The Devil lit a match

by Bebec

Summary

The water hugs her, wrapping itself around her hip, holding her tight without her resisting. Chloe has only seen the darkness of the waves, but now she sees their glow. Death is bright, warm - pressed around her, a shroud of senses, of aqueous elements.

She was also wrong about that.

Death is Light.

Written in French during the whumptober 2019.
Asphyxiation/Unconscious/Stay with me/Don't move/Numb/Embrace/Recovery/Trembling.
COMPLETE

Notes

I know.... so so so weak not to have been able to wait until the end of my translation.
Still,
New publication is never a bad thing, right? ^^
Well, pretty bad things will happen to our two partners, but it's the principle of whump X)
And All this whump is also for you, Kay_Kat who helped me a lot to improve my english since you're my beta =3 I won't thank you enough for all your advices since!
4 chapters of angst/fear/self-actualization and so on!
Here we go! (I've decided to place the plot some time after the finale of the episode 3 - so heartbreaking!)

See the end of the work for more notes.
It’s strange how powerful the tiniest sounds can become when your senses rest in oblivion. And yet, there is always one, only one, always the same in its smallest intensity, to bring you back to others. To bring you back at all. The sounds are diverse, but quite similar in their discretion in a deeper awareness, a consciousness that is more controlled in its landmarks of space and time.

But when everything becomes a blur, when consciousness hangs by a thread, by just a sound…. This sound pulls your mind, it pulls space and time towards you in the most brutal possible way.

The drop of water that splashes near Chloe's face is no exception; it splashes darkness with the discretion of a fanfare. Her body starts sharply, she rolls up into a ball, her fingers tense against something hard, cold, rough. She lets out a weak moan. Another drop and she shivers, brought back against her will, against the darkness, brought back to more consciousness than she can bear. It's worse than a fanfare, it sounds like a gunshot… booming like an explosion of water, loud and terrifying.

To the notion of space, of time; this aqueous insignificance revives global self-consciousness, of one's body, of one's thoughts, of unpleasant memories that it is human to want to neglect. For five minutes of indifference, without consequences.

And then comes the third drop.

And there is pain.
Conscious and revived by the overconfident oblivion.

It is a losing battle. Or a winning one... it depends on which side you are.

As for Chloe, she would have appreciated some neutrality. The oblivion is out of control, as is the pain, past a certain level. Chloe appreciates having some control over her life, over her decisions, her actions. So now, forcibly brought back to pain, but to a relatively stable awareness of her situation... She feels torn apart. She could always postpone her judgment to another time, though.

When she will be far away from this place.

She looks at her inert hand that's numbed from this previous loss of control, one inch from her face; palm towards the sky. She looks at the rust that starts from the floor to the walls, the seaweeds hanging between the nuts and bolts along the walls.

The sight.

She bends a finger, then a second; until she closes her fist, slowly; until she feels the pain between each of her phalanxes; it is electric, eager to fully bind her to consciousness. Her skin is clammy, she's cold. Really cold.

The sense of touch.

She breathes in; slowly, after unclenching her fist. It smells like water; sludgy wastewater. She smells these aquatic plants, she smells blood.

The sense of smell.

She tastes blood too. In her mouth. She tastes iron, salt, rising nausea; bitter. Always bitter.

The taste.

She is conscious. In all senses of the word.

"S-shit...."

"I couldn't... agree m're."

Chloe looks back, aware that she isn't alone, that she has never been. Something you can't deny as positive with real consciousness - solitude isn't its main foundation. And God, she doesn't want to be alone in this place.

"Lucifer..." she croaks.

The human form refrains from further comment, he doesn't even try to turn towards her, only offering the sight of his back to her, a jacket soaked by the puddle of wastewater that welcomes his upper body.

"Lucifer?" she calls him a second time, louder, her neck stiff by keeping this position.

The ball of designer clothes and clever thoughts moves, just enough to reassure Chloe. A sign of consciousness, of its continuity. She doesn't want to be alone, not in the least. Especially not when the fear clenches her stomach. Especially not when the pain twists her limbs.

She makes a third attempt and, in doing so, turns on her right side with excessive slowness.
"Lucifer. Hey... anybody here?"

"N-not... anyb'dy," he replies. "T'e Devil."

A weak but persistent voice. Provocative, but trembling. Neither from her position, nor from his; Chloe can't define the cause of this. The cold? The pain? Both?

"W-well…. Can't the Devil put… the heating on, can he?" Chloe pants, on hands and knees now.

She can still use her limbs; good. She isn't injured in these parts of her body. Just her head spinning, pain stabbing at the inside of her skull, the centre of the painful consciousness.

_Concussion._

She doesn't even count them, there have been so many head injuries since she started this job.

It's nevertheless better than a gunshot wound. Or a stab wound. She hates stab wounds.

It takes a little longer to Lucifer to answer her, during which time she manages to move forward; a few steps distance on her hands and knees, there are dozen left between them. The huge tank where they are held captive makes his voice echo, every sound around; even Chloe's boots scraping against the metal, even the seepage of water from the seaweeds under her palms.

"I'm n't... match, Detective."

"List me what you are, then," she presses him; she's still too far away from him, still too alone.

She needs to hear his voice, the continuity of this trembling echo that comes from his lips, that still trembles in the air, against the walls. She needs him, a partnership of consciousness. Anything will do, anything to keep him with her, until she can - with her hands, with her other senses - awaken his, just like one single drop of water awakened hers. 'Keep the victim stimulated until help arrives,' the manuals say.

Until help arrives.

For that, they would need to know where to find them both, she would need to know.

One after another, Lucifer quotes each of his identities, each adjective that could approach his perfect definition. Chloe's buzzing mind only stops on one of them.

"What did you just say?"

She is so close now; she can see the tears through his jacket, near his right shoulder, heavy water soaking it, pressed against his back, that outlines the main curves of his muscles. No blood, although she still can't see his full appearance in detail, nor his health condition from this side. There is still a shadow, unlike he just listed.

"Light," Lucifer repeats, barely moving. "Or Truth Bringer... depends on wh'ch interpretation….

"So... you're a match."

"Fr from it," he denies.

Chloe laughs, a slight tremor between her lips, another one. From a moaning to a laugh, the line is fine. Her hand rests on his jacket side, the softness of fabric soaked with water is a change from metal, it's warmer. More comforting, in a way. She puts her other hand on his hip, without Lucifer
complaining.

No serious injuries to the lower limbs.

Good. Good point.

Or the wounds are so deep that he can't feel anything. Chloe holds her breath for a second, the moment of this doubt.

_Facts, Chloe. Stay focus on facts; just facts._

She makes him vulnerable; here's a fact.

"Lightbringer sounds like 'match' to me," she says, squinting.

Near, in watery, metallic darkness; Lucifer doesn't look seriously injured. There’s no indication telling her that he is. She moves her hand from his hip to his ribs and quickly finds the edge of his jacket that she pulls towards her.

"No one e-ever compared my… supern'va with a match, Dete—_ARGH!!_" he howls once his right shoulder touches the ground, Chloe instantly moving away from surprise and splashes of cold water.

In vain, Lucifer tries to come back to his former position; too weak, too exhausted to coordinate his movements. He swings slightly instead, lifting his upper body a few inches away from the ground, and then falls back to it heavily, water and screams filling once more the air.

="Bloody Hell—!" he grunts, his right arm bent against his chest.

"Lucifer, don't move," she asks him, the surprise gone.

"I. Didn't. Move!"

She restrains herself from rolling her eyes, well aware that this would worsen her headache. It's better not to give it an additional reason to throw up on her partner's shirt. Plus, something tells her that he wouldn't enjoy that either. She comes closer and places one of her hands on his uninjured shoulder.

Lucifer gradually stops creating ripples and swirls around him, shaking nevertheless under her palm. They are both shaking, to such an extent that she can't say where her tremors start and his stop. No clear boundaries for pain, right?

"Just… stay still, okay? I-I'm… I'm gonna try to see what's wrong."

With clenched jaws, the Devil nods. Chloe takes a deep breath, chasing nausea and dizziness as far away as she can. She isn't a doctor, she doesn't have a lot of knowledge about—

Does Lucifer's body look like… like most people's body?

A second inhalation.

_Broken bones…. Look for broken bones. It's common to… to all species._

He never looks away from her, not once. Not when her fingers intertwine with his, when she slowly stretches his arm and mumbles countless apologies for each of his plaintive grunts. His gaze doesn't waver either when her hand briefly palpates his shoulder blade; it turns red until her fingers
move away from his limb.
"Sorry!" she instantly apologizes to him.

He shakes his head, red and brown briefly mixing up together. When he looks at her again, there is just brown. "Like to touch the f'bidden fruit, do we?"

She smiles, but stays away from his shoulder, from his shifting gaze.
"Like to imagine things, do we?" she says. "It's broken."
"Oh, y-you think?"

Chloe lifts her head towards the ceiling, pain and blood falling to the back of her skull in a second. What a strange feeling, as if the anchor of her consciousness has started to sink through a precise spot inside her skull. She blinks, her eyes shut on the curved heights of their prison and reopened on her partner's concerned face.

"Detective? Chloe?"

He must have been more concerned than usual to use her name. Or she might be more 'concerning' to see than she thinks; maybe both. Probably both. It’s nice, hearing him call her that, to hear him say these two words with gentleness, with this deep concern for her well-being. She hasn't heard it in weeks.

All she heard since is his anger, when he is around to express it to her.

"I'm f'ne...."

Words bump into each other inside her mouth.

"I highly doubt it," he says.

She shuts her eyes and counts to ten, inhaling and exhaling slowly; inhaling again, eyelids shut, shut to the swaying of her brain against her skull. It's just a sensation, it's just common pain from common concussion.

One, two....

Something's running from the base of her hair, dripping on the floor.

Five, six....

She has fallen into a puddle, probably the same as Lucifer's; she can feel his breath running over her cheek, her chin. It is water, not blood. Water.

Nine....

"Detective?"

Fingers on her skin, her cheek.

She opens her eyes, meets his; much closer than before. Too close. The nausea and imaginary swaying are gone, but Chloe keeps feeling ill. She is in pain; then she looks away.

His fingers leave her face immediately.
'It's just a concussion,' she whispers.

"Show me."

"Lucifer…"

He moves and, worried, Chloe looks in his direction again. He has managed to sit up, partly; unsteady on his wet knees - staying dry and clean in such horrible place is challenging, truth be told - but he's up, and even closer.

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours," he says. "Although, as far as I'm concerned, I played my part. You're the only one left."

Before she can refuse once more, he adds, "Plus, it would be a total waste if I let you perish before we ever get the chance to settle our scores."

"Is that your only motivation here?" asks Chloe, pain increasing its grip on her.

Lucifer looks at her without blinking, the shadow of a decision, perhaps a doubt, running through his gaze.

"Well…. You'll never know if you die first, will you?"

He never lies.

Right now, she would have liked if he had, though.

"Fine," sighs Chloe, leaning on her elbow.

With only one hand, an unharmed forearm and shoulder, Lucifer helps her to straighten up; with slow pressure on her arm, concerned about the continuity and the precarious balance of her physical well-being. His tremors mix with hers once again, proof that his own well-being is just as questionable.

She shivers as his fingers venture near the back of her skull, flinching. Then she looks into his eyes again. Red, again. Chloe doesn't dare to flinch anymore, not even dare to breathe.

She did it again, didn't she?

She always flinches.

"Could you accept me like this?"

She —

What she sees in his eyes is exactly like that night; anger. Again.

She also flinched earlier, but... but she thought she was hurting him, he knows that, doesn't he? Now she has flinched for the same reasons. Nothing to do wi —

"I will skin them alive," Lucifer growls, his fingers as scarlet as his eyes can be.

Blood. Is that hers?

Ow.
So it wasn't water. Bad draw.

Chloe breathes more freely, although her heart keeps pounding between her ribs. She looks at him more freely, free of any anger. She's not responsible for this one, at least. She looks at him, now that her vision stopped being blurry, called to order by adrenaline after gazing at a thousand-year-old being's wrath. As old as he can be, he doesn't look as impressive as usual - not with his hair in his eyes, with water dripping from it and softening his wrath; not with his drawn features, his pale face.

Keeping his invalid arm bent against his chest, his words take a much more solemn turn. Although she has no doubt about how far he's willing to go after their kidnappers, even before that.

He is a Devil of his word.

His actions are links to it.

"Might be good to know where we are first, don't you think?" she replies.

"Somewhere undoubtedly clammy."

His hand goes back to her wounded skull, the other under her chin, asking it to turn sideways. She doesn't argue and turns her heard, watches this wastewater scattered in large and small spots on the metallic floor.

"I heard them, before... before they —"

She keeps quiet, wincing slightly as she feels Lucifer's fingers brushing up and down the wound that causes her so much discomfort in her balance and in the order of her thoughts.

Before they knocked her out, from what it looks like, from what it feels like.

"My apologies, Detective."

She wants to shake her head, stopped by Lucifer's hand holding her chin. It's just as well. "They were talking about...."

—

"Leave her be; we came for him."

She's no longer pulled on the ground.

"She's been with him for far too long. Her soul is wasted."

A resigned sigh followed by the sound of a body thrown into a van. Not hers.

Lucifer....

"She'll understand. She knows who he is. Why we must drown her sins."

Footsteps. Someone lifts her up.

"May God forgive us...."
Chloe frowns, her fingers a few inches above a puddle of wastewater.

"...drowning my sins?"

Their gazes meet once more, just before a worrying roar echos from the walls around, it rises towards the thick pipes she had noticed earlier when she lifted her head to the ceiling.

Yes, how strange it can be to one sound, one only sound, to have so much power over the senses. In the absence of the five usual ones, awakened by a single blaring drop of water, the roar of the purifying floods all around them awakened just one sense - the sixth, useful but late to come.

Sensing death... as for Chloe, she already does.

Tbc

'Death is Light'
Chloe always had difficulty to understand some religious concepts, which probably explains her skepticism about the presence of a more powerful, higher Being in this old world in general.

Old.

Their way of thinking the world must be old, as for God.

Human's point of view about Him is old, really low.

She never got this; the lowness of so many devout people convinced that physical pain is the answer to give to true Evil, that's what they need to fight into this endless psychological warfare. It makes no sense; fight a concept, a tainted conception of the world on a physical level? This is absurd. A physical, psychological lowness. She read so many supposedly 'holy' books, messengers, historical traces of the divine struggle against the forces of Evil.

Torture, manipulation, unfounded accusations for many; for most of it.

And testing everyone, all the time; the test of fire, of water.

All this, for the Devil.

All this for an old vision, for lowness; he, too old, too low in people's minds so that they would see higher.

Chloe can 'literally' not see higher than that.

Water strikes from all sides, although it can only flow from higher position, from this inaccessible pipe that's as large as her and three times higher. It took her a long time to understand, this is too late now. A tank, the wastewater everywhere.... These tanks are everywhere on the docks; to desalinize seawater.

G—

She can't tell how, but the next second - in the blink of an eye - she ends up alone; she's pushed,
dragged, swung back and forth in salt waves, as fierce as ever, even inside this enclosed space.

Enclosed.

Enclosed.

Shit.

"— We must drown her sins."

Drown.

She… They were going to be dr—

Chloe's body slams into one of the tank walls, the already two meters high rough flows carrying her away in a new direction. Blinded by salt, pain, fear; her fingers scratch the wall until they get a grip on a pipe fixed to the ground. Her head comes to the surface, her lips spitting and coughing up as much water as they can, swapping it for moist and jeopardized air.

"L-Lucifer! Gh—!"

Her fingers slip on the metal; pressed by the water, seconds after seconds, meter by meter filled with it.

She pushes with her legs to such an extent that she no longer feels them, her lips swallowing and spitting out this water, unable to keep it at bay.

"Lucif —!"

"Detective!"

She sees him; at the other end of the tank. No, no... he was closer and then….

Lucifer's cry of rage and pain is barely audible, but she hears it. She also hears a stronger aqueous roar than the first one, right behind her. Turning her head, Chloe notices once again too late this tiny detail, an essential survival fact. Her mouth slightly opened on this late realization, she's instantly swallowed by a second raging flow of seawater through the circular wire fence. She holds on to life, to this pipe, the very one that will drown her soon.

Soon.

This word echoes within her as she sinks into the waves, there's no more hope left to reach the surface again.

How could she?

The waves hold her tight in their grip, they are pushing her towards the bottom; her body rolls, swirls, goes down and up. She even manages to get out a finger or two from water, for a few seconds; almost her entire hand scratches the lower part of the wire fence. But here's all she can do.

She doesn't understand.

Is it the best way to punish her for having betrayed Lucifer? That God chooses to drown her for the penance of her sin, for having dared to think of poisoning His Son, His favorite one?
No, she should have known better by now.

What she could read in Men's books isn't their truth.

But He must love Lucifer; He's His Father, a parent. She is one, still for a few moments of lucidity, the time of personal survival that she can still use to struggle against the waves - in vain, but she does it anyway.

Trixie.

She loves Trixie.

Her eyes, her smile; she can see them. She feels her soft skin against hers, baby, child, older than she will be allowed to see. She smells her scent, dark chocolate - from all the cakes she will sneakily ask to Lucifer, to Dan; they both are much too soft with her sometimes. She will know how to lead them around by the nose, for sure.

Her nose rubs against water, it's rough, solid - pounding wildly, strong.

Where waters is, life is as well.

Wrong.

Chloe is going to die. She will die of water.

Is it how it's look like? Death? Her five senses panicking, as much as they did for one single drop of water?

Is it like some last jolt of life before the very end?

Lucifer undoubtedly draws his sense of humour from his Father.

The water hugs her, wrapping itself around her hip, holding her tight without her resisting. Chloe has only seen the darkness of the waves, but now she sees their glow. Death is bright, warm - pressed around her, a shroud of senses, of aqueous elements.

She was also wrong about that.

Death is Light.

-xXx-

Death ceases.

It ceases, whole and luminous the moment before - perhaps hours, days; in Death, who really measures time? - and infinitesimal the next. Chloe still smells it in her lungs, heavy with water, this instrument of Death that they're spitting, throwing up.

However, what she's throwing up isn't wet. It's not cold.

It's warm. Searing.
It's luminous.

Chloe sees the death refulgence around her, within her, in her steady breathing.

Her breathing.

She is breathing.

She is, really?

She has feared to see the beginnings of her personal hell loop when she would have opened her eyes, infinite beginnings to what Lucifer told her once. To be honest, she feels also rather curious about it - one of the main characteristic of mankind, looking deeper into something when they shouldn't. But her eyes, her senses, they don't experience such things, nothing she has imagined, nothing from her guilt that she has thought enough to end down there.

Lucifer was convinced that she wouldn't end up there, that she would join her father and Charlotte in the Silver City.

His beliefs must have changed since then.

What would it have been like to live, relive over and over again this moment - her hesitant hand towards her partner's glass? What would it have been if she hadn't trembled? What would it have been if she hadn't even tried?

There is only Light.

Is it? the Silver City, really?

She can't believe this.

Neither do her eyes, staying on a human level of uncountable blinks, stuck with realistic facts. Passing the intense Light that keeps surrounding her, Chloe notices the blurry outlines of the city, of the beach below; both plunged into darkness.

Los Angeles?

She is breathing, she is seeing the city....

She blinks to such an extent that she ends up seeing nothing more but bright lines and threads of shadows. Chloe takes a noisy, deep breath; useless for her lungs, that seem functional, but she needs this to anchor her mind to reality, to facts.

The facts.

She's breathing. She's alive.

She-- She's glowing, she's literally glowing.

Gasping, Chloe stares at her gleaming hands in the quite dark surroundings. She sits on the ground, breathes this light out noisily, she watches it spreads on the ground that is dry, steaming. The tank is.....

The tank is gone.

No more water, no more aqueous prison. She is outside, somewhere in the port - far, far enough
away, far enough into the docks and the main attractions of the beach to breathe her surprise freely.

How is this even possible?

Why is she… glowing?!

More than that, her clothes are dry; there is no trace of the water that meant ‘death’ for her; her skin no longer keeps any trace of it. Not even a single drop. Steam and light rise around her.

She's alive. They're—

"Lucifer…. Lu—"

Her hands brush the ground and a wave of sensations runs from her entire body to her fingertips, to the stone under her palms. It feels like electricity, a spark; yet something very different from the known meaning of these two denominations. It's something primal, pure. So strong, so warm... her skin should have melted just by brushing it, just by coming too close.

The dense steam is moved away with one single hand on the ground, fluttering around towards the incoming tide not far from her position. It reveals another body nearby, lying on his stomach. Passed the first shock, the Detective recognize Lucifer's clothes. Although, the white wings spread in his back might have been a clue as well.

Wings.

Did he have—?

Did they… fly?

If they flew away from the tank, then... then why are they still here, at the docks?

"Lucifer...."

Too worried to notice, Chloe doesn't realize how fast she reaches him; what she should have crossed in two or three shaky steps, she does it with only one, an impulse that becomes confused with her concern for Lucifer.

He doesn't react.

Why doesn't he?

"No, no...." she mutters, shaking him first, then calling him; "Lucifer?"

Her glowing hands contrast so much with his spread wings; the faded white color of every feather, from their base to their end brushing against the steaming ground. They aren't supposed to be like this, Chloe knows they are supposed to be so much more; they are so much more in her scattered memories.

They have been much more, despite all the blood covering them, despite those gunshot wounds. Now they look... dead. The possibility that Lucifer might be dead as well crosses her scattered thoughts at such dizzying speed that she briefly can't control her hands, violently shaking against the fabric of his jacket. She tries to grab him by the shoulders to turn him on his back, she succeeds the second time. Barely. These faded extra-limbs prevent her from seeing his entire face, she can only see a faded version of it;, pale... grayish even. Far, so far from his other red face.
"Lucifer…. Go—!" she sobs, tears brushing her eyelashes.

Even she almost using his Father's name doesn't work on him. He doesn't glare at her, with this deep feeling of annoyance that she can no longer bear to wait for while rubbing her hands on his stiff shoulder. It's hard as a rock, as the one against which she's kneeling. There is no live in his gaze, open to the void.

Chloe has to do something, she has to bring him back to her.

But her head is hitting void as well.

All she can think about is this void reflecting in his gaze, his expressionless profile that shouldn't have been. He should have express his disdain for her, tell her to step back, not to come any closer to him. She complied with his requests of distance for weeks and it seemed the least she could do after what she tried to do to him. But this....

This is...

She needs his gaze; his furious, cold, shifty eyes... something, anything in his gaze. Anything but this void!

It's—

He's—

He can't be—

He can't do this to her!

"No, no, no, no, no, no!" she cries aggressively, punching him to the shoulder, might be the broken one - she doesn't give a damn. "Come back! Come back, you bastard! I don't deserve this!"

She doesn't deserve this sacrifice, whatever it is - because, to be honest, Chloe is unable to explain how the hell she got out of the tank, how she is still breathing and how he no longer is, how the hell Lucifer erased her death in a flash... Can't be, can it?

God, this is—

It's a nightmare. A nightmare of Light.

-xXx-

"Chloe?"

Her tearful face lifts from Lucifer's crumpled sleeve.

Amenadiel's face expresses so many things in such a short timing. Time... He can control time, can't he? She heard about it, Lucifer told her. There are surprise, confusion, growing fear that supplants other emotions.

"Luci...." he whispers, kneeling beside his brother.
"He's…" the Detective sobs without moving away from him, not letting go of the fabric of his jacket. "He's d—"

"He's alive," Amenadiel cuts her off, relieved.

Chloe shakes her head sharply. Amenadiel places a comforting hand on her shoulder, which is crossed with tremors. He looks for her shifting eyes. If he is surprised by her glowing appearance, he doesn't tell.

"Lucifer's alive, Chloe. He is, believe him."

"B-But, he's…" she keeps denying.

"He's not at his best, I'll give you that; but he's still breathing."

She shakes her head again, weaker movement of denial though; her nails digging into the fabric. "N-no. I checked his p-pulse, I—"

"I feel more things than you do," explains Amenadiel.

She frowns, clumsily wiping a luminous tear on her shimmering cheek. "You felt th-... that we were—?"

"I heard you, actually."

"Me? How?"

"I can't explain it myself. But now that I see you, I-"

He stops, shaking his head with deep concern in his eyes; he looks at his young brother's body, still, too much still. His concern grows deeper in his gaze than when he appeared from nowhere. He heard her, and…. Did he fly to them, to the origin of whatever he heard from her, what—?

What did she do, exactly?

She can't recall much; the last seconds - or minutes, how can she tell? - have been nothing more than a torment of words, of hysterical sobbing and supplications on the Devil's body. But it isn't; he isn't dead.

Lucifer didn't die.

He didn't.

"Oh Luci, what have you done?" deplots Amenadiel.

Chloe fixes her gaze on him, her breathing speeding up in her chest.

"What? What did he do? What did he do?! Is it him who d—" she looks at her glimmering hands, his wings that turned grey, like his face and skin - life off from him. "What did he do?!"

The light grows around her, exuding from her skin, running over Lucifer's suit, over Amenadiel's afflicted expression. The latter backs away and lifts his hands in front of him. Opening his mouth, he turns to the distant sounds of sirens, distant enough of the docks.

Turning to the Detective, he says hastily; "I don't know, but I might have a lead. Right now, we… we have to go."
Go?

"Going w-where?"

She hears the sirens approaching.

Good.

Good, good.

"We can't," she refuses, shaking her head. "They're- They're gonna help him. They're….

She feverishly strokes Lucifer's black hair.

"He- Lucifer needs help, he needs to see a doc!"

"Look at him, Chloe. Look at you! Humans wouldn't understand, they can't help him!"

Chloe doesn't understand anything, it's true. She never understood anything, never and even less now that she was shining like the sun right in the middle of the docks, now that the Devil can be mistaken with the stone beneath him.

She doesn't understand.

She lets Amenadiel doing whatever he wants, watching him take his brother in his arms and lift him up as if he weighed nothing, as if his wings weighed less than that. She stays on her knees, in the same daze, sitting on the same spot where she cried on her partner's dead body. Bright and ignorant in the dark.

"Come with me!" Amenadiel presses her, Lucifer carried through his shoulder, his arms hanging towards her.

She touches his fingers with hers; they're so cold....

Or maybe that's her who's burning hot?

*Like a match....*

Chloe frowns, lowering her hand quickly, worried about hurting Lucifer deeper than she's already done.

"To go where? You—" she looks around, confused. "Did you drive over here?"

"Not really."

Oh. So, he did fly, didn't he? Of course, he did. That's how he managed to find them so fast; in addition to… to….

"Come on, we can't stay here!"

Probably. However, Chloe persist to refuse; taking a few steps back after getting up. "I can't, I-I…." she takes a deep, shaky breath. "I make him vulnerable, he... I just should—"

Actually, she has no idea about what she should or shouldn't do. As a detective, she should stay here; find a story being close enough to the truth that will satisfy the cops investigating on their case, something that will suit to mankind's perception of truth. She can't let these men, these so-
called servants of God, walk away from this. She has to punish them, like Lucifer would do. But—

But she's *fucking sparkling!*

How is she supposed to explain this, hm?

"I know," answers Amenadiel. "But I can't leave you here, not like this. Plus, I…"

He stares at her, adjusting the Devil's dead weight on his shoulder with a grunt of discomfort.
"Plus, I'm not sure that staying away from him will help this time."

"What do you mean?"

He presents her his hand when flashing lights start to appear a little further away. These are too close to think of going home on her own, now.

"The explanations can wait. Come with me, Chloe!"

She takes one last worried look at Lucifer, at his hand hanging towards the ground, his brother's hand before her, and she finally takes it.

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'Tbe

'Self-actualization'

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Chapter End Notes

Exciting, isn't it? (what? Angst IS exciting, yes!)
Okay, maybe not so much with all these cliffhangers but, y'know... (shrugging) That's how I work.

Speaking of 'work', I'm trying an old approach for my writing (most for the french part - but I'm trying to apply it with some short fanfictions in English). Writing one project at a time, but publishing whenever I want to. It worked pretty well so far, let's hope it continues this way :) I do!
So, I'm gonna translate the two last chapters in the next weeks. X)

Thanks for reading!
See you soon!
Her feet touch the ground before Chloe realizes she must stand on it. Her knees are bowed down under the weight of her body and her hands touch the ground as well. She stares at the dark and smooth material under her palms that welcomes every reflection of Light in its heart, it spreads the Light further than its source.

Chloe is the source.

Panting heavily, she looks around her; the piano, the bar, the balcony behind her.

The penthouse.

It's been a while since her last visit, since....

"You're all right?"

She lifts her head, still sitting on the ground, and meets Amenadiel's gaze, still carrying Lucifer's 'faded' weight across his shoulder. Lucifer's wings rub against the floor, almost touching one of the Detective's hands. By doing so, some feathers seem to regain their former brightness. She hadn't seen Amenadiel's wings, nor even seen him move after grabbing his hand in the docks.

She had just seen....

She can't tell.

She had seen things, things that no one was supposed to see; that no one could describe, not on a human sight. She had seen.

She had seen....

Seen.

Seen.

The next thing Chloe knows is the lean contents of her stomach dirting the floor of the penthouse. For what Amenadiel doesn't judge her too harshly, Lucifer would have. If he had been able to do so. But he isn't, is he?
At least, she hasn't thrown up Light.

More Light or less of it, the situation remains unbelievable, unmanageable for her weak human senses.

She spreads Light, she had flown, she had seen things...

Unmanageable, indeed.

"Chloe?" Amenadiel sounds worried.

She rises a trembling hand towards him, towards his voice and the sound of his footsteps; wiping with the same hand what remains of her unappealing management of the situation in the corner of her mouth.

"I'm f'ne... I'm fine. I-I just hit my head before... before 'this'."

She had almost forgotten her concussion.

Chloe freezes. How can we forget such a thing? The concussion reminds of you, it's the principle of pain; there when you least expects it, not the other way around.

Panic-stricken, she starts to palpate every inch of her previously injured head, which had also been checked by Lucifer's precise touch. She looks at her fingers, panic growing in her heartbeats and breathing when she sees nothing but her skin, the absence of pain. Everywhere.

She is no longer in pain.

There's no more pain, no more pain, no more...

"—Concussion," she says aloud. "I... I'm fine?"

She said the last word with such disbelief that her voice flinches. She meets Amenadiel's gaze.

"H-How is this possible?"

Instead of giving her an answer, he points his chin towards the bathroom; already heading there without waiting for her, "We have to warm him up, and fast!"

"Warm him up?" Chloe whispers, looking at her hands again; colored with light, not with blood.

Her deep concern for Lucifer leads her to get back on her feets, shaking, feeling utterly uncomfortable in this known place. She knows it since the beginning of their partnership. Betrayal, misjudgment, bad management change many things. They changed the piano; it's dusty, longing to be used, to play a few notes in the cold atmosphere around.

Cold. Warming up.

Warming Lucifer up...

Lucifer.

Chloe reaches the bathroom doorway when Amenadiel had already put his burden down inside. She's frozen at the door, looking longer than necessary at Lucifer's body, partially hidden by his brother's imposing stature who's busy taking his shoes off. His head leaning against the ceramic, slipping on one side or the other with the angel's quick gestures. From one side, she can see his
eyes; opened, inexpressive... dead, one might think.

She did.

He's not dead. He's not....

How? Why? What's going on with him, then?

Chloe isn't crazy; she hadn't felt anything, nor pulse, neither breath between his lips that turned grey with this fake deathly grip on them.

"H-How—" she stammers as her trembling fingers squeezes the doorframe, not taking her eyes off Lucifer; whichever side he is. "What's wrong with him?"

Amenadiel throws the first designer shoe near her, under the sink. He pushes the other left a little further away, near the chest of drawers filled with towels and shampoos that she suspects to be more expensive than his Louboutins thrown on the floor.

"Help me to strip him, I'll explain later. There's no time to lose!"

Right.

Her questions can wait.

As for timing, Chloe's isn't the best. She had waited too long for some of her questions, doesn't wait enough for some others... she hadn't asked the right questions to the right people lately.

It's the last straw for a detective, isn't it?

She therefore does as he asked, well-aware - although, always too late - that her questions can wait, that she and this strange Light within her spreading in the bathroom can be postpone until later. Much later.

Lucifer's shower is big enough to... to get in there too many naked people she dares to count.

Lucifer's shower, indeed.

Chloe sits down beside him, hesitating briefly before unbuttoning the buttons of his shirt, one after the other. Her skin touches his from time to time, his is cold and hard as a rock. 'As a rock', indeed. It's like she's touching some rocky reproduction of her partner, like a sculpture, strangely malleable - as much as any human body can be.

Human.

He's not human; he's not dead.

When her hands reach the last button, she hurries to get him rid of the top of his clothes, pulling the fabric along his arms, keeping his shoulders away from the wall. Brushing his lower back with her hand, right under his wings folded in an odd angle - which can't be comfortable - Chloe freezes.

"What is it?" asks Amenadiel, pulling his pants up to his ankles, Lucifer's body slipping from a few inches towards the floor.

Chloe keeps quiet, staring at Lucifer's face.

He moved. A shiver, right where she moved her palm, between his shoulder blades.
She shakes her head. "Nothing. I thought that... I thought I felt him move."

"That's what I thought," sighs Amenadiel, Chloe turning to him.

"What you thought?"

"You must stay close to him, as close as you can be," he continues, always in a hurry, helping her to remove the rest of his shirt.

She assists him as best she can, her best is quite low given the turmoil of her thoughts.

"But I make him vulnerable," she repeats feebly.

"Usually, yes. But this isn't a usual situation."

Usual?

What really is? What can an angel mean by 'usual'? His isn't hers, hers must be ridiculous, insignificant. It's not; it isn't *usual!* Who... *who* can claim to make the Devil vulnerable?

Who can claim to have betrayed him?

"How could you do this to me? To me?!"

Lost there in her internal turmoil, Chloe doesn't even have the presence of mind to avert her gaze when Amenadiel removes his brother's last clothing barrier. Barrier... Lucifer would certainly call it an 'invitation'.

But not for her, not anymore.

It's too late for that.

"Why wouldn't it be?" she asks; finally looking away, too late, again.

"Strictly speaking, he's not 'injured', that's why. Not like you, humans, can be. It's complicated."

Amenadiel leads her outside the shower, then turning the faucet on. Again with water. Although, this one is at much more bearable temperatures than the one that had almost killed her earlier in the tank. It's even boiling hot, suffocating steam and heat quickly becoming messengers of the infernal rain shower.

"It's always been with him," she whispers.

They quietly watch the water pouring continuously over the Devil's slumped body; grey, still and seemingly indifferent to the heat and the deluge falling on his skin.

"This is gonna help him, you're sure?" Chloe finally asks.

"It can't makes him any more harm."

She nods, crushing her hands. "He's not gonna die, is he?"

"Let's hope not," sighs Amenadiel, rubbing his already sweaty forehead. The heat is unbearable for him - angel or not.

"Let's hope not?" the Detective pulls a face. "You said you knew what h—"
"I said that I 'might' have a lead about what happened," he replies calmly.

This is his brother who's lying there, on the floor of the shower stall, sprayed of water over and over again. This is his brother he hopes that he won't die?! How isn't he panicking?! Now she understands why Lucifer despises his siblings so much, for the little they seem to care about him for thousands of years....

"You wanna play semantics now, really?!

"I'm not—"

He sighs, shaking his head. "Come, we should talk outside."

"You also said I should stay close to him," Chloe reminds him in a trembling voice.

Her nails scratch the fragile skin of her palms, aware of her nervousness; as much as this strange light seems to be. It steeps the whole bathroom, to such an extent that she can no longer see Amenadiel.

The latter looks at her, his gaze then lingers towards his brother who's still not showing a slight sign of life.

He's alive.

Amenadiel says he is, but.... can she believe him? After all, it's not the first time she sees a victim's relative reacting this way. What she first thought as indifference might be denial.

But she felt him move.

She can't have imagined this, can she?

"I don't think he'll risk much with one or two meters of distance between you two," Amenadiel assumes. "Also, the boiling water should... stabilize him. I hope so."

Chloe stares blankly at Lucifer for a long time, the light waxing and waning from time to time until she agrees to follow his brother's seeming denial in another room; "Okay. Fine...."

As for her, she can't deny what is happening to her any longer. She's shining, hard to miss that.

-xXx-

They go in the bedroom, letting the door of the bathroom ajar, from which a steaming cloud frequently comes out at ground level. Chloe takes a deep breath once she's out, only then informed that she was holding her breath all along. She quickly feels nauseous, light-headed.

She doesn't complain about Amenadiel's support, letting him guid her to Lucifer's bed without a word. The sheets are cold under her hands, perfectly put on. There is no trace of their owner's sleepy movements, as long as his sleep can be, just the same layer of dust she saw on the piano and that now sticks to her sweaty palms.

She rubs her hands on her jeans, taking another deep breath; her empty stare towards the living room.
The shock, she guesses.

The adrenaline did its work and, as luminous as she can be, her body remains relatively human in its reactions. Soon she would tremble like a leaf.

She already is; she has never stopped shaking.

Her frantic heartbeats echo through her ears. She doesn't hear Amenadiel leaving, but she sees him coming back with a glass of alcohol. Chloe takes it without hesitation, nearly spilling half of it on her and on the dusty sheets before she drinks down what's left in one go. She's not thirsty, not her; her body, her mind are. They look for an escape, something to hold on to while this mad situation is drying her up from the inside.

She almost died.

She's shining and Lucifer...

Lucifer is in a disturbing state, to say the least.

This is her fault.

"Thank you," she says once the glass is empty, wiping her trembling lips with the back of her hand.

The light shines at eye level and she stops her hand halfway. "What's happening to me?"

With these whispered words, her gaze finds Amenadiel who's standing before her.

"It's... this is quite unexpected."

"A glowing human, really?" retorts Chloe, lowering her hand. "Is't... is it me who put Lucifer in this state?"

"No. I think that Lucifer... well..." Amenadiel hesitates, looking in turn at the Detective and the half-opened bathroom door.

"What? Lucifer 'what', Amenadiel?"

"He- It looks like he gave you most of his Light."

Chloe stares at him, speechless.

His Light? No, no... no. She can't have his Li—

"Can't be," she blurts, shaking her head.

"I need you to tell me everything you remember before I found you on the docks, Chloe," continues Amenadiel, not caring much about her answer.

So she told him everything; everything she could remember in the details. She told how she had met Lucifer in the underground parking lot of the precinct, how she had been surprised to see him there while he had told her he got a text from her earlier, about some urgent matter. She didn't tell about her betrayal to Amenadiel; what would have been the point to describe her more guilty than she already feels at the moment? Amenadiel should know she is. God knows everything; why not His children?
"It's give Him too much credits, Detective. If He knew everything I've done since I arrived here, He would have taken measures against me. And if He did know…. Well, that's even worse," Lucifer once told her while she asked him about it.

Worse.

She did know. She always knew who he was and that's even worse.

She is no better than God. But she had been made at His image, hadn't she?

She told when they regained consciousness in the huge tank; when the water had engulfed everything, when it almost engulfed her for good. As for the rest… except when she had woken up on the dock, free and glowing in the night, she can't remember much. Only that she was breathing, that Lucifer wasn't.

Because she took his *Light* from him?

How? She—

"I'm only vulnerable when I'm close to you."

Was that it? Was it all about this vulnerability thing between us?

Once she told everything to Amenadiel, Chloe looks at him. Amenadiel is now sitting with her on the Devil's bed. She hoped to find anything else but deep concern on his face; hope, a miracle response to what was happening to her, to Lucifer. She finds none of this.

Only a growing confusion that grows hers as well, in the worst possible way.

"I can't... I can't have what you said, Amenadiel. Lucifer's… he's— I'm human, that can't be right!"

"What you are is less important than what he is."

"The Devil?" she says, puzzled.

But Amenadiel shakes his head, then looking towards the bathroom. He had checked Lucifer's condition several times over a few minutes. His 'lead' seems to be nothing more than that, a vague lead leading to nowhere. Leaving Lucifer alone in there is incredibly difficult for Chloe, tired of explaining facts, tired of waiting for explanations that don't seem to be able to help Lucifer getting better, nor to help her coming back to what she was before. No, she still is.

Before and after doesn't matter.

She is she; Chloe Decker, a detective of the L.A.P.D. Just a bit... shimmering because of the circumstances.

"Lucifer was and is an angel above all, Chloe. I know he convinced himself otherwise, but.... what he may think of himself doesn't change who he really is."

*Who he really is.*

"And what does his 'true self' have to do with this?"

"Did he explain to you the inherent functioning of Hell, the Silver City? Why does a person fall into one or rise to the other?" Amenadiel asks her, joining his hands together.
"Just how criminals are punished down there, with these… 'hell loops'?"

He nods. "You have to understand that this unfortunate fate only depends on you in the end."

"On us, you say?" repeats Chloe, lost.

"Yes; your destiny has always been in your hands, during your time on Earth and beyond. God - my Father - has conceived you in such a way that your perception of yourself, more than your actions, is the sole decision-making of your destination after death."

Chloe tries to wrap her mind around this information, frowning.

"That's— It's... so, w-we... our…" she stammers, thinking aloud; at least trying to.

This is too much to handle.

"Your guilt can lead you to Hell. Of course, it's all about proportion. I just wanted to explain the quite 'literal' impact of your psychological perceptions on your body, on your soul."

"But what does it have to do with Lucifer? I'm not following you…"

"I'm coming to that, don't worry. The fact is that we, angels, aren't so different from you about this. Linda interprets it like 'self-actualization', sort of. Like a kind of upgrades of our physical and mental abilities.

"I don't—"

Amenadiel quickly interrupts her, aware that he would have to give her further explanations. He turns to her, facing her and explaining with comforting gestures and looks; "I lost my wings and powers for a few months; do you know why?"

She doesn't.

She shakes her head.

"Because I no longer 'felt' worthy! Lucifer got this face because he saw himself as a monster after the Rebellion, he got it back after he killed Cain - for the same reasons that would lead you to Hell or not; guilt. And now...."

Chloe looks down her hands, the light that glows beneath her skin, that follows her thoughts, her fears.

"Now I have his Light because...." she continues, pensive.

"I think that Lucifer acted impulsively here," Amenadiel thinks aloud, standing up again, pacing back and forth in front of her.

"Impulsively," she repeats, swallowing dryly.

"He might have feared that y—"

"He shouldn't have."

Amenadiel stops talking, his steps stop beating the floor, stop beating the guilt deeper within her. Guilt; so she would go to Hell for so little. All you need is... feelings, really? She thought she'd been condemned for actions, but - one or the other - she would end up there.
Oh yes, she does feel guilty.

Oh yes, she's drowning with many feelings.

She's drowning.

Lucifer should have let her drown herself with water, not with feelings.

"Because I'm TERRIFIED!"

Damn right she is.

"Chloe…"

For any answer, she shakes her head; slowly at first, faster the next. She inhales noisily through her nose, hunching her shoulders which endure slight tremors; her fingernails scratching her thighs but don't help much.

Nothing does.

She's terrified. Again.

Always, all the time.

"He has to take it back...." she whispers shakily, her eyes shut.

Shut or not, she can't run away from the power that comes from her. It goes in, goes out, spreads everywhere around; like shock waves.

"Chloe, calm do—"

"Make him take it back, make him, make kim…" she repeats over and over again.

"Chloe, you have t—"

"MAKE HIM TAKE IT BACK!" she shouts as she jumps up.

Her tears turn to nothing with this Light that isn't hers, that never should be. The same happens for the window pane behind her, on the other side of Lucifer's bed. It doesn't have time to shatter, it squeals for a moment before being blown out of existence. Chloe is sure of it, no need to turn around, no need to see, see that the Devil's impulsive actions are hers now.

Wherever this Light strikes; she's there as well.

She's everywhere. And nowhere.

Fresh breeze runs through her hair, she takes another deep breath, her eyes wide open, a bit red from tears that are no longer allowed to flow on her skin. Her fists clenched tight, she can't avert her gaze from Amenadiel's - frozen by stupor, caution, standing between her and the bathroom door.

"Make him- Make him take it back, please, I-I…" she sobs, shaking from head to toe. "I can't... not me. Not me!"

He gulps. "Chloe," he says after clearing his throat. "I know it's a lot to take in; I understand. Humans—"
"No, no!" she yelps, backing up to the entrance of the bedroom. "You don't!"

The lighting of the living room grow, vibrate in the air, some of them burst into a rain of stars on the dark floor of the penthouse. She feels that too, she feels too many things.

She shouldn't.

She shouldn't....

"I don't want his 'self-actualization' in me! I don't deserve it, I don't deserve this... sacrifice! Not after what I almost did to him!"

"How could you do this to me?"

How could he have done this to her?

"What are you talking about?" wonders Amenadiel, his brow furrowed with perplexity

She looks at him; is it some kind of trap, of test or...? He must know, him like all the other angels, like God. Why would Lucifer keep such a thing for himself? She blinks; more than she really needs to, not averting her gaze of this 'self-actualized angel' who stands before her.

"Y-you don't know?" Chloe pants, surprised.

Amenadiel's puzzled expression reaches new heights. "I don't know 'what'?"

And, for her, it is like God Himself just spoke.

Her guilt reaches new heights as well, but....

As much as Amenadiel as convinced himself, her next words alone are worth a one-way trip to Hell.

-xXx-

"You're not talking," says Chloe.

That's an understatement.

Amenadiel hasn't opened his mouth once, from the beginning of her confession to the appalling limit of her guilt. She's guilty, as much as she 'feels' guilty, for having plotted against the Devil. Against Lucifer, his brother.

God's son.

The Fallen one, Ruler of the Underworld, Beelzebub, Prince of Lies....

"Light, or Truth Bringer... depends on wh'ch interpretation...."  

And mankind chose the worst version of it.

Typically 'human' to do so; Chloe just realizes that, repeating her version over the last four months,
in Europe and then here in Los Angeles.

She sighs heavily, the leather of the couch squeaking under her thighs. Her gaze lingers towards the half-opened bathroom door.

Truth.

"I always tell you the truth!"

"No, you tell me your truth."

Is there a real difference?

She told herself hers, Kinley's truth.

"Is it some kind of... punishment?" she finally wonders, without taking her eyes off the door. "Because I tried to kill an angel?"

"You didn't, Chloe."

"But I was about to. At some point."

Of course, Kinley never really told her what was in that vial, nor how it would have affected Lucifer's state, but... even she can't convince herself to be that ignorant. It can't be insignificant, it never has been; just for the act itself - just for the thought of the act.

She turns to Amenadiel; tired, so tired.

"This is bad enough, reprehensible enough."

"Well, if that's all it takes to endure God's wrath, I wouldn't be sitting right here, talking to you," he replies with a slight smile.

"What do you mean?"

Amenadiel sighs in turn. He leans towards the coffee table, pouring them some alcohol while explaining to her; "I know that mankind is convinced to know the truth about the Devil by divine messengers of sorts. And it's not a lie either, not really. You learned one truth among others, got this very specific vision of Lucifer from us."

He takes a long sip before talking again; "My siblings and I aren't... in the best terms with him since the Rebellion. We were a united, happy family - I like to think so, anyway. And then...."

"Then we arrived," finishes Chloe with a heavy heart.

Amenadiel nods.

"You were part of the problem, but you aren't the only ones responsible for what followed next. Anyway, no one in our family has been the same since then. Lucifer dealt with the changes like... well, like he always did, you know?"

They share a knowing, shy look.

She might know, indeed.

"I 'darkened' his reputation, much more than it already was," he admits with bitterness in his voice,
or was it the alcohol he just drank?

He puts his empty glass on the table while Chloe has barely touched hers, turning it over and over again between her shimmering hands. It's like she's holding liquid gold on her lap.

"We were brothers. We were hurt, saddened by his selfish actions, it seemed selfish at the time. From sadness came anger, hatred and... slander. This is our fault - mine, those of my siblings as well as God's. This is our fault if you, humans, see Lucifer as Evil Incarnate."

"But I do know him," she whispers, her fingers quivering around the glass. "I-I knew him better than anyone, better than Kinley. I should have realized sooner... I should have predicted that other fanatics would come after Lucifer—"

This is her fault. It is her one and only fault if they had been trapped in the tank, if other fanatical believers had crossed the Devil's path and had started to think they were God's soldiers while they were just insane. She caused all this; this sacrifice, this divine punishment... whatever its name is. One or the other, it's a burden.

Amenadiel's hand wraps hers.

"What's done is done, Chloe. You can't change that," he comforts her. "And whether you did betray him or not, as you say... I bet it wouldn't have change anything here. You know how stubborn Lucifer can be!"

Yes.

Yeah, it just took her a long time to figure it out.

"And I would do it again. And again. Don't you know that, Detective?"

Unfortunately no.

But her ignorance isn't her main priority, right now. Right now, her main priority is lying in steam and boiling water, a few marble steps away from here.

She nods, pinching her lips. "But he needs it, right? This Light... it's part of him, isn't it?"

"It is."

"Why hasn't he taken it back since? What do we have to do to—?"

"To be honest, I thought that your proximity would solve the problem on its own," sighs the angel as he shakes his head. "But the shock has been violent for both of you," he adds hopefully as he straightens up. "It may just be a matter of time."

It wasn't.

---

'The eggs'
Chapter End Notes

Last chapter coming as soon as I can ;)
Thanks for reading so far!
The end is here!
Too fast? Well, it's not like I do this every day, right? X) Enjoy yourself!

Thanks for all the bookmarks, kudos and comments on the previous chapters.
Let's go!
Chop chop!

The eggs

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

THE EGGS

4

Time passes; minutes stretch out in hours, hours extending until dawn which extends its pink, orangey sunrays over the whole town. Time passes, it just passes; and the effects of this change-over don't. They don't even fade.

Fading.

It's one of Chloe's mean fears since an hour now; that Lucifer would eventually 'fade' in case that he wouldn't take back what's his in time. Amenadiel assumed that a part of this divine light, a tiny and essential part of it, remained within him, that it keeps him alive. But he still hasn't moved, nor spoken, he still hasn't freed himself from this 'rocky' appearance which seems getting worse. Amenadiel also comforted her about this.

But she can feel it.

She had felt many things since her talk with the angel; she keeps blaming her imagination - or shock, why wouldn't it be? - for some of them, like the time when a sphere the size of a baseball had appeared in the middle of her palm. It had disappeared the next, just when Amenadiel had called her from Lucifer's bedroom.

Then, there's this one thing that's very different from the others.

She can't relate it to anything other than the truth, the one that Amenadiel was putting aside with more or less ridiculous attempts to bring Lucifer back to who he is, with comforting words that no longer work on her, nor on himself. They fill the void, their guilty silence.

She feels this truth deep within her; more than an instinct, more than the one which always helped her with her work, with her relationships - more than a sixth sense, it's the seventh. The seventh sense, given to angels, forgotten by mankind; or taken back from the other five or six human senses, who knows? Amenadiel said he feels more things than she does on the docks, she also feels more, with this light that doesn't belong to her, this sense of truth that she can almost describes as...
The Lightbringer, 'Truth' Bringer; Lucifer Morningstar.

Chloe feels the truth, she feels that - more than being its bearer - he is its guardian. They complement, destroy, heal each other's wounds. Lucifer's Light had healed his wounds, kept the greedy hordes of Hell away from him for weeks and weeks until he could stand on his legs again, until he could be strong enough for both of them, so that it could rely on him; until he could take care of it as well.

How can she know this?

She sees it, feels it. It's like an open door to Lucifer's mind, to pieces of memory that isn't hers, that Lucifer gave her. So she does know; she knows there's no use, she knows Amenadiel can't bring him back. These heating lamps gathered around the bed, these warming blankets forming a rounded mountain on him to such an extent that she can barely see the top of his skull from the bedroom's entrance; it's pointless. He needs more, he needs it; his Light, his truth - his 'true' self.

She did try to give it back to him, so many times during so many hours. Her appearance can testify that, her damp hair brushing her skin under the collar of her shirt - one of Lucifer's - too big for her, that brushes the top of her breasts as well. She did sit beside him for a long time, touching him, putting her hands full of lights and gold wherever she could - on his arm, his chest, his hand... everywhere.

"Stay with me, okay?" she did whisper against his grey skin, where a torrential multitude was falling, where the reflections of this Light was leaping it.

Where he didn't take it back.

She did stay as close to him as she could be, as long as she could, she did touch him over and over again... and again. But the Light remained where it hadn't its place, it leaped along his skin, moved under hers, not crossing one to join the other, not once. She started to fear the 'irreversible' side of the situation, to fear the 'fading' side of it. This is how Amenadiel came to leave the penthouse in search of answers, a solution, a remedy perhaps? The comforting words, his certainties about Lucifer's quick recovery ran dry, burned to nothing under this true Light from which she can't escape either.

Chloe has been left alone in the penthouse, watching over Lucifer, the Devil turned to 'stone', turned to nothing. All this for a part of this worthy bearer that turned against him... It reminds her of the Greek myth of Medusa, a vague memory from her adolescence, from an ephemeral interest in worldwile tales and legends. This witch who turned into stone, her power - her curse, actually - turned against her by nothing more common than a shield.

Chloe is certainly not a shield, but she is 'common', from the highest point of view, from angels'. She's a weapon, the Devil's weak spot - a shield for human fanatics at God's service.

God, what a bunch of stupid people....

She is.

With this absolute truth, she can't pretend to miss her failure to understand Lucifer, to make him understand something essential. She who saw all these fragments of life, experience, of efforts t—

She sighs, shaking her head before she takes a look towards his bed again. Coming closer after a few seconds of thinking, she sits on the edge of the mattress, where Lucifer left her enough space.
She would never dare to touch his saggy wings outside the bed, their ends almost reach the opposite wall and block the door leading to the bathroom. Chloe has no choice but to sit up to his face, his half-opened eyes staring blankly at her folded thigh.

She gently pulls his hand out of the blankets - cold, grey; more grayish than even - and starts to draw with her fingers some imaginary lines on it, running her fingers through his palm, Light following her gestures. It floats right above his hand, opened but nevertheless impermeable to any sort of penetration.

Penetration....

Lucifer would have snorted, for sure.

Chloe smiles. "Being penetrated by a woman didn't seem to bother you before, did it?" she laughs unhappily as she recalls this moment.

"Happy birthday, Detective."

She squeezes his hand into hers, exhaling noisily all these raging emotions through her nose; although guilt stays right where it is, between her lungs, in her throat, at the corner of her eyes.

"I should listen to Amenadiel, shouldn't I?" she whispers, chewing her lower lip. "I shouldn't 'feel guilty' for having showing human fear... like he says."

Chloe looks at his inexpressive face partly hidden in the pillow.

"But I do. I feel guilty... not for being afraid, no. No, I feel guilty for making you think I was afraid of you. I'm scared, I'm terrified, it's true - and you've built an absolute truth around a part of mine. You just heard what you wanted to hear from me and I...."

She lets out a trembling sigh.

"I hadn't told you what you need to hear, when you needed to hear it."

She shrugs.

"It's now or never, I guess. Plus... you can't cut me off nor jump to conclusions in your state, can you?"

Can he hear her? Isn't it ridiculous to talk to herself like she is? After all, nothing tells her that Lucifer is that conscious, nor if he does hear a word of what she's saying. He isn't dead, he's not really here with her either. But as she has just said; it's now or never.

What else does she have to lose but a few minutes of anxious silence?

The silence answers her. "I'll take that as a yes."

She draws other imaginary lines along his palm, from his thumb to his ring finger, to the edges of his ring. From the metal to his skin, there's almost no difference.

"So..." she continues after clearing her throat. "I-I... What I told you that night is true; I got away to process things, process what I finally realized. 'It's about time!' right?" adds Chloe with a nervous laugh as she pulls away a strand of hair that regularly teased the corner of her lips. "And...."

She shakes her head, recalling another familiar face; red, some reflection she thought she had imagined in a factory.
"What are you?"

"I freaked out," she admits. "And it had nothing to do with you - Lucifer Morningstar - who was depicted as the embodiment of Evil, no. It was- I did because…"

Her voice shakes slightly and she takes a deep breath that quickly turns into a half-frustrated, half-muffled exclamation between her lips. She squeezes his hand hard, not caring much about the growing Light between their palms.

"—Because, despite everything, even after I learned… even after I became fully aware of who you were, I-I... I didn't care."

Chloe no longer looks at Lucifer, she doesn't look at their joined hands, she looks straight ahead; towards the living room, where she hadn't known how to say things, where - even after she had almost done something terrible - she couldn't tell the truth as it was. She's still unable to cry, to express anything but words that suffocate her from the inside. Yet another of the inevitable tricks of the Absolute Truth, it seems. She can no longer elude, no longer hide behind raging emotions not to face her real feelings. Not like that night.

"And how am I - Chloe Decker, a nobody - supposed to deal with that?!"

"You're the Devil, a fallen angel, the so-called embodiment of Evil through mankind's history, through mankind's memory, through your siblings' and - from what I recently heard - even through your Father's who's the worst of them."

Chloe has feared God's wrath, she has a few hours ago, but now... now that she can longer elude the truth; she can no longer hide behind this either. She can only go forwards, going willingly into the Hellish Flames, into an angel's Light who hadn't gotten unconditional love from his Father; as every child should have without having nothing else to do but being himself.

That's the whole question.

She loves Trixie, she has thought that God does love His children; but after what Amenadiel told her.... How could He stand by doing nothing while His son's name has been defiled for millennia?

"Even by knowing all this... it doesn't change a damn thing for me. Nothing could ever change my mind about you, Lucifer."

The Light wraps her in its embrace, as the bed, the mattress, warming blankets and lamps around. Only the words remain, only their hands, bound in this confession, stay.

"Just with this, I should have known that I had nothing to fear from you, but…. Back then, I just— I thought I fell into some kind of trap, that I let myself being trapped! I went to Rome to prove to myself once and for all that you weren't a problem, that everything was fine. That's when Kinley found me," she sighs.

Chloe closes her eyes, shaking her head.

"I let myself be trapped by his speech. As I told you, it felt like he understood what I was going through and I thought... I thought that if Frank knew, if he hadn't rejected you, maybe another priest could guide me through all this. All I needed to hear was that feeling 'well' around you wasn't bad. He showed himself like the virtuous soldier, but he was manipulating me, he was lying to me... from the beginning."
She runs her fingers over his palm; sometimes cold, sometimes burning hot - probably because of her, because of this Light of which she has no control. She shouldn't have any. All this happened because she wanted to control something that couldn't be. Because Lucifer thought- felt, as Amenadiel explained to her - that he had to prove her something.

But she knows. He also has to know.

"I don't know how I came to believe that sending you back to Hell could be the solution, I—"

She takes a deep breath after running her only free hand across her face.

"I have no excuse, no valid explanation for you, I-I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

What else could she say? What's done is done, she can't go backwards, she can't fix her mistake. That's the way it is. The trap is to stay frozen at the spot; keep walking around instead of walking away from it, to tolerate the situation instead of using it as a platform to something better, or something closer to the truth, at least.

"I am," she repeats, noticing - even with her eyes shut - that the Light has softened. "Afterwards, with time and many talks with you, I understood. I understood that you weren't a danger for me or anyone else, but... I was still thinking that I had to change you for... I dunno what for. I guess I wanted to change you - change how you were depicted in general - to turn my lo—"

She keeps quiet for a moment before saying; "... my liking for our partnership into something more acceptable. Stupid, right? This is stupid."

Chloe opens her eyes and lets them linger on the marble steps, on the living room; again.

"You asked me if I could accept you like this, if I ever could."

"Y-you have no idea h-how much I want to, I-I..."

"I..."

"I'm trying."

"The truth is that I could," she confesses. "That I always have; Lucifer, Devil, Angel, King of Evil... I lo- I like whoever you might be, whatever makes you who you are. I just needed some time, I needed—"

"The eggs?"

Chloe jumps and turns her head; her surprise meeting Lucifer's lively gaze, white-faced but rid of this grayish agony. His messy hair, the deep shadows under his eyes - that gleam of life she missed for hours - a tired smile he's struggling to keep.

He's here.

As white as the sheets beneath him, shining with Light, his Light that finally travels from one to the other, to its guardian. It sparkles longer around his wings, running along the last feathers, until it 'penetrates' him for good. She smiles.

She is she; guilty, human - she and his Light are no longer together, but will be in the truth. Forever.

"Well, I was about to say that 'I needed you'."
Lucifer arches an eyebrow, the only one she can see with his still partly hidden-face in the pillow and the warming blankets. He looks down towards his groin, noticing that he's naked under this large pile of blankets, under his partner's gaze.

"What a shame, given that's the best part of me," he says in a hoarse voice, exhausted from what he has just gone through, from the rocky death that has seized his soul. "You should know; you stripped me off, didn't you?"

She laughs, relieved to hear such remarks from him. "They're quite average; from what I've heard."

Lucifer's smile widens.

"Only at first sight, Detective."

They both laugh. The silence comes back rather quickly. Chloe doesn't try to break it right away, enjoying it for what it is, for their regular breathing, the life within their gaze, the slight movements of his wings at the other end of the bed.

And his hand.

Their hands together; true.

However, she is the first to speak. "I was afraid you'd leave me on my own, you know?"

"Well... I could hardly leave without first settling our scores, could I?" he replies.

"Right."

She doesn't ask him about it either. The answer is right here; he's speaking, he's alive. She's talking, alive as well. Nor does she ask him if he heard her all along, if he hear her true confession - she doesn't need to, neither asking him about his sudden recovery.

She knows, as she has known that just a touch, that just 'more time' wouldn't be enough to bring him back to her; she knows what Lucifer needed to come back, to take back what was his.

He needed the eggs.

Lucifer moves in his bed, then sighs. She stares at him, worried. He tries to move one of the many blankets towards the bed leg and glares at the heating lamps around him.

"You were right," he grumbles.

"About what?"

"It's too bloody hot in this five-stars hellhole."

"Right, sorry about that," she instantly apologizes and starts to sit up. "Amenadiel thought it could help you getting b—"

She keeps quiet, one leg out of bed. She suddenly feels light-headed and falls over the mattress.

"Detective?" asks Lucifer in her back.

His hand circles her trembling forearm. He's warm, when she's cold. What's happening to her? What now? She felt good the moment before, and now she...
"I'm fine. I think…" she reassures him. "I'm just... just 'burned out'?"

Really burned out.

She has never felt that way, like she would have wasted the whole contents of her internal batteries in one go. Lucifer's hand gently pulls her back towards him. She hears him move aside as many blankets as he can while keeping pulling her towards his naked body.

She doesn't struggle against him, although she can't help but wonder about his intend. "What are you doing?"

"I'm making some room for you in my personal hell," he simply answers.

The next thing she knows is that her back leans against his torso, that his arm is wrapped around her hip, that her hips are pressed against his—

"I-I…" she stammers, more concerned about not recalling how she came from sitting position to lie on the bed than about the proximity of her body with the Devil's average eggs. "I can turn off the lights—"

"Don't bother yourself, Detective."

"You said it was too hot."

"It is. I can manage for a few hours. As you can," he mutters.

Foreseeing her next protestations, he adds, his breath brushing her earlobe; "You need some rest. The Devil's full force is hard to handle, Detective; I'm impressed you haven't passed out already."

She smiles in his embrace.

"Don't flatter yourself. Besides, it was up to you to get it back."

"You have a point."

Silence settles around, peaceful torpor brought by one of Lucifer's wings that wraps them both in its shimmering embrace. Chloe looks sleepily at the bright white feathers resting on the sheets, not far from her fingers. She moves her hand towards it, barely touching them.

"Thank you," she says.

"Mh?" he huffs, on the verge of falling asleep. "Did you say something?"

She doesn't repeat her thanks, her smile widening on her tired face. Instead, she thinks over the docks, over the explosion seemingly caused by her partner's very literal caring for her well-being, over the spent hours, over all this time spent outside the world, outside its flawed truth.

Upgraded, self-actualized.

She frowns.

"How am I supposed to explain this to Dan? To Ella? To the Lieutenant?"

Lucifer's lips touch the back of her neck, she can feel them brushing her skin, turning into a devilish grin.
"What about…" he proposes in a drowsy but nevertheless amused intonation. "The Devil lit a match?"

The end

Chapter End Notes

I know, I could have written more.
But I like it this way; not too short, not too long. Just like I wanted it to be. :) We just need the eggs!

The beta-version will come shortly. In the meantime, I'm gonna switch with French fic for a while (prompt 'Sexist' on! Fi-na-lly!). I'll propose a vote soon, though with maybe new possibilities (like focusing 100% of a story like for this one). I'll see. If you have any propositions, please be my guest! ;)
I leave you here, 'burned out' but shimmering with deep satisfaction.

See u soon!

End Notes

Let a comment/kudo/bookmark if you're in ;)
Thanks for reading, as always :3

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!