at the bunker for two seconds. Sam, call in. They won’t fire you. You’re too good of a lawyer. Jack and Cas go pack for us. I don’t know where we’re going yet, but let’s make it a long one. I could use the adventure.”

The room was still, but I could see smiles cross everyone’s faces and, all at once, everyone rushed off to do what I had asked. Sam left the room, pulling his phone from his pocket and Dean went to
find his laptop. Both Jack and Cas left the room as well, heading towards the back of the house.

“Possible vampire-”

“Boring,” I said, getting up from my chair and going to Dean in the living room. I sat beside him on the couch and turned the laptop to face me a bit more. “Something I haven’t seen a hundred of, please.”

“Uh...” Dean grabbed his laptop and began typing into it. “Ghoul.”

“No thanks.”

“Were-”

“Unless it’s a warehouse that works like a werewolf, I don’t want to hear about it.”

“Then what do you want?” Dean looked up at me with a curious expression.

“I want something new. I want a challenge.”

Or maybe I had had too much new. Maybe I had been dealing with too much and I should just go after something easy? But I wanted to explore. Ketch was off doing whatever he wanted. Elly was being nailed by Lucifer, their relationship better now than it ever was. And Ali was sure to be busy with Cael and training...or other things I’d rather not think of. This was a moment for me. No friends. No drama. No fiancés. And definitely no hell for me to rule. For a day. I would be happy with one perfect day.

Dean was silent for a moment and I could see him checking our normal news websites and the trackers that Sam had created that would let us know if there was anything odd to investigate. Dean’s hands paused and he hummed quietly reading over something.

“I have a week,” Sam said as he entered the room again, shoving his phone into his pocket. “I do need to stop by home and pack, but I am so ready to do this. Have you guys found something?”

“Maybe,” Dean replied, a hand going to his mouth as his eyes flickering across the words on the screen. “This is weird.”

“What?” I asked eagerly, trying to get a better look at the screen.

“Up in Iowa there’s a guy who’s claiming that he saw a girl being eaten by a monster.”

“Could it be a wendigo?” Sam questioned, sitting on the other side of Dean.

“It doesn’t sound like it.” Dean scrolled down on the page. “Says some green fleshy monster did it. Made the street lights flicker when it moved. That doesn’t sound like a windigo.”

“I vote yes. Let’s go! We’ll talk to him about it.” I got to my feet and felt new. Energized. Ready to take on the world like we had so many times before. “Is everyone else in?”

“Sure,” Dean shrugged. “A new change of pace would be nice. Sammy?”

“Yup. I’ll do some research on the way there.”

"Perfect.” I smiled. It felt good to be back to normal. Just the family and me. Like old times. Before I was a demon. Before the British Men of Letters uprooted us. Before Mom came back. Before everything went to shit. Before everything horrible...
What was I talking about? Things had always been horrible. But it was an easier horrible.

Cas and Jack had finally returned, several bags packed. Without a word, we all headed for the door, but a buzzing in my pocket pulled me aside.

I fished out my phone and wanted to ignore the name that was on the screen. But I knew if I did then he would just keep calling and calling.

"I'll be there in a minute," I muttered, letting everyone filter outside. The moment the door closed I put the phone to my ear.

"Hello?" I asked as nonchalantly as I could.

"Hey, love." I bit my lip. I didn't like how the word made my stomach churn. "Where are you?"

"Out," I replied.

"Oh. When will you be returning?"

"When I want to." My voice was harsher than I meant it, but it was an echo of how I truly felt.

"I'm sensing some hostility."

"Are you?"

"Did I do something wrong?"

It almost made me laugh at how innocent he sounded. What a load of shit. "I'm not going to answer that."

"You're mad because I left."

"I don't care that you left Arthur." A hand went to my head and I began pacing. I felt itchy almost. I needed to move. My muscles were aching from staying still. My chest felt tight and I couldn't breathe. Fucking anxiety. "I hate how you never tell me. You don't even leave a note. And you don't answer my texts or phone calls-"

"I didn't think it mattered."

My feet paused and I stared at the floor beneath them. Maybe it didn't matter. Maybe I was overreacting. But I sure didn't feel like it.

"Do you know how incredibly stupid it is to go on a hunt alone? And now you're not letting anyone know where you are, Ketch!"

"You called me Ketch."

"What if I did?" I questioned. I jumped at the sound of Baby's engine. "I'll be back when I come back. Don't wait up for me and don't forget to burn your clothes again."

"Ale-"

I hung up on him before I heard the rest and tossed my phone onto a cabinet that was by the front door. I needed the time away and I didn't want anyone to find me. Not my best friend, not hell and especially not that British dog.
I left the house and raced to the Impala, climbing into the passenger seat that had been left empty for me. The car was silent and didn't move. I glanced over at Dean who was eyeing me with concern.

It was then that I felt the warm tears running down my cheeks. My hands scrambled to wipe the salt from my face.

"I'm ok," I pressed, though I was sure none of them believed me. "Let's go. I'm ready for this road trip."

I spun the volume knob up and Scarecrow in the Garden beat through the car. Dean waited for a moment more before putting baby in gear and pulling away from their home.

The car ride hadn’t been as long as I had wished it would have been. About seven hours had done nothing to stop my hands from shaking, which was bothering me. They hadn’t shook like this since I was human. On long hunts when I didn’t have the chance to eat they would tremble.

And all of the anger... I knew anger was one of the only emotions a demon could feel in its entirety, but this was getting ridiculous. I was pissed off that I was pissed off and it was the only thing I could feel anymore. My blood was in a continuous boil and there was nothing I could do to stop it.

It sure as hell didn’t help that I felt like I was getting fat. Maybe it was my imagination, but it sure as shit looked like my shirts were struggling to cover me. They had probably shrunk in the wash and I was overreacting. I always overreacted. Ketch couldn’t do laundry to save his life. Most of his clothes needed to be dry cleaned anyway, so he had probably messed up a load or two.

“Hello! Sister dearest!”

I blinked, trying to come back to reality. Sam was waving his hand in front of my face. I rubbed at my tired, white line fevered eyes. Sam and I were the only ones left in the car. I watched as Dean, Jack and Cas carried bags to the motel room.

“What’s up with you? You didn’t say anything the whole ride.”

“I don’t know Sam.” My voice was barely a whisper and he leaned closer over the back of baby’s front bench. “I feel like everything is wrong.”

“Everything is always wrong,” he said with a chuckle, ruffling my hair. I rolled my eyes. “Is it Ketch?”

“Why do you all always assume it’s Ketch?”

“When is it not Ketch?”

“Fair point,” I admitted in a grumble, folding my arms over my chest. “Yes, it’s Ketch.”

“Well...” he pressed when I didn’t elaborate. “We can fuck him up Alex. Dean and I would have no issue with that.”

“I know. That’s the problem.” A smile pulled at my lips. My brother’s knew how to fix things. Not a hundred percent, but they did help. “I kinda want to take you up on that.”
The mood in the car shifted to something awkward and worried. “What did he do?”

“I don’t know if he’s done anything. I’m pretty sure he did...or is.”

“Tell me.”

“I think he’s contracted again.”

“We took care of the BMOL.”

“Not with them.” I pulled my feet up on the seat and hugged them to my chest. I couldn’t let Dean see. He would never forgive me for getting baby’s seats dirty. “I don’t know who with but they must be dangerous.”

“What makes you say that?” Sam’s hand took my shoulder and gave it a comforting squeeze.

“He came home one night covered in blood and burned his suit. His favorite suit. He burned it. What else could it mean?”

“We burn our clothes. Sometimes you just can’t get the stains out. No one is that good at laundry.”

As much as I wanted to laugh at his joke, I couldn’t. “This was different. I’m not sure how else to explain it. And he’s been hiding it from me. He just leaves. He doesn’t tell me where he’s going, when he’ll be back, anything about what happened...”

“Maybe it’s you he doesn’t like.”

“Don’t even joke about that.” I smacked his hand away from my shoulder and exhaled deeply through my nose, trying to calm myself. I had never heard something that had hit me so hard before. Cut me so deep. And I have had my body torn to shreds by hounds. “Forget it. I shouldn’t have told you. I should’ve kept it to myself.”

I could hear Sam stuttering with apologies as I got from baby and slammed the door shut.

“Hey, watch it!” Dean warned, key pointed at me instead of his finger. He must have been coming back to grab more things. I shoulder checked passed him, but he had always been quick. He snatched me around the waist and held me tightly. “Whoa there. What’s going on?”

I shoved against him, but he held me strongly. “Let go.”

“No, we’re going to talk about what happened.” How was he this strong? I couldn’t ever break his hold. He must have noticed too. “You’re a demon. Why are you so weak? Are you iron deficient? Can demons be iron deficient?”

“Get your hands off me,” I instructed, stopping my useless attempts against him. I blew my bangs from my eyes.

“Sam, what happened?”

I glanced up at the closing of another car door. “I said something stupid. And she got upset. Let her go, Dean.”

“You’re a lawyer; what on earth could you have said?”

“I have notes to go off of in court.”
I glanced away as Sam came to stand beside us, Dean’s arms still wrapped around me tightly. This trip was supposed to be fun. This was anything but. “Dean, please let go.” It was like he had forgotten. He jumped slightly and released his grip. I hugged my arms around me and sighed.

“Do we need to take you back home?” Dean questioned in concern, taking my shoulders and trying to make me look at him. I simply stared at his shoes. “I don’t mind driving you back. You’ve been out of it since we left.”

“I’ll be fine.”

“Alex, you’re not fine. Do you want to talk about it?”

“Not really?” I replied, hoping that he would just drop it. And If I were Sam, he would of. He didn’t like touchy feelings with Sam. Probably made him not feel manly or some stupid shit. But he would always be on my level if I needed it.

“Let’s get a drink.” I shook my head, but I knew he wouldn’t take no for an answer. “Let’s go. Come on.” The push in his voice was gentle, but I knew it was more an order than a suggestion. I moved back to the impala and Dean opened my door for me and I couldn’t help but wonder if it was because he was afraid I was going to slam the door again. “Sam, go tell Cas we’ll be back later and hurry.” Dean closed my door and I watched as Sam jogged to the motel door and knocked on it. “What did that jerk say?” Dean asked when he was settled behind the steering wheel. I shrugged and I could sense Dean frown. “Alex, you should know better than anyone that I don’t take I don’t know as an answer.”

“Just something about Ketch.”

“We always make fun of Ketch. What did he say?”

“The truth. I’m sure of that.”

“Alex.” My name was stern.

“He said that Ketch didn’t like me.”

The car fell silent and I knew Dean was at a loss for words. I glanced up and saw him chewing on his tongue with a crease between his eyebrows as if he were trying to find something, anything to say. He didn’t have to though because Sam had come back. He climbed into the back seat and Dean started the car.

“Not cool Sammy,” he finally settled on.

“Yeah. I know,” he answered, ashamed.

"Hello beautiful," Dean muttered as he bit into his burger.

I smiled, crossing my arms and resting them on the table top. "Do you ever think that maybe you shouldn't eat that? You're pretty old now Dean. It's going to catch up with you."

He stopped and lowered his burger. He silently wiped his hands on the paper napkin and looked me dead in the eye. He lifted up his shirt and pointed to his flawless washboard abs.
"I think I'm fine," he answered, making Sam and me snicker.

"Only an angel could love that," Sam snorted.

Dean smacked him. "I am god damn attractive. And plenty of women have loved this."

I glanced to the bar where some girls were talking loud enough to be heard, but not understood. They had definitely been listening. All eyes were on us.

One who looked a bit more sober than the others was shoved forward and I had to put my hand over my mouth to stop from laughing at how obviously she didn't want to come over.

She slowly walked up to the table with a look of dread over her face. "My friends think you're hot. Do you want to hang with us?"

"I am a taken man," Dean answered, eating some fries.

"Not you."

I glanced between the brothers and Dean frowned. He wore an offended expression.

"Me?" Sam asked in shock, pointing to himself. He often came in second behind Dean. But I knew he had his fair share of sexcapades as well.

"Yeah. You want to have a shot with us?"

"Go," I whispered, nudging him under the table with my foot.

"Get out of here Sammy," Dean grumbled before taking a sip of his beer. Sam hesitantly got to his feet and let the girl pull him back to her friends at the bar. "Alright, spill," Dean instructed.

My smile dropped. "Oh, we're still doing this?"

"You don't get out of this that easily."

I sighed and glanced back to the bar where the young women were giggling. "You jealous?"

"No. And don't change the subject."

I turned back to Dean and was met with eyebrows raised in the same way my dad and John's would have been if they were expecting information to be given. It made me miss my dad.

"I think Ketch is contract killing again and Sam doesn't believe me and now I don't even know if Ketch likes me anymore. And I'm angry all the time. I don't know what to do."

Dean didn't say a word. He simply pushed his beer to me and nodded to it. I took it and drank some. He then pushed his basket of fries to me, ushering to it.

"I don't eat," I muttered. He simply motioned to it once more and I hesitantly took a fry. I don't think he understood that food wasn't good anymore. It didn't taste right. It was ashes in my mouth. Like chewing on charcoal.

I took a deep breath and ate the fry. My eyes widened in surprise. It tasted like a fry. Salty, oily, perfect.

"Fuck," I gasped, grabbing another. "I've missed these."
"I'll go get more," Dean said softly. "When I come back, we'll work through everything." With that he left the table.

My stomach grumbled and I couldn't help but looked down confused. The sensation was odd. Like I didn't remember how it felt to be hungry. When was the last time I had felt hungry? It gnawed at me. New and strong.

I glanced back to Dean who was chatting with the girls while waiting for his food and I returned to the fries. I couldn't get enough. There was no way I could eat quick enough. My body was crying as if the last two years of not eating had finally caught up with me.

"Slow down," Dean teased when he returned to the table. He paced a full meal in front of me. A giant, greasy bacon burger, more french fries, onion rings, buffalo wings and a large Weizen glass of deep golden beer. "You can have as much as you want. Taste what you're eating."

"I feel like I haven't eaten in years," I said through a mouthful of spicy chicken.

"You haven't eaten for years." I snatched up the beer and downed a decent amount of it. Dean took my hand and gave it a squeeze causing me to pause. "Pace yourself. I mean it. You can eat as much as you want, but we don't want you sick."

He was right. I was getting ahead of myself. We could order more food. I needed to relax. But I didn't want to. I had forgotten how good this had tasted. The memories were foggy at best.

"I think Sam might be busy tonight. So you can talk freely."

My attention wandered back to my younger brother who was in deep conversation with the ginger who had come to our table earlier.

"Talk freely?" I questioned absently.

"Alex, I know you keep things from him to spare him. It's what older siblings do. You have to be strong for them. They can't see you struggle and break. We carry everything on our shoulders so they don't have to." I turned back to Dean who was looking at me expectantly. "You know I'm right."

I stayed silent, not gracing him with an answer. Instead I dug back into my food in a hope that the more I ate, the less chance I had of explaining everything again to Dean.

But he had no problem with continuing.

"So ol' good for nothing is killing again?" He munched on an onion ring. He didn't push. He stayed quiet, waiting for my reply. Eventually I couldn't stand the silence.

"I think so." Silence. "I'm not sure what to do."

"And he doesn't love you anymore?"

"I-I don't know."

"Expain." I frowned, but Dean didn't notice. His eyes were on Sammy as he crunched away at the food that covered the small bar table.

"He's acting weird. I don't know." I shrugged.
"Tell me," he instructed firmly.

"He doesn't talk to me. He lies to me. He disappears for days at a time and returns covered in blood."

"You're still not telling me something."

I grumbled as I took another drink. He could always tell. No matter how hard I tried to hide it, he knew.

"We went on a hunt. He made me stay back. I heard gunshots and when he didn't come back I got scared." Dean had turned back to face me fully now. "I went to the house and found this little girl."

"What did she say?"

"You sure you can't read minds?" I teased, trying to break up how tight the air was between us. But he wasn't having it, Mr. Business.

"Alex."

"She said that her dad had hired a man to kill her mom."

"You tell Sam this?"

"Not exactly," I admitted, sitting back in my chair with a slump. "The general gist."

"Ok." Dean folded his arms over his chest. "Then I'll take care of it."

I didn't like the sound of those words and the tone they were said in. "What does that mean?"

"It means that I will take care of it."

"Dean, I will never forgive you if you hurt him."

"I will take care of it."

I finished off my beer anxiously. Dean had a way of getting carried away. It wouldn't be the first time that he killed someone that we cared about. Poor Sam had friends that were met with Dean's knife more than once.

"I'm heading out," Sam's voice said as he approached the table.

"Which one?" Dean questioned.

"Ginger."

"You didn't even learn her name?" I asked in shock. That wasn't like Sam.

"Her name is Ginger."

"That's ironic," Dean grumbled, finishing off his drink.

"And you were so right about purple nurples," Sam commented as he turned away from us.

"Dude, I suggested those like 12 years ago. When we first met Gabe!"

"I should have listened." Sam gave a shrug and shot us a smile over his shoulder as he followed the
"What the hell are purple purples?" I asked, a bit afraid of learning the answer.

"Coconut rum, orange liqueur, de blue curacao liqueur, and cranberry juice."

I smiled. "How do you know that?" His eyebrows rose and he shot me an incredulous look. "You're wanna be college days. Got it."

"What else is bothering you?"

"Please stop Dean. You're already going to kill Ketch-"

"I'm not going to kill Ketch. What else is wrong?"

"I don't know. I feel really guilty about something that happened between Lucifer and Elly and I honestly don't know exactly why. I am struggling to hold things down in hell and this stupid plan for me is making me anxious. How the hell am I supposed to end monsters?" I laid my head on the table top with a sigh, looking at my hands under the table in my lap. "How do I rid the world of monsters? There are hundreds of hunters all over the world. We've been hunting for hundreds of years and the monsters are still rampant. How am I supposed to fix that? I'm just so tired and I'm out of ideas. And then- and then-" I sat upright again to face a very kind expression. "I'm getting fat!"

"You are not getting fat," Dean snickered. "That's what you're worried about?" He was laughing even harder now.

"This isn't funny."

"You look the exact same way as you always have. From the first day I ever met you, you looked just like this. Did I get you too big of a beer? You alright?"

"Stop laughing." I sighed and threw a fry at him. "You didn't like me much then."

"You were another Adam. Someone who got a better version of our parents even though we were their kids."

"You still don't like Adam," I pointed out.

"I pity what his life became," Dean explained. "He was thrown into this with no knowledge, was tricked into giving up his vessel and died for it."

"And me?"

"You were some hot headed new hunter. You knew your stuff, but you were cocky. It was annoying."

"I was cocky?" I demanded with a laugh. "You were a cocky son of a bitch. Are you kidding?"

"So you didn't like us either?"

"I didn't say that. You remind me of my dad a bit. I liked both of you."

"I don't know how to end all monsters, but we'll keep working on it. I'll come by the bunker and we'll look over the books that are still there." Dean smiled kindly. "You want to go?"
"Yeah, but bring the food. I'm still starving."
Chapter 14

I gasped, something cold covering my face. Disoriented, I shot up in bed and could feel water dripping from my hair. The room was busy and Dean was tossing a plastic cup aside. He had obviously thrown water at me.

My breathing steadied and I glared. "What was that?"

"Sam didn't come home last night."

"So?"

"It's almost 5, Alex. You slept all day. We need to find him."

"I slept?" I whispered, trying to find a clock. I didn't even remember falling asleep. I couldn't remember the last time I had fully slept.

"Would you come help me? We need to find him. He's not answering his phone."

"I can't find him either," Jack explained. "I've been trying to find him all morning."

"Well, we do have wards carved into our ribs," I reminded as I rushed to my feet and went to find new and dry clothes. "Where's Cas?"

"Still out searching," Jack explained as I made my way to the bathroom.

I changed as quickly as I could and went to ready my gun. "Did he say anything else last night? Call? Text? You sure he's not just held up in bed?"

"You know he would have told us," Dean grumbled, duffle over his shoulder and a phone to his ear. "Cas, we're heading back to the bar. Let us know if you find anything." He lowered the phone and headed for the door. I snatched Sam’s laptop off the table and followed after the two of them. "Try calling him again."

I felt at my pockets and sighed. They turned up empty. Of course I had left my phone home. I climbed into the impala and reached over, taking Dean’s from his pocket. He glanced over me curiously, but swiftly turned his attention to driving. I dialed and my eyebrows furrowed at the message. It was Dean.

“Hey, Sam can't talk right now because he's waxing. Like everything. But leave a message-”

“Dean, what are you doing with my phone? Dean, come on,” came Sam’s annoyed voice.

“I’m assuming he’s not answering,” I muttered, passing Dean back his phone.

“Is there anything I can do to help?” Jack questioned from the back seat in his very innocent voice. I passed the laptop into the back.

“What has Sam been researching about this thing? I feel like I’ll get car sick if I try reading everything.” It was a strange sensation. A churning in my stomach and my head spinning slightly.

Jack took the laptop from me and the car fell silent. We pulled up to the bar quickly and Dean and I headed in at a brisk pace.
“We’re not open yet-”

“I don’t care,” Dean interrupted the bar keep, a young man who looked exactly how you would imagine someone who was up all night to look. “Last night we were here with our brother. He was hanging out with a bunch of chicks.”

“You mean the really tall guy with long hair?”

“Yes. He went home with a girl named Ginger,” I explained. “With the red hair.”

“Oh, the pastor’s daughter. Yeah. They live by the old graveyard on the edge of town.”

“He sure knows how to pick them,” Dean grumbled, tapping the bar a few times before turning away. “Thanks. Com’on Alex.”

When we had gotten back to the impala, Jack was waiting for us. “It looks like people have been going missing at the national parks. Just from the 40s to now there are 54 people that have gone missing. And just recently there was a girl who was found in the woods with bite marks. Police say it was a coyote or something of the sort, but the boy that was with her says he thought he saw something else in the forest.”

“Did he have any theories?” I questioned over the roar of the engine.

“Something called a Kohonta. Some Native American legend. It’s like a windigo but the natives would curse someone before they changed. Said it has acid spit.”

“Is it that green thing covered in vines?”

“There aren’t any pictures,” Jack answered Dean.

“We’ll worry about that later,” Dean muttered, shoving the car into park and leaving the car. I followed and we raced across the front lawn to the house.

“Dean, shouldn’t we think about this?” I asked. He didn’t reply and I sighed. He was very easily angered and sometimes acted without thinking.

He ripped open the screen and pounded his fist on the door. He must have been impatient because he was knocking on the door again almost immediately.

"I'm coming!" an annoyed deep voice said from the other side of the door. The door swung open to reveal an older man in a nice suit and tie. His anger seemed to melt away when he looked over us. "What can I do for you two? You look troubled."

"Is Ginger here?" Dean asked frantically. His anger was starting to show through. He always slipped when it came to Sam. I wasn't sure if he would act the same for me, especially now that I was a monster.

"What do you need with my daughter?"

"We just need to speak to her for a moment," I tried to explain, taking Dean's arm to attempt to calm him when his hands turned to fists. "Can we please see her?"

"Ginger! There's some people here to see you!" he called back into the house. "Would you like to come in?"

"No, this won't take long," Dean answered lowly.
There were footsteps from the stairs and the redhead rounded them before coming from the door.

"Do I know you?" She wore a confused expression, but kept her kind smile.

"You left the bar with our brother last night. He never came back home," I explained. "Do you know what happened to him?"

"You went to that bar again?" he father demanded. Her smile fell and she rolled her eyes.

"I'm 22. I can go to a bar," she hissed over to him. "Sam didn't come back?" She turned her attention back to us and looked thoroughly confused. "I dropped him off at that sketchy motel last night."

"Sketchy motel? Ginger, we need to have a talk about your friends."

"Not now dad!" Ginger hissed, waving her dad away. "We made out in my car for a bit, but he said he had something important he needed to do and he had me drop him off at that motel."

"What time was this?" Dean asked. "Wh-when did you drop him off?"

"Like three?" Ginger answered.

"And that's all you know? Did he say anything at all?" I asked. Where the hell could he have gone?

"Just something about that stupid legend. The one about the cannibal."

"A cannibal?" Dean and I asked together.

"Some old native story," the pastor explained. "A man got snowed in during the winter and ate his family to stay alive. Then a tribe cursed him with immortality and hunger. The man just wanders the woods looking for food. And if he doesn't eat, then his body will eat itself. But it's just a stupid story."

"Is that the Kohanton?"

"Yes," the pastor answered Dean.

"We're right by the woods," I muttered. "Did you hear anything last night?"

"No. We were all out by then. I'll call Cas. We got to go."

"Thank you," I said with a smile to the pastor and his daughter before we both raced back to the car without another word.

"Do you need help looking for him?" Ginger called after us.

"I think we've got this," Dean said back, climbing into the car, me following. Dean wasted no time in pulling from the curb, my door wasn't even closed all the way. "Fuck, where is your phone? There's a billion messages from El on here."

"Let me see when you're done with Cas," I instructed. "Jack, last night, did you hear anything weird?"

"Weird how?" he asked, tipping his head to the side.
"Sam was dropped off at about three AM. Did you hear a car? Hear him?"

"There was a car. It didn't stay long," Jack replied. "But I didn't hear anything else. I was reading about how werewolves affected hunting in Victorian London."

"Riveting," I mumbled. Dean tossed his phone to me.

"Cas is searching the woods," Dean explained. "He'll let us know if he finds anything, so don't be on the phone too long."

I looked through it until I found Elly's number and dialed it. It rang several times before it picked up.

"Finally. I've been calling all of you all night."

"Hi Elly," I said with a smile.

"Oh, thank god you're all safe. Was worried sick."

"What's up hun?"

"We've been having some issues over here."

"It hasn't been so great here either," I admitted. "What issues. And please don't say Ketch related."

Elly sounded confused. "I wasn't gonna. No, the bunker was attacked."

"Is everyone ok? Everyone is safe?"

"Yeah. Everyone is safe. Cael took Alex somewhere to keep her safe. Didn't really have a choice."

"What attacked you?"

"Some werewolves. But they were weird. Silver didn't work on them. Nothing worked on them except for beheading. And they were strong. Stronger than normal."

"That's odd."

"But there's something else. This happened in the show. But Micheal was doing it."

I rubbed the bridge of my nose and sighed. There was too much going on. "We'll discuss it more when I get home, ok? Just put up what you need to, go buy a shit ton of garlic or something."

Elly laughed airily. "I wished that worked. It doesn't even work on vampires."

"Stay safe. I'll be home soon and we'll talk."

"Alright Alex. Stay safe too. Bye."

I was about to pass the phone back to Dean, but it rang and I quickly answered it. "Cas, did you find anything?"

"I didn't find Sam, but I found another body. Bites like the newspapers said. Doesn't look like an animal though. Her throat was ripped out."

"Where are you?"
"Just off the hiking trail, by some restrooms."

"Ok, we'll be there soon. Don't go too far."

"What did Elly want?"

"Werewolves attacked the bunker. I'm assuming they wanted Ali. Just another thing to deal with when I get home."

"Are they safe?" Jack asked, sitting forward in his seat.

"Yes, they're safe," I assured.

The car finally came to a stop in front of the forest and I got from the car and went to the trunk of the impala to get some gear. With a knife and a few extra clips of bullets for each of us, we all raced down the hiking trail in search of Cas.

When we finally found him, he pointed beside him to the forest floor where the grey body of a young woman lay, blood coating the pine needles. She had long, deep scratches down her arms and her throat indeed had been ripped free of her body, showing licked clean bones, the edges burned clean.

I almost wanted to throw up at the site. I have never been one to be queezey, but there was something about this scene that made my toes curl and my stomach turn. I reached out my hand and took Cas’ coat in my fist to steady me. It was the closest thing within reach.

He glanced over at me with concerned blue eyes, but I shook my head to tell him to ignore me. He moved closer so I could have a better grip on his arm and turned back to Dean, waiting for orders.

“Still no sign of Sam?” I questioned.

“Nothing as of yet.”

“I have an idea,” Jack continued on after Cas’ reply. We all looked to him inquisitely. “According to the research, people are attacked when they are alone at night in these woods. We can use me as bait. I’m sure that thing couldn’t hurt me.”

“I think we should think this through a bit more,” Dean offered. “I don’t want to use someone as bait.”

“We might not have a choice. We don’t know anything about this monster,” I sighed. “Jack is the only one who read the research. Maybe bait is the best idea we’ve got.”

“There is a church a further in that we could use,” Cas offered, pointing away into the trees.

“Let’s set up there,” Dean agreed. “We’ll see if there are any other ideas when we get there.”

“What about the body?” Jack questioned. “We can’t just leave her here.”

“Once we catch this monster, we’ll call someone to come get the body. Right now we need to worry more over people who are alive than ones that we cannot save.” Cas kept his arm still out for me as we walked passed the body and to where the angel had indicated the church had been.

“Are you alright?” he whispered to me when we had separated a little bit.

“Been feeling a bit off,” I explained away. Not that I knew what was wrong. “I’ll be fine. Was just feeling a tad dizzy.”
“We don’t get dizzy,” Cas mumbled. “Are you sure there is nothing wrong?”

“I’m fine. Thank you Castiel.” I gave his arm a squeeze and released it in hopes that he would drop the subject.

As luck would have it, we came across the church just then. The stone was old and weather worn, overgrown with ivy. It’s steeple was damaged and the cross lay sprawled across the forest floor. Some of the windows were smashed, but most were miraculously intact. All in all, it looked very forgotten, like a fairy tale.

“Let’s set up shop,” Dean called out, heading for the door.

I went to follow, but stopped at a sharp pain. A burning in my feet and a crushing of my head. I gasped and stumbled away from the church, hands clutching my head. I dropped to my knees, the air leaving my lungs as if it were ripped away from me.

“Alex!” Dean called, racing over to me. I looked up through blurry eyes at my brother. He had fallen to my side and was trying to help me up. “Are you ok?”

“Hallowed ground,” Cas’ voice said somewhere in the distance. “Maybe this was not the best idea-”

“I’ll just stay outside,” I coughed. I tried to wear a smile as Dean pulled me to my feet. “I can let you know if the monster shows up. No worries.”

I paced outside of the church, waiting. I could pull my hair out from the roots at how nervous I was. This wasn't fair. I couldn't help. What the hell was I supposed to do? All I could do was sit and wait. But I didn't want to sit and wait.

My brothers could take care of themselves. They had been hunting longer than me. But I knew they were accident prone. We all were. We were always nursing some injury back to health.

Dean was in the church, waiting. Cas was still off searching for Sam and Jack was supposedly out in the open to use for bait.

The sun was beginning to set, the last sunlight shining through the trees like sleepy spells of golden dust. And the forest was quiet. Still. I wouldn't have been surprised if this land had never been found before now.

There was a rustling of leaves and I turned, my hand ready on my gun. I relaxed at the flutter of a trench coat.

"Hey Cas." I gave him a nod.

"Just coming to check on you," he explained as he took a spot beside me, standing up right with his hands clapped behind him. "You doing alright? I know how restless Winchesters get when they can't do anything."

"I'll be alright Cas. I have too much on my mind to be restless."

"Yet, here you are."

I sighed and let my head lean back to soak up the last rays of sunlight. "Here I am," I agreed. I
inhaled deeply of the scent of pine and stretched out my arms. "Cas, do you ever feel like there's something important you're supposed to accomplish and you're the only one who can, but you can't fucking figure out what it is you're doing wrong?"

"That is strangely specific," he mused. I stood upright again, looking down at the quaint church. "I suppose I have felt like that, but I know that everything will work out the way it's meant to. It always has, even if you three are the biggest pains in the ass."

I smiled a bit. "I guess we did fuck up Armadidn't. I never did figure out if I were a vessel for anyone."

"Uriel mostly."

"Mostly?"

"Well, just as Adam was an alternative for Micheal, you were for Lucifer."


Cas chuckled sweetly. "Well, I'm glad you're you and not Uriel. He's too self righteous. The angel of God's Wisdom." He scoffed and I smiled. "He's just as much in the dark as the rest of us."

"Would be kind of nice to have some of God’s guiding wisdom right about now.” I cracked my knuckles and kicked at the leaves at my feet. “Cas, you know something is up with me, don’t you?"

“What? Not being allowed onto hallowed ground isn’t that far off for a demon.”

“Not that.” I sighed deeply, feeling the chill of night beginning to set in. “I don’t sleep, I don’t eat, I don’t feel pain for the most part. But....”

“I too partake in more human endeavors than most angels. But you were human before. I’m sure it’s just habit.” He gave a half smile and I knew he didn’t believe the words he was saying.

“How are things going with Dean and Jack? You three make a cute family.” I began in my pacing again, unable to stand still anymore. Cas followed along with me, slowing our walk down to a comfortable stroll instead of my anxiety induced jog.

“Good. Dean doesn’t hunt as much as he used to, which I suppose is good. His mind is an always worried mess when he hunts. I’m shocked he isn’t more shut down that he is. But he’s been homeschooling Jack, so I think he’s in a different kind of worried mess.” I giggled at the thought of drop out Dean trying to teach Jack math equations. “He gets frustrated most times. But I think it’s good for the both of them. Dean has been talking about opening up a bar ad well."

“A bar?” I laughed. “He would be good at that. He’s absolutely amazing at mixing drinks. And I always thought that Dean would make a good father. Sam too. In their own ways.”

“Everything has changed so much in the last year. I like where we are now. But Dean want to move back into the bunker. Says he misses hunting all of the time.”

“He’s never liked hunting,” I muttered. “I’ve lived with him long enough to know that he still has nightmares and he cries when he thinks he’s alone. He doesn’t want this life. I think he just thinks it’s all he’s good at. It’s all he’s ever known. And he doesn’t like change. It scares him. But if anyone deserves a normal life, it’s my brothers. They’ve given heart, life and soul to this world over and over again with never a thank you. They deserve better than this Cas.”
“And what about you?”

I paused in my steps and looked to my feet. “I deserve what I’ve got. I deserve this fucked up life. I’ve never deserved more.”

“Then what are you going to do if you succeed in your destiny that Cael shouldn’t have mentioned.”

I was at a loss for words on both accounts. He shouldn’t have told me? And I had never thought about what I would do once all of the monsters were gone. What would I do? Had I even expected to live through it?

“I guess I’ll rule hell, if there is one?” Would there be one? And what about Angels? What would happen to them? “Chuck knows more than us, right?”

“He must. Not everything has made sense, but it always works out the way that it should. You just have to trust in him.”

I stuck out my tongue. “This is getting too religious for me. I wouldn’t believe in any of that shit if I hadn’t met Chuck myself. And even now I don’t fully believe it.” The forest was silent for a moment when we didn’t speak. “Cas, what will happen to you if I get rid of all of the monsters? Are you part of the monsters? I don’t want to take away the good. I just want all of the bad to stop.”

“We’ll figure it out when we get to it. I’m sure there’s a lot to what needs to happen. We’ll discuss it when the time comes,” Cas assured.

“Cas, when we are done with this, can you help me with Ali? There’s something so incredibly wrong with her. I took her soul in a deal and now she’s not her. Cael is trying to help, but I’m not sure what good anything is doing.”

“I will see what I can do. But if he can’t help her, then I am unsure if I could do any better.”

“Maybe you should go back to Dean and Jack. It’s dark now. If that monster is going to show up...” I trailed off. Cas nodded and gave a kind smile before working his way back to the church on ground that I could not follow. “Sam where are you?” I muttered to myself, glancing around.

I went and took a seat with my back against the tree. I hated being alone with my thoughts, but I didn’t have much more of a choice. And I hated waiting around. I hated sitting here waiting for the monster to come. And with no Sam. Where had he gone? Was he dead somewhere like that girl that we had just left in the middle of the woods. Would we find him like that? Or would we ever find him? Was he just lost now? Gone forever?

I couldn’t think like that. I just couldn’t allow myself to. It would do nothing to help the situation. I was still in this and I still needed to fix it. It was the top of my ever growing list of things to do. A list that never would never ever end. A list that I was a slave to.

Just the thought of it made me want to drink until I could feel no more. Until it was all numb. Until my blood was more than 90 proof.

A cracking of tree branches drug me from my depressed senses and I looked around the forest, unmoving from my spot. I couldn’t see anything though. But I didn’t move from my spot. I didn’t want to alert the monster if that’s what it was.

There was another branch snapping in completely the opposite direction than the other one. And
then the most eerie whistling I had ever heard. I looked towards the sound, but still could not see a thing. No large monster, no people, not even a squirrel.

Where was this fucking thing?

Shattering glass brought me to my feet and I could make out figures shuffling through the windows of the church. And I wanted so badly to raced forward when Dean’s body flew across the church with a sickening smash. But my foot hit that line and it burned. Like holy water. Like salt lines. Like hell fire.

But the second I saw Cas being flung out of the church doors and into a tree, I knew I had to do something. And Jack calling for my name made it all too real. If an angel and a nephilim couldn’t handle this monster, then maybe a demon could.

With all the strength I had in my body, I raced forward. A splitting, suffocating pain coursed through my body. It didn’t want me to move closer. It only intensified as the church grew nearer. I stumbled, slipping on the pine needles, but pushed forward. Forced forward. Teas were tumbling down my cheeks.

I rounded into the church and hopped from foot to foot in a vein impulse to attempt to stop the burning. I did my best to look through the blurriness of the tears and could make out Jack backed into a corner and Dean slumped against a wall. And there was the monster, on all floors, crawling towards Jack just like the girl from The Exorcist.

“Your powers aren’t doing anything to it,” Jack called to me, backing up further against the wall.

I gasped, doubling over at a constriction in my chest. This wasn’t fair. I had to help him. But how?

My fingers quivered as I reached through the blinding hurt for my gun. Aiming it, I pulled the trigger in quick succession, the sound only adding to the echo of my head. Taller than me, breath so rotten I felt as if my nose would melt off.

Bullets didn’t work. What was I supposed to do? I didn’t have anything but my gun. I tried again anyways. It was all I could think of to do. It was the only thought that made sense. And so I did. I emptied every last one of those bullets into it. But it did nothing. Only made it angry.

I was hit with thick arms and was tossed aside like a rag doll.

I hit the floor and had never wanted to badly to just lay in one place, wishing that I would just fade out of existence.

“Alex!”

I tried to lift myself up, but my arms shook and dropped me back to the hot church floor. There was movement beside me and I glanced up enough to see Dean stagger to his feet, knife in hand. He raced at the monster and the Kahonta all too easy knocked the blade from his hand and threw him aside.

He crawled over Dean and I could hear a growl and then a scream. Dean’s scream. It shattered through my own screams of pain. I needed to help. I needed to do something. And with Cas down for the count and Jack not knowing how to fight without his powers, it was up to me.

I scrambled to my feet and scrapped the knife from the ground. I stumbled towards the screams, now unable to see fully. My foot kicked something and I dropped to my knees. The form in front of me was large and I slammed the knife down into its back.
There was an unnatural scream and it left enough time for Dean to roll out from under the Kotohan. I fell back and collapsed, breathing hard, doing my best to see if I had done enough. And I must have. In a melting, smoking mess, the monster turned to a bubbling liquid on the church floor.

I coughed and curled in on myself, unable to move.

“Dean, are you ok?”

“Cas, get her out of here,” Dean ordered.

“Dean, Sam’s under the church,” Jack’s voice said somewhere in the distance now.

“Sammy!”

In an instant all the pain stopped, leaving me with a dull ache. I gasped for the cold night air, clawing at the dried leaves and pine needles. I couldn’t stop coughing. It was like I had never breathed before. Every cell was greedy and screaming.

“Dean, it hurt you. Are you ok?” Cas questioned.

“Don’t worry about me. Is Sam ok?”

“I-I’m fine.”

“Where’s Alex?” Dean demanded. “Alex!”

“Her-here!” I croaked out, tears still falling reely down my cheeks. Hands took hold of me. Held me tightly. I wasn’t sure whose they were, but I didn’t care. It was nice to feel something soft amongst all of the sharpness. “I want Crowley.”

I wasn’t sure why I said those words? Maybe it’s because he had been the one to help me every time I was hurt. Every time I felt like I wasn’t strong enough to carry on. And he was always there. More so than Cael ever was. Maybe Crowley was my real angel.

“Shh. Let’s get her back to the motel,” one of the boys said. I couldn’t tell who.

And the next thing I knew was laying in the back of the Impala, my head on someone’s lap. Fingers played with my hair and I assumed it was meant to be comforting. When my mind was finally beginning to function full again and the rumble of Baby’s engine had calmed my frantic heart, I opened my eyes to see Jack looking out the window, his fingers still gently caressing my hair. Must have been something he had picked up from Mom.

My eyes widened and I shot up. “Sam?” I groaned at the dull ache in my stomach and clutched at myself, laying back on Jack’s lap.

“I’m here,” Sam assured, a hand patting my knee. He must have been at my feet. “I’m safe. Thank you for finding me.”

“And Dean called someone to find the girl,” Jack explained, fingers pausing. “I can stop.”

I smiled and closed my eyes. “Thank you Jack.”

“Dean, I can drive,” Sam offered after the car jerked slightly. I opened my eyes curiously and sat up slowly this time. Dean was clutching his shoulder and leaning over to one side as he was driving. He shook his head. “Please let someone else drive.”
“Let me heal you,” Cas insisted. “You’re losing too much blood.”

“When we get back to the motel. We aren’t far now.”

“What happened, Dean?” I asked, my arm still holding my middle as I straightened up a bit more.

“It bit me,” Dean answered, yanking the steering wheel back as he drifted a bit. We had finally made it back onto a lit road and in the street lamp that swiftly passed by, I could make out Dean’s jacket soaked completely with blood. Cas was right. He was losing too much. “What the hell were you thinking Alex? Going into that church like that?”

“I saved your life, jerk. Don’t take this out on me,” I grumbled, folding my arms over my chest. “I’m glad you’re all safe.” I felt Sam take my hand and give it a squeeze. “It hid you away? It killed everyone else.”

“I don’t know. Maybe he was saving me for later. Took me to that church and then there were several people who were laughing. It ripped up the floorboards and left me there and I assumed went after the group.”

“And how did you find him Jack?”

“That monster burned the floorboards when you killed him.”

“Why didn’t you call out to us earlier?”

“I was gagged,” Sam explained. “That thing was smart.”

The car came to a sharp halt as Dean hit the breaks and put Baby in park. We all jolted forward and into the front bench. Everyone around me jumped into action. Sam raced around to help Dean out of his seat. Dean leaned into my brother heavily and his legs gave way. Cas was swift to grab Dean’s other side and Jack stood by the open door to help me out of the car.

I took his hand and let him pull me from the back seat and into the night air. I stumbled and Jack caught me, his arms around my waist. He was a strong kid. “Thanks Jack,” I whispered as he took most of my body weight onto him and helped me to our room.

I closed the door behind us and could see Dean passed out on one of the beds while Sam was working at getting his jacket and shirt off of him. Jack placed me in one of the chairs beside the bed and went to the bathroom to get something. Most likely a wet cloth.

Cas had two fingers placed to Dean’s head and his eyes closed. “Nicked one of his arteries,” Cas said in his low voice most likely more to himself than to anyone else.

Jack had returned and Sam took the bowl and rag and began wiping clean Dean’s shoulder. Jack and Cas both nodded to each other before placing hands over dean. A cool glow of blue and the warm glow of gold filled the room and I watched as the large chunk taken out of Dean’s shoulder began to return. There was a sharp inhale of air and Dean jumped upright. Sam tried to catch him and tried to make him lay back down, but Cas swiftly pulled Dean to him, cuddling Dean’s head into his chest.

Dean’s trembling hand took a fistful of Cas’ trench and he hid his face in the angel, breathing hard. Cas clutched him tightly, resting his head against my brother's. “Stop being so bull headed,” Cas ordered. I smiled. They were meant for each other.

“Let’s rest a night before we head back,” I suggested. “I think we all need the time.”
“I agree,” Sam nodded. “Who gets first shower?”
As we made our way back to the bunker, I could only stare up at the sky and nervously tapped my fingers on the door of Baby. The clouds were ashen with thunder and growled and flashes of lightning were blinding as they crackled across the sky.

We stopped by the bunker and I climbed from the car. The air was hot and damp, but the stillness was incredibly misleading. And we were a bit outside of the next town, but if you listened closely you could hear the warnings, the tornado sirens blown across the trees.

“We need to hunker down,” Sam said as we unloaded the car. “Dean, get the car into the garage. Jack, make sure we have enough supplies ready if the power shuts off. Cas, check and make sure everything is locked up and secured. Alex—”

Sam broke off at the crack of lightning that hit across the road from us. In a form of instinct, we all crouched down, hands over our heads. There were sparks from the electric pole as the lightning split down it and half of it came crashing to the ground.

We all stood up and I glanced around. The bunker’s front lights were off.

“I thought we had generators,” I muttered, a hand to my head. The trees were starting to creek and dust was starting to pick up. “I’ll go check those. Let’s hurry.”

I rushed into the bunker and ran into Lucifer who caught me around the waist so I didn’t fall.

“Well, hello doll.”

I rolled my eyes and pushed away from him. “I need to check the generators. How’s Elly?”

”A little lost, but we'll get through it. Cael took Sapphire somewhere, so Elizabeth is a bit—”

”Lost,” I finished for him, running down a set of stairs. He followed after me. I pushed open the door to our cellar and turned on the switch for the lights, but the room stayed dark.

Lucifer tapped me with something and I took his flashlight turning it on. There were several large generators and I glanced over them. None of them were running. I stepped over to one and opened the gas cap. It was full. As were the other two.

”We have more gasoline on those shelves, right?” I asked, motioning behind me with the light. Lucifer moved to the shelves and picked up one of the gas cans. It made a sloshing sound and I nodded in understanding.

I moved over to one of the generators and pulled on the chord. It grumbled in dislike and wouldn’t start. I tried again and it only sputtered.

I kicked the machine and sighed. Lucifer came and tried as well, but nothing came of it. He even tried to power them up with his grace, but it did nothing.

”Right,” I grumbled. ”That's not good.”

I turned and left the room, handing Lucifer back his flashlight. We made our way back up the flight of stairs and into the map room.

”Dean,” I called. My brother entered the room with a flashlight in hand. ”The generators aren’t
"starting."

"Sammy and I can run into town and pick some up."

"You sure you can beat the storm?"

"Most of these don't turn out. You know that." Dean gave a shrug. "You going to be ok here?" His gaze was hard on Lucifer.

"I'll be fine," I assured.

"Alright. We'll head out and be back soon. Sam!" Dean called, heading towards their bedrooms.

"We need to find the lanterns," I muttered, heading to the garage.

The knife continued to catch the light from the small oil lantern on the table. The light danced across the wall like a carousel as the knife spun in my hand, the tip slowly digging further into the table top.

We really should have thought about the new generators for the bunker. It had never occurred to me because the temperature and light never bothered me. I could find a needle in a haystack in the pitch black if I truly felt the need to.

Everyone had left the bunker for various reasons. The boys had gone to find new generators that wouldn't fail to help with the power outage and Lucifer and Elly had gone to pick up some more food. We had storage, but it would be easier to use fresh things first before the canned.

My eyes left the light fluttering across the wall at the sound of a door opening and closing. It was only one pair of footsteps. Ketch.

I waited quietly, my knife stilled as the sound of shoes on the concrete grew louder. I could make out a deeper shadow on the wall and got to my feet.

With a swift move, I pulled the knife back and threw it. I would never be as good as the kid, but I could hit my target without a problem.

Ketch stopped, his nose a breath away from the knife blade that now stuck out of the wall. His silver eyes glowed in the light reflected from the lantern onto the knife, like he had a blindfold of fire draped over his eyes.

He didn't turn to me, didn't look startled or concerned. But the words that came from his mouth did nothing to lower the temperature of the sweltering room.

"I assume I deserve this, but can you tell me why you want to kill me this time, Love?"

"Don't call me that," I grumbled under my breath, "What the fuck is wrong with you?"

"I'm not sure I know what you mean, love." The nickname was said out of spite this time.

"Don't act all innocent." I stood from my chair, "You've been disappearing without saying where you're going or when you'll be back. You've killed important leads before we got all the information out of them. When you do come home you're covered in blood that you try to hide from me."
“There are always be more leads.” He said calmly, laying his gun and a bloody knife on the table, ignoring the rest of what I’d accused him of.

“You’re contract killing again aren’t you?”

This statement was followed by silence. We both stood there, feet apart in the silence, his eyes a solid silver as mine burrowed into him.

“Ever since you’ve been back you’ve been nothing but aggressive. It’s like you’ve started taking some super steroid.” I continued, watching him as he moved further into the room, loosening his tie.

“You like it when I get aggressive.” He flirted, his mercury eyes almost glowing.

“I like it when you’re aggressive in bed.” I huffed, I wasn’t going to fall for his bullshit or his distractions, “Not when you kill our only lead in months.”

“Don’t you start with me.” He said, taking the knife out of the wall and stalking towards me. “You torture souls for fun.” The knife slammed into the table, “You have no room to be upset over this. I did my job. I killed a monster.”

“What job?” I wasn’t phased by his try at masculinity. “You’re a hunter. Not an exterminator.”

“And what’s the difference? Isn’t your whole goal here to kill off everything anyway?” He took a seat at the table, relaxing under my angry gaze. “Just add these to the body count. Send a prayer to your precious body guard who holds onto you so tightly. When was the last time he spoke back to you?” He threw his feet up onto the table top, a cold grin on his face. “I’ll admit it’s a bit poetic, a demon following an angel’s plan.

I wasn’t sure how quickly I’d moved. But in the next seconds, my hand had gone across his face. Hard enough that his cheek was already red and his head had been forced to turn. I could feel the part of me that was fully demon welling up again. I could feel the power. The want to take control and punish him. I could barely hold it back.

“I’m making the world better, not assassinating for money.” The words were hot and angry as they left my mouth.

He turned back to me with a poisonous glare. Maybe I’d hit him too hard. I was sure my strength was out of my control, but I didn’t at all feel bad about it.

“I didn’t say anything about money, Alex.” His voice had become hard and cold, nothing left of the teasing and flirting tone he had had moments ago.

“Don’t play dumb, Arthur.” I almost hissed, “I know you’ve been taking contracts again. I know about the burnt clothes. I know about the midnight calls.”

“You used my first name. Then you are serious.” This tone was sarcastic. “What if I have been killing for money? Do you have a problem with it? I haven’t seen you complain about the rooms we’ve stayed in.”

“You could’ve told me.” I could feel the control slipping, “You didn’t have to sneak around like you were cheating.” I felt my eyes slip to black without my say so, “I didn’t feel good enough for you!”

“Why would you not be good enough for me?” He almost laughed, “I gave you a ring.”
“You’re never around anymore!” There was a sharp growl behind the words, “I had to beg you to let me go on a hunt with you!”

“Alex,” He rose to his feet, “Let’s be rational about this, you don’t need to go all devil on me.”

“GO DEVIL?!” That was a wrong move, “I am being rational! You’re the one sneaking around!”

“It’s hunting!” He shot back. “Why does it matter if I’m hunting?”

“Because you’re not hunting.” The full demon voice had come through now, making my voice deeper. A voice that would make most men shudder. “You’re killing for pleasure again. I know you are.”

“There’s not much that I enjoy in this world. Is it wrong of me to indulge sometimes?”

“When it makes you a murdering asshole. Yes.”

“Listen to yourself!” He sounded tired now. Like he was done with this fight. “You kill for fun too. I know it. You can’t do this job without enjoying it!”

“I don’t have control over that anymore.” I argued further, I couldn’t let this go anymore. “If I don’t kill I’ll go insane. It’s not my fault.”

“And me killing is?” He demanded. “Do you know how long killing has been drilled into my head? I couldn’t stop even if I wanted to!” His arms flew up in exasperation. “What do you want me to do? Become a perfect little innocent boy? That’s not me, love. And I can guarantee it’s not the man you fell in love with. I am not a bodyguard. I am not a babysitter. I am a man of letters, and a bloody fucking brilliant one at that!”

“No.” The word was firm, “You were a british murder dog. I made you a hunter and a man of letters.” I pointed a finger at his chest. “Without me you’d still be one of their brainwashed mutts.”

“Do you ever think that maybe I liked being a mindless mutt for them? Do you think that maybe I tried just for you? I did. I tried to be a good hunter for you. I tried to be nice to those idiotic brothers of yours. I tried a lot of things to make you happy, but none of it is me. Never had been. Never will be. I refuse to be miserable. I love you, Alex. To the ends of the earth and back. But you can not ask me to cage everything I’ve been. I gave up a lot for you. But this is something I can’t just forget or give up.”

His words brought back the human in me. “I want you to be you. I would do anything to have you be you.” I let my head drop. “I just don’t need you brainwashed again. I need you to be strong. Because I….” I felt something strange well up. “I….I can’t…be.”

The room fell silent. I took a chance glance up at him. His face was blank. Almost like he couldn’t contemplate what I’d said. Finally, after many seconds, his eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

“What?”

“I…I…” I didn’t know how to say it. “I’m losing control of….of this.” I gestured to myself.

“Love?” He took a careful step towards me. His hand outstretched, hesitant to touch me. “What are you talking about?”

“I can’t control being a demon anymore.” The words were stammered, “It’s going to swallow me. I’m…I’m…” I could feel myself shaking, “I’m afraid of hurting you.”
“You couldn’t hurt me.” He laughed, an attempt to lighten the mood. “Demons are easy compared to most things.” The didn’t help. But he knew that. His hand reached forward and tipped my face up to his so he could place a soft kiss to my lips. “We’ll do it together, love. Through better or worse. Till death do us part.”

I snaked an arm around his neck and pulled him close into a hug. “How do you always make me feel better?”

“Feel like what?”

“Make me feel human.” I closed my eyes, enjoying the smell of teak wood and gunpowder as he held me close. “I never feel more alive than when I’m with you.”

“Then you trust me when I say I won’t let it consume you?”

“I would trust you with my entire demonic existence.”

“Let’s not go that far,” He teased. “You shouldn’t trust me with more than a kettle. I’m rubbish with anything important.”

“Loving me is important and you’re not rubbish at that.” I kissed his neck softly. “And sex. You’re not bad at sex either.”

He let out a true laugh at this. “That’s nice to know.” I felt a shiver as I nipped at his pulse. “I’m sorry. About lying to you. I’ll find a way to make it up to you.”

“You can do it now. We have some time to spare before everyone gets back.” I nipped at his jaw.

He sighed, his hands taking my hips. “We do?”

“Of course, love.” I whispered, using his catchphrase against him. “Unless I decide to lock to doors.”

I glanced up as the smell of sickly sweet pomegranates filled the room. I gave a confused glance over Elly, inhaling deeply of the scent. It was so strong, I could see it radiating off of her.

Her wrists. Her neck. Her chest. Maybe it was just some new perfume. But between her legs caught me off guard. I had heard of putting perfume behind your knee but never between your thighs.

I didn't need the mental pictures to know what happened, but they still came. Lips over pulses in wrists and neck. Teeth down her chest as hands held hers above her head. Gasps, moans, swearing, names.

How appropriate that Lucifer left the smell of pomegranates across his Eve's skin. Almost like poetry.

"You have fun?" I asked with a smile, making a deep blush cover her cheeks.

"Shut up," she whispered, coming to sit beside me. She snatched up my glass of scotch and finished it off before pouring another glass.
"That good?" I teased, elbowing her. "Do I need to go buy you some cigarettes?"

"I said shut up." Her blush deepened and she downed the glass a second time. "Where's Ketch?"

"He went out."

"And you're not worried? He's been gone a lot."

I shook my head. "I'm not worried."

"What are you doing?"

"I was just thinking about what you had said over the phone. Been wanting to call some of the other hunters and see if they have noticed the same thing or if maybe this was a one time thing," I explained, closing the book I had in front of me. "But they're probably asleep. So I thought that maybe I could find some lore about it that maybe we had missed."

"And have you had any luck?"

I sighed and shook my head. "Nothing yet." I stole my cup from Elly and poured myself a glass. The burn was pleasant even if it didn't affect me anymore. "Care explaining it to me again?"

"Yeah. Ali went out to the store and just appeared back here, covered in blood. Said a pack of wolves were after her. Said something about wanting to use her powers for something or other. She wasn't quite clear on it." Elly shrugged with a deep breath. "Cael took her somewhere to hide her. He's supposed to bring her back here today." Elly got to her feet and walked behind me, heading for the kitchen. "Do you want anything?" she called.

"I don't eat," I reminded, looking back at the book that was still in my hands. I opened it and continued skimming the pages waiting for Elly to return. When she did she had a bowl of cereal. She sat back beside me, her legs crossed under her on the chair.

"Don't tell Sam I stole his cereal."

I laughed. "It's been nice that they wanted to move back in while we figured all of this out. It will take all of us."

Elly nodded in agreement and ate a large spoonful of Krunch Cookie Crunch. "This reminds me of Cookie Crisp."

"What's that?" I asked curiously. I had never heard of such a thing.

"Just a cereal back in my world. Doesn't matter." She took another large bite.

"We should make you Winchester Surprise some time. You would love it. Mom made it up."

"I know." Elly smiled through her mouth full with chubby cheeks. "The only thing that Mary was any good at making." She swallowed her mouthful and her face took a more serious look. "About the werewolves Alex, they are immune to silver. We had to decapitate them. Bullets did nothing."

"And you mentioned something about Micheal," I reminded nervously. We had killed him. I was sure that there was no way that bastar would ever be coming back. But this worried me.

"In the show, Micheal wasn't killed by you. Jack killed him. But before that, he was trying to make an army of unstoppable monsters. Took vamps, werewolves, shapeshifters, and djinn and had them drink a mixture of blood and angel grace. It made it so that the only possible way to kill them was
to cut off their heads and Micheal would control them. Tried turning the whole city of Chicago into monsters, but Dean trapped him, so it didn’t work.”

“Cael killed him. I watched him die.”

“Cael did it?” Elly asked curiously, drinking the milk in the bottom of her bowl.

“Yes. He did it,” I nodded absentmindedly. “Elly, what else could be doing this? There aren’t anymore arch angels and all of the angels in heaven are just that. In heaven. There aren’t many of them left. Who could be doing this? The only other archangel is Lucifer.”

She shrugged. “I can only tell you what happened on the show. And he would never...” She trailed off.

“What else happened in the show?” I asked hesitantly.

Elly opened her mouth and closed it again, looking away from me. “I will tell you if it becomes necessary,” she finally answered.

“So, it’s bad.”

“It’s bad.”

“How many seasons were there again?”

“Fifteen.”

“And...” I ran my finger over the edge of my glass, not wanting to look up at her. “What season are we on?”

“Fourteen.”

That made my chest tighten unpleasantly. What did that mean for all of us? How did it all end? What was so bad that she wouldn’t tell me?

“And why did the show end?”

“The actors wanted to end on a good note,” she responded softly.

“And how did the show end?”

“I can’t ruin that,” she whispered. “I’m... I’m going to go back to bed for a few more hours. And I’m sure Lucy will be wondering where I went.”

“Ok.” It was all I could think to say as she took her bowl back to the kitchen and then left down the hallway for her room.

What was she not telling me? What was so bad that she couldn't say? I lowered my head onto the table and exhaled deeply. What else was I supposed to do? She wasn't giving me any hints.

A flutter of wings made me sit up and I blinked several times. I did my best to smile. "Hey kid."

She nodded to me in reply. "My mom and dad here?"

"Still asleep," I answered. Without a word, she turned and headed for the hallway. I got to my feet and walked over to Cael. "How is she?"
"A little shook up. But she took on a pack by herself before coming back here for help. Anyone who wasn't a trained hunter would be on edge," he said, arms folded over his chest.

"She took on the pack?"

"Well, what else could she do? She needed to stay alive."

I nodded. "True."

"And how is she otherwise? Was she all powered up?"

"She was." I bit my lip at that. "The crazy eyes, the anger, all of it."

"Ok. Stay here. I'm going to get Cas. We need to talk."

I raced down the hall and stopped at Dean's room. I knocked on the door and there was shuffling and groaning. The door opened and I gave Cas a smile. Dean was still in bed, lying chest down, shirtless with his face hidden in the pillows and the rest of him draped in shared sheets. "Cas, we need to talk." I glanced over him. He was in one of Dean's shirts and boxers. That was sweet of him to stay with Dean at night. I couldn't even do that for Ketch. "You have a moment?"

"Sure." He glanced behind him and probably after deciding that Dean was fine, he closed the door behind himself. "What's going on?"

"It's about the kid," I replied, leading him back to the map room where Cael had taken a seat and was waiting for us. "Alright, we need to talk about Ali. We need to figure this out."

"What exactly is happening?" Cas asked, taking a seat at the table. I didn't move though, deciding that standing was better for me.

"We went on a hunt and we needed to save Elly and the only way we could was to make a deal. And ever since then she's been having issues." I ran a hand through my hair and then rubbed at my tired eyes.

"What kind of issues?" Cas pressed, hands folded neatly on top of the table.

"She gets worked up very easily and when that happens, she-she..." I waved my hand around looking for the words.

"She becomes this strong monster almost," Cael finished for me. "It's like the angel side of her takes over and you can't stop it. You have to calm her down."

"It sounds like Sam," Cas mused. I tipped my head to the side in question. He rolled his eyes and I smirked at the action. "When he didn't have a soul."

"We hadn't met you then," I pointed out with a laugh.

"I was still Dean's angel. I was listening. He was lucky he didn't get a second one. I almost didn't make it."

"A second one?" I stepped closer to the table in curiosity. "You can have more than one?"

"You do," Cas shrugged.

I looked over to Cael who was staring at the table, avoiding my gaze. "Why do I have two?"

"You had one before me. I replaced him." Cael looked up from the table to me. It seemed like he
didn't want to tell me this at all. "You Winchesters are so fucked up that I'm your second angel."

"Who was it?"

"Zechariah."

"That asshole who tried to kill Dean?" I demanded.

"Yeah. Him." Cael gave a nod, but his face quickly turned to confusion. "Am... I an asshole?"

"Yes, but for completely different reasons," I teased. Cael was difficult but I liked him. A smile flickered across his face. "If we're so fucked up, what does that say about you?"

"Why do you think I avoid all of you as much as possible?" Cael shot back at me.

I laughed and shook my head. "Fair."

"Can we get back to the topic at hand?" Cas asked as politely as one could. "So you took her soul and now she's being like this?"

"Right," I replied. "Ali made the deal, I took her soul and now she's like this?"

"Maybe she is losing her soul. She becomes more and more one noted every day," Cael agreed.

"What did you do to her?" Lucifer voice demanded behind me. I turned just in time to be shoved to the floor by his strong hands.

"You touch her again, I'll kill you," Cael hissed, immediately coming between the devil and me, a hand holding to Lucifer's arm tightly.

Elly slowly stepped towards me and helped me from the floor.

"That's my daughter you fucked over!" Lucifer yelled. "I should have fucked you up when I had the chance doll." He shoved at Cael, but Cael held tightly to the angel. "I went easy on you then and it won't happen again. I will torture you in ways that no one has ever been tortured before!"

"I did what I had to," I defended, ushering Elly behind me as a safety precaution. I didn't trust the redness of his eyes. If they were anything like his daughter's then we were in trouble.

"Fuck you." Lucifer tried to take a step forward, but Cael was swift to twist his arm back behind him with an angel blade to his throat.

"Don't hurt him," Elly squeaked out, her hands reaching out to him, though I held her tightly behind me.

"You took her soul!"

"Elly would have died without it!" I yelled back.

"You should have found another way!"

Lucifer again made movement and my guardian pulled his arm up further, forcing him to his knees. But I knew better. Lucifer could break that hold in a second if he truly wanted to. "That's what you Winchesters are so good at, isn't it?!"

"It was the kid's idea," I shot back, my grip on Elly tightening as she tried to move past me. He was explosive. His old self. Back to being a dick. I wouldn't take the chance of him hurting El.
"Bull shit!"

"I won't accept responsibility for a girl who can make her own decisions!" I yelled, making the room still. "But I would do it again! I know you'd have me do the same as well. You would do anything for Elizabeth, including stealing thousands of souls! Don't pin this shit on me, you bastard!"

"Alex, you're hurting me," Elly's soft voice said behind me. I blinked several times, having to take a moment to register her words. I released my hold on her and could see bruising.

"I-I'm sorry, El. I didn't mean to hurt you."

"I know," she answered with a nod.

The room was still tense and I bit my lip. "Lucifer."

"I don't want to hear it," he hissed.

"It's true," a new voice said from the hallway. I glanced up to see Ali standing close to Jack. She stepped forward and took Cael's arm in her grip, softly pulling him off of her father. "I sold my soul to save Mom." She pulled Lucifer to his feet and he stood in stunned silence. "She was hurt and dying and I couldn't help her any other way. Please don't be mad at Alex. She didn't do anything wrong."

"And if you're worried, we could always have Rowena come by and see if she knows what's wrong," Jack suggested. "She always seems to know what's going on."

"Oh no. I'm not letting her anywhere near my family," Lucifer said flatly.

"Because you killed her?" I shot at him. Why did I always try to make things so tight between us? It wasn't good, but there was still such a large level of untrusting between all of us. His fists clenched tightly and he shot me a harsh look.

"I think we can all agree that we have all done things that we're not proud of," he hissed through tight teeth. "But that doesn't change the fact that we both used each other and I dislike her."

"She's been helping us solve a lot of issues lately," Sam's tired voice said as he pushed into the room with an exhausted looking Dean behind him. Looked like the whole bunker had woken. "Maybe it would be best to have her come check up on Ali. From what I've heard, it seems like the best direction to go."

"It's settled, we'll give her a call," Dean said, clapping his hands. "And trust us, Pitchforks, the rest of us aren't too happy about the situation either, but it needs to be taken care of in the best way possible."

"And this is the best you've got?"

"Lucy," Elly sighed, stepping to her boyfriend who took her arms to look over the bruising that dusted her delicate skin. "You know it's the best way forward. You know for a fact that it is."

He exhaled deeply and gently ran his hands over her arms, the bruising disappearing without a trace. He didn't say anything else. He simply ran his hand over his mouth and left the room, pulling from both his lover and daughter's grips.

"I'll call her," Sam said, pulling his phone from his sweatpants pocket.
"Who wants food?" Dean asked, heading for the kitchen. "French toast sound good?" He didn't wait for a reply before pulling out pans.

I grimaced. What a nice foot we had all started off this morning. But we were bound to all fight. It would only be natural. We were all in the middle of each other's relationships and we would never fully mix. But what family ever was perfect?

"Jack, can I talk to you?" Elly asked, rubbing her elbow nervously. I looked over the two of them curiously and waited for everyone else to settle before I followed them down the hall.

"What is it Elizabeth?" Jack questioned from one of the many rooms. I paused to listen, staying hidden out in the hall.

"I wanted to thank you for being so kind to my daughter," Elly answered.

"Of course. She is my sister after all."

"About that..." Why did Elly sound so nervous? "Would you want to go on a hunt with me? Just us two?"

"Just us?"

"I haven't gotten to know you very well, Jack. And with being with your father and all, I thought that maybe..." Elly trailed off. "Is that being too forward?"

"Not at all. I would enjoy that very much."

I smiled a bit. It was nice that she was trying. And I knew that this scared her. She wasn't even ready for Ali, so having another kid that wasn't really hers was probably just as difficult, if not more. I was proud of her. She wasn’t that little kid that was barely legal to drink anymore. She was a mom and a damn good one, even if she didn’t believe it.

"Ok. You find one and we’ll go on it as soon as we find out what’s wrong with Ali."

"Ok." Jack sounded like he was smiling his bright, kind smile.

I pushed myself off of the wall and went back to the main room, not wanting to over step more than I was.

The sweet smell of cinnamon was slowly filling the bunker and I felt my stomach growl. I bit my tongue. What was wrong with me? What the hell was wrong with me? I almost wanted to call Crowley and yell at him. I needed someone to explain this to me. Was this normal for demons? As far as I knew, it wasn’t.

"You don't feel anything," Sam said as I entered the room. "It's horrible, really. You just don't care."

"It sounds nice to me," Ali said with a laugh. I smiled as Dean smacked her upside the head. "Ow." Her hand went to her head and she glared at him as she rubbed the spot.

"It is not nice," Dean said strongly, setting a plate of food in front of her. "You have no moral compass. It's not good."

"And Rowena is the Irish witch?"

"Scottish," Sam corrected. "How do you know about her?"
"Same way I know that you listened to Night Moves when you lost your virginity for a second time," she shot back.

I laughed out loud and Dean choked on his beer. Sam's fork dropped from his hand and onto the plate with a shrill clink. Dean started coughing into his arm and I stepped closer, clapping him on the back.

"She watched the show," I explained. "Do you need the heimlich?"

"That was in the show?" Dean gasped out.

"Oh, I've seen things that you could never dream anyone would know," Ali teased with a dervish smile. "Like the one time Dean had the dream about the angel and devil strippers."

"That is private!" he hissed, pointing at her, breath finally back. I laughed at her smile. And could see Cas with a quizzical look across his face. "This was before us."

"And Sam ripped his pants once when you were digging up that grave," Ali continued on.

This time Dean laughed. "I forgot about that!"

"Oh please. Like you didn't do anything embarrassing before," Sam grumbled angrily shoving a large slice of French toast into his mouth.

"Yeah, you like Taylor Swift."

Dean's smile fell as Sam laughed and I looked over him with a grin. "You do, do you?" I asked. "I didn't know that."

"I don't!" he defended, moving to sit beside Sam with a frown.

"Country Taylor?" I pushed, moving to the table and taking a seat beside Cael.

"Shake it off Taylor," Ali explained, eating her own food.

"What else do I not know about either of you?" I questioned, resting my head in my hand.

"If you needed to know, we would have told you," Dean said strongly.

"Right, right," I nodded with a laugh. But there were more important things to take care of at the moment than what music my brothers liked. "When will Rowena be here?"

"Later tonight," Sam replied.

"Do we have time to see your client?"

Sam sighed and scratched his head. "It won't be easy. He barely says anything to me. It's like he wants to be guilty."

"Well, he did do it, didn't he?" I asked curiously.

"Well, yeah. I'm positive he did. But I'm sure I can get him off on insanity charges. Normal people just don't hear voices."

"We hear voices," I reminded with a laugh.
“You’re just going to let him get slapped with a light sentence?” Dean almost demanded.

“It’s kinda his job,” Ali cut in. “He’s working for this man. His job is to prove his innocence. Noone ever said it would be easy. That’s why most lawyers don’t ask their clients if they’ve done the crimes. It’d keep them up at night.” Ali got from her seat and began picking up the dishes no longer being used.

“She’s right,” Sam agreed. “I don’t get to pick if my client is guilty or not, I just have to prove he’s not. And like it or not, everyone is innocent until proven guilty.”

“He’s more working on trying to get a lighter sentence than to prove he didn’t do it,” Ali continued from the kitchen where she was now washing dishes. The kid was smart. Elly had done a good job raising her daughter. “He was found with the murder weapon, with the bodies, and covered with the victim’s blood. It’s clear he did it.”

“How did you know that?” Sam questioned with eyebrows furrowed together. “Was it in the show?”

“No. You’re not a lawyer, just a hunter.” Ali returned to the room, wiping her damp hands on her pants. I tipped my head curiously before realizing how she knew. The boxes of files Sam had brought over when he had moved back in probably held the case in them. “I read the case files.”

“When?” Sam sounded flabbergasted and I smiled. Dean smirked before eating more.

“The last two nights. I don’t need sleep.” She shrugged. “I’m a fast reader. I could only be in the study at home while my parents were out or sleeping. I had to get through the books as quickly as possible.”

“Those are confidential.”

“Then don’t leave them out in the open.”

“They were in my room!”

I laughed. “What the outside world doesn’t know won’t hurt them.”

“They’ll be public records in the next hundred years anyways.” Dean added through his mouthful.

“Sam, I really need to speak to him,” I pushed, trying to steer the conversation back on target. “I need a lead. I need answers. My demons can’t find anything.” Dean grumbled at the words, but I ignored him. “Please, Sammy.”

“It’s Sam.”

“For your big sister?”

He groaned. “Ok. What excuse are you going to use?”
“FBI.” I held up my badge and Cael did the same. It took some convincing to get him to come with me, but Dean said he needed to do something important with Cas and Elly didn’t want to go anywhere until we had figured everything out with Ali. “I’m Agent Seger and this is my partner, Agent Clapton.”

“They just want to ask you a few questions,” Sam explained in the most professional tone I had ever heard him use. “I will be present.”

The man, who I had been informed was named Jason Macintosh, sat at the table, hands folded in plain sight. He wore a jumpsuit and looked tired and scraggly. It had been several days since his face had been graced with a razor.

“What do they need to know that hasn’t already been said to the police?” he asked boredly, as if he had somewhere better to be.

“We’re workin another case similar to yours,” Cael answered. I glanced over him, hoping he didn’t fuck something up. But he was usually much better with people than either Cas or Jack were. “We simply wanted to know more about the graves.”

“We don’t need any detailed on the supposed murders,” I added with a slight smile.

Jason looked bewildered and glanced between all three of us before sitting up a bit more forward in his seat. “And you’re sure this is ok?” His eyes were dead set on Sam.

“Yes.” Sam nodded. “It has nothing to do with the case against you and if they overstep, I will show them out.”

Jason looked as if he were trying to consider every possible outcome that could happen. Finally, he exhaled sharply through his nose and nodded. “What is it you need to know?”

I took an eager step forward. “You said that the grave was empty?”

“Yes.” I waited patiently for him to continue and the silence must have been too much, because he did. “Not just the one though. All of the graves were.”

“All of them?” I asked as I took a seat on the other side of the table. “How many did you dig up?”

“I-I’m not sure. It’s all a bit of a blur.” He licked his lips and looked upwards in thought. “I just wanted the voices to stop. So I kept digging. Maybe 12 or 13.”

“And the voices wanted you to rob the grave?” Cael stepped in. “What was it they wanted?”

“It was some book. Something called the Protector’s Manuscript, I think. It was a spell book.”

“Spells?” My knee bounced anxiously. I had a direction now. I didn’t know why I needed this book, but I obviously did. Even if it was to stop whatever these voices were.

“I know it sounds stupid. It does. No bodies in any of the graves, voices telling me to find a book of spells...” He sighed and rubbed his eyes. He didn’t seem crazy. Only god knows what those voices were. He could have been crazy, but the voices could have been demons, spirits or any other number of things.
“Is there anything else you could remember about that night?” Cael said, folding his arms over his chest.

“I felt like I didn’t have control over my body. It was like I was a puppet and someone was the puppeteer.”

“Thank you so much for your time, Mr. Macintosh.” I got from my seat. I didn’t think that I needed anymore out of him. “You have been very helpful.” I nodded for Cael to follow me and we all left the room, Sam letting the guards know we were done. “Anyone else getting major witch vibes? Or was it just me?” I asked as we were buzzed through a security door.

“We should ask Rowena about it when she comes by,” Sam agreed.

“Cael, do you think you can search for the book?”

“I’m not going to become your Castiel,” he grumbled back. “You already have me training the girl.”

“You like it, even if you won’t admit it,” I teased as we finally left the jail. “And she was able to take on a pack by herself and survive, so you’re doing your job. Thank you.”

My car door creaked as I got into it.

“Alexandria, dear,” Rowena gaped, pulling me into the biggest mama bear hug I had ever received. “Oh how I’ve missed you. It’s been a trifle difficult working with only your brothers. I’m so glad that you’re alright.”

“It’s good to see you too, Rowena,” I gasped out at how tightly she held me. But she found a new target and released me almost instantly. “Elizabeth darling. Is that you?”

“Hi,” she said, hugging Rowena back in what looked like just as tight of a hug. “Been a long time.”

“I’d say. Look how much you’ve grown dearie.” Rowena pushed her back by her shoulders to look at her. I smiled. “And you have a wee lass!”

“Hi. I’m Alex. But I guess my name is pretty much Ali now.” She held out her hand, but Rowena swallowed her into a hug as well. Ali shot me a look that told me the witch was way too close to her personal space. I only smiled more. There were a few things I had learned about Rowena and one was that she was going to hug you as long as she wanted to, whether you liked it or not.

“Ali, you look so much like your mother when she was younger.”

“You knew my mother when she was younger?”

“Aye, she was about your age when I met her. And my, what beautiful eyes.”

“My dad calls me Saphire because of them,” Ali explained, a light blush dusting her cheeks.

“Oh, and who’s the father?”

“That’s why we need your help,” I cut in, pulling Rowena’s attention back to me. “Ali is a nephilim.”
“Oh...” she didn’t seem very excited. She had grown used to Jack, but hat had taken a long time. “And the father?”

“Jack is her brother, if that helps,” I said with a wince. “Absolutely not,” Rowena said, picking her bag back up. “It was nice to see you again and it was nice to meet you, but I’m not doing this.”

I jumped forward and stood in front of her. “Come on, Rowena,” I pleaded, arms outstretched to block her way. “Elly really needs your help. Please Rowena!”

“I’m not going anywhere near the spawn of the literal devil!” Rowena hissed, clutching her bag to her chest.

“She’s even nicer than Jack,” I tried again. “And Lucifer isn’t even here. I made sure that Sam and Dean took him out. And he’s not like how you remember him.” It was a lie on my part. I still didn’t believe he had changed hardly at all.

“Please, Rowena,” Elly begged, coming to stand beside me. “Or leave The Book of the Damned and I will figure it out on my own.”

Rowena paused and held up a finger. “The only time yer getting this book will be when it’s ripped from my old, dead fingers.”

“Then please help my daughter.”

“What’s wrong with her?”

“I sold my soul and ever since then I’ve had issues. I get angry easily,” Ali explained. “I feel like I’m doing something right and then it turns out wrong.”

“That sounds perfectly normal and human. Now if you will excuse me.” She tried to push past me, but I caught her and held her still.

“Please. I did something wrong and you’re the only solution I have to fix what I fucked up.”

Rowena stopped, probably knowing that the winchester way was to keep fighting until we achieved what we wanted. She sighed in frustration and lowered her bag from where it was against her chest.

“And the father knows?”

“Yes,” I said with a nod, lowering my hands.

“I will see what I can do. Come take a seat.”

Ali moved closer to the witch and sat at the map table. Rowena took the seat beside her and took Ali’s hand in her own. “So you’re a real witch?”

“Absolutely,” Rowena replied. “I’m not one of those silly sideshow entertainers.”

“How long have you been practicing magic?” Ali asked excitedly.

I smiled and moved closer to Elly. “She’ll be ok,” I tried to reassure.

“Don’t start Alex. I’m not in the mood for false hope.”

What was I supposed to do here? There were only so many ways I could actually help. “Why don’t
you go pick up something for dinner. I’ll stay here with the kid.”

“200 years?” Ali gasped out. “You’re so beautiful.”

Rowena laughed. “Thank you dearie.”

I looked over Elly who had her arms folded over her chest and who wore an unsure and nervous expression. She bit her lip.

“I’ll take good care of her. I promise,” I pushed, taking her shoulders. “Go for a drive. You can take my car if you’d like.”

“Alright,” Elly whispered, lowering her arms. “Is everyone going to be here?”

“Yes. And Ketch is supposed to be back tonight. Or at least that’s what his message this morning said.”

“I’ll be back soon then.” Elly agreed. I pulled my keys from my pocket and handed them to her. She stepped over to Ali and kissed her head. “I’ll be back in a little while. I’m going to go pick up some food.”

“Can we try Winchester Surprise?” Ali asked excitedly.

I smiled. “I’ll make you a list,” I said, moving to where we kept the paper. Once the list was written and Elly had left, I went and took a seat on the other side of the table. “Well?”


“Ok,” Ali replied with a small nod.

“Well?” I asked when Rowena had finally released the kid from whatever trance she had been under.

“I’m going to go lay down,” Ali muttered, a hand to her head. Her skin was pale and sickly.

“Drink some soda water, dearie. Magic can use a bit of energy,” Rowena called after her. She turned back and folded her hands on the table top, red lips pursed.

“Yes?” I pushed again.

“You and your brothers...” she sighed.

“What is wrong with her, Rowena?” I didn’t want to play these games. Her tricks and round about ways of answering questions were stressful at best.

“It’s difficult to explain. She’s basically burning through her grace.” Rowena’s manicured nails tapped on her book as I struggled to understand.

“Well, that’s just like when angels are low on grace, right?” We just need to get her more?”

“I don’t think it will be that simple. Once the grace is gone, she’ll only have half a soul.”

“That’s still not the end of the world,” I tried to bargain, but it was more trying to make myself feel
not so shitty for making a deal with the kid. '

“Who’s to say.” Rowena shrugged. “She could live with half a soul until your hounds decided to go after her, or it would keep burning away.”

I ran a hand through my hair and rubbed my face, breathing deeply. “How do we fix this?” I ask from behind the shield of my hands.

“I’ll read through my book, but at the moment I honestly don’t have any ideas. And there isn’t enough grace in the world to make up the difference in how quickly she’s burning through it.”

“Thank you Rowena.” I muttered with a long breath. What the hell was I supposed to tell Elly and Lucifer. I wanted to tell them the truth, but then at the same time I didn’t want to hurt them. “I have another question if you don’t mind.”

“What is that?” she asked as she fumbled through the pages of the thick book.

“Have you ever heard of the book the Protector’s Manuscript?”

She froze, a page halfway to being flipped fell from her fingers, back into place. “Where did you hear about that book?”

“A case I’m working. What is it?”

“That’s dangerous witchcraft you’re messing with there dearie. Best not be dabbling in that.” She hurriedly busied herself with her book.

“What aren’t you telling me?” I asked curiously, my feet now off the table. I leaned forward and reached across the table, slapping a hand down on the book she was so preoccupied with.

“Rowena, why is someone looking for that book?”

“That’s nothing you need to worry about.”

“Graveyards are empty, people are hearing voices telling them to kill people and can’t control their bodies and they are asked to find that book in the graves, I think it’s fucking something to worry about.”

“Al-Alright,” she stuttered and looked up at me with a worried look in her eyes. My tone hadn’t been that harsh, had it? I hadn’t meant it to be. I was just frustrated with the games. It was too much. “A long time ago, there was someone who was called the Witch of Endor-”

“Never heard of her,” I found myself interrupting.

Rowena rolled her eyes. “Do you know nothing of the Bible?”

“I try to avoid it. My whole life is a religious nutjob, didn’t think it was important to read the old shit,” I explained with a shrug, removing my hand from her book and sitting back down to listen.

“The old shit is important too, dearie. King Saul sought the Witch of Endor to summon the dead prophet Samuel’s spirit to help him defeat the Philistine army.”

“What does that have to do with anything?”

“The Witch of Endor wrote the book thousands of years ago. But she never died, supposedly. She pops up all over history though. Alice Young, Grace Sherwood. But you would probably know her most by the name Bridget Bishop.”
“The first witch killed at the Salem Witch Trials by Abigail.”

“There’s some hope for you yet,” Rowena teased, closing her book and resting her arms on it. “She wasn’t killed.”

“Shocking,” I said sarcastically. “Do any of your witches ever die?”

“The ones good enough at magic never do,” she replied with a smile and a wink. She sat back in her chair, pulling her book onto her lap. “That book holds some of the oldest spells in it. Most are probably forgotten or have never been heard of because the book has never been proven as real. It’s never been historically documented anywhere. I doubt you would find anything about it on the internet at all.”

“Then how do you know of it?” I glanced up at a door closing upstairs. The boys might have come back, but I returned my attention to Rowena in hopes that she would keep talking.

“Just rumors through the ages.”

“Why are they searching for the book in graveyards?” There was a crash upstairs and I winced. I needed these answers. I didn’t have the time to deal with a fighting Lucifer. But Rowena looked like she had lost the want to talk. She got to her feet and grabbed her bag from the floor beside her, shoving her book into the bag. “Rowena, please. Why would they be searching graveyards for the book?”

“It was said to have been buried away with Bridget Bishop’s body.”

“But if she never died, then where’s the body?” I jumped to my feet to try to stop her from leaving, but she looked dead set on getting out even if she had to hex me to do it.

“I don’t know the answer to that question dearie. I will keep looking for something to help the girl, but I really should be going.”

I jumped as the door opened and slammed against the stone wall behind it. Ketch stumbled through it and tried to make it to the stairs, but his shaky hold on the railing broke and he collapsed, his body tumbling down the stairs.

“Ketch?” I gasped, sprinting to where he lay sprawled at the bottom of the staircase.

I dropped to my knees and pushed him onto his back so that I could see his face. He had a black eye and his eyebrow was split and bleeding and he was clutching at his side. Blood was staining the white fabric of his shirt and I immediately began unbuttoning his shirt as quickly as my shaking fingers could. His rib cage was bruised and bleeding. He must have gotten kicked.

I placed my hands over the wound and tried to heal him, but nothing happened. I couldn’t. Why couldn’t I? What the fuck was wrong with me? Was I just too worked up?

“Rowena, help me please.”

The witch’s heels clicked on the stone floor as she walked over to us. She lowered herself to her knees and took one of his arms. I grabbed the other and we lifted him up, carrying his limp body down the hall and to our bed. He groaned as we rested him down.

“It looks like he cracked a few ribs,” Rowena said, stepping back from the bed.

“Can you do something about it?”
“You can’t?” I fell silent and bit my lip, looking back at Ketch whose face was scrunched up in pain. “What is the point of being a demon queen if you can’t heal your beau?”

“Don’t make fun of me,” I muttered softly, my fingers shaking as they ran through his hair.

“Go get me some water to clean him up with. I can heal him, but it will take some time. I’m not instant like the rest of you.”

I nodded and went to the bathroom, grabbing a towel and wetting it in the sink. I returned and started cleaning his side as Rowena dug through her bag.

"Alexandria, I need five candles please."

I nodded and headed to the door. "Anything else?" I called over my shoulder.

"Some salt too."

Well, I knew we at least had the salt lying around. And I did find the candles rather easily. It had taken a while to get all of the organizing and bunker back to the way it had been before the fire, but it was slowly coming back together.

I went back to the room and choked a bit when I walked in. I coughed as I handed Rowena the items.

"It’s not even that strong of a scent," Rowena grumbled as she took the things I held out before lighting more incense. She then set up the candles in an inner circle between four bowls and lit them as well.

"Dear, go get me some hot water please. The hotter, the better." She held out one of the bowls for me.

I went to the bathroom and turned on the sink facet as hot as it would go and waited. The waiting was horrible. It couldn't have been more than a minute until there was steam fogging the mirror.

I filled up the bowl and took it back to Rowena who dumped a heavy amount of salt into the liquid before placing it back into the formation with the other bowls. One now held just plain water, one looked like it held dirt and the third had the smoldering incense in it.

"Anything else?" I asked anxiously. I wanted to be doing something to help. Anything to keep me busy. And a few cracked ribs was nothing to be so worried over. But it wasn't only his injuries that had me concerned. He had said one more job. This was the last one. But the way he had explained his employer made it seem like he had more jobs that would be coming whether he would like it or not.

"Just let me work," she answered, dropping some type of oil onto the candles and making them each hiss in turn.

I nodded and made my way back to the bed and sat beside Ketch. He winced at the movement of the mattress.

"How are you feeling?"

"It definitely smarts," he gasped out, eyes shut tightly. He held his hand out towards me and I took it tightly.
"It was him, wasn't it? The one you won't tell me the name of?"

He nodded.

Rowena made her way over to the bed with the steaming bowl that now looked like a sludge of everything combined.

"I'm not going to sugar coat it, this is going to hurt," she said as she scooped up a handful of the gunk.

"You're sure that's sanitary?" I asked apprehensively.

"You're not the one doing the healing, are ye?" Rowena shot back, slapping the goo right onto his open cut.

Ketch groaned and his grip tightened on my hand. His teeth were clenched and bared. "Damn you."

"Oh, stop being such a wee bebe." But as she rubbed more of whatever muck she had made to his injury, he just hissed through his teeth.

"Is he going to be coming after you?" I asked. I really needed to know where this road was going to take us, what was going to happen next. Did we just need to hide or did we need to fight?

"The percentage is high, love," he almost inaudibly answered through his teeth.

"And does he know where you are?"

"No clue."

"Right. Rowena, I'm going to make a call. You got this?"

"Yes," she replied, returning to her candles.

I patted his hand and gave it a squeeze before getting from the bed. "I need to know his name."

"I don't know it," Ketch answered. "I've never met him personally. Just worked through phone calls. He found me."

"Where is your phone?"

"My riding jacket. On my bike. It's a blocked number."

I nodded and raced from the room, heading down the hall and back to the map room before taking the stairs two at a time. I entered the garage and I finally connected what had made the large crash earlier.

His bike was in the middle or the garage, on its side and there was glass around it from either a light or mirror breaking.

I grabbed his jacket that was halfway out of the bag he always carried with him and I dug through every pocket until I found his phone's screen was now cracked, but looked to still be working.

I pulled up his contacts and found the blocked number that appeared more than the others. I dialed it into my phone and placed it to my ear to hear the dial sound and that cool woman's voice say that the number was not in service or had been disconnected.
I sighed and put the phone to my head for a moment as if that would help me come up with some ideas of what to do.

I lowered my phone and called Sam. It was a few rings before he finally answered. "What's up?"

"Can you trace a disconnected number?"

There was a pause and I chewed on my tongue waiting for a reply. "I can probably search the number and tell you who it might belong to, but I can't tell you where they are unless they have the phone turned on. What's wrong?"

"I need you two to come home."

"What happened?"

"I'll explain it when you get here. But please hurry. I'll make sure Rowena is out of here before you get home."

"Ok Alex. We'll be there in about 20."

I hung up and got back to my feet. I pushed Ketch's bike upright before making my way back to my bedroom.

"Rowena, they'll be back home soon, if you wanted to leave," I announced as I entered the room. Ketch was sitting at the edge of the bed, trying to button up a new shirt. He looked stiff, but was obviously better than before.

"He should be right as rain in a few days," she explained as she blew out the candles. "It's a slow healing, but if he rests for the next little while, he will be fine."

"Thank you Rowena," Ketch said, offering her a smile.

"I don't need your thanks, tyrant," she said loudly, making me smile.

"I'm not the English government," Ketch reminded.

"Does mean that your people didn't steal our homes and livelihoods."

"That was hundreds of years ago."

"Cuts are still fresh, I'm afraid." She picked up her now full bag and came over to me, pulling me into a hug. "It was nice to see you, dear. I'll let you know if I find anything for the girl."

"Thank you for always being there whenever we need you."

"Aye, you all owe me a million favors."

And with that she released me and left the room without another word.

I hesitantly made my way over to him and knelt down in front of him to help him to button his shirt that he seemed to be struggling so hard with.

"You're going to have to tell my brothers," I mumbled, half of me hoping that he wouldn't hear it.

"I don't need their help."
"Ketch, they need to know. And until you're healed, you can't help yourself."

"I will take care of it."

I finished buttoning his shirt and groaned out of frustration. "You're impossible! You can't even take care of yourself! Look at the mess you've been sucked into!"

"I didn't have a choice!" he shouted.

"That's not what you told me."

"How was I supposed to tell you that they were black mailing me?"

"Arthur!" My hands went to my head and I began pacing. Why did he constantly lie? Why was he like this? "We're in this together. What do you not understand about that?"

"They threatened to kill you. I couldn't let them."

"I am a fucking demon, Ketch! I can take care of myself!"

"You couldn't even heal me, what makes you think you could take them on? They've noticed that too Alex. You're not strong anymore."

I stopped pacing and my hands dropped to my side. "Just because I am too stressed to do something, doesn't mean I'm weak!"

"Alex! We're back!"

"I'll be there in a bit!" I called back to Dean's voice.

"They know Alex. They know something's up. And I don't believe everything they've said, but I wasn't about to let them hurt you."

"We'll discuss this later," I grumbled. "We have to figure out how to protect you, you jerk."

"I'm the jerk?" he asked with a scoff.

"Alex!" Sam yelled.

"Coming!" I left my room and went to the map room, tossing Sam my phone. "It's the last number I called."

"Right." He caught my phone and sat down at his laptop with it.

"What exactly is going on?" Dean questioned as he searched for a beer in the fridge.

"Where's Lucifer?"

"Went to go check on Ali," Sam answered.

"Dean, get me one." I sat at the table and lowered my head into my hands. There was a clink and I glanced up at a dark bottle. I snatched it up and drank from it. I placed it down and looked between both of my brothers. "Ketch!" I yelled, causing both Dean and Sam to jump. "Get your ass in here!"

Sam swiftly went back to his work and Dean looked like he wanted to disappear. He went to stand beside Sam and took another drink. "Ketch is in trouble and needs help. Aren't you dear?" I asked darkly as Ketch limped into the room.
"I told you I could take care of it," he snapped.

"I told you he started killing again," I reminded Dean, whose eyes darkened a bit at the mention of it. "Well, they're after him now."

"And we need to help him why?" Dean asked, getting a slap from Sam. Normally, I would laugh, but I wasn't in the mood. "I think he's getting what he deserves." Another smack. "Would you stop that?"

"As mad as I am at him right now," I said, tilting my beer bottle to the side, "I still love him for some reason and we need to help him. He's injured and can't do anything."

"Just heal him," Sam said with a shrug, glancing over his screen.

"Not an option," Ketch offered, trying to make it so I didn't have to try to explain. "They threatened Alex. I was only trying to protect her and it's gotten out of hand." 

"You sucked our sister into this?" Dean demanded, stepping closer to Ketch.

"You don't scare me," Ketch shot back.

"I found out who the number belongs to," Sam said, probably in the hope that it would calm down the room. "An Ernest White."

"Oh."

"Who is it?" I asked, though the name sounded familiar.

"He's the one who I was supposed to deliver Gabriel to."

"Oh..." I whispered. "So I didn't kill all of them."

"No. You didn't kill all of them," Ketch reaffirmed.

"So what do we need to do? Does he know where we are?" Sam had closed his laptop now and had his arms folded on the tabletop.

"Or I can take care of our problem now," Dean grumbled, though I knew he wouldn't with me in sight.

"Absolutely not," I said strongly. "We'll just have to be ready for him. He obviously knows something about us if he was threatening Ketch with me. Sam, can you keep an eye on that phone and if it comes back online, tell us? Dean, just make sure the buker is stocked with what we need. We've taken on the BMOL before. We can do it again."

"If you haven't forgotten, we almost died here because of them," Dean said with a harshness to his voice.

"But you didn't," I reminded. "You both got out of it. And we'll do it again."

"We can do this," Sam assured. "And now that I know who it is, I can locate him. No worries."

Dean moved over to Ketch and I got to my feet, ready to step in if I needed to. Dean's hand took Ketch's shirt, wrinkling the collar in his fist. But Ketch stood tall.

"If anything happens to my sister because of you, I will take care of you myself and I will not feel
any heartache about it. Family comes before things like you.”

Ketch only nodded and Dean released his shirt.

“Ketch, go back to bed. Rowena said that you needed rest.”

“I’m fine.”

“Now, Arthur!” I shouted, unable to stop myself. “You make me so fucking mad. Just go!”

His eyes wandered my face for a moment before he finally nodded, rubbing the back of his neck and leaving the room.

“Alex, do you-”

“I don’t want to talk about it,” I interrupted Sam. “Thank you. I’m so sorry for any trouble he is causing all of you.” I got to my feet and left the room as well, not knowing where else to go but to my room. My hand rested on the door knob and I sighed. I opened the room and stepped in to see a shirtless, bandaged Ketch laying on the bed with his arm draped over his eyes. The only light in the room was a single bedside table lamp. “Ketch...” He didn’t answer. He didn’t even move. “I’m sorry I yelled at you.” Still no response. I sighed and went to the bed. I lied down and rolled into his side, making sure not to hurt him. He wrapped his arm around me and pulled me closer to him. I don’t think I have ever been so surprised.

“I’m sorry I lied to you. I was just trying to protect you.”

“Thank you. But please, come to me next time.”

“I promise.”

“Ketch, there’s something wrong with Ali. I don’t know how to tell Elly.”

I closed my eyes and relaxed into Ketch’s breathing. “Then make up something. Say Rowena is still working on it.”

“I can’t lie to her,” I said softly.

“It’s not a lie. Rowena is still working on it.”

I mulled over it. Maybe he was right. I wasn’t sure what else to do. I didn’t want her to worry. Maybe I shouldn’t have been so harsh on Ketch. I was about to do the exact same thing to Elly that Ketch had done to me. We all just wanted to keep our loved ones safe by any means necessary.

“Alex!” a younger voice said from the other side of the door. “Dean’s making Winchester Surprise. Come on! It’s almost ready!” I smiled at the excitement in Ali’s voice.

“I guess we better go.”
Chapter 17

I was bent over, knees on the floor, hands grabbing the toilet bowl, and puking my guts up. I'd been like this for a few days now. Sick to my stomach. I hadn't even been sure demons could get sick. But here I was.

I threw up again and pushed myself back onto my ass. I was heaving and sweating and I still felt sick. I let my head hang and just tried to breathe.

"Just fucking kill me." I breathed.

There was a knock on the open bathroom door and I jumped and looked up to see Elly in the doorway.

"I could hear you down the hall. Are you ok?" she asked kindly.

"No. I..." I tried not to throw up on myself, "I think I'm dieing."

Elly laughed lightly and came to kneel beside me, rubbing my back as I puked again. "You're not dying. You have a fever?" She pulled my face up and placed a hand to my forehead. "You don't have a fever. How long have you been feeling sick hun?"

"I don't know. A few days?" I honestly wasn't sure anymore. I was still trying to think how this was possible.

"A few days?" She was silent, thinking for a moment before a look of recognition came to her face and she brushed back my hair. "I don't.... How...?" It turned to confusion. "Has it only been in the mornings?"

"I guess? It happens if I smell food too." I didn't know what she was getting at. "These are some weird questions, El."

"Alex, I feel as your best friend who has seen you naked I have a right to know when your last period was."

I gave her a weird look. "I'm a demon, El. Those things don't happen to me anymore." Why was she asking that?

"Then I am more than confused." She got to her feet and patted my head. "I just had the same thing when I was pregnant with Ali."

"Wait. You thought I was pregnant?" I asked, giving her a serious look. "Elly I...I can't. I couldn't even when I was human. I was sterile."

She gave a shrug. "Maybe you should check. What could it hurt? It would narrow it down a bit if you did. And you've been wearing larger pants. Don't think I haven't noticed. Been bloated? Gaining weight? You haven't been tightening your boots anymore."

"I....I..." I couldn't wrap my brain around it. It just wasn't possible. There was no way in literal hell that I was pregnant. Yes, Ketch and I had stopped using any means of protection but that was because I couldn't possibly get pregnant at all. "I think I'm going to be sick again."

"I-I didn't mean to...." Elly exhaled deeply and knelt back down beside me. "I could be completely
"No. You're right. I need to rule that out as a possibility." I said, standing on weak legs, "I'll be back in a bit."

"Ok hun," Elly's voice followed after me as I left the room, a hand to my lower stomach.

I passed through another door and made the leap to hell, landing on my hands and knees as it took almost all of my energy to make the jump.

I had been more tired lately. And more irritated. Especially with Ketch when I honestly didn't really have a reason. And Elly had been right. I had been wearing a size or two larger pair of pants. I didn't honestly have an explanation why.

I huffed and puffed on the floor. Trying not to throw up again. I couldn't even bring myself to sit back onto my knees.

"Crowley!" I yelled, willing with all the energy I could that he heard me call for him. And I wasn't sure if it didn't work or I was just impatient, but I shouted his name again.

"What?" he demanded, his sandaled feet appearing in my view from my hands and knees. "I was at the Mauna Lani Spa in a session with Leilani who has the touch of an angel and it's costing me a pretty penny, this better be something important."

"I need you to...." I choked back another bout of vomit, "To check something for me."

He sighed, his voice softened slightly. "What mouse? Kingdom falling apart? Been hearing rumors that you're having issues. Is this you begging me to come back? It is nice to finally have a Winchester on their knees in front of me."

I glared up at him, finally pushing back into a sitting position, staring for a moment at his Hawaiian shirt with a god awful pattern on it. "You gave it to me fair and square." I said, not in the mood for his teasing, "I need you to check if I'm...." I hated the thought of even asking, "If I'm...."

"If you're...?" He motioned with his hands for me to continue and I found the words difficult to utter. "Mouse, I can't help you unless you-"

"I think I'm pregnant, Crowley." I spat out, hating the silliness of this all.

He huffed a laugh and gave a nod. "I don't think you're far off, mouse. You look it to me. Gained a bit of chub in your cheeks." He patted his with a teasing smile. When I didn't drop my glare he sighed and moved over to me, placing a hand to my head.

I felt something push into my head and run through my bloodstream. Something almost intruding. It pulled away from me and he nodded.

"You're about a month along. Need anything else, or can I get back to Leilani?"

"How the fuck is that possible?!" I said, disbelief clouding judgement. "I was sterile as a human. And demons can't get pregnant! Right?"

"It's never happened before, but you have hit the jackpot, haven't you?" He sounded annoyed, but it was nothing compared to how I felt. "And shouldn't you be thanking me? I fixed you. Every last inch of you. I rebuilt you from the floor up. I only kept your scars because you said you liked them."
"Why did you fix that and not tell me?!" I put a hand to my forehead, eyes wide.

"Well, I didn't think you'd be sleeping with the whole bloody kingdom, now did I?" he said in his scraggly voice he used when he was mad.

"I didn't sleep with the whole bloody kingdom, Bat," I grumbled.

"Everybody knows about you and Charlton." He scoffed. "Who else would it be? His royal highness is gone. We both know this."

"Well it's not his. I'm sure about that." I fell back onto my back, the cool stone floor soothing me a bit. "And the royal highness is back in town."

"You found him?" Crowley looked shocked. "Well, isn't that lovely mouse? You can have a family. Sure the kid will be one hell of a saint."

"Let's not joke about this Crowley. I'm not even sure what this kid will be." It made me sick thinking about it. "If a nephilim is stronger than it's angel parent then...." I thought for a second, "Is there even a name for a human and demon baby?"

"Once upon a time, I feel like I recall it being something like cambion, but I haven't the faintest if that's right."

He stepped closer to me so he was more in view.

"We need to get rid of it, bat."

"You can't get rid of it! We couldn't kill a nephilim, what makes you think we can kill this?"

"Well I can't keep it! If a nephilim kills its mother I don't wanna know what this....this thing will do to me."

"You're not human, you nitwit. I doubt it will kill you."

"And if it doesn't then what am I supposed to do with it? It's going to be more powerful than me right?" I closed my eyes, "It'll be like giving birth to the antichrist..." my eyes shot open, "Fucking hell! It'll be the fucking antichrist won't it?!"

"Will you fucking calm down? If anything Jack or whatever the other one's name is would be more likely to be the antichrist. And yes, I know they’re back. News travels fast when you are trying to take out all supernatural life. Unless you fucked Lucifer." He rolled his eyes at me, making me feel a bit stupid.

I took a deep breath. "I've never thought of myself as a mother, Crowley." My tone was soft, "I'm not ready for this. And what if....." the next thought broke my heart, "What if he doesn't want it? What if he won't love me anymore..."

"What do I look like to you? A marriage counselor? You just have to tell him, mouse. There's nothing else I can tell you. Sure your girly will be there with you if the killer won't." He rubbed at his eyes. "If it will make you feel better, I'll stay on call for you."

"Thank you." I mumbled. "I need to get back."

"Get some rest, stop drinking," he suggested before disappearing from the throne room himself.

I sighed, tears in my eyes. What was I supposed to do? Crowley had been right. I just needed to tell
him. How did Elly do it? How could she be that strong? She had said he was happy. Would Arthur be happy?

I blinked and the stone ceiling was replaced with the ceiling of my room in the bunker. It didn't make me weak this time, which I was grateful for. I sighed and sat up in my bed. How was I going to tell him? We weren't even married yet. I hung my head in my hands and let out a long, frustrated sigh.

"So?" Elly asked, making me jump and quickly brush the tears away. I could only nod and she came and sat beside me, wrapping an arm around me. "It'll be ok," she whispered gently to me. "I'll help you through this. What could a new little monster do to you?" She smiled at me, but it didn't take the fluttering of my heart in my chest. She caressed my face with her hands and kissed my head. "Everything will be ok, Alex."

"What if he doesn't want it, El?" I whimpered, "You said Lucifer was happy when you found out." I started crying again. "But we're...he's a hired gun and I'm a demon. We can't raise a family."

"He loves you, Alex. Loves you more than you could ever know. He will not abandon you. He will not stop loving you. And he will not make you raise the kid on your own. If the devil could stay with me, then this will be nothing for you two." She nudged me with her elbow. "Besides, you have to find a way to name them after me. It's only fair. I named my daughter after you."

"You thought I was dead." I teased back.

"I don't want excuses. I want results!" She laughed and it made me feel a little lighter.

But the feeling was quickly extinguished at a knock on the bedroom door. I looked up to see Ketch at the door, leaning against the door frame, in a new and pressed looking suit.

"Am I interrupting?" he questioned.

"When I said I missed the suits I didn't mean to go out and buy a new one." I was trying to joke, but the smile didn't stay on my face for long, "We need to talk."

He frowned but gave a small nod. Elly patted my head and quietly excused herself from my room, closing the door behind her after pushing Ketch out of the way.

"Is this a first name kind of talk?" he asked softly, his arms folding over her chest.

"No....I'm not sure." I bit my lip not sure how to tell him, "It's more important than that."

He glanced to the door and it made my heart pound in my chest. He didn't want to be here. How the fuck was I supposed to tell him?

My hand instinctively went to my abdomen as I waited for him to turn around.

When he did, he tried to crack a smile. "I'm guessing this isn't about me spending exuberant amounts of money on a new suit, is it?"

"No." I let my head drop into my hands again, he was unintentionally making this worse, "Can you just...come here?"

There was silence, but I didn't dare look up. After what felt like a handful of lifetimes, I could hear his dress shoes move across the floor and then felt the bed beside me dip as he sat down.
"Did I do something wrong?" he asked with worry in his voice. "Whatever it was, I'm sorry."

"You didn't do anything wrong." I couldn't look at him. "Arthur...I...I don't even know how to tell you this..." my head was spinning. This was such a mess. I knew nothing at all about this. And the thought that he'd leave me still ran through my mind.

He hushed me and gently pulled my face to look at him. "There's no need to cry love," he whispered softly. "Whatever it is, we can work through this."

I looked into his silver eyes and took a deep breath. How did he always make me feel so calm? I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and opened them again.

"What if I showed you?"

I reached a hand up and placed a finger gently against his temple. I closed my eyes again and focused on the tiny second heartbeat that could just barely be heard above my own.

And that just made it all the more real. All the more nerve racking. There was only so long I could stay in denial.

My hands trembled as I released my hold on him and I exhaled shakily as I waited for a reaction.

He looked just as shaken as I felt. He reached up and loosened his tie and cleared his throat. His other hand snatched mine up and held it so incredibly tightly I was sure it would break if I were human.

"Ok," he breathed out, worry in those deep silver pools. "Um... I...."

The world was crashing down around me. He was going to leave. I knew it. I would never see him again. He would make sure of it this time.

"What do you want to do, Alex?"

The question had me taken aback. He... Wanted to know what I wanted?

"I..." I had no idea. "What do you think we should do?" This was an us thing. This was no longer he or I.

He was quiet for a long time, but he was still here. Still with me. He finally looked over me and I jumped as he pulled me to him in a long kiss, stealing the air from my lungs. He pulled back and nuzzled his head against mine.

"I'm going to marry you," he whispered to me before kissing me again and washing away so many of the worries that had been crippling me.

"I..." I had no idea what to say when I pushed away from him again, "You want this?" It was the only thing I could think to ask.

"I don't know," he answered. And it was the truth. And that was more than I could ever ask for. "I am scared shitless, Alex. I am absolutely fucking terrified. I have no idea how to do this, but I love you and I am not going to leave you."

He kissed me again and it made my head spin. God...

"But," -he took a deep breath- "I am going to marry the fuck out of you and we will do this. If that is what you want. This is between both of us. It's our kid, but it is your body and your life. Is... Am
I enough for you?"

I almost broke down into tears again. But instead, I threw my arms around his neck and kissed him deeply.

"You are more than I could ever ask for,” I breathed.

God, I wanted a beer. I don’t think I had ever wanted a beer so fucking badly. And not having one was driving me insane. Maybe I was an alcoholic. Maybe I did take after Dean. Maybe I did have a problem. And not being able to indulge was causing me to be upset. My fuse was shorter than normal.

“How are you getting worse?” I groaned, laying my head against the back of the chair I was straddling.

“I just need a break,” Ali said, lowering the gun. I had somehow gotten Cael to search for the book and so it was my turn to help train her. And she seemed to not be able to do anything at all with a gun. She was hopeless.

“How on earth did you get everything from your mother but her godsent ability to aim a gun?” I got from my seat and shifted my weight a bit on my swollen bare feet. I moved closer to her and glanced over her profile. “Try again. I want to see something.” Ali rolled her eyes and pushed her bangs back behind her ear before taking her stance and aiming at the target that had a wide spread of holes in it. “You line up the three dots on the sight.”

“I know,” she grumbled. She inhaled deeply through her nose and as she exhaled, pulled the trigger, the gun going off loudly. Her wrist had jerked right before she pulled the trigger. Her jaw clenched in frustration.

“You’re anticipating the recoil too much. You’re scared of the gun.”

“Of course I’m scared of the gun. Why can’t I just snap like Jack or my dad? They always seem to be able to make everything magical happen when they snap. And you just have to wave your hand.”

“Kid, we talked about this,” I leaned against a post and folded my arms over my chest. “You’re burning through your grace too quickly. Until we can find a way to stop that, you shouldn’t use your powers.”

“It’s so unfair. I finally get something in my life that makes me special and I can’t use it.”

“You don’t need to have powers to be special.”

“Yeah, right,” she grumbled, rubbing the back of her neck.

“I think Cael likes you anyway.” She blushed at this and I smiled. “I bet you would be able to shoot better if he were here.”

“Shut up,” she hissed. “Just teach me how to fix the problem.”

“You need to relax more. And stop leaning away from the gun. Don’t be afraid of it. It is protecting you, not hurting you. If this doesn’t work, then you’re going to be dry shooting until you get used to the feel of the gun.”
“Dry shoot?”

“No bullets. Try again. Legs a shoulder width apart and lean into the shot. Be confident in your shot.”

She nodded at my words and lifted the gun back up. With another few deep breaths, she shot the gun. There was a crack and I sighed. It was better, but still not good enough to kill which was going to be important and necessary.

“Give me your gun. You’re dry shooting now.”

She grumbled as she passed it to me and I unloaded it before passing it back to her. I then went and took a seat back in my chair and waited for her to keep going, but she didn’t. She looked over the gun and slowly lowered herself to the floor, pulling her knees to her chest.

“Why haven’t you told my parents?” she asked quietly, pulling her hair from the ponytail it was in. Her hair fell into those intense blue eyes.

“I don’t want your parents to worry unless they have to. But it’s important for you to know so you can control what’s happening. Besides, your father wanted to kill me for taking your soul. Could you imagine what he would do if I told him you were burning through your grace? He would have my head on a platter.”

“He’s just scared. He lashes out when he’s scared.”

“Violently.”

“He hasn’t been violent until we came here. I think you upset him.” She gave me a teasing smile. “That doesn't excuse his actions, but you could stop antagonizing him, you know.” I nodded. I was also part of the problem. I could admit that. “What are you going to name him?”

“Him?” I asked, my eyes wide.

“Yeah. I know you’re pregnant. My mom told me. But you can tell now.”

I pursed my lips and looked over her for a moment before answering. “I haven’t thought about names yet. How do you know it’s going to be a boy?”

She shrugged and tipped her head to the side. “Just the vibe that it’s giving off. But you’re still in denial, aren’t you?”

“As in denial as you are about liking Cael,” I shot back. I didn’t want to think about any of this. I didn’t want to worry about it more than I had to. I already had a panic attack every time I remembered that there was some demon growing in me.

“So what if I like him? He would never think of me the same way. He doesn’t think of anything the same way. I think that’s why I like him so much. He’s.... different. Mature.”

“Millions of years old.”

“So is my dad.” She shifted her position and began playing with her hair, the gun now placed aside.

“Where are your parents?”

“They went out to see a movie or something. I try not to intrude. I don’t care what they do, as long
as I don’t have to hear about it.” I laughed at that. Hopefully she at least never walked in on her parents both naked. “Why did you make Cael and Jack look for that book? Why aren’t you looking?”

“You’re parents don’t like Cael much. They met at an interesting moment in time and I don’t think it’s ever been fixed. I just thought that it would be good to give them a break. Why?” I teased with a smirk. “Is someone missing him?”

Ali looked away from me with hot cheeks and immediately changed the subject. “He said that they met in jail, but I don’t believe that. How did my parents meet?” She glanced up with a curiosity shining in her eyes.

I smiled. Of course he would say that. “He didn’t lie exactly. As far as I know, they met in hell. They were both locked up and she got them out. And then they-uh- they uh...” I trailed off and motioned with my hands. Her nose scrunched up in dislike. “And then I went to go find her and tried to kill him and accidentally shot her. He saved her and then they have been together ever since.”

“And-

Ali broke off as a red light began to flash and a siren filled the room. Something was coming. Something dangerous. I got to my feet. “Kid, stay here. Load the gun and lock the door. Don’t come out. Do you understand?” I instructed over the loud ringing.

She got to her feet. “I can help.”

“Your parents would never forgive me if you got hurt. Stay here. I will come get you when it’s safe.”

But-

I didn’t hear the rest of what she said because I ran from the room, pulling my gun free from its holster. I almost ran into Dean as I rounded the corner. He looked pissed and I knew what it was.

“It’s White, isn’t it?” I asked as we both made our way to the map room where Sam was also ready with a gun at his side.

“Either him or someone that works for him,” Ketch answered for me as he limped into the room. “You shouldn’t be out here.”

“I ordered. I could fucking take care of myself. Just because I was pregnant didn’t mean that I couldn’t fight. And I sure as fuck didn’t need my brothers knowing about my problem yet. No one else needed to know. “Sam, can you check the cameras? Dean, check the generators. We can’t have them go out again. Especially after what they did last time.” Both of my brothers went off to their assignments and I glared at Ketch. “This is your fault, I’m going to help fix it and protect you from my brothers. And do not mention our little issue. I still don’t have the courage to tell them.”

He nodded. “Are you sure you should be-”

“Ketch, I am pregnant, not dying.”

He opened his mouth to speak, but stopped as my phone rang above the siren. I pulled my phone out and glanced at the number listed. It was the blocked one. I showed my screen to Ketch who came to stand a bit closer to me. I hit answer and put the phone to my ear.
“Alexandria.”

“It’s Alex,” I corrected the thick accent on the other side of the line. It was sad to say that this was something I was used to. Negotiating. The threats. The blackmail. It was almost normal now.

“What do you want, White?”

“You Winchesters really are smarter than we give you credit for,” he laughed.

“Use a burner phone next time you want to stay hidden.” My grip on my gun tightened as my palm grew sweaty.

“If I wanted to stay hidden, I would darling.”

“It’s Alex,” I grumbled again. Ketch was looking over me curiously, waiting for any sort of information from me. “How’s the baby?”

“Is there anyone in this world that doesn’t know that I’m pregnant?” I asked with an irritated sigh. “Come on. I don’t have time. How many of your goonies are coming after us, because you are obviously not here.”

“There’s a dozen or two. No need to worry your pretty little head over it.”

“And what do we need to do to call them off?”

“You’re a quick one aren’t you?” His tone was teasing with a hint of enjoyment seeping through it. “You send Arthur back to me and I will call off my goonies, as you called them.”

“You’re not getting him back.”

He laughed. “I know he informed me that he would be leaving my employment, but I own him. So return what is mine and I will let your little family and your unborn child live. How is that?”

“I don’t think you’re understanding who you’re dealing with.”

Sam had found his way back to the room and stopped, looking over me curiously. “We’re surrounded.”

“And the power was cut. I started the generators,” Dean said coming back in from the basement. I glanced around as the alarm finally silenced, but the red light continues flashing. He must have turned off the warning. It had been getting annoying.

“And this is the first wave. There will be more, unless Arthur returns. If you make it out of this, I’ll be speaking with you again.” The line went dead and I shoved my phone into my pocket with a sigh. “Normal give me him or you die. Let’s just get this over with.” I cocked my gun and pushed past Ketch to Sam. “He’ll call again. When he does we need to track his phone.”

“We’ll worry about that later,” Sam nodded.

There was a banging on the door at the top of the stairs and a dent appeared in the face of the metal. My eyebrows furrowed. What on earth were they using to break through the door? That door was solid and bolted shut.

I stepped closer, but Ketch’s hand caught my shoulder to hold me in place. I glanced back at him, but his eyes were set on the door at another loud whining creak as the door caved in just a little bit more. His grip was firm though. Protecting.
There was another clang and the door bent in the middle with a groan, the door now off the hinges. There were a few soup can sized things thrown through the cracks in the door and they clinked down the stairs. I could feel a pull on my shoulder from Ketch as he drug me backwards and into his arms.

“Get down!” he yelled, forcing me to my knees on the cold stone floor. He covered my head and the next thing I knew there was a sound louder than a gunshot that made my ears ring so the ringing was the only thing I could hear. And the blinding light that came next was somehow worse. And it kept coming. The sun was filling the room. The actual sun was in every corner of the room and there was no shadow anywhere. And the power that came off of the flashbangs was still strong even with Ketch’s arms around me. It was like being hit with a feather pillow in the chest harder than I had ever been hit before.

I coughed as I tried to breathe through the smoke, completely unable to see. There was only white that I tried to blink through. A shuffling sound filled the room and I could make out the sound of scuffling and I could only assume there were blind punches being thrown by my brothers. And soon the pressure of Ketch over me was ripped away.

I tried to see through the dancing white lights and could only make enough sense of the room to know that the hands that were on me were dragging me toward the stairs. I fought against them, but they were stronger than me. And there was more than the two. A pair of hands was now on my ankles. I tried to kick, but I was lifted from my feet like a rag doll.

A muffled scream came through the still present ringing in my ears. I was dropped to the ground, the floor hard as I landed. It was as if I had just woken up and the lights had been immediately turned on. I could only squint and see shadows.

There were three other shapes like me, crumbled on the ground and more were being added to it after every scream. And my vision would go white once more before clearing up. I knew that light though. That was one that I was all too familiar with.

“Everything’s alright now,” a tight voice said, the sound much clearer now than it had been before. “I’ve taken care of them.”

I rubbed my eyes and blinked several more times, a clearer picture finally coming into view. I pushed on my chest that was still tight from the impact of the flashbangs in a hope that it would help release some of the tension.

Hands took my arms and I was pulled to my feet, eyes meeting gold and red. “Are you alright?” Ali asked softly, glancing down at my stomach before looking back up at me. I nodded and licked my lips, looking around the room. There were bodies fallen over each other. All of them wearing tactical gear with large guns. “All of you ok?”

Dean stood with more weight on his right foot than his left and his knuckles were bruised and bleeding, some of his fingers swollen. Sam was using the back of his hand to wipe at a split lip, smearing the blood over his chin. His eye was already black and blue and there was a cut bleeding from his eyebrow. Ketch was using his tie over his nose to stop it from bleeding, but there were already spots staining his white dress shirt. His hair looked like it had been pulled too. It was out of his normal slicked back style and was curly and in his eyes.

Ali released her hold on me when my balance was all back and she stepped over to Ketch first. She placed a finger tip to his head and there was that warm golden light when she healed. Next came Sam and then Dean. All of them clean and healed.
“You know you’re not supposed to be using your grace!” I said before I could stop myself. “How could you be so irresponsible? And I told you not to leave that room.”

“You’re welcome,” Ali grumbled, arms now folded over her chest. Her eyes were still those two brilliant colors.

“Alex!” Elly’s worried voice said from somewhere in the garage. I could see her head round the broken door and she probably could have fit through the hole, but all of us winced at a screeching. The door was shoved out of the way by Lucifer and Elly raced as quickly as she could down the stairs and through the fallen bodies, dragging Ali into her arms. “Are you ok?” Her hands took her daughter’s face to look over her.

“I’m fine mom,” Ali answered, pushing her mom’s hands away from her only to be gathered up in a hug by her father.

“Are all of you alright?” Elly asked, looking around the room at all of us. “Alex?”

“We’re ok,” I assured. I would need to have this fight with Ali later. Her mother couldn’t know. Not yet. Not until I had a definitive answer from Rowena that there was a spell that could fix her.

“I’m ok,” Ali repeated again to her father who had yet to let go of her. I guess he really was just scared, like the kid had said. This world was dangerous and his family was all he had in this world. They were the only things that were his and that loved him, but somehow I still felt like there was something I had done wrong to ruin all of it, though I wasn’t sure what it was. It was probably the guilt of pulling them back into this world. Or at least that’s what I had to keep telling myself. “Dad, I’m ok. I promise.”

“She’s a hell of a kid,” Ketch said as he removed his tie from around his neck. “Not sure what we would have done without her.”

Lucifer had a look of dislike in his eyes, but he didn’t say anything against Ketch. He was handling himself better than normal. That was good at least. “I’ll help replace the door,” he offered. “I’m sorry I broke it.”

“It was pretty broken already,” Dean said with a nod.

“But we appreciate it,” Sam added quickly.

“Let’s get this cleaned up,” Elly suggested with a sigh. She wandered back to Ali and kissed her daughter’s head before giving Lucifer a quick kiss as well. “Then we’ll start dinner.”

“That’s a pretty fucked up sentence,” Ali laughed, receiving a warning look from Elly.

Everyone began to get to work, dragging bodies from the room and to where our incentorator was. A light chatting filled the room, but Elly was oddly quiet. I went to stand beside her as she tried to grab a body, but Lucifer stopped her and gave her a kind smile as if to say that she didn’t need to work.

“Are you alright?” I whispered over to her. She took a deep breath before nodding.

“Just a lot of conflicting emotions,” she answered. “I feel guilty for not teaching her sooner, but then I also feel like I’m a horrible mother for making her a murderer.”

“She saved all of us.”
“She’s not going to want to stop hunting or to go back. I know her too well. But this is never what I wanted for her. There was a reason I didn’t tell her.”

“That’s how it always seems to work out, doesn’t it? Sam, Dean, Joe, Claire, you, me.... This life was never what anyone ever wanted for us. But it’s who we are. We can’t change that.” I folded my arms and shrugged. “And I wouldn’t want to. You’re daughter is strong. Be proud of her.”

“I am proud of her. I just... She deserves more than sleezy motels, fast food, one night stands and death in her life.” Elly sighed. “She deserves a good education and a good job and a partner and a family.”

“Partner, huh?” I teased, elbowing her. “She experimenting a little?”

“As long as she is happy, I’m happy,” was my answer. “And it’s not like I’ve never been with a woman before. You know Charlie and I went out once or twice. And there might have been a few sleep overs that were more than sleep overs and some threesomes that did or did not happen.”

“Oh really?” I asked sarcastically, though I was shocked. She shrugged and shot me a smile. We both busted out laughing and I hugged her. “You’ll have to tell me later, because I distinctly remember you being a virgin until sin city.”

“I’m going to get dinner started. Everyone should be back tonight.” Elly released me from the hug and headed for the kitchen. “Dean, how do you feel about grilling up something?” she called.

Dean entered the room again and went for the kitchen with Elly. He took her waist and looked through the fridge with her. I smiled a bit, but it fell when Lucifer entered the room again. He glanced toward the kitchen and sighed, but went back to work.

“You’re being good, lover boy,” I commented.

He rolled his eyes. “She wouldn’t do anything like that to me. Doesn’t stop me from being jealous though.” He grabbed the last body under the arms and began pulling it away as well as if it weighed nothing, the man’s head lolling to the side with those burned out eyes. “She’s the only human I’ve ever loved and the only one that loves me.”

I didn’t like the way that made my chest feel tight again.

“We’re eating outside tonight,” Dean announced. “Sam and I need to figure out how the power got cut so we can turn off the generators. Until then, everyone out!”

This was like a scene out of a movie. It was something that I couldn’t remember ever having, even when I was little. My dad didn’t cook much and my mom couldn’t at all. The thought made me smile. Dean had no choice but to learn to take care of Sammy. But I was cursed with not being able to cook more than eggs and bacon. That had been my father’s favorite food.

Dean was at the grill, cooking away. Cas was beside him, handing him whatever Dean asked him for. Sam and Elly were at the folding table we had set up, pouring over Sam’s law books. She was trying to help him find a loophole or something for one of his cases.

And Lucifer was throwing a football with Ali and Jack, trying to teach him how. There was just something about sports and Jack that didn’t mix too well and it was rather funny to see him attempt the throw the football when Lucifer and Ali were so clearly better at it. But it was nice to see everyone happy and getting along and like a family.
“How are you feeling, love?” Ketch asked, coming back from the house with a soda in one hand and a glass of amber in the other. I frowned and took the soda he held out to me.

“Jealous that I can’t have a drink,” I answered. The can opened with a hiss and I took a sip.

He nodded. “I can stop drinking too if you-”

“It’s ok, Ketch,” I assured, giving him a smile.

His arm wrapped around my waist and held me close. “Have you told your brothers yet?”

“No. But if they haven’t noticed yet, then neither one of them is as smart as I think they are.”

“And are you going to tell Mary?”

“That I’m pregnant with her one night stand’s baby that is half monster?” I snorted before taking another sip of my drink. “Absolutely not. She can know later.”

Ketch sipped from his glass thoughtfully for a moment. “And have you thought about getting married?”

I paused for a moment, unsure of how to answer without sounding like an awful human being. But I guess that wouldn’t really count now anyways. “Haven’t really had much time to sit down and pour over bridal magazines.”

“We don’t have to have a big ceremony,” Ketch offered kindly. At least he knew that much about me. I hated weddings. All of it. Anything that had to do with it. Invitations, decorations, colors... why the fuck did I need colors? And dresses above all else.

“I don’t even remember the last time I wore a dress. It was probably when I was five or something.”

“You don’t have to wear a dress. You don’t have to wear anything if you wouldn’t want to.”

I laughed and hit him. “Shut up, you bastard.”

He placed a kiss to my head before taking another drink. “That is not a football. I have no idea what you Americans think the sport of football is, but it is not that.”

I only laughed again. “A little homesick?”

“Maybe a touch. But I wouldn’t leave you, love.”

“Have you heard anything from Cael? He hasn’t checked back in yet. He was supposed to be looking for that book.”

Ketch shook his head, his hair still a mess of curls from the earlier scuffle. “I haven’t. You and I can always go and look for it. We can start with Bishop’s grave and work back from there. Maybe Rowena can find us a tracking spell to help us.”

“I’ve already been asking her to do so much. I can’t ask her to do more. But we could always look at that grave. That’s a good idea. Do you want to do that tomorrow?”

“You sure you don’t need to rest?”

I rolled my eyes. I was pregnant, not dying. Good god. “I will rest if I need to rest. I am only a
month or so along. I am fine. Everyone needs to stop worrying so much. If Jack was able to keep Kelly alive, I’m sure I will be fine.”

"Dinner’s ready!" Dean called out, turning away from the BBQ with a plate of steaks and heading for the table. I pulled myself from Ketch's grip, but held his hand as I lead him to where everyone else was now gathering.

I smiled as Lucifer ruffled Jack's hair. Their family was so mismatched, so fucked up, so malfunctioned, but somehow they were all so happy. They were a family. It even looked like Elly was finally accepting Jack's company. I could only think that Kelly would have been overjoyed that her son had such a kind family with so many people to take care of him.

I took a seat beside El who was still in deep conversation with Sam about the insanity plea. About how there was no premeditation and if he really was under a witch's hex, then how would he prove anything without spilling anything about the supernatural.

There was a soft wind blowing and across the table from me Ali dropped her fork and there was a bright smile being held back.

"Cael," she greeted warmly.

I looked over my shoulder to see a worn angel. He was disheveled and out of breath, almost like he had been running.

"I haven't found your book yet," he explained with a huff, hands going to his knees. Whatever had happened must have been a lot, because it wasn't easy to tire an angel.

"That's ok," I said. I scooted closer to a now quiet El so that there was enough room for him to grab a chair and join us. "We'll worry about that later. Thank you for your help. For now, come join us."

He wore an apprehensive expression after he straightened up. He did understand daily family sit down meals, didn't he? Not that I had much experience with it either once my dad died and I moved in with Sam and Dean.

There was an odd silence as Cael came and stood in the space I had created for him. But the conversations did pick back up and a comfortability overtook us again. "You look tired," I commented, cutting off a piece of steak and taking a bite. I closed my eyes and sighed at the taste. It was still bewildering how much I had missed food and how I had forgotten that I liked it.

"You don’t eat," he muttered quietly. "Why are you eating?"

"Just to fit in," I shrugged, lying through my teeth. But I didn’t need him being curious on top of everything else that was going on. I just didn’t have the time to take care of something that could have such a wild outcome like that. He in all honesty didn’t look convinced, but he didn’t push it.

"There are others looking for the book," he said, making my hands pause. I had thought there would be others, but I didn’t like hearing it.

"How many others?"

"Let’s keep it a surprise."

"So you don’t know?"
“No, I don’t know.”

“Ketch and I are going on a hunt. We’ll be home in a few days,” I announced at the breakfast table the next morning. Everyone muttered something in understanding or agreement. I went and grabbed a piece of toast from the table and gave a smile. “He’s waiting for me at the car. I got to go.” I got a better grip on my bag over my shoulder, shoved the toast into my mouth and started for the stairs. There were footsteps behind me and I turned back to see Elly following after me. “We won’t be gone long. It’s not even really a hunt. We’re just looking for something is all,” I explained through my mouthful when I spotted her nervous look.

“That’s not it,” she muttered softly, taking my arm and pulling me behind the staircase and away from everyone else, causing my toast to belong to the floor. “I-I..” she trailed off.

“El, you can come if you’re that worried. I’m sure he wouldn’t mind-”

“No. It’s not that.” She picked under her nails and looked strictly at her hands.

I glanced over her curiously. She hadn’t been this nervous since she had first come to this world. Two years ago. And it took me looking over her again before I noticed something different. Something new. I snatched up her hand and could feel the heat radiating off of her cheeks as I looked over the ring. It was simple but beautiful. Like her. And it was something that wouldn’t get in the way on hunts. A thin band of gold with and few diamonds. They were small and created the band with a small gold inlay between each diamond.

“About damn time,” I said with a smile, pulling her closer to me. “How did he do it? Was it cute? Tell me. It had to have been better than my panic attack shower proposal.”

“I told you the only way he would marry me was if the world was ending. Is the world ending?” she questioned, her free hand running through her hair.

I laughed, thinking over the memory. We had been in my bedroom, heads hanging off the edge of the bed so the world was upside down. “I’m glad you didn’t dye your hair. I don’t think that you could pull off another color.”

She nodded with a snort. “Yeah, I tried red for a bit, but Lucy was less than impressed.”

“Why are you so nervous about this?”

“Never thought that it would happen. And it was cute, I guess. I’ve never really pictured the way I would be married outside of middle school.”

“Well, how did he do it?” I asked again, smirking as her cheeks turned a deeper shade of scarlet.

“You don’t want to know,” she answered softly, turning away from me. But I held her hand tightly and pulled her back to me.

“I do now. What did he do?”

“Well...” She licked her lips and shrugged, looking like she wanted to shrink away. “After you all went inside, we stayed out, right?”

“Right?” I nodded, trying not to laugh form how embarrassed and absolutely adorable she looked.
“Well, he had set up this like...fort thing. A blanket and some pillows and candles and some drinks. And-and-umm... He made a meteor shower for me.”

“I didn’t know he could still create things.”

“Neither did I. But he did and then he pulled out the ring and we might have done it in your backyard.”

I snorted and my smile hurt my cheeks from how wide it was. “That sounds like a good night Elly. A bit jealous. Ketch isn’t romantic like that.”

“You wouldn’t know what the fuck to do if Ketch did something like that.”

I tipped my head side to side. “I suppose that’s true. I’m really happy for you Elly.”

“I want you to marry us.”

My smile dropped. “You want me- Me - to marry you?” I asked in absolute shock. Why me of all people? He didn’t even like me. We were like an explosion waiting to happen. He was the match and I was the gasoline. We didn’t mix. “I’m sure someone else would be better.”

“Nope,” she said decidedly. “I want it to be you. And you can do one of those stupid online certifying things. But you also have to help me with everything else.”

I felt like I wanted to drown. God, what did that entail? “Everything else?”

“Well, it doesn’t have to be a big ceremony, but I think it would be nice to have a dress and tuxedos and maybe a few flowers here and there, but that’s it. And I want all of you to be there. And maybe Jody and Donna. Just a fun all around hunter’s wedding.” She paused and seemed to be thinking over everything she just said. “Ok, maybe not Jody and Donna. I have no idea what they would do when they find out I’m marrying the literal devil.”

This brought a smile back to my face. “Anything for you, hun. Leave it to me and the kid. We’ll pull some ramshackle thing together. It might not be the prettiest, but with how drunk we’ll get no one will remember.”

“Thank you Alex. I love you.”

“I love you too.” I pulled her into a tight hug that she immediately returned it. I cleared my throat when she released me and I rubbed the back of my neck. “Could you do me a favor?”

“Sure.”

“Can we keep the whole baby thing hidden from my brothers as long as we can? I would be shocked if they didn’t know something was up, but they haven’t mentioned it and I would rather we kept it that way.”

“My lips are sealed.” Elly wore a wide grin.

Alright. I’ll be back in a few days and we’ll start planning.” I dropped her hand and made my way back to the front of the stairs to head up them. But how the hell was I supposed to help plan a wedding? How was I supposed to conduct it? I didn’t want it to be some stupid movie cliche, but I had never been to a wedding. Just the parties after for the free food and bar.

“You look happy and scared at the same time,” Ketch said as I entered the car. I threw my bag in
the back seat and closed the door.

“Elly is finally going to marry that bastard,” I announced.

“And that scares you why?”

“She wants me to officiate the wedding.”

Ketch laughed loudly and pulled from the garage.

"You didn't have to drive straight through," Ketch muttered with a yawn and a stretch as the early morning sunlight began to fill the car. "We could have stopped."

"I don't need sleep," I reminded. It felt like no one seemed to grasp the concept. "I'm fine."

The town was just barely beginning to wake. There were several cars moving on main street, but for the most part the businesses were still closed and dark.

I made my way towards the graveyard my GPS pointed to and rolled up on a small field that was gated shut and surrounded by buildings that all seemed to have something to do with witches. Made me wonder how Rowena felt about the whole thing.

"Should we do this now or wait until dark?" I asked, putting the car in park in front of the iron gates that were smaller than I thought they would be. They were only about waist high. At least that would make it easier to jump.

I got from my car without an answer from Ketch. I stepped up to the fence and rested my hands on my hips as I read over the large white sign that was there.

The Burying Point
1637
The Oldest Burying Ground in the City of Salem.

"I would suggest we wait until it's dark," Ketch answered from somewhere behind me. I glanced over my shoulder as he groggily walked over to me. I didn't blame him. Twenty five plus hours in a car sucked, even if you slept through it. "We don't know how touristy this place will be."

"We'll come back when it opens. We'll need to find the grave. It probably isn't marked. I searched for hours online and could only find that it was here. I know there’s a monument, though.” I shrugged. Ketch nodded with a yawn, his hands shoved deep into his jean pockets and his back hunched against the cool morning breeze. “We can find somewhere to stay. Wait until it warms up a bit. Get something to eat and relax for a bit. Sound good?” I stepped closer to Ketch and slipped my arms into his jacket and rested my head against his chest. He hummed in agreement and I smiled.

I stepped through the headstones of the small graveyard that was now bustling with tourists, chattering happily about witches. I glanced around at couples taking pictures by graves, some of the stones now encased in glass to keep them safe from how old they were. It made me miss Ketch a bit. But he had just been so tired, I let him stay behind and sleep. And it’s not like finding the
grave would be horribly hard. There weren’t many here and I had already found the monument that left much to be desired.

And walking through another row, I finally came to a stop. There was a headstone, but it was so far worn by the weather, that I couldn’t read the scratches that were left. But that wasn’t what had caught my attention. It was the perfect circle of dead earth around the headstone. Unholy ground. This had to be her. Whose else could it be?

I had never seen unholy ground personally, but Dean had explained it in great detail. It was one of his proud moments where he was right and Sam was wrong. That didn’t happen too often, so Dean was more than happy to take advantage of the occasion.

I glanced around at the people meandering through the graves who didn’t seem to care much about what was under my feet. It was just another grave to them, not some massive mess of supernatural that I had to fix.

All that was left to do now was wait for the sun to fall before we could dig up everything. I was sure that it would be Ketch doing all of the work. There was no way he would let me do hard labor. Not now. Though I was pretty sure I could handle grave digging. It wasn’t the first time I had done that with something that was physically wrong with me. I had gone grave digging with a broken arm, with fractured ribs, with open and bleeding wounds that were larger than what was safe. A baby was nothing I couldn’t physically handle.

I wandered back to my car and drove back into town to where the hotel was that we were staying. Ketch would stay in nothing less than a suite if it was just us two. It was so odd to walk into a room that cost more than my childhood home ever did. The room reminded me of when I went to rescue Elly from Vegas. Large, expensive, a piano. This room didn’t have the piano, but it had a bar that certainly made up for the lack of instrument. Or maybe, I would have preferred the instrument. I would have sounded drunk on it whether I was or not. I just couldn’t indulge in the bar.

I could hear the shower going from somewhere near the bed room and I sat on the couch, flipping through the channels on the TV, though I didn’t pay much mind to it. I was lost in thought with what was going on in my life and no amount of cheesy horror flicks would fix that. There was just so much that I had to figure out. And one was the Kid’s issue. I hadn’t heard from Rowena in a while.

I fetched my phone from my pocket and dialed her number before putting it to my ear. Before I could even speak, the witch had cut me off.

“No, I do not have an answer yet. Do you Winchesters ever just call to say hi? You always need something when you call me.”

“I’m sorry, Rowena,” I answered with a smile. “How are you doing?”

“I’m a wee bit stressed if you want the truth dearie.”

“Is something wrong?” I asked, lowering the volume on the 80’s slasher girl’s scream.

“Just some more people are after that book you’re wanting. They keep coming to me. As if I would have any inkling of where that bloody book is.” She used her normal dramatically distressed voice that just made me smile and bit my lip not to laugh.

“Well, you are one of the most powerful witches currently. Why would they not think you had a book of dark magic?”
“I would not want to touch that book if I could help it. Nothing good could come from it. Why on earth do you want to find it?”

I shrugged, knowing the answer would upset her. “Just a bit of light reading.”

“You really are horrible,” Rowena shot back and I could only imagine her face was the same color as her hair.

“It’s to keep it safe. I’m not about to screw with dark magic.” I pulled at a loose thread in the throw blanket that was draped over the arm of the couch. “So, nothing for Ali yet?”

“I have poured over that book for days. I had read every page at least three times if not more. I can’t find anything to help her. You just need to keep her in check. That would be my best advice.”

“We’ll figure something out.” I sighed. “We always do. I just have to come up with a way of how to tell El.”

“She doesn’t know?” Rowena sounded shocked. But if she knew anything about any of us, then she should have known that I wouldn’t have told Elly. “Shouldn’t she be helping look. She would move the moon to help that girl. You need to tell her.”

I grimaced. “I know, I know.” I rubbed my temples as a headache began to set in, a pounding I hadn’t felt in a long time. “But how do I tell her that her daughter is being fucked because of me? It’s all my fault Rowena.”

“A lot of things are your fault.”

There was a hand placed on my shoulder and I glanced up to Ketch who wore a kind smile, hair curly and dripping with water from his shower. I returned it half heartedly and he gave a concerned look, coming around to sit beside me. I rested against his chest and folded my swollen feet under me, closing my eyes as he rubbed the back of my neck.

“Thank you for looking for me,” I muttered, relaxing into Ketch.

“You’re welcome. I’ll keep an eye out for that book. Until then.”

The line disconnected and I tossed my phone aside on the cushion. “I found the grave,” I announced.

“That’s a start,” Ketch said, pulling me closer. “I take that she doesn’t know what’s wrong.”

“You would be correct.” I nodded.

“I’ll have some resources look into it,” he said, his hands now playing with my hair.

“Ok.”

It took some convincing, but Ketch was finally letting me help. And by help, he meant that I could hold the flashlight so he could see where he was digging. I rolled my eyes as my offers to help were denied for the upteenth time. But I guess he wouldn’t need help now that there was a loud clunk from the shovel indicating that he had hit something.

I stepped closer and could make out the old wood of the coffin as Ketch used the shovel to uncover the rest of it. I jumped into the hole and shoved my flashlight into my pocket before taking one side
of the coffin and helping lift it from the grave. Ketch got out first and then extended his hand, pulling me from the six foot hole.

It was his turn to use the flashlight. He shone it on the box and I pushed the lid open. With a sigh, I stepped back to look at it. Empty. No body, no book. Though I couldn’t say I was much surprised. With all of the grave yards being empty, why would this one be any different. And if she really hadn’t died, then there wouldn’t have been anything in her coffin anyway.

“Well, this was a waste,” I muttered.

“Well, at least we know the book isn’t here,” Ketch answered with a shrug. “I’ll start burying it back up.”

I was about to offer my help when the world turned dark.

The aching pain in my head was what had woken me and for a brief moment a terror overcame me and the thought that I had been hit hard enough to go blind was overwhelming.

I put my hands out, but they were immediately restricted by rough planks of wood. My breath caught in my throat and my chest became tight with panic. I was in a box. God. I was trapped. What the fuck was I supposed to do? I was fucking in a coffin. In my coffin if I didn’t get a hold of myself.

I closed my eyes and lowered my hands back to my sides, trying to steady my breathing. If I really was buried, like I thought I was, then I needed to conserve my air and hyperventilating wasn’t going to help.

My hands searched my pockets and a slight bit of relief filled me when I felt the outline of my flashlight. I pulled the light from my pocket and turned it on, blinking at the sudden brightness and reassuring confirmation that I truly wasn’t blind.

Old wood greeted me, rotting and splintered. Between the cracks in the boards I could make out the texture of dirt.

I licked my lips and exhaled deeply. I knew how to get out. I was taught how. Dean showed me in a much more gracious way than John had taught him.

I could remember Dean explaining the panic he had gone through as he lay in a coffin built by his father’s own hands, and the lid was nailed closed over him. Dean had never buried me very deeply, even less so for Sam. Only ever a foot or two that was easy enough to sit up in.

But Dean had been buried the whole six feet. Sam had mentioned more than once that ever since then Dean had been claustrophobic. Sam said he could remember being in the car and hearing Dean crying the whole time. Sometimes, if Dean was panicking enough, John would undig Dean. But I knew that over the many times this had been practiced, those moments were few and far between.

And I hated it. Swore I would never practice again after the first time. I had been young, barely trained. I didn’t understand how to push past the riddling anxiety attack and get the job done. That came years later. But I could remember the whole experience perfectly, detail by detail. I knew how to get out of here. Did Ketch?

That didn’t matter at the moment. If I didn’t get out, there would be no one to help Ketch if he
couldn’t get out, if he was even in a grave at all.

This was the part that I hated the most. The consuming darkness that overtook me again once I turned off the flashlight. I shoved it back into my pocket and then did my best to lift my hips up so I could pull my flannel free.

My fingers trembled as they buttoned my shirt up to the very top button, the tightness of the collar doing nothing to help my anxiety. I crossed my chest and pulled my flannel up until it completely covered my face before tying the bottom of the shirt off the best that I could. My breath was hot against the fabric, but it was better than suffocating from the dirt that was going to fall.

I took a deep breath and closed my eyes tightly, even though I couldn’t see anyways. I kicked at the wood and could hear it splinter and crack, dirt falling onto my legs. I did my best to shift on top of the dirt. If I wasn’t careful, it would pin me down.

I kicked again and could feel the wood give way. Dirt dropped over me and I did my best to shove what was pouring over my face down towards my legs. Luckily for me since it hadn’t been raining, the dirt was decently loose.

My hands reached out blindly until I found a board of the coffin and pushed at it, creating enough room for me to sit up before more dirt fell into my lap. A strong pressure filled my chest as the weight of the dirt began to crush me. This was the part that I dreaded the most. I could remember the last time when my arm had become trapped and I couldn’t move.

When I had finally gotten free, I had almost passed out and I had gotten several broken ribs. But if I was better this time at it, then hopefully I would be fine. I just needed to stay calm. But that was difficult when I felt like I couldn’t get enough of a breath of air.

I could do this. It was six feet. If I could get upright and find a hold for my foot then I could push myself up.

The dirt shifted enough for me to pull my arms up and I did my best to use this to my advantage. If I could push with my arms, the dirt would pack down enough to let me fully stand up.

Angling my body the right way was painful and the sharpness that was in my side was unnerving. Had I really cracked another rib? Shit. This wasn’t good. This wasn’t good.

No, keep a hold of yourself. You’re a fucking Winchester. You’re not going ot fucking die in someone else’s grave! I just had to stay calm. I just needed to stay calm.

You’re upright. That’s a start. Come on Alex. You can do this.

I reached up as far was could and the night’s cold air licked at my fingers, making my heart jump. It was right there. So close. Fucking so close.

I did my best to lift my feet up, searching for a register on anything, but I was positive I wouldn’t find one. It was more like trying to swim through the dirt than it was like climbing. But the cold that was on my fingers was enough to keep me sane. Enough to let me know I could make it. God, I would fucking make it.

With my arms now free up to my elbows, I reached around to find purchase on anything and found the edge of the grave, ground that was compacted enough for me to take handfuls of and pull. It was slow work and my arms ached, but when the cold air blew through my flannel and into my face, I cried.
Tears poured down my cheeks as I struggled to free the rest of my body from the suffocating ground. And once I was free and on solid ground, I tore at the fabric around my head, not caring that the buttons were being ripped and popped off. I tossed the flannel aside, greedily gulping of the air, the wind drying the tears on my cheeks.

I could panic now. I could cry if I wanted to. This moment was mine. The pain and the deard were mine and I could own and explore them for a moment. I could sob uncontrollably, gasping as if I still couldn’t breathe.

My hands took fistfuls of the grass, trying to anchor myself to something solid. Something that wasn’t going to swallow me. And I wasn’t sure how long it took, but I finally had full control again. I could breathe. I could think.

I glanced up and around the now empty and quiet graveyard. Nothing was out of place, as if the world hadn’t noticed that we had been missing. We…

“Ketch,” I gasped out, stumbling to my feet. I groaned as my ribs protested, crying. But as I looked around, I couldn’t find any other graves disturbed. I dug into my pocket and pulled out my phone that was caked in dirt. I wiped at the screen and dialed Ketch’s number, my heart once again beating anxiously.

“Pick up.” I whispered. “Pick up, pick up, pick up.” But the muffled sound of his ringtone came from the grave and my heart sank. He was down there, still down there. But where? There hadn’t been anyone else in the coffin with me.

Fuck.

I couldn’t find the shovel anywhere, but my car was still there and even if Ketch wouldn’t let me help, we had still packed two.

I sprinted as quickly as I could to my car, my hand clutching my side. Nausea made my head spin and I had to force myself to keep the contents of my stomach down. I forced the trunk open as quickly as I could and snatched the shovel up without a second thought before racing back to the grave to dig.

Each breath and each movement were excruciating but I couldn’t stop. There was something in me that refused to stop. Something that would do anything to protect him.

I moaned as the shovel slipped and the handle came back and hit me in the side. I dropped to my knees, coughing. This wasn’t fair. I wiped at my tear-filled eyes with dusty hands and did my best to blink away the tears and the dirt.

And there it was, the coffin. I had reached it. My fingers dug at the dirt, doing my best to uncover it. I ripped at the boards, pulling them free and throwing them aside, but I was only greeted with the bottom of the coffin.

My nails scraped against the wood as I did my best to get a good hold on it. Shoving it upwards, I pushed the rest of the coffin aside and I could see Ketch’s hand on top of the dirt. “Ketch!” I called, using my hands to push the dirt as out of the way as I could. I finally found his face and dug down until his head was fully uncovered. But he didn’t react. I put my hand to his nose and mouth and sighed. He was still breathing. But I was sure he was hurt. There had been a lot of weight on top of him and his head looked like it had been bleeding from whatever we had been hit with.

I kept digging and every now and then did my best to get under his arms and pull him free. It was
slow work, but finally I had pulled him from the dirt and collapsed on the ground, exhausted. I
couldn’t move anymore. I couldn’t breathe. It made my ribs scream.

I fished my phone from my pocket and paused for a moment. Should I call for an ambulance? I’m
sure I could scrape together the money to pay for it but trying to explain why we were in a
graveyard at night and why we were buried alive would be difficult. They didn’t have cameras
though, we had checked.

We needed the help though. I couldn’t do this on my own. I just didn’t have the strength.

My hands shook as I dialed the number and placed the phone to my ear, but it rang continuously. I
cursed the angel’s name and clicked on another number. It rang twice before a voice picked up.

“Hey Alex, what do you want?”

“Help,” I whispered, too tired to make my voice any louder. “The burying point in Salem.”

“I don’t know what that looks like,” she muttered, her voice was strained.

"Google it."

“I can get my father.”

“No. He won’t want to help. Please, Cael isn’t answering.”

“There’s Cas-“

“Ali, Ketch and I are hurt. Please help,” I begged, trying not to start crying again. It wasn’t going
to help anything. "Please."

"O-ok. I will try."

I couldn’t think enough to say anything else. My hand dropped from my ear and into the dirt. My
breathing was shallow and I closed my eyes.

The strong swish of wings brought a slight smile to my face, the largest I could muster.


There was no answer, but I could sense the healing glow beside me, even with my eyes closed. I
jumped as a hand took my arm and that feeling of healing traveled to each place that had been
aching and burning, loosening knots and strengthening muscles.

I released a breath I didn't know I had been holding and relaxed into the dirt, the grip of sleep
tugging at me.

Hands scooped me up from the ground and I couldn't bring myself to care. They were gentle, safe.

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