Honeymooners

by LazBriar

Summary

Following the events of The Shadow, The Stranger, and The Angel, it's time for You and Angel Dust to settle down and think about the future. But of course, by settle down, the spider intends to live it up with a big honeymoon bash! What could go wrong?

Notes

Hello reader, welcome back! What you're about to read is the tail-end of my current works, taking place after the story events of SSA. Be warned, if you venture forward, spoilers for the latter will appear pecked throughout (or, you might not have context about certain things).

That said, I hope you enjoy this next short series. Have a good honeymoon with your spider husband!
You wake up, and it’s not a dream.

For a brief, surreal moment you don’t recognize your surroundings. Fatigue makes you dizzy, unaware, like you’re floating outside of yourself. But soon all the shapes make sense, the colors shift into focus, the distant, muffled sounds of a chaotic city softly pour through a massive stretch of blinders. It’s home. It’s a room. It’s the room you share with Angel Dust.

You sit up in soft, pink sheets. The sweeping knowledge, the avalanche of realization, it collapses upon you. A warmth forms in your chest, a sensation you don’t know too well, so unfamiliar. But... it’s happiness. It’s joy. Because this isn’t like any other day. This isn’t the same kind of morning you’ve experienced over the past several months. It’s a new life, a new world. Because of him, your spider, your Angel. He’s not your boyfriend anymore.

He’s your husband.

You take a breath, hand going to forehead. You swing your legs to the side of the bed, noting said
spider is absent from the room – though that’s okay. The weight of this, of you, is still so fresh in a blissful, confusing sort of way. Holy shit, Anon. Angel fucking Dust. You say it to yourself one more time: he’s my husband.

That’s going to take a while. A long, long while in fact, to totally process. In ways, it seems like it shouldn’t be real, all things considered, not after what you experienced. And yet it is, as distinct as hard bourbon, as lucid as the air you breathe. You instinctively look at your right arm, flexing the hand. it’s not quite visible, but, there – embedded in your shadowy flesh – is the imprint, the mark of a Binding. In Hell, marriage is far too pure and sacrosanct a thing, of course. It's punishment for those Down Below to be attached to their significant half, so it wasn’t supposed to be a good thing.

And yet it was. It was the best fucking thing you’d ever felt in your miserable, awful existence, previous and this. You felt like you were attached to Angel, like your essence mingled with his. He was with you, even though he wasn’t. Goddamn.

But before you get too exciting, a notable, phantom tingle brushes against your left side. Ah, fuck. Leftie’s gone. Much like your left eye which is now a blurry, muddled mess, your opposing limb is no long with you. Well, in fairness, it was never yours to begin with. When you came back after the events of Abaddon, part of him stuck to you, creating a surrogate limb. After his return of the Half, well, ah . . .

Hmm. You mentally flinched. You didn’t want to dig that up, not right now. But, events aside, a literal piece of you was out of the picture. It would take some getting used to, and you were going to need a new prosthetic. Back to square one, looked like.

But despite the loss, you felt so light, so clear, as though a weighted boot was yanked from your throat. The nightmares were long gone, replaced with, well, tranquility. A sense of safety and fulfillment and again, joy. Just a pure, unfiltered happiness because you were with Angel Dust. In mind, body, and soul. Fuck! It was amazing! And fuck!

It was also terrifying! How the hell were you gonna’ do this!? You’d never been a husband, not really. Annie was, well, Annie. But this. A whole new cosmos of feelings and responsibilities, it was. Were you ready? Hah, no, not at all.

You finally stand and get dressed, noting the absence Angel. What time was it? Your eye flicks to his clock, and shit, it’s nearly noon? The hell were you snoozing for so long? Awful. You wanted to spend your time with Angel now, something you could finally fucking do, so sleeping in was stupid. With some difficulty, you manage to get your suit attire on, or one of them. One arm makes it much harder, and you grimace when you look yourself over in Angel’s full body mirror. Not a great look, but a problem to address later.

Nuggets appears, gives you a welcoming oink and you oblige with head pats before heading downstairs. You’re eager – you just want to see your spider again. That’s all, really, you’ve ever wanted. It doesn’t take long though before you hear the sing-song melody of his loose, New York snark, echoing from the Hotel’s foyer.

“. . . and da’ way I seeze it, ya’ kinda’ owe us, Chuck!”

Ah, there he is.

“Are you kidding!?” And ah, there’s Vaggie?

You start towards the sounds. Oh. Already in a row and it wasn’t even lunchtime. That’s Angel, all right.
“Bitch, if I was kiddin’, you’d know. Or. . . would ya’? Can never tell, Vags, ya’ sense o’ humor is fuckin’ deplorable, neheheh!”

Closer. Now, here, Charlie’s chirpish tones countered. “You’re not being fair at all, Angel.” It’s married to Vaggie’s emerging growls and growing frustration.

And so you appear like a shadow, quiet on your feet. In fact, you don’t intrude just yet, you stay to the side, watching the argument unfold. Angel, in his familiar Valentino, keeps his arms crossed, staring down Charlie and Vaggie, his expression stuck with resolute defiance.

Oh, he’s wearing his hat too. Cute.

“Fair!?” he bellows, two extra arms wiggling about. “Ya’ daffy!? We’ze saved ya’ like, I’unno, a bajillion times! Dis’ whooole fuckin’ city of rejects n’freaks oughta’ be thankin’ us for keeping their keesters outta’, I dunno’, double-death!”

Vaggie growled. “You two were the cause of it!”

Charlie huffed, rubbing head. “Nobody’s ungrateful, Angel, but. . .”

“Oh yeh? Where’s m’fuckin’ flowers an parade, den, eh?”

“But!” Charlie said, eyes narrowed. “Do I even need to say how many times you’ve broken the Hotel rules?”

You’re tempted to let this keep going but, you’re also curious.

“Maybe,” you finally say, walking forward. Not because you’re too interested in the conversation, but because of Angel. The moment you speak, his mismatched eyes swing to you and your heart skips a beat. The way he looks at you is amazing, and his beautiful face swims up to you.

It’s like he forgot he was arguing at all. “Baby!”

He rushes into you and it’s as though you’re both as light as a feather, as delicate as silk strands. You embrace him, you breathe him in, and you feel his arms encircle you, the other two sneaking around your waist.

Vaggie grumbles and rolls her eye. “Oh great.”

You kind of forget the Hotel exists. You kiss him once, and he smiles, and shit and fuck and fuck and shit it’s the best.

“Y’slept like a rock, pockets!” he says, face close to yours. “So cute, ya’ know! Didn’t wanna’ wake ya, heh. Mm. Heh. . .”

You smile back. “And I missed you already.”

“Ya’ just woke up.”

“Exactly.”

One more kiss. Just one more, enough to hold you over while you break the embrace, Angel stuck to your side like a bird on a branch. He returns his gaze to the pair, holding your right arm.

“Well, babe, maybe you’ze can help me settle dis shit, right now!”
Charlie sighs, rubbing the bridge of your nose. “Good morning, Anon,” she says, ignoring Angel’s comment.

You chuckle. “Miss Magne. Vaggie.”

Vaggie returns with a nod.

“Angel, please,” Charlie says. “We appreciate it, but . . .”

Angel growls, glancing back to you. “Can ya’ believe dis shit!? he says, gesturing at the two with an exaggerated wave.

“We’ze heroes, babe! You n’me! Yet when we wanna’ splitsville and fuckin’ celebrate we can’t even do that!”

You blink. Celebrate? “What do you mean?”

Angel redirects his attention to you again, fully this time, sincere and full of warmth. “I mean, Anon, our honeymoon.”

He quirks an annoyed brow towards the other couple. “Ya’ know, honeymoon! Cause’ he’s my fuckin’ husband now! Cause we got hitched!? Dat’s what people do!”

Hearing him say that word puts a wellspring of happiness in your chest. Holy shit, that’s right. That’s right. A honeymoon to celebrate your “getting hitched.”

“But these two eggheads, fah! Ya’ think after what we did, savin’ sinners n’shit they’d be all thankful like, but nah! They won’t let us!”

Vaggie growled, but Charlie raised a hand. “That’s not fair, Angel! We have reasons for that!”

Vaggie prepares to jump in with her girl, but a discordant audio disrupts the conversation.

Static.

“Oohohoho, and what fascinating reasons might those be?”

A shadow pops into the room, shifting to a suited, snarling grin. The ever-familiar Cheshire smile of Alastor coalesces before you, brandishing his studio-mic, a roundabout of muffled applause accompanying his appearance.

Once again, Vaggie mumbles. “Oh greaaaat.”

Alastor looks between the two groups, waving a hand. “Why, don’t mind me! I couldn’t help but overhear a raucous and had to step in!”

“We have everything under control,” Charlie says, uncertain herself. Alastor – if it’s possible – grins wider.

“By the burning of my ears, you won’t mind if I don’t believe you,” he says, letting his gaze roll to you and Angel. The spider scowls, shuffling into your side, keeping a protective grasp around the left of you that isn’t.

“When my two favorite troublemakers are about, well, the results are always spectacular! If they’re up to antics, I say: let them!”
At first, the spider blinks, processing the words (and the fact Alastor abruptly appeared in his usual unannounced fashion). Angel holds his hands out now, expectant. “Y’see!? Even chuckles over here is on our side!”

Alastor laughs. “My sultry silk spinner, not at all! Sides are for squares and I’m too polished for that. But there’s never a dull moment with either of you, is there?”

You squint. Oh god, what is he up to now?

“It’s fine,” you try to say. “No trouble at all! Really. I just want to spend time with Angel and. . .”

Alastor makes a wide gesture. “Of course you do!”

He slinks to Charlie and Vaggie now, making a feigned, sorrowful face, patronizing even. “Why Miss Magne, have a heart! Don’t we owe it to our lovely lovebirds to throw them a spectacular celebration? Why think of the shows, the music, the entertainment of it all!”

Angel bites. “Yeah!”

Charlie makes a t-sign with her hands. “Bup! Whoa, whoa! Whoa! No celebrations, no parties! That’s. . . look. . . it’s just not great timing!”

Alastor hocks a laugh. “But it’s the perfect time!” he says, appearing at Vaggie’s side, using her as an armrest (much to her fury).

He points to both of you. ‘The math checks out, doesn’t it? We’ve been spared the agitating aggression of one Abaddon and his sorry band of C-Listers! Oh, they’ve kept the stage going! And inspiration to us all! Two foul, revolting fetid souls, the worst of their kind, coming together in unholy matrimony! It brings a tear to the eye and bile to the throat, ahaha!”

You tilt your head, smirking. “Oh yeah? Fuck you too, Al.”

There’s a static-laced “oooh” emanating from Alastor, and he only chuckles. Vaggie takes a swing at the Radio Demon perched on her head, though he vanishes and reappears by Charlie now.

“Two for two is a decent record! A solid ratio, an impressive no-loss streak. . .”

He pauses, voice crackling. “Of course, they’re missing a star player. . .” he sneers, voice low. Neither you or Angel hear him, though Charlie does, and her eyes narrow.

“Don’t.”

He straightens his suit. “Oh, Miss Magne, you can’t blame a cat for tossing the yarn! But I digress. Let our lads in love get the shebang they want! What a dull affair otherwise!”

You know, while you can appreciate Alastor going to your defense. . . it’s Alastor going to your defense. His schemes always revolve around something falling apart. Someone has to trip and stumble for him to take interest to it, and if you plan a honeymoon, all you want, all you’ve ever wanted, is to spend it with your spider. You’d rather spend it here at the Hotel if it meant nothing bad would happen. Angel, though. . .

“Yeah! Listen to em’ Charles-in-charge! Dat sounds like a fuckin’ blast!”

You glance at Angel. Uh oh.

Alastor leans into it. “Glad you agree my climaxing comrade!”
Angel Dust snaps his fingers! “Yeah, yeah! It should be a goddamn’ fuckin’ knockout! I want every reject and scuzzball t’see me with my man! Set dis’ circus tent on fire! Blow em’ away!”

The spider grins, turning his predatory gaze to you. “Then blow you, ehehehe!”

“Whoa!” Charlie says.


People knowing about your honeymoon? With Angel? Knowing you were his husband and he was yours? That. . . that didn’t sound wise. Or even safe. Exactly how many people wanted you dead, much less the spider? And media saturation around here often ended in disaster. The eyes of Hell, looking at you, Angel Dust. Brr.

“No whoa!” Angel challenges. “C’mooooooon!”

He pleads. He turns his back to the others before staring into you, his eyes wide and wanting. Two gloved hands come to your shoulders, gently massaging your limbless left side. Again, just this, you forget the world exists, that you’re in a Hotel, because in this moment, with Angel Dust, nothing else matters.

“I want to,” Angel says, voice soft. “Please, baby? I wanna’ show em’ all my guy. My guy. I want em’ t’see how happy ya’ make me.”

His mismatched gaze wanders, going to the floor. He leans, voice low and soft, where only you can hear him.

“I wanna’ forget for a while.”

Either it’s instinct or the melding of your souls or both, but when he says it, you know what he means. A jag of realization and an indelicate hurt runs through your chest. Right, right. He’s talking about Ju-

You push the thought aside, fast. Not that, not right now.

You sigh, smiling at him. “Will this make you happy?”

You’ll do anything to see him smile, anything. He has but to ask. He nods, pecking your cheek. “Sure fuckin’ will.”

Well, that’s enough for you. You glance back to the others, and Alastor meets your gaze with a knowing grin.

“Hang on!”

Charlie isn’t convinced. She takes a long, steady breath, hands folded together.

“Look, Angel, Anon. I’m happy for both of you, I think what you have now is great and beautiful and a steppingstone towards redemption, but you can’t seriously think this is a time for, well, anything! I don’t. . .”

She hesitates, because she’s fighting to not say the wrong thing. Vaggie goes at it like a brick to a window, though.

“She means,” starts Vag with a hard gesture. “The both of you are always getting into trouble! When you go off and do something you put yourselves in danger! Or worse!”
Not wrong, not wrong at all, and frankly you agree with her. You’re content to stay here, at home, where it’s safe until you figure out how the fuck to be a good partner that’s, well, for the foreseeable eternity. But, dammit, Angel Dust wants something. And what spider wants, spider gets.

Charlie clears her throat. “Yes, and, um. You did take an heirloom, Anon. I didn’t forget. Er, and yes technically you did your job as Hotel Security by technically saving us from danger but…”

“They’re for sitting!” Alastor chides. He wiggles his fingers together, disregarding Charlie’s concerns.

“Oh, come now Charlie, must you be a fuddy duddy? There’s an easy solution for all of this, really!”

She crosses her arms. “What? By listening to me?”

“No!”

Alastor gestures to himself, head tilting. “Let me organize it all!”

Charlie’s face sagged and her eyes boggled. “You’re kidding me.”

The Radio Demon put a hand to his ear, as though listening for a sound. “Why, I didn’t hear a laugh! No, no, my dear, were I to tell a joke, you’d know!”

You gawk too. Alastor, planning anything? That sounds like it’ll end in nothing but trouble. Angel, on the other four hands, makes eyes, his features stretched with a wide smile.

“A fantastic, open yard gala with eyes and ears from every which way, that’s what I’m thinking!” continues Alastor, spreading his arms. “Oh yes, a star attraction, a true power couple for all to see! Angel, adult actor, now humbled and tied down – dare I say, getting better?”

He vanished, appearing between you and the spider, curling his arms around your shoulders, uncomfortably so.

“What’s more inspiring, Miss Magne? And I say, wouldn’t this sell your Hotel to all those daring doubters!”

You try to shuffle away but Alastor’s grip is quite firm. Meanwhile, at the words, Charlie blinks, and then her eyes start to sparkle. Uh oh. Playing up the idea that Angel was, in fact, getting better certainly would prove Charlie’s thesis to so many in Hell. After all, settling down was a good trait, right?

“And if you’re still not convinced,” finalized Alastor, “Why, the rest of you could come along and keep an eye on things!” he says, winking with his left one, glancing at you.

“Yeah!” Angel throws in now, head nodding. “Listen to da’ spook! C’mon, sunshine! All dem wayward souls get to see what I good boy I am, riiiiight?”

Vaggie looks between Charlie and Alastor, dawning an expression of ‘oh no.’ It’s working. Charlie starts to hop on her feet, excited.

“. . .it would be a great demonstration of the Hotel’s therapy system!” she said. “And would there be singing!?”

Alastor withdrew his grasp, hands going behind him. “It’ll be a regular open mic night!”

You blink. Okay, hang on, it’s like a freight train of “oh fuck” and “holy shit” are hitting you. Open
mic gala something in the middle of Hell? With you and the rest of the Hotel? Is that necessary? You look to Angel, and you see the hunger in his eyes, the want of it, the desire. The same kind he has when he wants to “make the scene.” He is the scene after all. But, Devil, you haven’t had much time to recuperate. Hell, you haven’t even given proper rites for Ju-

Grrr. You shove the thought aside again. Angel looks happy. You want him to be nothing but that. He gets what he wants, no matter what it is. And he said he... wanted to forget.

Well, not like your vote counted for much now anyway.

“It’s a deal!” Charlie conceded, hammering fist into her palm. “Oh, this’ll be great! Yes! Everyone can see how well the patients are doing, and there will be songs and music and wine, lots of wine, and... Vaggie! Isn’t this great!?”

She turned to her love, pupils as bedazzled stars. Vaggie forced a smile, answering through clenched jaw.

“Yep, fantastic.”

Vaggie looks to you, where you return with a helpless shrug and strained smile.

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“There’s like, a million fuckin’ things I could try on!”

It’s a while later, and Angel’s head over kinky boots. His movements are light, joyous, and buoyant, hands strolling through inventory of various clothing. Mostly dresses. He goes through his vast armory of attires, licking sharp teeth, scanning for something perfect. Of course, that’s a fools errand, he’s perfect in whatever he chooses so far as you’re concerned.

You, in the meantime, are sitting in chair, overcoat hung on the furniture’s back while he simultaneously watch him and muse over the coming event. It’s uh. Big. Scary big. Alsastor “persuaded” Charlie to pen down a massive open gala, an outdoor event crowned on one of the city’s larger buildings. On said building top was something like a garden, or so you’ve been told, where the fancy and affluent gather. Extremely wealthy too, Alastor was eager to point out, like he was prodding you. Hmph. Well not trying to, he was, you knew it.

Couple of months ago? How exciting. How breathtaking. Ripe pockets, loose money, big scene. The perfect kinda score and a great place to build reputation. But now? The fatigue you feel from all of Hell has really settled in, especially with all the things that had happened. The losses incurred weren’t worth it. You just want to spend time with Angel Dust, that’s all. You don’t need or want anything else. And yet, you feel his yearning, feel that drive pour into you, your soul, like his excitement is creating a feedback effect into the essence of you. Probably has something to do with your Binding, the point you grasp the hunger. His desire to numb things, to distance himself from what happened, you see it pushing him into this.

He’s happy. But, you’re a little worried.

Hmph, you give yourself a mental scolding. Oh relax, you, everything will be fine. He’s just jazzed, that’s all. It’ll be fine, it’ll all be fine. Everything’s okay now. Bad guys gone, he’s with you, you’re with him. No crazy schemes or plans. It’s fine.

“Oooo, how about t’blue!” Angel twirls with a beaming expression. “Or, no, no, wait wait! Uhh, lavender! Mmm, wait, scarlet onesie with da’ crimson choker and a wig, yeah!”
You focus to him now. “Everything gonna’ be all right over there?”

Fat Nuggets watches his master work, corkscrew tail wiggling.

“Tell me what’cha think!” says Angel, holding out a quartet of dresses. You blink, squinting with your right eye.

“Ah, well…”

You don’t get to finish before he’s flying through another set.

“You know Angel,” you say. “This might sound crazy, but I love you in the suit. You’d look good in an overcoat.”

He snickers. “Keh! Ya’ would say that ya’ uncultured palooka! Single eye of yers don’t got the magic sight like me!”

He paws through a jewelry box. “I love lookin’ pretty. S’bout that pop, ya’ know?”

He pulls free a few diamond chokers and an entourage of rings, scrutinizing them, measuring them out.

“Dazzle, baby, dazzle. Y’gotta fuckin’ blow em’ away, like I says!”

You’re not going to argue, but, “dazzling” is a lot of eyes, a lot of attention. Not an idea you’re keen on right now.

“Only if it ends with me blowing you,” you say, leaning back in the chair, hoping to catch him off guard. It kinda does. He flicks you a glance, chuckling.

“O-oho, dat so, wise guy? How ya’ gonna’ do with one arm, eh! You couldn’t even work the shaft! Takes two, ehehe.”

You’ll pursue this. “Is that a challenge?”

He pauses. “You really tryin’ to suck my dick right now?”

“You wanna’ find out?”

For a moment, Angel loses focus, then sneers. Then, a finger comes up, wiggling. “Ohhh no ya’ don’t! Ain’t fallin’ for dat! Ain’t ‘bout to get jizz all over the place.”

Rapiers out. “You’re just afraid I’ll embarrass you with the ol’ One Armed Joe.”

“Da’ fuck ya’ talkin’ about?”

“You’ve never heard the legend of One Armed Joe? Jacked off everyone with one hand so good he bankrupted a brothel?!”

Angel Dust snorts, picking another entourage of dresses and tossing them on the bed, leaning a little (enough that the perk of his rump wiggles at you – on purpose or no).

“Yer’ makin’ dat shit up!”

You show your right arm and flex your fingers. “I’ll show you.”
Angel redirects this with a parry, tossing an object specifically at your left side. “Catch!”

You of course can’t, the object (some lace) falling to the ground. He laughs.

“And thus, d’legend of One Armed Joe beaten by a pair o’ panties.”

You chuckle. “Asshole.”

There’s a jeer of laughter from Angel while he finishes gathering a few things, though, it dies down when he turns back to you. He clears his throat, frowning, eyes going to your left side.

“So, uh, how’s that doin’?” he says, gesturing to the space of what isn’t you.

You glance at the stump on your shoulder. “Still gone, looks like,” you say. You don’t know if it will regrow, but, being that it was never a part of you, survey says: unlikely.

Angel forces a smirk, offering a weak laugh. “Hah, yeah, well, I’ze got spares for both of us, ahaha!”

“You’ll lend me one right?” you say, trying to join in.

“Yeah.”

A small pause.

“You know what the weirdest part is?” you say after a moment. “I still feel it there. I don’t get it, really. Like I’m trying to move a . . . well. . . I don’t know.”

Angel goes to his bed, flipping through his dresses, though he’s a bit distracted now. “It don’t hurt, right?”

You want to say it hurts because it reminds you of what you lost, that it’s a reminder. But you don’t.

“Nope,” you say, turning to him. “No pain. Just strange.”

There’s more silence, Angel’s wide eyes returning to his selection of attire. This seems like a good moment to talk before the event, right? Try to at least address the events of what happened, since you’re technically on the subject.

You breathe. “So, ah. I’m thinking after this Honeymoon, maybe we could you know, set things right. I found his card and . . .”

It’s like you flipped a switch.

“HOLY SHIT!” Angel exclaims, tone shaky as an object falls from one of his dress attires. It’s a rectangle of flat white fitted with a screen. A Hellphone. He snaps it up immediately and fumbles with it in his hands.

“Dis’ fuckin’ thing!”

He’s essentially dashed away from what you were talking about, hyperfocusing on the found object. Well, you’ll try later then.

“What is it?”

Angel tilts his head before smiling. “M’old phone! Agh, eesh, dat bein’ the d’facto word, this bitch is ancient, I look like a fuckin’ nanny with dis’ thing!”

“Just in time for the honeymoon, right?” you say with a forced smile.

The office is caked with dust. Holy shit, has it been that long?

You flick the lights on and a fan sputters to life, kicking up airborne debris. You cough a bit, gazing around at the family of obsolete monitors, spying your desk just as it was when you left it. Last time you were here, you were, well, leaving.

You won’t be around for long. Preparations are getting made for the outing and you need to grab a few things. You consider the Tec-9 briefly. Is that something you’re going to need? No, no, of course not. It’s all good now, it’s all fine, everything’s fine. Stop worrying.

You go to your disk and grimace at a glass ashtray and empty bottle of cheap reserve. Goddamn you went for the bad stuff, huh? Well, no need for it now, things were on the up-and-up.

Or so you thought, until the air trembled and a burst of static caught your attention. “Burning the midnight oil, my dear boy?”

You cough and spin, only to see the grinning figure of Alastor leering at you. “Fuck!”

Alastor tilted his head. “Anon, please, we’re on air, mind the censors!”

You take a moment to collect yourself, rubbing your nose. “Yeah, okay, right. Alastor, what the fuck?”

“What’s wrong?” he chided, striding towards you, glancing around the filthy office, taking a finger and striking it across your dusty desk. “Can’t an old friend check in on his bosom buddy?”

“I’ve got plenty of bosoms already, buddy,” you toss back. “And uh, normally when you check in, I lose something.”

He laughed. “Oh, Anon, I’m hurt! After all this time, you still don’t trust me?”

You groan, glancing to the side. “All right, all right. Sorry, I guess? What uh, what’s... uh. What the hell do you want?”

Alastor rubbed his digits, flicking away a puff of debris as he turned his attention to you. “Why, to see my fellow fiend on his way, of course! To assure that my personal investments continue to make another smash hit on the stage, ahaha!”

He tossed his arm. “You’ve really kept this place lively! Oh what antics, what entertainment! Oh, Anon, Anon, I’m just a watcher, the applause in the crowd!”

A muffled raucous of radio applause emerged from him. “I’m just stuffing myself silly with popcorn, you see!”

You blink. “Uh. Thanks?”

He waves a hand. “No, no, thank you. You see, my limp layman of linguistics, I couldn’t help but notice you’re short a clapper, and dear oh dear it pains me to see my stagehand, well, without a hand!”
You’re not sure how you feel about Alastor thinking of you as a stagehand, but, whatever, could be worse.

“That’s why, my dapper demon of departed digits, I’ve drafted you up a dowry!”

You rub your head. “Alastor, please.”

He laughed again, a thunder of audience applause erupting with him. “Oh, very well! Suppose I’ll spoil the soup. A little something to get you back on your feet.”

He gestured with open palm, a flex of shadow coalescing before him, pulled through the air like a long tendril. Then, the gooey mass started to writhe and form, carve itself into a shape, a definition. You watched, uncertain, taking a step back as the mass quivered with incandescent red, cracking into existence. Slowly, you watched it manifest into a recognizable solid, a length several inches long. A limb. An arm.

The blackish mass evaporated, revealing a cracked, fractured prosthetic, all too familiar. Your eye widened as realization swept over you.

It was the Arm of the Saint.

“I do believe this is yours,” said Alastor. His free hand snapped his fingers, the used limb vanishing and reappearing on your desk with an unceremonious thunk. You watch it rest there, still wearing all the scars of the past, the digits singed, a dull char mussing the metallic goldish hue.

“Nothing quite like the old and familiar, eh?”

You’re not sure what to think. “. . .how did you. . .”

The Radio Demon chuckled, waving his hand. “Friends on the other side, so to speak.”

Huh. Admittedly, you’re not as interested in how he got it back. Really it’s the why. This thing only got you in trouble after all and you’re not looking for a repeat. What, does he want you to steal some ancient artifact or arm wrestle a Nephilim? You’re good.

Or, uh, maybe he’s trying to be “nice,” in his own weird fucking way. Maybe you’re overthinking this. Hah. Yeah.

“Uh, thanks,” you manage to say.

“Think nothing of it!” he chimes. “Or, do.”

You’re not entirely sure what he means by that. In the meantime, you go to the desk, looking it arm over, considering. Hrm. You’re not interested in doing anything like the “old ways,” the Saint’s Arm was nothing but that. Then again, it could serve as a reminder, maybe, something to constantly keep you out of trouble.

Or, you know, get you in it.

Bah, Anon! Don’t be a sourpu$$! It’s all gonna’ just be good times from here on out, yeah? Kick aside the sourpu$$ and let yourself breathe for once. Do it for Angel Dust, do it for your husband.

“Like an old glove, isn’t it?” added Alastor, watching you with intent. “That’ll even you out, yes? Can’t hug a hubs going solo, now can you?”

You force a chuckle. “Guess so.” You turn to him, conceding.
“I . . . appreciate it?”

He takes a step and bats you on the shoulder. “You can’t blame a fan for loving this re-inflatable Hindenburg, ahahaha! It’s the least I can do.”

Then, he mimes checking his wrist. “Oh, but egads, I’ve a little shindig to plan, don’t I? And you’ve got a Honeymoon to celebrate!”

Wordlessly he offers a wave and a grin, vanishing in the same dark mass he appeared from, the glimmer of his scarlet, static eyes the last thing you see. Could he always do that? As you turn to take the arm, studying it, you realize. . .

Hindenburg? Hey!

—*—

All the chaos is gone for a little while. All the mess and fractured pieces form into a single, recognizable thing of sense when you’re here, here in this room, this bed, with Angel Dust. It’s late evening, time for bed, held under the embrace of his puffy pink covers.

It’s kind of hazy, like you’re drunk on him. Sometimes it doesn’t seem like it’s real, like it couldn’t be, and yet, here you are. It’s all you need.

Around him is a collection of dresses he’s set out along the walls, while he glances at them from the bed. Your right arm is curled around his back, while the “Saint” is set aside. You’ll get to that later.

“You know you’re gonna’ have to put those back,” you say, meaning the dresses.

“Maybe I’ze make you do it,” he throws back, head on your neck.

“Yeah, you’re really going to let me mess with your fancy clothes? I’ll put them out of order. No color coding either, what with one eye and all.”

Angel’s eyes widen, gasping. “Ffuuuuuck. Ya’ right! Y’ain’t got no sense of color theory!”

“Black works just fine.”

“Booooring!”

You chuckle. “Pink and white is more your thing, peppermint.”

He offers a hushed ‘yeah, yeah’ before squeezing himself closer, heaving with a tired sigh, one that’s filled with happy relief.

“I can’t fuckin’ wait, pockets,” he mutters, eyelids closing. “Dis’ gonna be so fun. With my guy? Awh, da’ fuckin’ best!”

You smile, smooching his forehead. “Whatever you want baby, whatever you want.”

Spider gets what spider wants.

He yawns a little, murmuring. “Wanna’ go places with my husband.”

Same.

“Lffyoubaby,” he mumbles, fading.
"Same.

“Love you, Angel.”

But also..."

You feel his breathing slow to a gentle, tired rhythm until sleep takes him. You glance at the blinders, where the chaos of Pentagram City dwells. That’s a “place,” and you’re not sure what to think of it. Hah.

But who cares what you think. It means everything to see Angel happy, it’s all you care about now. You want – no, you need – to be a good partner.

Everything you’ve done in your life, every decision you’ve made, every relationship, every plan, has ended in costly failure or catastrophe. It got you killed, it got you in Hell.

Except Angel Dust. He’s the one thing you ever got right, and you mean to keep it that way. Whatever it takes, even it means throwing a noisy party in a part of Pentagram City for a lot of demons to see, some of which who may or may not have it out for either you or the spider.

But, hey, Lucifer’s Daughter and everyone else will be there? What could go wrong? It’s all fine now.

Everything’s gonna be fine.

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