A new player has entered the grand dance of Demons, Angels, and Reapers. Sebastian and his master, Ciel Phantomhive encounter an unknown variable after receiving cryptic clues from the Undertaker and a grim warning to tread carefully from an unusually serious Grell Sutcliff. Fascinated, Ciel and his companions try to puzzle out the mystery of the new "servant" that is Hadrian.
Prologue ~ Eternity Equals Therapy

Chapter Summary

Harry is the Master of Death.
A brief introspection from the now immortal wizard...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

I blinked.

That's how long it took for everyone that I knew and loved to die.

I watched as my loved ones withered away into nothing and the world moved on without paying any mind to my grief and confusion and hopeless, helpless, rage. A long time passed before I finally came to terms with my new reality. Being the Master of Death grants one with enough time to actually achieve such a thing. That... and a good dose of insanity followed by slight apathy, not to mention a pinch of overwhelming terror at the thought of being alonealonealone forever...

I need therapy.

I snort. Understatement of the millennia!

But in all honesty, there are only three possible paths I can see for my unending future. The first outcome is that I stay relatively sane and go about loving and losing until I snap. The second option is that I'll shut down and become some apathetic zombie, cursed to wander forever without rest or warmth. The last possibility is that, no matter what, I will go a little mad... or a lot depending on circumstances, time of day, etc, etc.

Currently, I am doing my best to blend futures one and two while trying to keep at bay number three for as long as possible.

Thus my desire for therapy. Yay.

So now I remain here, in a world that has forgotten me and all those I cherished.

And I fear what will become of me should I truly lose what little compassion and hope I have left.

Chapter End Notes

Hi all!
This is my first crossover! Hope y'all enjoy the ride!
Harry will be a bit OOC in this fic, but I really enjoy a strong, powerful, sassy Harry Potter. And I also adore the Master of Death trope!
Please share you thoughts, comments make my day and give me motivation! ; )
- Lightseed
~ Assimilation ~

Chapter Summary

Hadrian adjust to his new Realm and new titles as well as making some new acquaintances.

The day was overcast by blue-grey clouds from the rainstorm that had swept in late last night. Weak, watery sunlight poked through every now and then before being swallowed up again. Despite the threat of more rain, the day was overall pleasant for late autumn.

Brilliant eyes of deepest green peered out from beneath a dark cowl, following the movements of the passersby. No one noticed him, despite how inconspicuously unique he looked. He was dressed in a dark green silk shirt and tight-fitting black cotton pants. Black scaly boots made of a mythical fire-breathing creature graced his feet and over the shirt was a vest made of impenetrable green-grey snakeskin, a trophy from his earlier years. Completing the outfit was a beautiful silvery cloak. It shimmered like water at the slightest movement.

But no one noticed his uncommon appearance.

For no one saw. And that was how he intended it. Magic worked just as well, if not better here in this Realm than back in his former one.

Growing bored of people-watching the hooded figure slipped away from his spot upon a low brick wall and up onto the roof of a building. Stretching out below and beyond was London, in the Victorian Era to be exact. Perhaps that's why he felt as at home as he did here compared to what the Magical World was like back in his old Realm. That place never moved beyond the sixteenth century as far as technology... and some ideals were concerned.

Leaping gracefully from roof to roof the person smiled and let out a joyous laugh at the feeling of the wind whipping past his lithe form, the adrenaline and endorphins flooding his blood. It reminded him of flying.

He landed with a thud on the edge of a building overlooking a cobblestone road. Across the street was an ominous-looking funeral parlor with a sign above the door that read: 'Undertaker'.

"I wonder..." Is this where the rogue Reaper is hiding? Death did mention that he was a favorite of his. I should say hello before I explore any more of this world or before Death calls me in.

Harry ~

The interior of the shop is dark and holds an air of decay and mystery.

Ironically it soothes me, but being Death's Master will change a person I've come to discover. Coffins of all shapes and sizes litter the shop and odd macabre items line the shelves behind the counter. As I wander further in an eerie laugh rings out and a purple coffin's lid slowly begins to shift open.
"Hehehe! Welcome, would you like to try a coffin? I'm sure I could find one perfectly suited for you!" A slightly high-pitched voice giggles as the coffin opens fully, revealing a man with long silver hair and tophat.

I catch the gleam of yellow-green eyes beneath the long bangs that let me know exactly what this man is. Only Grim Reapers possess that shade of electric green.

I smile at the Reaper as he steps fully out of the coffin to assess me, dressed in long black robes with a silver sash.

"I'd try out a coffin if I could, but alas I do not have the qualifications to do so," I reply and inwardly cackle as the Undertaker freezes as he catches hold of my aura. My lips twitch into a faint smirk as I lean my hip against the counter and watch the rogue struggle to comprehend just who has walked into his shop.

"M-Master of Death?" Undertaker breathes.

I dip my head. "Indeed. I just arrived into this Dimension a few weeks ago via the lovely help of Death. He wanted me to get a chance to assimilate to this world before he asks me to take up my official role in the Grand Game."

"It is an honor to meet you, my Lord."

I wrinkle my nose at the title but don't say anything. Better to keep formalities till I know who I can call friend and foe. "Anyway, I was hoping I would get to meet you eventually. Death spoke quite fondly of you."

Undertaker's eyes widen minutely behind his bangs at my words, but I can tell he is flattered by the tiny smile curling at his lips. "How can I be of service, my Lord?" he questions with a curious tilt of his head.

"Would it be ok if I drop by from time to time in between missions? I've heard a lot of amusing things about you, and I'd like to get to know you better if that's alright that is?" I tack on the last hastily, hoping I'm not imposing.

It's been so long since I've interacted with anyone other than Death! Am I seriously going to screw up so soon?

Undertaker snickers at my flustered expression and gives his consent, causing me to subconsciously wilt in relief. "Would you care for some tea?"

"Please," I reply and make myself comfortable on a coffin lid as the Reaper bustles about gathering cups and preparing the beverages.

I end up staying for a little over an hour, getting a feel for my new acquaintance and him for me.

I end up enjoying myself and plan to come back to visit soon. Undertaker still seems nervous by my presence, but he warmed up a little by the end of our visit and did not seem opposed to me coming by in the future.

That gives me hope for my future in this new world.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Several months go by as I explore the world and learn of the other Immortals that share it.

I've not personally encountered any of the top three species Angels, Demons, and Reapers that
inhabit this Realm besides Undertaker, but I have felt their presences and heard fantastical stories from humans that have supposedly encountered them.

I can't help but be curious about the other Immortals. Perhaps I may even forge a relationship with some of them. Regardless if it is friendly or antagonistic the thrill of interacting with other undying beings sets my blood ablaze with excitement at the prospect.

After six months of exploration, Death bids me go and make myself known to the Shinigami Headquarters so I can start up a working relationship with the Director of one of the Divisions, one William T. Spears.

He is extremely formal and polite when we meet, hiding his nerves behind the adjusting of his glasses with his Scythe. I give him a smile and explain my reasons for being here and what my role is to be once my assimilation is complete.

William promises to help me any way he can.

During the next six months, I learn how the Shinigami operate and the role I will have as the Master Reaper.

I swear that the new moniker is almost as bad as the Boy-Who-Lived label! Everyone looking at me in awe and other such adoration nonsense! It's nice in small doses, I like to be respected as much as the next guy, but this seems a bit over the top!

I bet Death planned it that way, the jerk!

As the Master Reaper, I am charged with collecting the rare and world-impacting souls and judge where their eternity will be. And apparently, I can even kill other Immortals! That... explains why everybody is clamoring over themselves in awe/fear-induced worship. That's a fun little perk!

On the one year anniversary of my appearance in this world, I get my first mission from Death.

"Hello, Master." Death greets me, fondness in his voice.

"It has been a while, old friend. I've adjusted to this place pretty well I believe." I grin at the cloaked being as we stroll down the corridors of the Hall of Records.

"I am glad, Harry. I was a little worried, you know." Death murmurs and I can't help but feel grateful that at least one entity cares about me. If not for Death showing when he did I would have fallen into madness. That I am certain of.

"Thank you," I mutter and then scowl as a Reaper darts around the corner of one of the long shelves containing the Cinematic Records, Amazement glistening behind his glasses. I can hear him mumbling to himself about 'seeing the Master Reaper' and my ire at the stupid name is evoked. "I do have one complaint. Did you really feel the need to give me another stupid title?!!"

I can feel Death's smirk from the shadows of his cowl but he disinclines to answer.

A few moments of silence pass save for the click of my boots on the gleaming tiles. "So, are you here to tell what my first assignment will be?"

Death nods. "Yes. I need you to clear out a nest of low-level imp demons that have taken over a church in Wales."
I pause and give my colleague my most deadpan glare. "Cleaning? You know this reminds me of what Mrs. Weasley forced us to do back at Grimmauld Place, right? Can't one of the other Reapers handle this?"

Death laughs and places a bony hand on my shoulder. "I think you'll find a few surprises are in store for you with this little clean up job, Harry." I roll my eyes at that. "Just think of this as your trial run." The entity coaxes.

"Fine," I sigh as Death gives me a slip of paper with coordinates and basic details written upon it. "I'll head out now and get this over with," I announce after scanning the parchment.

"Thank you, Master."

I wave a hand nonchalantly in farewell. *How disappointing, and after all the build-up too.*

"By the way Master. After this, you will be able to choose your own Reaper Scythe!" Death calls after my retreating form. I glance over my shoulder in surprise and then allow a pleased smile to split my face. I had been wondering when I would get my own Scythe for a while! Apparently, this little mission will be Death's way of testing me. That... and probably a way to entice me to do well.

Shaking my head at the irony of getting the weapon *after* the battle I hurry away down the halls toward the exit.

*This should be educational.*

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Dusk is just settling across the countryside like a warm blanket by the time I reach my destination. I stand in front of a small dilapidated chapel, the windows broken and wood starting to rot from age. Its nestled in an area of small, gently sloping hillocks which I use as a vantage point to scope out the area before making my way toward the church entrance.

The atmosphere is heavy and the repugnant scent of old blood and bile reeks in the faint breeze. My hackles rise as several pairs of glowing otherworldly eyes gleam out of the dark doorway. Low rumbling growls and snarls greet my ears as one of the imps steps into the overgrown yard.

I grimace in disgust at the toad-like creature. It looks to be a cousin of the evil ministry toad from my past, Delores Umbridge. The demon shrieks in challenge and I unthinkingly bare my teeth in a hiss in response. The creature grunts in surprise and stumbles back a step, appearing to be confused.

It is only then that I realize that my canines have lengthened into fangs and my nails into wickedly sharp claws. *What the heck is this?!* I force myself not to panic as some latent power, seductive yet twisted, rises up to meet my Magical Core. *Damn it Death! Is this the freaking surprise you mentioned?! We are so having words when I get back to Headquarters!*

I am broken from my freak-out by the toad demon leaping forward, appearing to take my shock as an open invitation. The other demons, which had stayed back, for the most part, howled and charged as well.

"Time to get to work," I mutter and quicker than thought whip out the Elder Wander and send an explosion curse straight into the midst of the horde. The battle, if one could call it that, is quick and brutal. In no time at all, I am surrounded by toad-like corpses, the grass stained with thick black blood. The final demon is ended with a wordless wandless spell to the heart. But instead of the magic I am familiar with, the dark energy I felt earlier answers my call. It rips the imp in twine,
exposing the still-beating heart to the cool night air.

My jaw drops.

What. The. Hell!
~ A Three-Way Contradiction

Chapter Summary

Harry discovers some surprising new insights about himself and begins his new duties as the Master Reaper.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"DEATH!" I bellow, scattering low-ranking Reapers in my wake upon my furious arrival into Headquarters.

"Yes, Master?" Death queries as he materializes before me, a tinge of satisfaction coloring his tone.

"What the hell is this?" I demand, waving my talons in his hooded face. I await his answer with gritted teeth, which reminds me that I still have the bloody fangs too!

"Ah. Seems you are a Wendigo Demon. Huh... I would have pegged you for a Serpent affiliation given your Parseltongue gift." Death muses as he inspects the claws. "Ironic given how pure you still are..."

"And what exactly does being a... Wendigo Demon even mean!" I ask in a deceptively calm voice, a tight smile plastered on my lips. You better not give me some cryptic bullshit either! I add mentally.

Death, seeming to sense he is starting to approach thin ice makes the right call. "Well Master, you have unlocked the Demon characteristics that were gifted to you along with those of a Reaper and Angel. Basically, you have the powers of all three Immortal races and certain physical attributes and affiliations of each are connected to your being now."

"And why am I just now experiencing, much less, knowing about this?" I growl and Death actually shifts his weight back a bit at my dark tone. I probably look rabid with my bared fangs and the new tainted magic thrumming under my skin.

"You've already had experience wielding the powers of a Reaper, being the Master of Death and all. When you met the rogue Reaper, Undertaker, you unlocked what little power you were not aware of. That is why you did not notice your Reaper attributes as much because you have become used to them over the years before coming to this world." Death explains patiently and seems to relax slightly as I dial down my aggression. He continues before I can ask any more questions. "What you are going through now is the unlocking of your Demonic powers and the physical representations of your Demon species. Like with the Reaper, this has now been unearthed by being in the presence of a Demon. And also similar to how you learned to control and identify your Reaper abilities, you will have to do the same with your Demonic powers until they become just as familiar. And the same goes for Angels when you eventually encounter one."

I blink and inhale deeply through my nose, bringing up my hands to massage my temples as I process this new and frankly confusing information. "Why do I even have the powers of each Immortal? Why not just the Reaper, that is the most logical choice."
"The Fates seemed to think it would be necessary to bestow the other traits and magic upon you. I did not have the jurisdiction to question since I was allowing you to enter a new dimension. And as I am sure you now know, the rules of this dimension are a bit different from the one you came from."

I groan softly and bury my face in my hands. The adrenaline from the mission is slowly starting to drain away and I suddenly feel exhausted. I can also sense the Demon magic slowly settling back within my Magical Core, slumbering till I have need of it. A few minutes later the claws and fangs disappear as well.

"By the way, Master. The claws and teeth are only just a fraction of your actual Demon form. You'll have to figure out how to access it and shift if need be into the full embodiment of the Wendigo Demon." Death pipes up casually.

The only thing I can think of to utter is, "What is my life?"

"A three-way contradiction!" Death shoots back cheerfully.

I feel the overwhelming urge to cry...

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

A few days after my unexpected revelation I follow Death and William T. Spears to the room holding the yet-to-be-chosen Death Scythes. Dozens of weapons and tools line rows of wide shelves, sharp edges gleaming in the light. I glance at Death questioningly as we stroll down the aisles at a languid pace.

"Reach out with your magic, Harry. Like calls to like. Your Scythe will reach out for you and you to it."

I nod and close my eyes, loosening the grip I keep upon my vast stores of power. The wand chooses the wizard, Mr. Potter. Ollivander's voice, soft and mysterious, echoes across my subconscious as my magic brushes across multiple Scythes, searching. I can't help but smile faintly at the memory of getting my first wand. I was so naive back then...

Silence reigns save for the quiet beating of my heart.

Suddenly I feel it. My eyes snap open just in time for a long double-bladed glaive to fly down the aisles and into my outstretched hand. Just like when I first received my holly-phoenix feather wand, there is a feeling of deep warmth, of home. My Death Scythe seems to almost hum with approval and excitement. Are Scythes sentient? I wonder as Willam gives a respectful nod of acknowledgment and writes down the necessary information to get my weapon processed.

"Congratulations, Master." Death murmurs softly as we turn and exit the room. I can sense the entity's affection and it makes me flush slightly with fuzzy warmth. No matter how long I live I don't think I will ever get used to someone truly caring for me. Just for me.

And even though I am Death's Master he admitted that he always held some respect and admiration for me before I conquered him at his own game and acquired all three Hallows.

"Thank you," I reply and twirl the shaft of the weapon in one hand lazily, admiring the blades and testing its balance. The glaive preens to my amazement.

Death chuckles at my expression. "The Scythe of a Reaper is not unlike the wand of a Wizard."
I need to practice and get a better feel for this thing. I can't rely on magic all the time, especially if I run into the more powerful Immortals! I muse as William returns with the appropriate paperwork ready for me to sign. "I look forward to working more closely with you, my Lord." William intones in his deep, bland voice. However, his lime-green eyes betray the hint of nerves he is feeling being in the presence of his Boss and the most powerful Reaper to walk this dimension.

"Indeed. As do I, William. I'll do my best to lighten your load as much as possible." I offer with a reassuring smile, causing the Division Leader to tentatively return it with a small uplifting of his lips. I sign the paperwork with a flourish and with that I have officially claimed my very own Reaper's Scythe!

And now to practice, practice, practice!

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Nearly two centuries and a half have passed since my first mission and the acquisition of my glaive.

During that time I have reaped many unique and amazing individuals, both altruistic and entirely reprehensible. Johan Bach was one of my first followed by the Tsar Paul 1st of Russia was not too long after. That was a... fun one. And here in recent years I've reaped and sent along into eternity Martin Delany and William Kelley.

My reputation has grown admirably, this time because of my skill and intuition in the field not because of my titles. Though the Master of Death and Master Reaper still hounds me due to the young newbies I come into contact with, much to my eternal aggravation! But beyond that things have been peaceful, no encounters with the other Immortals other than my fellow Reapers and low-level demons. I even managed to master most of my Demon powers and my Wendigo form. I was quite proud of that!

At this moment I'm casually leaping across the rooftops, my Invisibility Cloak shimmering like liquid behind me. I land at last in front of the Undertaker's shop and brush the few black strands of hair that escaped my tie back from my eyes as I walk into the parlor. "Undertaker, are you here?" I call out after a few minutes of silence. Usually, the Reaper greets me from his customary purple coffin with a maniacal giggle and slightly wary eyes.

"Sorry my, Lord." Undertaker demurs as he steps out of a curtained off doorway behind the counter. "I had a customer to make pretty. Nasty business this one. 'Tis enjoyable." He says with a soft sigh of delight.

I just nod and hop onto the counter, long since becoming used to Undertaker's zeal for his job. His passion, though...strange given the criteria, is something to be admired. But I have no room at all to judge. Quirks come with the profession of being a Reaper. "How have you been? I'm sorry it has been so long since my last visit."

Undertaker grins as he hands me a beaker of tea and I sip it appreciatively. He may be odd, but the rogue knows his teas!

"Aye. It has been more than fifty years hmm? Things have been good, plenty of people dying to do business with me, hehe!" Undertaker bites into one of his infamous dogbone biscuits and asks around a mouthful, "Did you ever figure out your Demon form, my Lord? Last I heard you were still struggling with the final transformation."

I nod, pride swelling in my chest."Yep! I look bloody terrifying! It took me a while to get used to
being a skeletal deer-headed monster. You should have seen the first time William came across me in that visage. I never thought I’d see him scream that loud, nor that high-pitched!” I laugh at the horror I’d caused that day. Undertaker's boisterous laughter fills the shop and its infectious nature causes me to laugh harder.

After we catch our breath Undertaker proceeds to tell me about his recent clientele and how they most likely correlate to the Jack the Ripper Case. Apparently the Queens Guard Dog will soon be coming up to investigate. Intrigued I decide to stay in this part of the world till either the culprit for the grisly murders has been apprehended or something else fascinating captures my attention. Besides, I don't have any pressing duties right now...

Meeting this Guard Dog could prove to be just what I need to reconnect with my steadily fading humanity.

Chapter End Notes

Can you believe I haven't put up any trigger warnings yet?! It's a miracle!

Sorry if the story is a bit slow. I'm working on world-building and figuring out how to smoothly integrate the two fandoms.
Chapter Summary

Ciel Phantomhive and his butler, Sebastian unknowingly meet the Master of Death.

Harry is intrigued by the feisty mortal child and his Demon. With his humanity fast fading he decides to try and regain it through this child.

TW: Blood, Death, Angst, Battle.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ciel ~

I leave the crime scene and Sir Randall behind in an internal huff, but keep my stride confident and the blank mask firmly upon my face. Sebastian, Aunt Red, and Lau trail after me followed closely by Grell, Madam Red's irritating butler.

"Well, there seems to be only one place else we can go to get the necessary information." I declare as I lead the group down cobbled streets and around corners.

"You don't mean?!" I hear Lau gasp.

"I do indeed."

Ten minutes later our party stands before the funeral parlor entitled 'Undertaker'. "So... why are we here?" Lau asks, his lips unturned in an innocent smile as Madam Red rounds on him. I ignore their bickering and push into the shop, Sebastian's presence firm against my back as I take in the gloomy atmosphere. "Undertaker, are you here? I have need of you!" I call out just before a cackle reverberates through the atmosphere and the lid of a coffin against the wall slowly inches open.

My companions startle and stare in shock as the owner of the shop steps forward, eyes gleaming behind his hair. "Welcome, little lord! I was hoping I'd be seeing you here. Have you come to try out a coffin?" The silver-haired man asks, voice slightly raspy yet airy with amusement.

"My master comes on business." Sebastian supplies, stepping up by my side. Like an ever-faithful hound. I silently mock.

"That's right. I'm here for information on the Jack the Ripper Case. I need to know what you know please." I say more command than a plea in my voice.

"Ah, so you are the Queen's Guard Dog then?" A new voice rings out from the shadows. I whip around in shock to come face to face with the greenest eyes I've ever seen. Sebastian sucks in a barely audible breath and stiffens, which in turn immediately makes me wary. The man before me appears young, with long black hair tied back at the nape and dressed in hues of green and black. The stranger tilts his head in a curious manner as we continue our staring contest, the emerald depths of his gaze seeming to suck me in despite my will.
"Who are you?" I demand harshly, fists clenched by my sides in a mixture of embarrassment and anger.

The man simply turns his head, a silent dismissal and I seethe, vision tinting red. "Answer me!"

He has the audacity to laugh! "You are a force to be reckoned with, Ciel Phantomhive, especially with the company you keep." He murmurs in a melodic, slightly liting accent.

"Indeed! The little lord has such an amusing drive!" Undertaker chimes in.

"But you would do well to keep a more cautious air." The stranger says with a pointed look as he steps around me to lean against the counter. He surveys everyone in the room, lingering especially long upon both Sebastian and Grell and they, in turn, do not look away from him. Almost as if he were some predator stalking them, and though I am loathed to admit it, even to myself, that is the feeling I get from this newcomer.

I clear my throat pointedly and turn back toward the Undertaker and the reason why I'm here. Time is of the essence. Undertaker giggles at my expression and I twitch. "You know my price, my lord. A single pure laugh is what I require, nothing more."

I sigh in exasperation. When was the last time I truly laughed or smiled? How can I give someone else what I can't even recall?

First Lau tries to appease the Undertaker when he notices I remain silent. His abysmal joke falls flat and earns the Chinese man a snort from the stranger. Madam Red gives it a go next and Sebastian thankfully has recovered enough to block my ears from what must be truly lecherous gossip if the raised eyebrows around the room are anything to go by. In retaliation Undertaker slaps tape with a large red X over my Aunt and Lau's mouths before turning to me, not even acknowledging Grell who is still keeping vigil over the emerald-eyed man.

"How about it, little lord? One laugh and all with be revealed to you." Undertaker leers, his teeth flashing in the gloom of the parlor.

I swallow hard as the weight of my lost joy presses against me, mind blanking. I'm broken from my thoughts as Sebastian steps forward and starts to speak before the nameless man unexpectedly cuts him off.

"Come now, my friend. Surely you can give the boy a discount?" The man says with amusement dancing in his eyes.

"I gave him a discount last time though." Undertaker whines, almost pouting.

"Please, as a favor to me? I promise I'll do something entertaining soon." He cajoles.

"...Very well, my Lord." Undertaker gives in with a deep sigh.

I fight to keep my jaw from dropping. Undertaker never gives out information without getting his laugh first! Never!

"Excellent!" The stranger claps, beaming widely as he pushes away from the counter and glides across the room toward the door. I start in surprise when I am suddenly pinned by his unnervingly intense gaze, and for an instant, my mind screams danger before those stunning eyes slide away. "Well, that's my cue to leave. I'll pop by soon, Undertaker."

"Of course, my Lord."
"Oh. By the way, Ciel, I'll be expecting a favor in return for my help today." The man cheerfully tosses over his shoulder before he vanishes out the door. I just stand there in stunned silence for who knows how long before the Undertaker catches my attention and at last divulges the information I seek.

But in the back of my mind, I cannot help but wonder about the mysterious person that I never got the name of.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

**Sebastian ~**

As we prepare to leave the shop Undertaker halts us. "That person you met is starting to become a good friend of mine. Be on the lookout for him sometime soon in the future. He likes to pop up when you least expect it."

"What is his name? What was he doing here in the first place, Undertaker?" my young master inquires, still seeming to be slightly off-balance if the emotional tone of his words is anything to go by.

I too am curious to hear the answer. That...man...was not what he appeared. He was something ancient and yet I had never previously encountered him. I could practically taste the aura of destruction on him, though he appears to have a tight leash on his power. Curious. Could he be one of the First?

"Actually," The silver-haired man hums, tapping his chin with a long black nail. "I don't reckon he's ever once told me his name."


The Undertaker shrugs and says with a titter, "Who knows why he does anything! Since meeting him that is the only consistent thing about him. He likes to keep you guessing!" A shiver runs down my spine as I recall the way the unknown man materialized from nowhere. I was sure there had been no one else in the shop! I would have sensed them otherwise. "As for why he was here," Undertaker continues, "He wanted to meet you, Guard Dog."

My master's expression briefly twists into confusion and is that...fear? "Why would he want to meet me?"

A shrug is my master's only answer before he and the rest of our group is ushered out of the shop. "Don't worry, little lord, you'll surely be getting your questions answered soon!" Undertaker croons a moment before the door clicks shut.

"Sebastian, I want you to investigate this unknown variable as soon as possible." Ciel murmurs in a barely audible voice as I open the carriage door for him.

I bow my head with a soft, "Yes, my lord." A thrill goes through me at the thought of the challenge ahead. However, at the same time, I shudder. I instinctively know to be wary of this stranger, and that more than anything, is what most unnerves me.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

**Harry ~**

I laugh, long and loud as I watch the Queen's Guard Dog run around the ballroom to keep away
from the overly enthusiastic blonde-haired girl trying to compliment his dress. And the best part about it all is that I was the one to point her in Ciel's direction! Karma! I dispell the notice-me-not spell and briefly join in on the dancing, glamour firmly in place as I simply enjoy my fun.

*Master, what are you still doing in London? I thought you were coming straight back after your visit with Undertaker.* Death's voice inquiries within my mind. He sounds slightly exasperated and I chuckle quietly aloud.

*I'm watching the Phantomhive boy running from his fiance and it is hilarious!*

*Hmm... I'm surprised you've not run into that family so far. Vincent and Rachel Phantomhive passed away two years ago under mysterious circumstances. And before you point out that I know everything about death, something has blocked my Sight from becoming aware of how their demise transpired.*

*Did you just make a pun?*

*Focus Master!*

I slip away from the party and out onto an open-air balcony. The breeze caresses my face and the moon's light bathes me in silvery blue hues. *Did you know the kid has a Demon contracted to him as well as a Reaper posing as a human for his Aunt?* I question, allowing my weight to rest on my forearms as I lean against the railing. *I met them in Undertaker's shop when Ciel came to gather information on this 'Jack the Ripper' case. That's part of the reason why I've not returned to Headquarters.*

*Ah. How intriguing... Very well, Master. I trust you to keep an eye on things should they go awry. It is not our job to interfere, but that does not mean we don't. And besides...* Death laughs, his voice like the rasp of dry autumn leaves. *When have you ever minded your own business?*

*I'm not sure whether to feel flattered or offended.* I reply with a mental shrug. *Very well. I plan to keep watch over the boy for a time. He amuses me. So I will not be back to Headquarters for a while.*

*As you wish, Master. I hope you recover the faith you've lost in yourself.*

I let out a slightly shaky exhale at Death's parting words. My lips curls in the barest hint of a wry smirk. Of course, Death would know why I'm really not returning to my duties. Even though I've thrown myself wholeheartedly into this new world and my new purpose I cannot ignore the feeling of my humanity slipping through my fingertips. The old me, the old Harry James Potter, is dying little by little each day.

I've already forgotten what my friend's faces looked like. And I'm starting to forget what they were like. Did Ron enjoy books or was that Hermione's passion? Didn't I first meet them at a train station...? I sigh despondently and summon my Invisibility Cloak to me, throwing it over my shoulders and drawing the hood over my face. I'll catch up with Ciel and his Demon some other time.

I don't feel much like partying anymore.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

A couple of days pass with me doing nothing beyond occasionally stalking Ciel and easily evading the Demon when he tried to do the same to me. The little game of tag we have going has kept me...
from dwelling too much on my own psyche and helps to liven up my routine. I know this one is of a rather higher tier than the Demons I've run into in the past. And it excites me to finally encounter another worthy opponent, even if it just involves playing hide-and-seek!

It is the evening of the third day when I notice the Demon and his master standing at the corner of a dingy alleyway. The human is dressed in commoners clothing, though just a little too fine to be completely realistic in my opinion. The Demon, dressed in elegant butler attire is busy obsessing over a cat, much to his master's annoyance.

I bite my lip from the rooftop I'm perched on just above them to keep from snickering and giving myself away. A fine sheen of frigid rainwater patters upon us as the minutes tick by. What are they doing out here in such dreary weather? I ponder, thanking whatever Higher Power may be for water-repelling-charms. I can see Ciel try to suppress his shivers even as he berates the butler.

Suddenly a high-pitched, terrified scream shatters the quiet. Ciel without a moment's hesitation races toward the source of the shriek with the Demon right on his heels. Oh, the irony! I think as I prowl along the rooftop after them. Now who does he remind me of, I wonder?

I watch as the Earl throws open the door and then freezes in what appears to be shock. And that is when I catch the overwhelming stench of coppery blood emanating from the small apartment. The information of the one who died floods my brain for a split second as I crouch along the edge of the roof.

Mary Jane Kelley.

Born in 1863.

Died on November 9th, 1888.

Cause of Death: Violent stabbing and slashing which led to severe blood loss and shock.

Weaponry used in death: Reaper Scythe.

Rage floods my veins as the last piece of information drifts away. A Reaper has killed someone not yet due to die!

As the Master of Death, I am privileged to automatically know possible outcomes of a person's life and what could lead to death. One such factor is knowing when someone has died before their time.

In the meantime, Ciel has witnessed the mutilated corpse that I can just barely glimpse from my elevated position catty-corner to where the doorway is. His Demon arrives and places a gloved hand over the boy's eyes and hops back a pace with a whispered, "Don't look!" Unfortunately, it is too late and the little lord promptly empties his guts onto the pavement. Too young. I can't help but hypocritically think as I watch him gasp and tremble.

I was young like that too once upon a time... I was innocent, right? Or have I always been this way? I'm broken from my musing by the Demon's smooth baritone addressing someone standing in the shadows of the doorframe. "My, my. You played quite the convincing act there. You almost even had me fooled, Grell Sutcliff, or should I call you Jack the Ripper?"

My eyes narrow to slits as the Reaper I'd seen in Undertaker's shop steps forward, drenched in blood. Now I have the name to match the face of who I'm going to be unleashing my wrath upon.

"N-No! It's not like that! I-I heard the screaming b-but..." Grell tries to deflect but it is apparent no
one is buying it. A large shark-like grin with equally sharp fangs splits the Reapers face as he undoes the ribbon tying his long hair back. "You really think so, eh? Well, I do have superb acting skills!" Grell croons in a confident, cheerful voice. His hair bleeds into fiery scarlet as he discards the ordinary glasses for a pair of stylish red ones with tiny skulls decorating the frames, dull green flashing into toxic veridian behind the lenses. "But then again, you are so much more as well, right Sebastian?"

I miss the rest of the exchange between Grell and the newly named Sebastian as I sense the presence of another Reaper, this one I'm much more familiar with arriving nearby. William. A little late aren't we?

I tune back into the confrontation in time to catch the last bit of Madam Red's monologue and witness Grell materializing his Scythe, a crimson chainsaw. I sigh wearily as I spot the modifications to the weapon. I have a feeling most of those aren't legal... I can't help wincing in sympathy as the deranged Immortal starts making scandalous insinuations toward Sebastian. And even for a Demon, the butler appears greatly disturbed. This would be absolutely hilarious to me if I weren't so pissed!

My Demon magic purrs within my bones as Ciel orders Sebastian to capture Jack the Ripper, both of them. I can see the contract mark in Ciel's eye and on Sebastian's hand glow a bloody fuschia hue a moment before Sebastian launches himself at Grell as the Reaper in turn charges. The battle is fast and vicious, each Immortal almost too quick for the eye or mind to fully process. But eventually, Grell seems to gain the upper hand and drives the Demon back, his chainsaw leaving deep gouges and indentions in the stones making up the street and buildings.

And while this is happening Ciel's aunt has taken it upon herself to dispatch her nephew, her insanity caused by rage, bitterness, and grief driving her beyond rationality. I watch as she grabs the boy by the throat and lifts him an inch off the ground, squeezing hard. "Master!" Sebastian cries out in alarm from where he is barely keeping Grell's Scythe blade from cutting him from shoulder to hip, pinned against the wall of a building.

Should I get involved? I already have once...twice if you count setting the girl on Ciel at the Viscount Druitt's ball. I twist my fingers into the material of my Cloak and allow my breath to mist in the air. Before a decision can be made on my part Angelina Duress drops the boy and backs away, tears welling up in her eyes. Her face is distraught as she whispers over and over, "My sweet sister. I can't kill him, not their only child! I can't!"

Out of the corner of my eye, I notice Sebastian shoot past Grell, the chainsaw shredding his shoulder apart as payment for the reckless act. He seemingly teleports behind Madam Red, his Demon features bleeding through and eyes a hellish red. They are narrowed in murderous, possessive rage. "No Sebastian!" Ciel screams frantically as the butler's hand descends to deliver a fatal blow. "Don't kill her!" He obeys and stops himself in the nick of time. The Demon clutches the wound on his shoulder, the white of his glove stained a dark garnet as the blood soaks through the material.

"My, how noble of you Bassy, sacrificing your arm for the little brat." Grell chuckles as he pulls his Death Scythe free from where it had torn through the brick wall as if it were butter. He then turns on the sobbing Angelina with a dark glower. "And you Madam Red, you were supposed to kill the brat! Do it now and I'll forget this little hiccup."

The noblewoman shakes her head. "I can't! I can't kill him!" She sobs.

Grell sighs in exasperation. "Don't tell me you've gone soft after all those women. Just kill the kid already!"
"No I won't -" She is cut off by the flash of a bloodstained chainsaw swinging for her chest. OH HELL NO! I rage and call upon my Demonic affiliation.

The blade whirls menacingly, just starting to slice into the woman's blouse, just barely nicking the skin beneath.

It's too fast for the Demon to counteract. Too quick for the human mortal to comprehend.

However, I am much, much faster...

In the space of a single heartbeat, I fluidly transform into my Wendigo embodiment and leap down from my perch silently. I intercept the chainsaw between my large claws as I tower over the stupefied Reaper. My skeletal jaws twist into a smile that should not be physically possible for my anatomy as I hiss deep in the back of my throat. But I've never been one for social norms...

"W-What the Hell?! Who are you?!" Grell yelps as he futilely tries to tug the chainsaw from my grasp.

"Athenasios is my name," I growl in a deep, seductive voice that reminds me of the lowest notes of a piano. Despite my nightmare-inducing appearance, my voice reflects nothing of it. It is a lure for my prey after all. "You've made a terrible mistake, Reaper. I will not be lenient in my Judgement upon you." And before anyone can react I lunge toward the Reaper and sink my long fangs deep into his side.

Grell screams in agony as my deceiving strong frame wrestles him to the ground further aggravating the gaping wound. All the while his blood bathes my tongue. The Reaper thrashes against me, his yellow-green eyes wide with panic. With a snarl, I lift him in my jaws and hurl him downward. He slams into the cobblestones hard enough to leave him stunned. A hoarse growl warns him not to move, not that I'm sure he can, as I turn to glance up to the rooftops meaningfully. A second later William T. Spears leaps from his position to land on top of Grell's head, smushing it further into the shattered pavement. The Division Leader eyes me warily before turning his attention to the Reaper at his feet. In his usual inflectionless voice, he begins to read Grell the charges filed against him from a thick binder held loosely in his hand.

Knowing that William has things under control I turn my attention onto the young Earl and his Demon. Both are staring at me with expressions of surprise and disbelief, Ciel more so than the butler. I lick the blood from my teeth and bony snout with my unnaturally long tongue. At that point, Madam Red promptly faints on the spot. She would have cracked her head open if not for Sebastian's quick reaction. I casually toss my antlers as I straighten to my full height from my crouched position, coming to a full 9' 6 not counting the antlers. Ciel appears to be having trouble keeping his jaw from dropping and naturally I cannot help chortling at the sight.

"Paint a portrait. It'll last you longer." I grumble as they continue to goggle.

I am satisfied to see both faintly blush. "Who are you?" Ciel asks, his tone firm though I can see through the false bravado.

I outright laugh at this, the exact same question he asked me only days earlier! "Athenasios. And before you ask, no, I will not tell you what I'm doing here or why I bothered to interfere." I state with a stern glare, causing Sebastian to tense and subtly move in front of his charge. The Demon studies me with a deeply intrigued expression marring his features. I can smell the respect and caution radiating from him and I bestow him with a crooked smirk.

Ciel opens his mouth to most likely demand further answers, scowling in frustration, but his butler
stops him with a gentle hand upon his shoulder. He dips his head in a shallow bow and sends a quick warning look at the boy. "You have my thanks, Athanasios of the Wendigoag." He murmurs softly.

I hum and bare my fangs in a mockery of a smile. "I shall remember your debt. You shall not forget." I reply as I reach out and touch the Demon's injured shoulder, my Demon magic eagerly leaping to my claws to do my bidding. Sebastian flinches and sucks in a startled breath as my powers knit his flesh and bone back together. For added measure, I even mend his torn tailcoat. I can see the dawning fear the Crow is trying so hard to suppress within his eyes as he feels the weight of my aura.

"T-Thank you," Sebastian whispers and takes a hasty step away, clearing his throat. And once more the unflappable mask of the Phantomhive butler is back in place. I cackle internally at this and step aside to allow William to perform his apology and give Sebastian his card. And the irony of bowing his head to a Demon makes me snort at the fact that the Master Reaper in such a form is not three feet away.

With one last bow and a discreet glance my way William takes ahold of the collar of Grell's long red coat and drags him away, muttering about overtime and paperwork. I grimace. The war on paperwork is a neverending annoyance for the Shinigami Divisions, especially the Leaders.

I give my body a good shake to dispell the water droplets forming on my obsidian pelt, my skull and neck vertebrae cracking in protest. I exhale in a deep sigh, fog escaping my skeletal jaws, as I turn and start to make my way out of the alley. "See you around, Ciel Phantomhive, Crow!" I call over my shoulder and with a wave of my talons, vanish from sight.

Such a long and eventful evening.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

I briefly return to Headquarters to give my account to Death and William of what transpired. I leave the fate of Grell Sutcliff up to them but tell Death he'll be secretly observed from the Master Reaper if he even survives what they have in store for him.

William is still side-eyeing me by the time I take my leave, still in my Wendigo form. My shaggy black pelt, sharp claws, and burning emerald-eyes look so out of place in the pristine and order-efficient Hall of Records. I sigh and turn to face the Division Leader. "You'll have to get used to my appearance in this form eventually, William. It is a useful tool for my work in the field." I scold, though keep my tone neutral. No need to freak the poor guy out more than he already is.

"Of course, my Lord. I apologize for any offense I've caused, and for not realizing Sutcliff's crime sooner." He bows formally at the waist.

I shift back into my normal body and shove my hands in my pockets. "I accept your apology. Just please try and keep an open mind about my powers in the future." I reply and receive a nod of acknowledgment. "I'll keep in touch, Death."

The hooded and cloaked entity nods, frustration and appreciation leaking across the bond we share as Master and Servant. "I'll be awaiting the next telepathic message, Master."

With a final disgusted glare at the unconscious Grell 'Jack the Ripper' Sutcliff, I apparate away to the Phantomhive manor.

I'll await Ciel's return there. After tonight I would feel remiss if I did not keep a closer eye on the
child. He reminds me so much of myself in certain areas that it almost aches. If I'm to do so I must develop a more personable and involved relationship with Ciel. He'll get some extra security.

And I will get some entertainment and practice reconnecting with my humanity.

Hopefully, this will be one of my better ideas... though I'm not holding my breath!

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

A few days later Sebastian Michaelis opens the door to find the raven-haired, nameless man from the Undertaker's parlor standing in the front steps smiling too widely to be innocent.

"Hello, Demon! Let Lord Phantomhive know that he has a new servant for hire!

Chapter End Notes

Hope I portrayed this well! It took me a while to figure out more of Harry's personality and why he would want to get close to Ciel.

I will be revealing more of the Wendigo lore (both real and my own made-up stuff) in later chapters. Athanasios is Harry's Wendigo name. He does this to further mess with everybody's minds who are not aware of who he truly is. Athanasios means "Immortal/Eternal" in Greek.

Please let me know what y'all think! Every Review strikes a blow against the enemy of all authors, Writers Block! ; ) (This story can also be found on FF.net)

Also today is my birthday! So here is a chapter as a gift to yall! Comments would be a great gift! *hint hint* XD
~ Persistence ~

Chapter Summary

Harry bugs the crap out of Ciel and proves himself worthy for a position in the Phantomhive Estate.

TW: Fighting, injuries, blood.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The sight of the little lord's face when Sebastian ushers me into his office is beyond priceless!

"W-What...?"

"Cat got your tongue, kiddo?" I ask innocently, waggling my eyebrows slightly. Ciel flushes and a growl rumbles in the back of his throat. Out of the corner of my eye, I see Sebastian hide a smirk of his own.

"Shut up! What are you doing here?" The kids grumbles as I plop down in the chair opposite him.

"Came to apply for a position in your service," I reply with a nonchalant wave of my hand, gazing around the room curiously. There isn't much of note. A few expensive pieces of furniture, a couple of paintings. The books on the bookshelf catch my eye for a moment, but the interest soon dies when I realize they are books about laws and stuffy old politicians and historical figures and all that rot.

Blegh! Boring!

"Why in the world would I give you a job?!" Ciel snarls, slamming his little hands on the desk as he stands. I bite back a coo. "I don't even know your bloody name!"

"Ah... but that would be telling, now wouldn't it?" I cradle my elbow in one palm and use the fingertips of the other to tap my chin. "Besides, you owe me, Ciel Phantomhive. For the Jack the Ripper case, remember?" I lean forward slightly, allowing a tendril of my magic to nuzzle against the room's occupants. Both stiffen and I hum under my breath.

Ciel holds my gaze stubbornly, posture as rigid as a board.

Only the ticking of the ancient grandfather clock in the corner breaches the weighty silence. It is ok though. I can wait for however long it takes. Patience is almost second nature to me by now... lest it comes to treacle tarts. After several long moments go by the human lowers his gaze and slumps back into his chair. I can literally taste his frustration and curiosity.

"Why do you want to work for me? What can you do that I do not already have?" He queries, tone
bored but I can see the spark of anticipation in his gaze at my answers.

My smile is razor-sharp as I reply. "I can act as a cook, stablemaster, tutor, spy, groundskeeper, healer, soldier, assassin, and bodyguard." I list off each position with a tick of my fingers while ignoring his first question. "Take your pick, little lord."

Ciel's steel-blue gaze is incredulous. Sebastian in the meantime is studying me inconspicuously from the corner of the room, or he would be if I were not attuned to what he truly is and what I am. "I don't just hire regular servants. If you can really do all you say you can then I'll expect you to do even more at an extraordinary level." the boy drawls almost smugly.

Ha! As if I'd balk at that tactic!

"Perfect. I can get bored if cooped up for too long."

The Earl scowls at my flippancy.

"Perhaps a demonstration would not be out of the question?" Sebastian suggests. I flash him a quick grin and watch a flicker of puzzlement mar his face before he schools it back into a pleasantly blank mask.

"Yes. A demonstration of your skills would be the best way to tell if you are a liar or merely a braggart." Ciel snarks as he rises from his seat and begins to start for the door.

I snort as I too rise. "Very well."

This'll be hilarious!

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Several hours pass as I show off my various talents. During one of my tasks, the other Phantomhive servants popped up as spectators. They amuse me with how easily they seem to annoy Sebastian as he constantly has to stop them from accidentally interfering with my 'interview'.

I prepared a multicourse meal that was to die for. Ciel did not say anything other than mumble, "adequate.", after tasting my food. The other servants gushed about how I apparently rivaled Sebastian's cooking skills which earned me a glare from the Demon.

Afterward, I easily calm and ride one of the manor's feistier horses. She's a beauty, love at first sight. She reminds me of an animal I once owned because of her white coat. I think it was an owl...

I shake the faded recollection away and prepare for my next job.

I easily plant flowers, trim hedges, and stop Finny from uprooting a nearly century-old oak tree before my gardening skills are approved of.

My final task is approaching as the sun begins to start dipping toward the western horizon. Throughout all the labor and mind games I've barely rested or perspired. That is the beauty of being Master of Death along with all my other stupid titles. I don't weaken or tire nearly as fast as a mortal. Most of the stuff I've done today was easy because of both my nature and former skill-set that was beaten into me in my past life. It is hard to forget the abuse I suffered no matter how long it has been.

Funny how the negative aspects stick with me more than the positives...

Goodness have I become cynical!
Our little group is currently stationed outside on the lawn. The sun is just beginning to bleed red as I flex my joints.

Ciel walks up to me and hands me a simple wooden staff. Sebastian is also given one which he twirls expertly with a gleam in his russet eyes. "Your final task will be to defeat my butler," Ciel explains at my questioning glance.

"Oh? Very well, little lordling." I sink into a ready position, the oak wood smooth in my palms. Sebastian mirrors my stance. I inhale and exhale slowly, keeping my gaze trained on my opponent, muscles coiling in preparation.

This is fun! I can't help but allow a tiny smile to twitch across my lips.

"Begin," Ciel says softly.

The Demon flies at me, his weapon a blur. I move forward to counter. Our staves meet with a solid twack! The force behind the strike sends shockwaves running up my arms and I grunt as I push the butler back a step so I can disengage.

He's a lot stronger than me.

Let's see if he's faster!

I duck under Sebastian's next swing and jab the butt of my staff deep into his gut, satisfaction humming through me as I hear the Demon growl in displeasure. I twist away and out of his guard barely in time to avoid the full force of his attack. The blow clips my shoulder and clavicle instead of my jugular.

I wince as pain flares from shoulder to fingertip on my left arm. I know I'll have a dark bruise and possibly damaged muscle from the intensity behind Sebastian's attack. I quickly back away but the Demon follows, eyes bleeding red and a confident, cool smile fixed firmly upon his face.

My opponent blinks in surprise when he finds me smirking back.

With a burst of magic-enhanced speed, I slip behind the Demon and twist my body just enough to avoid his grasping fingers and twirl my staff so that it rams into the back of his kneecaps. Sebastian barely stumbles but it is enough for me to land a solid strike to the middle of his spine.

The butler hisses and turns furiously toward me to counterattack. We parry each other by seconds, the wood of our weapons groaning in protest. I know the staves can't take much more strain with the way we're going at it.

I can feel my pulse jumping against my throat as I sidestep and dodge the Demon. It has been a long time since I've fought like this. Perspiration is gathering at my temples and I can see Sebastian is starting to get a little winded himself. We've been at this for a while, just short of going all out. Sebastian's features are faintly twisted into a puzzled frown as he seems to become aware of the sweat beading on his brow.

Seems I'm not the only one surprised by this.

I don't think I can outpace Sebastian without calling upon my powers. I wanted this to be a fair brawl, but I'm outclassed in this area.

Before I can decide upon my next course of action I am literally knocked out of my contemplation. Pain explodes across the side of my face as Sebastian's staff smashes into my head, causing my
neck to twist abruptly to the side and throwing me back by half a meter. I sprawl on my hands and knees as blood trickles from my hairline and spots of color flash randomly across my vision. *OW!* I suck in a shaky breath and force myself to my feet, fingers clenching around the smooth wood of the staff in my hand as a way to ground myself.

If I'd still been human that attack would have literally sent my head flying.

Gingerly I touch my temple and call upon my magic to seal the cut and slight fracture along my jawbone, groaning softly as the agony is lessened slightly. I can deal with further damage after this fight is over! Sebastian has not moved from his position, gaze curious and slightly shocked to not find me unconscious. I can feel Ciel's calculating stare burning the back of my spine as I advance slowly toward the Demon. I inhale and exhale slowly as my vision finally comes fully back into focus. I lock gazes with the butler and before he can react, I unleash my magic and allow it to flood my bloodstream.

I all but glide forward and in a complex blur of motion and speed slip past my opponent's guard and whip my staff upward. Sebastian's head snaps up as the end of my weapon connects with his chin. A split-second later I am switching the staff to my other hand and bring around where it lands with a solid *thud* as it nearly breaks the butler's ribs. Sebastian wheezes slightly as he slumps to his knees, one hand cradling his side and his red eyes blown wide in amazement.

I give him a tight smile. "Well fought." I murmur just a moment before my staff once more come to bear on him, crashing into the back of his neck. I stare down at Sebastian's prone form and then lift my eyes up to meet Ciel's stunned features.

"H-How...?" the child chokes out.

I shrug and bring my hand once more to my head, wincing slightly as the healing magic knits my wounds and vanishes the bruises. I give a little experimental shake to see if anything is broken and nod in satisfaction when the only issue I find is onsetting exhaustion and slight stiffness from overworked muscles. Ignoring Ciel as he begins to demand answers over my victory, I crouch down and lay my hands upon the butler's shoulder and direct healing magic into his form. The bruises and blood vanish without a trace and Sebastian shivers as he slowly levers himself upright, face openly expressing his surprise at my kindness.

I sigh tiredly and rise, holding out a hand in a silent offer to help the butler up.

He takes it after a moment's hesitation and I easily pull him to his feet. "I think a healer and fighter such as yourself would make a fine addition to the manor's household." Sebastian drawls, respect glimmering in his eyes and tone. "May I now learn your name?"

I grin tiredly and give a mocking little half-bow as I introduce myself. "Hadrian Odon. A pleasure to make your acquaintance, Sebastian!" I smirk mischievously at the Demon's puzzled frown over my last name. Not many know that 'Odon' has, among several definitions, means 'one not subject to death'. It's my own little joke.

"No wonder Tom Riddle had such a fascination with names..." I muse silently as the Earl stomps his way over, fed up with being ignored. I turn to face him with a huge Cheshire grin stretching across my lips, which only causes Ciel to become more incensed.

"Seems like you got yourself a badass healer and backup fighter to add to your collection, lordling!" I announce cheerfully and then turn an expectant look unto Sebastian. "So, where's my room? How much do I get paid? What are my benefits, vacation days, insurance?" I rattle off.
Ciel lets out a disparaging groan as he buries his face in his hands.

It only serves to heighten my amusement.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sure you've noticed by now that I have a deep fascination with names and their meanings. That is why I gave Harry the unique last name instead of the usual 'Potter'. Each name connects to what Harry now is. His old life is fading and his immortality is shaping him into someone new, so that is why he seems a bit OOC at times!

The Houndsworth Arc is coming up next!
~ Establishing the Boundaries ~

Chapter Summary

Harry establishes his place within the Phantomhive household.
Ciel learns that not all are under his command.

TW: Shouting, fear.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Ciel sighs tiredly and mumbles something about Sebastian showing me to my quarters. Without another glance, he makes his way back into the manor just as the last of the light dips into the inky darkness of dusk. The butler gives me a polite nod and gestures for me to follow. I fall into step with him and we make our way silently across the grounds and through the grand manor.

"You're not human," Sebastian states matter-of-factly as he peers at me from the corner of his red-brown eyes.

I smile. "No." I agree.

Sebastian leads me up a staircase and down a long hallway, the flames of the candelabra in his hand sending flickering shadows skittering across the walls and floor. Silence descends once more for a few more steps before he speaks again.

"What are you? You have a strange... aura about you."

I hum softly as I shove my hands into the pockets of my silver cloak. "I'm not really sure what I am anymore," I admit softly, keeping my gaze fixed ahead. "I'm a lot of things, but I'm not sure if any of them are me." The Demon does not comment on my riddle-like answer. Instead, he opens a door at the end of the hall and ushers me into a moderately big bedroom. There is a simple but comfortable looking bed against the far wall with a nightstand accompanying it. A window on the westward wall grants me a view of the forest sprawling across the grounds with a wardrobe and chest of drawers on the opposite side of the room.

Not too shabby. I think in satisfaction as I step further into the room and run my hand against the soft blue blankets upon the bed.

"This shall be your quarters while in the manor. I shall introduce you to the other servants tomorrow morning at breakfast after I tend to the Young Master." Sebastian says, keeping close to the doorway, almost as if he's afraid of crossing too near my territory. Interesting. I need to ask Death more about Demon nature and custom. I make a mental note as I give a nod of acknowledgment to Sebastian's unspoken order.

"I'll be up around seven am, will that suffice?"

"Yes. I shall lay out your duties in detail and give you a more in-depth tour of the house and grounds tomorrow. I don't trust those idiots not to get lost or break something." Sebastian scowls briefly and I cover my smirk with a yawn.
"Well then, I believe I shall bid you goodnight now. You did quite a number on me and I'll need my rest to repair the damage done." I give a little mocking bow and Sebastian rolls his eyes but smiles nevertheless.

"Flattery shall get you everywhere but here, Mr. Odon."

I chuckle at that as I begin to shrug off my cloak and unbutton my shirt in preparation for sleep.

"Hadrian." I pause at the Demon's stern use of my name and raise my eyes to meet his. He's paused through closing the bedroom door halfway, hand resting on the handle and half his face framed in shadow and candlelight. His eyes, however, are a glowing vermilion and narrowed in a glare. "If you do anything that will put my Master in danger or do not aid him I will make your life a living Hell before I end it."

The threat is heavy with promise and I know Sebastian will keep his word on this.

My smile is all sharp edges and bitter irony. "I won't harm the lordling. Your meal is safe from me, Demon." I reply calmly, hiding the way my pulse spikes slightly as Sebastian's power weighs down the air, asserting his dominance on this. Sebastian stares me down for a few moments, judging my sincerity most likely. I hold his piercing gaze and force my body to quiet.

It is not my place to interfere in their Contract. I'm only here to find my humanity again...

Finally, Sebastian steps back and his features soften once more into his usual calm mask, apparently satisfied by my response. "Pleasant dreams, Mr. Odon. We shall talk more in the morning." With barely a sound he eases out of the room and closes the door with a quiet click.

I let out a deep sigh as I finish undressing and retrieve my sleep clothes from a bottomless, space-extended pouch that hangs from a cord around my throat. I nestle under the blankets with a groan as I take a few moments for my mind to settle from the long day.

I hope coming here was a good idea. Is my parting thought as sleep claims me.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Alone...

I turn my head this way and that, trying to find any sign of life.

Anyone.

Anything!

Nothing... Emptiness... Alonealonealone!

Fear seizes my heart and I run, yet I gain not an inch of progress.

"Please," I whisper brokenly into the gaping expanse of black nothingness. "I'm afraid." I pause, waiting for a response.

Silence. There are no people here. No Reapers or Demons or Angels.

No Wizards or Witches or magical creatures.

No Life.
No Death.

Just me. Alone. FOREVER...

I scream.

Only echoes reply.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

When I'm introduced to the rest of the staff the next morning they all talk over each other in their excitement to meet me. Unfortunately, I can barely muster up the energy to even say my own name, much less answer their barrage of questions.

I sigh into my steaming cup of tea and spoon in a little more sugar. Last night's nightmare hit me out of the blue. I had thought I would be over that by now. This is why we need to hire Reaper Therapists! No wonder Grell went nuts and Undertaker can't function without a laugh! All these centuries of living and nobody ever considered bloody mental health! I take a sip from my teacup and morosely pick at my breakfast even though my stomach wails at my idiocy.

I know if I eat after one of my nightmares everything will just taste like ash, no matter how exquisite it may look or smell.

"Are you OK, Mr. Hadrian?" It's Finny who asks the question. He is the young blond boy that I stopped from uprooting a tree with his superhuman strength yesterday. His bright blues eyes gleam with concern from across the little table in the servants' lounge. "Yessir! You're looking a bit peaky there!" Mey-Rin chimes in as she takes the seat beside me. I sigh once more and push my bangs out of my eyes. "I apologize. I did not sleep very well last night, otherwise, I would not be in such a pathetic state." I murmur while suppressing a yawn. I blink a few times and focus back on Finny's concerned face. "I'll be fine. Don't worry about it." I force my lips into a small grin to punctuate the statement.

"That's what I like to see! Don't let the enemy win!" The chef, Bard, exclaims brightly as he joins our little group at the table. I grimace into my teacup. Seems like all the servants are morning people around here. "So Hadrian, why'd you decide to join the Phantomhive household?" Bard inquires as he piles his plate high with eggs and bacon.

"I'm not entirely sure... I wanted to see if I could recover something that I've lost within myself by interacting with people again." I reply with a slight shrug. They seem confused by my odd answer but have the good sense not to probe. Well... interacting with living people at least. Maybe I should have picked a more normal mortal... But then again, they don't interest me. I muse silently as the others finish up their breakfast while chatting softly among themselves while I space out. I've never been one to follow the norm so why should I try to reconnect with my humanity that way?

I raise an eyebrow and drain the rest of my tea before standing and following the butler out the door. I follow Sebastian down several halls and through a set of polished oak doors and into the opulent dining room. Ciel sits at the head of the table, delicately nibbling on a piece of grilled salmon. "You wanted to see me, kiddo?" I smirk as Ciel's tea sloshes out of his teacup as he goes to take a drink. He whips around to glare at me and a tiny chuckle slips past my lips.
"Don't call me that!" The young Earl snaps.

"Very well, little lord."

Ciel sighs and mumbles something about it being too early to deal with me. Sebastian hides his grin behind a gloved hand as he goes to stand slightly behind his Master's chair. "Take a seat." He waves me into a chair and I do as ordered. I tilt my head in a curious manner as silence consumes us for a while save for the clinking of Ciel's silverware against his plate. At last he deigns to speak again. "How did you defeat Sebastian yesterday? He tells me you are not human, and I am inclined to believe him."

I blink. Very blunt, especially coming from such a Slytherin child. The thought pops up as I study the Earl's face and consider what I should reveal, or if I should say anything at all. Not much point keeping things secret... but then again the Demon may use what I reveal to cause trouble for the other Reapers. Best to keep my cards close to the chest... for now at least.

I sigh softly and lean back in my chair and fold my hands together on the polished tabletop. "I honestly don't fully know what I am..." I begin and shoot Ciel a frosty glare as he makes to interrupt me. His mouth closes with a click when he meets my gaze, understanding the warning. I'm irritated from how fitful my rest was and I already know I will snap if probed too much. I clear my throat and with a pointed look in the child's direction I pick up the explanation.

"I used magic to help me defeat your butler," I ignore the child's scoff at the mention of magic. "As for what I am..." I tap a finger against the wood of the table as I try to think of how to explain. "I was human... in a former life. Now I am something... unique."

"That tells me nothing!" Ciel scowls, cobalt eye boring into me.

"I am three yet one and even then I'm not really sure if I am anything at all." I say solemnly, though smirk internally as Ciel sputters in annoyance at my cryptic reply. If I must suffer bloody nightmares then you'll just have to put up with my riddles!

"I order you to give me a straight answer!"

My magic flares to the surface, lapping against the occupants of the room with freezing intensity, their breath immediately fogging the air. "Don't," I hiss at Sebastian as he makes a move as if to restrain me as I rise from my seat. I pin him in place with a glare and then turn it upon the frozen Earl who is staring at me with wide, panicked eyes. "You have not earned the right to demand anything of me, child! How would you like it if I forced you to tell me all about your sorry sordid past? Just knowing you have a Contract with a Demon tells me more than enough!" I snarl, my voice edged with cutting hoarfrost as I fight to reign in my temper.

I stare both Demon and boy down for a few long moments before sucking in a deep breath and releasing on the exhale. Gradually the room's normal temperature begins to climb back up and my magic settles back down beneath my skin. Slowly, I sink down into my chair, exhaustion flooding my system as my nerves settle. "Apologies," I murmur. I open my eyes after a couple minutes of breathing exercises and focus back on the child and his Demon servant.

The young Earl clears his throat uncomfortably as our gazes lock. He is the first to look away. "Sebastian will show you around the manor and explain your duties." Ciel says as he rises and walks out of the dining room leaving me and the Demon alone.

Sebastian frowns at me, his eyes flickering a bloody fuchsia. I heave a deep sigh and place my head upon my folded arms atop the table. "Stop judging me, Sebastian." My voice comes out muffled...
but no less impatient.

"I wasn't-"

"Please, I can feel it from a mile away!"

Silence reigns for a time and I nearly doze off as the minutes tick by. "Mr. Odon...?" I blink my eyes open and raise my head, realizing with a start that the butler has been trying to get my attention.

"Hmn?"

"I asked if you would like to explore the manor and grounds now." Sebastian repeats, his face and voice impassively polite, yet his eyes cannot hide his suspicion nor curiosity.

"Sure... And I am sorry for snapping at you. I had a rough night." I reply, strangling my embarrassed flush with a vengeance.

The Demon simply nods and leads me out of the dining room.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Ciel ~

It takes me the better part of the morning to get my heart rate back under control. I scowl down at the paperwork in my hands and determinedly force the encounter with Hadrian out of my mind.

By the time noon rolls around I have at last completed the necessary papers and rise from my desk to walk around my office and stretch my legs. I wander over to the window overlooking the front lawn and lean my forehead against the cool glass. Was it a mistake hiring Hadrian?

"It is a bit late to be asking that, Master," Sebastian says as he pushes a trolley loaded with food and tea into the room, causing me to jump.

"Did I say that out loud?"

He nods.

I sigh and pinch the bridge of my nose to stave off the sudden migraine. "Is he still... upset?"

Sebastian raises an eyebrow as he hands me a cup of Earl Gray tea. His lip twitches upward slightly as he asks, "Are you frightened of Mr. Odon, sir?"

"No!" I snarl and curl my hands into tight fists at my sides, digging my nails into my palm to stop myself from doing something foolish in my rage. I've already been made a fool of enough for one day. I silently sip at my tea as Sebastian goes about preparing my salad and smoked chicken just the way I like it. Finally I heave a small sigh and set my cup aside. "Dig up any information you can about Mr. Odon. I don't like him keeping secrets from me, especially if he has this so called magic ability."

The butler frowns at me as he sets my food before me and refills my teacup. "Instead of ordering me to sniff about, which I doubt will divulge anything given what he has shown and admitted, why not ask him yourself?"

"I already did that and look at what happened!" I shoot back incredulously.
The Demon raises a perfect eyebrow, gaze chastising, and I inwardly cringe under it. "No. You ordered him, Master. Even I can see that was an unwise decision. You do not have his trust, so why should he share anything?" Sebastian lectures with his arms crossed over his chest and tone bordering on condescending. "Even though Mr. Odon is now part of the household you and I both know you have no real power over him. He is not bound by any supernatural contracts, nor are we sure of what his intentions are."

I scowl and stab at my meal with a bit too much force. He's right and I hate it! To my further irritation Sebastian continues his lecture.

"If you are to find out anything about this new player you must get to know him. The only reason he has thus far indulged our curiosity is because he is testing us, for what reason, I cannot fathom. So far Hadrian has the upper hand in this little game."

I groan softly and let my head thunk against the desktop. "Fine! I'll work on cozying up to the bloody ignoramus!"

Sebastian chuckles and smirks as he gathers the dirty dishes back onto the trolley. "Very good, sir. What kind of butler would I be if I did not impart such sound advice to my young Master?" The Demon effortlessly dodges the paperweight I chuck at his head and departs.

I slump back in my chair and wearily scrub a hand down my face. Why did I ever agree to this?

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Harry

The days bleed together into a comfortable routine as the summer stretches out lazily. I don't have much to do in way of healing except patching up the other servants. I swear their constant misadventures give me a run for my money!

Ciel has barely said two words to me since our confrontation that first day in the dining room. Guilt nips at me for my harsh reaction every time I see the Earl and I squash it ruthlessly each time. The boy has no right to anything other than my service as a healer. Not yet. Not until I know I can trust myself...and him with my past.

To be human one must know their nature.

And mine is far...very far from any sort of humanly induced emotion or quality.

On the other hand, Sebastian and I seem to be coexisting rather well. We don't speak much, but there is a level of mutual respect and self assured destruction between us. We both know we can seriously screw the other up, and that notion is the irony of my comfort around the Demon.

I hum under my breath as I flip through the pages of a book on medicinal plants and herbs, the summer sunshine dappling patterns across my skin as it peaks between the branches of the tree I'm currently leaning against.

It's a Sunday, my official day off, so I figure soaking up some sun would do me some good. It reminds me of a time when I was young and had yet to realize the true weight of my "responsibilities".

Besides, there are no magical species of fauna or flora in this Realm, so studying up on common medical solutions is a must. I can't rely on my magic all the time. That would be unwise and lazy in my opinion.
Constant Vigilance comes to mind, and I get the faint impression of an old, scarred to Hell and back warrior. Was his name Maddy or Moody...?

Master?

I blink as Death's velvety baritone echoes in my head, snapping me out of my guessing game. It's been a while since he checked in. I frown slightly as I reposition myself against the tree trunk. Hopefully nothing is wrong.

Hello Death! How are things in HQ?

Business is booming, as they say. It is a bit lonely without you here, I'll admit... Death trails off for a moment and a tiny smile twitches across my lips. I wanted to inform you that you'll be in an area where a few departed souls will need collecting. Would you mind picking them up when you're there?

Sure. I live to serve and all that yadda yadda! Where and when will I need to be for this particular errand?

Death chuckles, his amusement rippling along my magic like faint jolts of electricity. I turn the page of my book absentmindedly and use a leaf to bookmark my place as my Servant gives me the names and dates of my upcoming errand.

Be careful in Houndsworth, Master. There are other forces at work there.

I'm always careful! I can practically feel the raised eyebrow through our link and I send back a mock pouting expression. Technicalities! Though I must ask, will there be another surprise like the last errand I did for you?

Silence is my answer and confirmation of my suspicions.

You sneaky bastard!

Chapter End Notes

If you have any questions or suggestions for this please feel free to comment or PM me. I'll do my best to answer.

I already have Harry's Angelic form and name in mind. But should I give him an animagus form and what should it be if I do so? What do y'all think would best fit this Harry's personality?

Hopefully I'll get the next part out soon. The actual Houndsworth Arc will start next chapter! (Trying to do better at pacing and whatnot)

Every Comment gives me more motivation to do better!

;)
Chapter Summary

Memories from his earlier years tease Harry and lead to him questioning his life even more.
Hadrian and Ciel chat a bit over trauma.
Harry also finally comes into contact with an Angel and begins to unlock his powers.

TW: Nightmares, Panic attacks, Anxiety attacks, Spiraling thoughts, Bad language, Negativity, Description/Depictions of wounds, gore, blood etc.
Y'all should be starting to realize how evil I am by now! XD

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

I bolt upward with a stifled gasp, frantically scanning my surroundings for the unknown assailant that had invaded my dreams. Only the outlines of the furniture greet me. With a deep exhale I flop back against the mattress, sweat cooling against my body and causing me to shiver as I come down from the adrenaline high.

What the fuck was that? I silently grumble while blinking up at the ceiling. I can't recall much of the dream, but I remember large white wings and fevered lilac eyes watching me. With a quiet snort, I turn onto my side and curl up once more. Deciphering half-dreams can wait till the morning.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

"Mey-Rin!" I roar as a resounding crash echoes throughout the manor. The maid's rambling apologies further direct me on where to go as I stalk through the halls, my healer's satchel already hanging from my shoulder. I find the clumsy woman in one of the receiving rooms off the main hall, a broken vase and crumpled flowers scattered at her feet.

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Odon!" Mey-Rin wails. "I tripped and the vase flew out of my hands."

I click my tongue and move around the mess to examine her. "This is the nth accident in as many days," I grumble as I carefully extract a tiny sliver of porcelain from Mey-Rin's palm with a pair of tweezers. Otherwise, she's alright except for the usual hysterics when this happens. "There now, you're fine." I dab a bit of homemade antiseptic paste on the shallow cut and then expertly apply a bandage.

"Thank you, sir." Mey-Rin sniffles with a faint blush coloring her cheeks.

"If you weren't so attached to those ridiculous glasses of yours I'd snap them in half for all the trouble they give you!" I swear those things were created with the sole purpose of driving me mad with their inefficiency! But for whatever reason, the maid refuses to part with them. I heave a sigh as I shoo Mey-Rin from the room before she goes to try and pick up the vase pieces. I banish it with a swish of the Elder Wand.
I pack up and walk out of the room, massaging the bridge of my nose to relieve the slight headache that is trying to form. *I swear if she or Finny break one more thing I will hex them into the next century!*

Sebastian's dark chuckle seems to echo my silent threat. "Having fun, Hadrian?"

"I'm going even more insane than I already am, does that answer your question?"

The butler smirks as he shifts the suitcases in his hold. We will be leaving for Houndsworth first thing tomorrow morning, so naturally, the rest of the staff are running amuck like chickens with their heads chopped off!

"Have you packed the entire mansion?" I tease as I count at least eight different bags and cases all miraculously balanced in the butler's arms. Sebastian's upper lip curls faintly in amusement as he sets the bags in the room I'd just vacated. He'll collect them tomorrow morning as we leave.

"One never knows what the young Master will require upon his missions for the Queen."

"So, any idea what's so special about Houndsworth?" I inquire as I lean against a wall.

"Something about a mutt I believe was the gist of the matter." Sebastian practically spits the word 'mutt', a glower briefly settling over his porcelain face. I blink as an image of a black, feral dog comes to the forefront of my mind's eye. I blink again as the corners of my eyes prickle slightly, the faint wisps of grief brushing against the edges of my soul.

I swallow the sudden lump in my throat and try to focus on the memory trying to take shape. These occurrences are becoming fewer and fewer since entering this Realm. I'm scared that one day I will truly cease to recall anything from my past life.

Unfortunately, as soon as I try to examine the fragment it fades back into oblivion as quickly as it came. All I'm left with is the lingering melancholy and frustration from being unable to reclaim the echo of my past self.

"...Hadrian?" Sebastian's voice seems to come from a great distance and I realize that he's been trying to get my attention for a while now. "Are you well?" I pretend to not notice the faint trace of concern in his voice.

I tilt my head and rake my fingers through my long black hair. "I-I... I'm, well not really fine." I sigh in irritation at my stammering. "I apologize, Sebastian."

The Demon gives me an appraising look, eyebrow raised slightly in question. "Does this happen often?"

I snort softly. "Off and on for a little over..." I trail off as I try to tally how long it has been since my memories started to fade. A chill runs down my spine as I realize that I can't even remember that much! *It was a little over my fifth century in my previous Dimension... Why? Why did I forget?! How could I forget my friends and family?* A low, harsh noise rumbles in the back of my throat and involuntarily slips past my lips as an even more terrifying thought enters my mind. *Did I even have anyone that cared about me?!*

My vision begins to blur at the edges and I swallow hard as my lungs constrict, cutting off my air. "Hadrian!" Sebastian grips me by the shoulders, ruby eyes meeting mine. *So stupid! Why am I panicking?! Please, if there is a God don't let me faint!*

"Breathe, Hadrian!" Sebastian orders, Demonic authority ringing in his words even as his own
slightly panicking gaze wavers. I do as ordered, the inhale burning my lungs. My chest heaves frantically, almost against my own accord, as my body fights to regain normality. "That's right. Keep breathing. Don't let whatever is plaguing you win! You're stronger than this!" Sebastian's velvet voice is an anchor in the midst of the fog swirling within my head. I force myself to inhale and exhale slowly as the butler continues trying to calm me.

"It-it hurts! No one left! I've forgotten!" I rasp out the words as my legs buckle and I slide down the wall. I vaguely hear the sound of footsteps approaching as Sebastian takes his gloved hands from my shoulders and turns to address the newcomers.

**Master? Master?! Harry please!** Death's frantic voice is what finally breaks through the haze enveloping me.

*Death.* I nearly weep in joy at the sound of his familiar, comforting voice.

*Are you okay, Harry? Are you in trouble?*

*I... I'm alright now.* I reply and lazily glance over to where Sebastian is trying to calm an overly concerned Bard, Finny, and Mey-Rin respectively. *I think I just had a panic attack.*

*I know. I could feel it through our link. I was so worried!* Death's usually smooth tone quivers slightly. I blink in surprise at the faint foreign emotions I can pick up from his side of the bond. *Do you know why this happened?*

*No. I was trying to remember when I could last clearly view my memories of my loved ones, but I forgot for a moment that I had anyone to begin with. It...* I hiss softly under my breath at my almost admission. I'm ashamed to say how scared I truly felt at that moment before the attack.

*You do not need to be ashamed, Master.** Death scolds lightly. *And yes, you did have people who cared about you very much. You have lived for a little over seven hundred years, so it is natural for your mind to shift, especially since your immersion and transformations! I believe once you've fully mastered your new forms and magics you should be able to recall your earlier years with the clarity you once had.* I hum softly as my shoulders droop slightly, completely drained. Relief and sorrow flooding me in equal bitter measures at my friend's explanation. I long to remember, yet at the same time, I dread it. Yes, I have changed a great deal throughout the years, but is there another reason I can't remember much from my time before I became the Master of Death?

*Did I choose to forget?* I ponder as the other servants finally cease with the hysterics and Sebastian shoos them away. They depart, but not before wishing me well and to take things easy. I muster up enough energy to dip my head in acknowledgment and give a tiny appreciative grin.

*I shall check in on you later this evening, Harry.* Death promises as the telepathic link closes.

"Are you alright now, Hadrian?" Sebastian murmurs as he extends his hand to help me to my feet. He eyes me warily as if afraid I'll crumble into dust if he breathes wrong.

It takes me longer than I would like to squash my knee jerk reaction to growl at him. "I'm fine now." Still, I cannot completely keep the annoyance from my tone. I blow out a long breath as a wave of exhaustion sweeps over me. "I think I'm going to go nap for a little while. Thank you for your assistance earlier." I say sincerely and the Demon only gives a nod in return. I start down the hall and toward the grand staircase but pause and toss one last remark over my shoulder. "Oh, and when you tell the Earl about this make sure to also let him know I will be having a chat with him.
And before Sebastian can react I rush up the stairs, ignoring the way my body protests at the too swift movement. I don't allow myself to relax until I shut my bedroom door with a quiet click and slide down the wood with a muttered curse.

"Damn it all!" I mumble and thunk my head back against the door. Sleep steals me away before I can even think of forcing my body to move toward the bed.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Ciel ~

I awaken abruptly from an already forgotten dream. I take a moment to breathe and assess my surroundings, mouth slightly dry and the faintest edges of unease from the dream lingering beneath my skin. My eyelids are beginning to droop and I'm almost succumbing to slumber once more when I see them.

A pair of glowing emerald eyes gaze out at me from the darkest corner of the bedroom. I bite my tongue hard to stifle a scream and flinch back into my pillows, heart pounding a frantic tattoo against my ribs. I blindly reach for the dagger I keep under my pillow and grasp the cool handle tightly as the stranger takes a step forward, the pale moonlight streaming through the window illuminating their outline in ghostly silver.

"Hadrian!" I gasp as the owner of the green eyes at last fully reveals himself.

The man offers me a thin smile as he takes a seat on the edge of the mattress, hands clasped loosely in his lap. He turns his face toward me, silvery shadows dappling his nightclothes and greens eyes pinning me in place despite the exhaustion in them.

"What the Hell are you doing here in the middle of the night?"

"It's actually three in the morning."

I glare at him. "I don't care! Why are you here?" I repeat the question with more force, nearly growling.

Hadrian is silent for an indiscriminate amount of time and I am about to tell him to leave when he finally speaks. "You were screaming."

It is said so simply that it takes a moment for my sleep-fogged brain to catch up. I blink and settle back against my pillows with a weary sigh. "Well, I'm obviously fine," I flick my hand at the door dismissively, "You were screaming."

It is said so simply that it takes a moment for my sleep-fogged brain to catch up. I blink and settle back against my pillows with a weary sigh. "Well, I'm obviously fine," I flick my hand at the door dismissively, "You can go now." I don't need you to make a fool out of my weakness again! I silently seethe. Hadrian could be carved of stone for all the movement he makes, his lips quirked in a frown. "You were calling out for your mother." He murmurs softly.

"There is no shame in that," Hadrian says as if reading my thoughts. "I... I once had terrible dreams of my parents' deaths. I would hear my mother's voice screaming and pleading seconds before she was murdered." His gaze has taken on a distant sheen, voice quiet with sorrow. He turns that
haunted gaze onto me and I swallow tightly as my own grief threatens to rise up in reflection to meet it. Hadrian offers a tiny smile, barely a curl of his upper lip, but the understanding behind it leaves me reeling.

"W-Why would you...?" I trail off, at a loss for why he would try to comfort me. No one has even attempted it in years, so why would this virtual stranger do so when I have been so hostile? What's his game? What does he gain from this, sharing his story? "Your parents... they were murdered?"

He nods. "I tell you this not to garner pity, but to express my sincerity."

I scoff. "Sympathy and sincerity are for fools. I don't care about your pathetic sob story." I drawl in a bored manner. Hadrian seems to completely ignore my attitude, and if he is bothered by it he does not show it in the slightest.

"Believe it or not, I see a part of myself in you... my previous self, before I was transformed."

Hadrian continues as he tilts his head slightly to the left, studying me and I fight not to squirm. "You have a disgusting burden placed upon your shoulders," his lip curls, "And from what I have seen have no one who can see past that icy facade you wear."

I open my mouth to protest, pulse spiking in alarm, but Hadrian cuts across me. "I offer this solidarity because out of all the Immortals and once-mortals, I understand this the best. I know the depths of what it is like to have loved ones taken from you, though... I do not remember them." He sighs and lowers his head for a moment before continuing before I can question him. "The Demon would not offer you any sympathy, and would use this to crush you to flavor his meal." Hadrian's green eyes seem to spark. "I know he heard your cries tonight. Demons do not understand pain like you and I. And the other servants, although well-meaning, do not know how to handle this. So, that leaves me."

A bitter chuckle slips from his lips as he gestures to himself. "It just leaves me..."

I lick my dry lips and give a bemused nod. "I still don't understand why you would care. What's in it for you, Hadrian? Why are you even here in the first place?" I narrow my eyes, trying to see if there are any tells that will give away his motives, but I cannot find any, at least none of the most common when someone lies to me.

"I know the depths of what it is like to have loved ones taken from you, though... I do not remember them." He sighs and lowers his head for a moment before continuing. "The Demon would not offer you any sympathy, and would use this to crush you to flavor his meal." Hadrian's green eyes seem to spark. "I know he heard your cries tonight. Demons do not understand pain like you and I. And the other servants, although well-meaning, do not know how to handle this. So, that leaves me."

A bitter chuckle slips from his lips as he gestures to himself. "It just leaves me..."

Hadrian meets my stare head-on, the corner of his mouth curling up into a smirk that wouldn't have looked out of place on Sebastian. "I am here because I want to be." He stands and moves toward the headboard and I cringe backward, gripping the covers between white-knuckles fists. Sorrow darkens his gaze as he pries my fingers from the sheets and pulls the blanket up over my shoulders. His hands are cold.

I can only gape up at him stunned, as he all but tucks me in. WHAT IN THE NINE HELLS?!

"You are still a child, little lord, even though you are embittered and cunning beyond your years," he murmurs, "Going through the depths of the Abyss does that to people, hmm?" The shadows seem to lap at his frame, blurring the edges and giving him a ghostly appearance. "I would suggest you take what comfort and joy you can from this life while you are still able to. Before... you forget everything you once were." Hadrian's words are heavy with experience and I swallow hard as his powers, whatever they are, coalesce against my body for a moment in a strange mixture of warmth and dread.

"Wha-?"

"I have warded you against having any more of those forsaken nightmares, at least for the rest of
the evening."

I sigh and close my eyes, exhaustion, confusion, and exasperation swirling through my blood. The bastard chuckles and says with faint amusement, "Goodnight, Ciel. You shall get your answers... eventually." The door clicks shut and I groan as I roll onto my side and ponder the strange encounter.

I'm up for a long time before sleep steals me away again.

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

**Hadrian ~**

The steady rocking of the cart and the warm sunlight flickering through the cloud cover lulls me into a half-doze. The other servants' chatter keeps me from reaching true slumber, but I cannot fault their enthusiasm.

It's nice to see beauty with fresh eyes. Finnian is fascinated by everything he sees, childlike enthusiasm ringing in his words and actions. Baldroy is more restrained but no less enthusiastic and Mey-Rin chimes in with observations about the wildlife that crosses our path every so often.

I snuggle back into the corner I've claimed of the open-air wagon and listen in on Sebastian's quiet conversation with the Earl in the carriage a couple of meters ahead. Apparently, there are rumors of illegal dog-fighting pits the village of Houndsworth. The Queen wants this cruelty gone before she can begin to turn the town into her new summer resort.

So naturally, she sent her Guard Dog to investigate and claim the property in her name.

I huff softly to myself. Why the higher class feel the need to migrate every season for no purpose will always baffle me. Though, I am curious to see what the Earl will do with this seemingly unimportant mission. *Nothing is a coincidence after all.*

I have to bite my tongue to keep from cackling at Ciel's remark of the servants reducing the manor to shambles if he hadn't brought them along. *Methinks you are a seer, little Phantomhive!*

I crack open an eye and lazily watch as the landscape slowly transitions from green rolling hills and forests to parched, lifeless earth. My nose wrinkles of its own accord as the stench of sulfur and wet dog permeate upon the wind. I growl as the scent grows stronger and Sebastian glances back at me, a similar look of disgust on his face. Barely an hour later we reach the outskirts of the town.

A large dead tree draped in chains and studded dog collars guard the entrance. The rusted iron chains clink eerily in the breeze, a counterpoint to the other servant's cries of dismay. *Charming.* I swear I hear Death's rasp chuckle in the back of my head as we move on.

Dilapidated houses and dreary weather greets us as Sebastian steers our cart along the roughshod road leading up toward a manor house sitting atop a hill overlooking the town. My Demonic affiliation presses against my magic, almost as if curious, as I catch glimpses of the occupants eyeing us warily. Insanity, suspicion, and fear lay heavy upon this place like a smothering blanket.

When Finny, bless his kind heart, jumps out to help an elderly woman with a baby carriage he leaps back in shock to reveal the bones of a small dog, most likely a puppy. The fanatic, dazed words she mutters as she pushes the carriage away leave a bad taste in my mouth. *'The white dog is a good dog. The black dog is a bad dog.' How strange a saying... Perhaps it is a reflection of balance...? Then again, I'm probably putting too much stock into the mutterings of a crazy woman.* I shake
myself from my thoughts and motion Finny to get back in the wagon. I notice dogs of all sizes and breeds as we make our way through the village. The raucous and snarls hurt my ears. Upon the hill is what I assume to be the Lord of the land's house, judging by the size and position from it. It looks only slightly less ramshackle than the other buildings in my opinion.

Mey-Rin gushes over a handsome man playing with what I think is a German Shepherd when Death's voice caresses my mind. *That will be one of the souls you are to collect for me, Master. His end will be violent, unfortunately.*

I sigh and watch the young man and his dog until we round the bend. I overhear Sebastian making some kind of philosophical insinuation or other, but I am preoccupied with the task ahead. I'll need to be there right before he dies so I can guide his soul to the Void where Death will take over for the rest of the Judgement and Afterlife processing.

*Very well, Death. How long?*

**It will be tonight, roughly around midnight.**

I run my fingers through my long black hair and yawn as the cart winds its way up the hill and at last stops in front of the gray-stone manor house. *I have a feeling I am not going to like this one bit...* I think with a wry grimace. My Servant's silence is confirmation enough.

Our entourage is greeted by a willowy young woman with silver hair and lilac eyes at the door. "Hello. Are you the Earl Phantomhive?" I'm surprised when she looks in Ciel's direction instead of one of the adults.

"Yes, I believe my Master was expected?" Sebastian states, helping the boy from the carriage.

The girl smiles and gives a formal curtsy. "Excellent. Welcome to Barrymore Castle, sir. Lord Barrymore has been awaiting your arrival."

I hop out of the servant's wagon and raise my arms above my head in a leisurely stretch, wincing in relief as my vertebrae pop loudly. I grin as Ciel shoots me a disapproving glare as I follow him into the manor, leaving the others to handle the luggage. We follow the woman through the halls and up a flight of stairs to a receiving room.

I shudder at the stuffed animal heads looming overhead on the walls. Wisps of memories of an old, derelict house and preserved elf heads mounted upon the walls along with the screeching of a maniacal portrait flicker through my mind. *Damn it! Why can I never hold on to them?* I blow out a harsh breath, stamping down upon my frustration. It seems the more I try to hoard the memories the more they slip away.

The crack of a whip and an angry male voice shocks me out of my mental lost and found. The woman who led us here is on her knees, her arms raised in a defensive position, pleading and whimpering as a burly man strikes her repeatedly with the whip.

"Who is this poncy little chihuahua you've brought me, Angela? I'm expecting the Earl of Phantomhive! CAN'T YOU DO ANYTHING RIGHT?!" The man roars and snaps the whip several times across the maid's raised arms in quick succession.

A sharp, piercing hiss whistles through my bared teeth as fury claws its way through my blood. My magic thrums eagerly, begging to be unleashed and I am seconds away from allowing my control to slip when Ciel gives a quiet order to Sebastian.
In the blink of an eye, the Demon is across the room and snaring the man's whip hand in a vice-like hold.

"What are you doing? Let me go you filthy Doberman!" The man blusters, his odd sideburns-mustache bristling.

"He's acting on my orders." Ciel murmurs, a half-smirk twitching at his mouth. His single cyan eye glows with predatory excitement, the Hunt has commenced. I take a moment to suck in a lungful of air and use it to calm my magic into something more focused. I'm pissed as Hell but I cannot let my magic out to wreak havoc in such an unorthodox manner.

The little lord would chew my ears off if I killed any suspects before he got his answers!

The man, Lord Barrymore I assume, finally wrenches his arm from Sebastian's grasp. "What? Who are you?" Barrymore grunts.

Ciel takes a seat at the table and places his cane upon the surface with a soft clack. "I take it from your tone you don't know who I am. My name is Ciel, the Earl of Phantomhive."

"Do you mean to tell me the Queen's Emissary is nothing more than a toy poodle?" Lord Barrymore glowers at the child, massaging his wrist where the butler had gripped too hard.

I imagine how much more fun it would be if I could wrap my own around his neck. Out of the corner of my eye Angela cautiously rises to her feet and backs away a few steps. She glides along the edge of the room until she reaches the door and slips through. A few minutes later she returns with a tea service as Ciel and Barrymore discuss the legalities against the Queen obtaining Houndsworth. I'll ask to see if she would be willing to let me heal her later. I make a mental note to myself as I watch Sebastian take over preparing the tea due to the uncontrollable trembling in Angela's hands.

A quiet growl rumbles in my chest as I catch sight of the molted purple bruises and welts on her porcelain skin.

Barrymore pauses and glances over at me having heard my displeasure, a sneer marring his features. "And who is this lowly mongrel?"

"Aww. I don't get an official dog breed name?" I moan, words dripping sarcasm as I take a step closer toward the table. I square my shoulders and raise my chin.

"You're not worthy of being a dog."

Sebastian raises a cynical eyebrow at that. "Oh you are so right about that, Barrymore." I shift into a stalk, my magic coiling at the edges of my fingertips. Barrymore scowls and goes to open his mouth but I cut him off before he can spew anything else that will lower my IQ. "I'm no common dog." I smile, sharp and mirthless. The man pales as I creep ever closer. I'm almost right in his face as I softly croon, "I'm a wolf."

We lock eyes and the idiot finally seems to realize I am only wearing a human mask, the Demon nature in me peeking through the flesh. I am not truly human any longer. Haven't been for at least two hundred years now.

**Lord Henry Barrymore will be your second target, Harry. His end shall also be quite violent.**

Death murmurs, though he sounds slightly amused.

I lick my lips and let my smile stretch, freaking Barrymore out even more. I can smell his fear
through the sweat he secretes. My Wendigo purrs in pleasure at the scent.

*Good. I cannot stand abusers.* I reply with sadistic glee. Death sends a warm wave of affirmation and his presence vanishes a moment later.

"Enough, Mr. Odon." Ciel commands and I draw back, still grinning.

"Of course, little lord," I reply with an exaggerated bow at the waist. The boy's face twists into an annoyed grimace, but his uncovered eye gleams with mischievous delight. Sebastian also appears to be enjoying watching the Lord of Houndsworth squirm, if his innocent expression is anything to go by.

"Right. Back to business." Ciel announces and that seems to break the spell on Barrymore. He turns and ignores me completely as he picks back up where the conversation left off.

The Lord skims the papers, but I can tell from his body language that he will not give in to the Queen's wishes. Barrymore confirms it a second later as he tosses the packet down and folds his arms with a frown. "Under no circumstances will I sale Barrymore Castle to anybody."

Ciel raises an eyebrow. "Oh? And why is that?" he inquires.

"Because of the *Curse,*" Barrymore states solemnly.

"What Curse?"

"This village and its dogs have been around for hundreds of years. Anyone that interferes with us will be cursed." Silence reigns for several minutes as the Earl and Lord face off. Barrymore rises from his chair and places his palms down on the table, looming over Ciel's small frame like a hulking grizzly bear. "The Curse affects people in a most *dreadful* manner. Even the Queen cannot lift it! Anyone that tries will meet an unspeakably terrible fate!" He nearly growls the words, sounding much like the dogs he accused my companions of being.

I tilt my head and let a tendril of my magic loose to explore the room. If there is a Curse I should be able to locate and hopefully dispose of it. I sense Ciel's power as the Contract Holder for Sebastian and said Demon's own dark, seductive magic. However, I barely abort a startled gasp at the power I sense from Angela.

Pure and powerful like electricity, it is a beacon against Sebastian's. I bite my bottom lip and start to withdraw when I catch something very *off* about this new magic. There is something tainted within Angela's core. Something even more twisted than that of a regular Demon's. My gut clenches uncomfortably as acid burns the back of my throat. I squeeze my eyes shut and inhale and exhale slowly to fight back against sudden nausea.

*Shit! That is disgusting! It... if felt familiar... Like a Horcrux...* I swallow hard and shove my hands into the pockets of my cloak to keep from fidgeting. *How could whatever that wrongness is exist in something with magic that pure? Unless...* I open my eyes and sigh softly, hoping my hunch is just that, a hunch. I'm only half aware of Ciel and Barrymore bringing the conversation to a close. *What if whatever Angela is it is all just a facade? There is something bad within her magic!*

I'm jolted from my worried musing by Sebastian's gloved hand falling upon my shoulder.

"Are you well, Hadrian? You've been staring off into space for a while now." The Demon says with a curious head tilt.

I must up a smirk, but it feels thin and hollow. The butler obviously doesn't buy it either.
"Can you sense anything off about Angela?" I ask in a low undertone.

Sebastian frowns thoughtfully. "Other than the fact that she is an Angel? Not at the moment," he replies equally as quiet.

I blink, dumbstruck.

"An Angel? Really?"

"Yes. Fortunately for my sensibilities, she is not broadcasting her Grace fully, otherwise I would be quite put out."

I glance at the others as Ciel and Barrymore rise from their seats, Ciel with a contemplative gleam in his eye and Barrymore giving the boy a death glare with all his might. "Be on your guard, Sebastian. There is something sick within Angela." I whisper and brush past him to follow the Earl from the room. As I pass Angela fire suddenly blazes along my spine and shoulder blades. I dig my nails deep into my palms to keep from crying out and hurry out of the room and along the corridor. Bloody Hell! Why did this have to come at the most inconvenient of times? I curse my luck and head down the stairs and through the front doors. I ignore the other servant's shouted inquires as I hurry past where they are unloading the last of the bags from the carriage. Warm, sizzling magic races along my marrow and nuzzles against my Magical Core.

I hiss softly, unable to contain it, as another wave of scorching heat ripples along my shoulders. The Angel affiliation seems to be unlocking a lot faster than the Demonic or Reaper powers. I apparate behind a nearby tree and into the thick forest bordering the village, taking what small comfort I can in the darkness of the trees.

I need to figure out the depths of this new Angelic side without being disturbed.

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It is almost nightfall by the time anything manifests from this new power.

The only warning I receive that something is about to happen is a final all-powerful itchy tingling that zings along my spine before it focuses upon my shoulder blades. It feels as though something bursts out of my back and I scream, collapsing onto all fours. Brand new muscle, tendon, and bone climb up and away from my body like tree branches, skin and something soft and airy forming a millisecond later to cover them. Spots dance across my vision as my body fights to accommodate my new appendages.

Something wet drips from the shredded remains of my shirt, somehow still valiantly clinging to my torso by a few threads. It takes me a moment to realize it's my blood staining the grass below me. Ow. Is the only eloquent word my brain can supply, even though I've yet to feel the pain from my shredded back.

A breeze blows by and I shiver despite the humidity. Suddenly the limbs on my back twitch and extend, the soft, airy material covering them rippling along the wind current. Wincing slightly, I glance over my shoulder to finally get a look at what new oddity has been added to my bizarre existence.

Wings.

Of course, they're wings, idiot! a sharp, little voice snipes and I can't help but roll my eyes at myself. I focus back on studying the wings. They are very large, about four to five meters each. The soft stuff is actually feathers. The color is a little hard to see in the weak light, but I can make
out that the feathers appear to be very dark green, almost to the point of obsidian. A faint sheen of blood gleams upon the feathers and I grimace as the sight brings a bout of dizziness.

With a moan, I close my eyes and focus on my breathing and dig my fingers into the waxy grass to keep grounded. The lightheaded sensation fades after several rounds of breathing exercises, however, it seems my adrenaline and shock has finally worn off. Pain lances along my back and wings as I rise on half-asleep legs.

"Shit!" I snarl when the weight of my wings and my sore limbs nearly make me topple face-first into a tree trunk. I manage to catch myself in time, sinking my nails into the rough bark to keep my balance. I push away from the tree and take a step back to brace against the awkwardness of my uncoordinated wings. Okay... first thing's first, I need to figure out how to control these things. With a quiet huff I slowly, cautiously, flex the new muscles in my shoulders and back. Despite the sharp sting from the injuries, my wings respond of their own accord, gently flaring until they are half curled over my shoulders. It is a bit odd, they feel like an extra pair of arms, only covered in feathers.

With a giddy grin, I ease one wing to its full extent, loosening the stiff joints and marveling at the feeling of control. I do the same with the other and after a couple of hours, I'm able to have both wings extended to their fullest with minimal pain. "This is awesome," I whisper and watch the moon slowly ascend before the clouds begin to converge. I can smell rain in the distance, the storm front should be here in a few hours, probably around midnight.

Midnight... that was when Death declared I needed to take the soul of that young man. I run my fingers through my hair and wince as I hit a tangle. With a quick flick of wandless magic, I set my hair straight, as straight as it will ever get at least, and cast a quick Tempus charm. The glowing numbers inform me it is already past ten. Alright, time to get to work. I give a decisive nod and cautiously push a small portion of healing magic into my spine and wings. I shudder as the skin on my back tingles and slowly knits back together. Another charm sees the blood cleaned up and my torn shirt repair itself, just with slits for my wings this time around. I groan softly as I realize I'll most likely have to do that to all my clothing if I'm going to need to call upon my Angelic affiliation in a moment's notice. It would be annoying to rip apart my shirt every time this happened. The things I do for my Servant. I hope you appreciate me Death.

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It is exactly midnight when I witness the murder of James Ettore by the hand of Henry Barrymore.

The poor man barely has time to cry out before Barrymore's bloodthirsty hounds are upon him. They rip him to shreds in barely under five minutes. James' dog, the one he was playing with earlier, lets out a ferocious bark and lunges for the Lord. Barrymore lets out a muffled shout of pain as the German Shepard takes a chunk out of his calf, the fabric of his pant leg ripping as he kicks the dog away. The coward makes his escape, calling his dogs back to him, before James' hound can manage to make it to his paws.

I lower the hood of my Invisibility Cloak and walk over to the rapidly cooling corpse. With a flourish I summon my Reaper Scythe to me, the double-bladed glaive eagerly jumping into my palms with a happy thrum. I stifle an amused snort and dip my head in respect toward the body. With a deft slash, the blade of my weapon cuts the strings tying James' soul to the living stratum.

James' spirit looks as he did in life, auburn hair and warm brown eyes, though he is transparent like a ghost. As the soul rises from the body I watch the Cinematic Record of the life of James Ettore. He had a simple life, not letting the worries of the world drag him down like most others in this village. James had dreamed of leaving Houndsworth with his dogs to seek out a small fortune and
then raise his own animals in peace. He was only twenty-three, quite young to have his life torn from him by a power-mad tyrant.

I sigh as the Record ends and beckon James' soul to me. "I'm sending you on your way now, James Ettore. I am confident Death will agree with me and send you on into Paradise." I say gently and slash my glaive through the air, creating a portal for the departed spirit to slip through into the Void where Death will await him. "Go on now," I murmur and place a hand upon his shoulder and nudge him toward the tear I'd created.

James pauses and looks forlornly at his dog. The beast whines pitifully and paws at the body of his master. "Do not worry, James. You will see him on the other side one day." I try to be reassuring though the words pierce my heart with bitterness. I never will see my loved ones again. The spirit offers me a tiny smile as if sensing my thoughts and then slips through the portal. The rip seals immediately after like it was never there.

Death, the first soul is on his way to you. I send the message through our bond and twirl my Scythe a couple of times before vanishing it back to a pocket dimension until I have need of it again.

Thank you, Master. James has been reunited with his family and ancestors in Paradise.

Good. I'm glad. I sigh in relief at that. The young man deserved it. I purposefully ignore the pain in my own soul at the reminder that I shall never be reunited with my family and friends. I'm Immortal and always shall be. There will be no crossing over for me, and I am not allowed to fully cross into Heaven or Hell, even with the Resurrection Stone. The shades of the dead cannot compare to that of a living spirit that has already crossed over. With a grimace at my self-pity, I force a change of subject before Death can pick up on my negative emotions.

Just so you know I unlocked my Angelic powers. It hurt like a bitch! I feel my Servant's amusement and concern and decide to ward him off before he can work himself up. I chuckle quietly at the absurdity of that. Death driving himself into a tizzy is such an odd thought, even though I've been getting to know the Entity for centuries.

It is nice to know he cares.

Don't worry, Death. I'm fine. Despite a lot of clumsiness and dizziness, I was able to get through it in one piece. I shift my wings against my back. I really need to figure out how to get them to go away... Any tips for this new side of me?

Well, depending upon your Angelic affiliation you should have certain abilities. For example, all Angels have their own magic which they call Grace. Angel's Grace is specific for their classification, like a fingerprint. Death explains patiently as I move away from the body. What color are your wings, Master? Most Angel wings are white with slight variations into gold, silver, and blue.

Mine are a deep, dark green. I reply absently as I try to will the wings away like I'd done with my Wendigo claws and teeth the first time they were unlocked.

Death's cackle startles me from my concentration. Only you, Harry! Only you could be one of the rare Angels of Death! The Entity sounds absolutely smug and I rub my temples as his laughter fades to the occasional snicker.

Must you really wail like a banshee right in my skull, you rotten sack of bones?

He cackles again just to prove to me that he is really an immature child hiding beneath those dark,
hooded robes. Once the ringing fades Death speaks. **I would like to you soon after this errand is over, Master. I'll be able to help you adjust to this newest change.** I detect the wistfulness in his tone and wince. Death, ironically, gets rather lonely. I can empathize. Immortality is as much a curse as it is a blessing, and Death had been around since the Beginning. He was one of the First Ones the Creator brought into being when the universe was born. Death has stood stalwart against most every emotion and trauma the universe has witnessed, but loneliness has always been the one stumbling block he's struggled with.

> **Of course, my friend. I shall come to Headquarters after this Houndsworth fiasco is over with! Besides, I need to make sure that Grell Sutcliffe remembers his place.** I've been wanting to know how the flamboyant idiot has been faring since I dropped him off at William's mercy.

My Servant snorts softly in amusement at the last remark. **He's been doing paperwork for William and the other Division Managers ever since. His Scythe was also confiscated. He'll be on probation until William or I say otherwise.**

I muffle my laughter with my palm and go to reply when a long, loud howl pierces the evening. "What now?" I growl, frustrated with one debacle happening after another.

**I shall see you soon, Master. Good luck.** Death whispers within my mind before closing the link.

I rake a hand through my hair irritably as the townsfolk begin shouting and I can make out shapes darting from their houses. I tug the hood of the Invisibility Cloak over my head, obscuring my body lest the villagers think I had something to do with James' death. My wings twitch slightly as the wind picks up. I reach into my core and take hold of the electrifying Grace dancing about and tug, willing it to settle. A moment later my wings meld into my back as if they had never been. I roll my shoulders to work out the stiffness and wait for the newest disaster to find me.

Knowing my luck it won't be long.

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"Are you not going to swim either, Hadrian?" Sebastian murmurs as he leans over the beach towel I'm currently reclining on.

"Nope." I pop the 'p' and close my eyes. The warmth of the rare sunshine is lulling me into slumber. Last night, I learned about the Demon Hound supposedly stalking the land, preying upon the villagers in defense of the Barrymore family. What a load of bull! The villagers had recited some creepy chant similar to what the old lady with the pram earlier had muttered. *Barrymore is playing them like a fiddle!* The villagers had continued the eerie poem as they bore James' body away, careless of the real reason he died.

After the Hell that was last night, I got very little rest, so any opportunity to grab a quick catnap will not be missed!

I should know better than to let my guard down around a Demon.

Before I know it my towel has suddenly become a net and I am flung through the air. I hit the water with an almighty splash, the coolness of it shocking me. I gag as lake water fills my lungs and I claw my way to the surface. I spot Sebastian by the shore with a triumphant smirk on his face and Ciel struggling to hold back laughter from his lounge chair.

"Y-YOU BLOO- BLOODY BASTARD!" I splutter between coughs. I tread water and silently bemoan my clothing. Everything is charmed waterproof except for my cream cotton blouse. For
some reason, this one shirt will not hold a spell for anything! I swim toward shore and slog my way into the shallows, glaring down the butler the entire time. I flick out the Elder Wand and spell my clothes dry and shake out my hair, water droplets flying in every direction.

"I'm getting you back for this!" I hiss as I storm past the Demon, heading for the food laid out upon another towel. Sebastian merely throws me a smug grin and walks over to Ciel. They have a whispered conversation and then the butler is speeding away and the Earl has a pensive expression cutting across his features.

I roll my eyes and plop myself down on the towel and snatch a finger sandwich from the platter as Finny, Bard, and Mey-Rin seat themselves around me with Angela and Tanaka joining a moment later. I nibble on my food and listen to the other servants chat with the Angel while Tanaka sips at his ever-present mug of tea. I notice with a start as Angela reaches for a slice of cake that her hands are completely healed from the scourging they took yesterday.

Must be a trait of Angels to heal quickly. I determine as I finish the last of my sandwich. I internally must agree with Mey-Rin's praise of Sebastian's skills in the kitchen as the others munch through the snacks. I bury my face in my hands as a group of people run by, shouting something about finding a dog and punishment. Can I not have five minutes to rest? I despair when I see the Earl rise and march after the mob with a determined stride.

"Are you coming, Hadrian?" Bard questions as he and the others leap up to follow their master.

"Noooooo." I can't keep the petulance from my voice as I flop onto my back and fling an arm across my eyes.

"Come on, Mr. Odon!" Finny chirps, scooping me up and throwing me over his shoulder as he dashes off. I yelp in shock at the action and cling on for dear life. I can hear Mey-Rin and Bard snicker as they chase after us and I lower my head with a defeated groan.

"End me," I whimper as I bounce along. My pleas are unanswered and eventually, the abnormally strong lad sets me gently upon my feet. I wobble briefly and Finny steadies me with a strong hand against my shoulder. I give him a soft, grateful smile before focusing on the mob baying for blood in front of us.

I watch as several large dogs are released upon James' German Shepherd. Red tints my vision as the canines viciously bite and claw at the chained up creature. The dog growls and struggles but his foes only increase their brutality. Beside me Finny pales and begins to tremble, clenching his hands in front of his chest and pale green eyes wide with horror.

"Stop this," he whispers so softly I can barely hear him for the shrieking of the crowd.

"Finny?" I watch as his shaking worsens and tears begin to build in the corners of his eyes. He looks as though he's seen a ghost.

"JUST LET THE POOR THING GO," Finny bellows out of the blue and pushes his way through the mob. I gaze at the boy in surprise, and after a quick glance at my companions to confirm we are all in the same boat, follow after him. Finnian is such a soft-spoken, gentle creature. I've never once heard him raise his voice in anger! I stumble to a halt in a mixture of awe and pride as the boy rips a thick stake from the ground and dashes toward the bloodthirsty hounds. "Stop this NOW!" With a single, precise swing he uses the pole to knock the dogs away, sending them skittering back with surprised yelps.

The blond boy drops the stake and collapses to his knees, hugging the mangled German Shepherd
to his chest. We form a semicircle around him, anxiously wanting to aid the distressed gardener. The shuffling and muttering from the villagers alert me that there is about to be more trouble.

I spin on my heel and face the angry mob head-on, the others following my lead.

"How dare these outsiders interfere!"

"They should be punished."

"They are bad dogs!"

I catch a glimpse of Barrymore smirking at the back of the crowd and a growl rumbles in my chest as the villagers press forward bandying clubs and pitchforks and rakes. I take a step forward and call upon my magic. It rushes through my blood and gathers at my fingertips, ready to be unleashed.

"Try something, I dare you." I snarl, my voice heavy with dark promise. The villagers start forward but freeze in their tracks as I whip out the Elder Wand and fire off a warning blast into the air. I unleash the full weight of my tightly controlled magic, letting everyone feel the weight of my aura pressing down upon them. The villagers' eyes bug out of their sockets and I catch Bard and Mey-Rin gaping at me in surprised confusion. Ciel's gaze drills into my head but I ignore it. "Take one more step," I warn, "And I will have the next person's head."

The Demon in me stirs in excitement, longing to cause chaos and terror. My new Angel half rises in my Magical Core to protect and defend. I feel the phantom sensation of wings upon my back and talons curving from my fingers. My magics pulse in tandem with my rapid heartbeat as I hold my ground in a loose defensive stance, waiting for some idiot to make a mistake. I will kill them all and apologize to Death later for the influx of extra souls if someone decides to act foolishly.

The prize for the 'Biggest Idiot of All Time' ends up going to Lord Henry Barrymore.

"Your phony tricks won't save you from punishment!" Barrymore bristles, his dogs snarling at his feet.

"It is funny you should mention phony tricks, Lord Barrymore." Ciel drawls, stepping up to my side.

"What? What the blazes are you talking about you yapping Pomeranian?!" the man blusters. I notice with interest that his complexion has become noticeably paler.

The Queen's Guard Dog frowns in annoyance at the moniker but continues on with his accusation. "You've been lying to the people of Houndsworth this whole time. There is no Demon Hound! You." The young Phantomhive's passionate speech is interrupted by Barrymore's livid roar.

"How dare you! Get him!" The hounds circling the Lord bolt forward at once on his command.

The dogs barrel toward us, spit flying from their jowls and teeth bared to rip and crush. I tense and gather my magic and release it in a shock wave. At the exact same time Sebastian swoops in out of nowhere and backhands one of the dogs as the exact moment the magic hurtles two others into the air. The Demon then quickly dispatches the rest and straightens to stand protectively in front of Ciel.

"Such uncouth, barbaric growls." Sebastian tsks disdainfully as the beasts scramble to their paws and edge forward, hackles raised and ferocious snarls ringing in the air.
"Cutting it a bit close, Sebastian," Ciel mutters though he keeps his gaze firmly fixed on the now puce colored Lord of Houndsworth.

"It won't happen again, young Master." The Demon murmurs succinctly while adjusting his gloves.

"I'll show you what happens when a dog challenges me!" Barrymore scream, eyes burning with rage. "What are you useless mutts waiting for? Kill them!"

The dogs bark and howl, tensing to attack.

"That is another reason why I despise these creatures," Sebastian says quietly, disgust dripping from his words. A moment later the butler's eyes flash with vermilion Demonic power and the dogs immediately whimper and lower onto their bellies, tags wagging tentatively in submission.

I've got to learn that trick! I vow silently and train my wand upon Barrymore and the mob lest they try anything while Ciel and Sebastian begin to produce proof of Barrymore's treachery. The Demon Hound was nothing more than one of the village dogs coated in fluorescent turquoise powder and made to run about the town. Sebastian proceeded to produce a projector which beamed an image of a wolf head silhouetted against the dark gray clouds and a vial of faintly glowing dust.

Barrymore rants and waves his arms about, puffing out his chest, but I notice the way he shifts nervously from foot to foot and the perspiration gathering upon his brow. If I wasn't already aware of his sins the way he's reacting now would be damning enough.

"That doesn't prove anything! You cannot fool them. Where is your evidence?"


Ciel smirks as Sebastian makes his way over to the German Shepherd which is barely clinging onto life by a thread. "You can rest now. Your duty is finished. We can take it from here." He murmurs and retrieves a scrap of cloth from the dog's mouth. James' dog lets out a tiny, almost grateful whimper and shuts his eyes. I send the creature's soul into the Void with a flick of my wand. Animal souls do not need as much guidance as those of humans.

"What fine craftsmanship." The Demon calls out, examining the shredded bit of cloth. "Would you care to examine this, my Lord?" Sebastian holds the fabric out toward the flabbergasted man and villagers. I myself am amazed by how quickly Ciel and Sebastian have pieced the clues together in just a few short hours. "This is yours, as I'm sure you recognize. This is a piece was torn from your pants by James' dog when you attacked his master." The butler states in a cold, blunt manner.

Barrymore freezes for a split second, rage, fear, and shock all warring for dominance on his face. He turns as if to run, but the crowd quickly surrounds him. One villager lifts up his pant leg to reveal the bite wound from James' dog.

"He lied!"

"He really killed James!"

"Punish him!" Someone yells and just like that the mob switches targets. They hoist their former Lord off his feet and drag him away, ignoring his demands and protests while chanting all the while, 'Punish James' killer!'

I slowly let lose the breath I didn't realize I was holding and allow a self-satisfied smirk to curl across my lips. I glance over my shoulder to check on my companions. Mey-Rin is half slumped
against Bard, the relief evident in her posture. Bard scratches the back of his head, a puzzled frown
on his face as he gazes after the dispersing townsfolk. Tanaka simply sips at his tea, totally
nonchalant, and I shake my head fondly. The eldest Phantomhive servant is truly a treasure.

Finny seems to cave in upon himself as he hugs the dead dog tightly to his chest, sobbing quietly. I
sigh and walk over to him, placing a reassuring hand on his trembling head, softly stroking his
straw-colored locks. "Shh," I mutter, "It'll be okay, Finnian. He's with his master now. He was a
good dog."

Finny sniffs and looks up at me, tear tracks staining his cheeks and eyes glassy. "Are y-you
sure?" He implores in a small, ragged voice.

I smile. "I'm certain of it," I say confidently and help him to his feet. I give the lad a gentle push
toward Bard and Mey-Rin, knowing that they will be able to comfort the youngest servant better
than I.

"One more reason for me to hate dogs," Sebastian grumbles with a contemptuous flick of his hand
toward Finnian's grief-stricken form huddling in Barldroy's and Mey-Rin's embrace.

"Shut the fuck up, Demon!" My temper explodes at Sebastian's callousness. The butler's russet eyes
widen and he takes a half step back. I make to shove past him but he snags my elbow in an iron
grip. "Let me go," I hiss, struggling to keep my agitated powers from lashing out.

"Do you have a problem with me?" Sebastian leans in close, his voice is almost a growl and his
eyes glimmer with Hellfire.

"I will if you don't bloody stay your tongue!"

The tension rises as both our Immortal powers begin to permeate the air, battling for dominance.
Before things can escalate to relationship-damaging Ciel steps between us, his expression
murderous. "Enough of this childish behavior!"

The butler releases my arm and steps back with a snort. "Of course, Master." He murmurs with a
dip of his head.

The Earl snaps around to face me and open his mouth to most likely chew me out but something in
my face must make him think better of it. He sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose between
thumb and forefinger. "Cool down, Hadrian. We will be leaving in the morning." The boy looks as
exhausted as I feel.

He marches off toward the manor, shoulders slumped. Sebastian gives me a long, assessing look
but says nothing as he walks past and follows the young lord up the hill. I scoff but the anger
vanishes barely a minute later as Mey-Rin, Bard, and Finny shuffle over to my side.

"Thank you for standing up for me, Mr. Odon, but please don't judge Sebastian too harshly. I... I
don't think he meant to be rude." Finny says with a teary smile.

"How'd you get them all to freeze like that?" Bard questions, his pale blue eyes narrowed in
suspicion.

"Magic," I deadpan, too tired to even think of a convincing lie. "I'm not exactly...normal." The
servants gape at me.

"W-What do you mean? Real magic, not just misdirection and tricks?" Mey-Rin is the first to find
her voice.
I simply nod. "I'll explain, just not right now please." I plead and scrub a weary hand down my face. "I-I'm sorry." Now they'll know what a freak I am!

"There is nothing to apologize for." A warm, wizened voice murmurs. My head snaps up so fast I nearly crack it against the man before me. Tanaka gives me a pat on the shoulder, adjusts his glasses, and walks off.

I blink in shock. Tanaka rarely speaks, but when he does it always holds weight and makes one pay attention. I chance a glance at the trio.

Bard looks impressed. "Well then, if Tanaka thinks its fine, then it must be!" He exclaims and just like that the tightness in my throat vanishes and I'm able to stand tall once more.

"Don't worry, sir. We won't tell anyone." Finny rushes to reassure. Mey-Rin and Bard echo their agreement. Who would believe you? I keep my incredulity to myself. A relieved smile twitches at my lips despite myself and I bow low in gratitude.

"Come on. We should rest while we can. Who knows what disaster will happen next?"

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

Rain pounds against the rooftop in a steady, hypnotic beat. Thunder rattles the window panes as I stalk through the halls. My Wendigo power caresses my Magical Core with velvet pleasure as my blood-lust slowly grows.

It is my turn to exact a pound of flesh. The next soul Death wants me to collect will be Barrymore's and I plan on showing him little mercy before I send him to the Void. I navigate my way down to the dungeons where Barrymore is being held. The irony of his placement brings me no end of satisfaction. A barely muffled scream vibrates in my larynx as Angela suddenly steps into my path as she enters the hallway from a side room.

"Oh!" She startles, a hand flying to her heart. "I'm sorry sir, I didn't see you!"

I shakily blow out a breath and will my posture to ease. "No worries."

The Angel bows and slips past me but as she does so, I catch a flicker of her sickly aura. I swallow against the bile that tries to clog my throat.

"Are you well?" She must've noticed my struggle. I've never had a very good poker face... Damn it!

"I'm fine," I rasp. "Excuse me." Her lilac gaze follows me until I turn the corner.

With a fortifying breath, I continue my journey and at least reach the stairs leading down into the oublieette and descend. As soon as I force open the heavy oak door Barrymore's frantic cries assault me, echoing off the mildew stonework.

"Let me out! Its going to get me I know it! Please, oh please let me go!" The condemned man wails, voice thick with panic. I frown and start down the steps toward the main holding area. Why is he so worked up? What's going to get him? I ponder this as Barrymore's pleading grows more pronounced. "It's coming for me! Please, I beg of you, anyone! Plea-"

CRASH!

I freeze, adrenaline surging through my veins and magic coiling along my forearms. Barrymore's scream of agony sends me bolting down the stairs. I skid to a halt in front of Barrymore's cell and
desperately try to get air into my lungs. A giant white wolf looms over me with Barrymore's right arm trapped in its jaws.

_The Demon Hound!_ I realize with a jolt.

The man is howling in fear and pain, clawing and scrabbling at the beast's muzzle. With a snarl, the creature chomps down. There is a sharp _crack_ of bone breaking as the wolf rips off the hand and swallows it. Barrymore shrieks and then goes limp, collapsing in a pool of his own blood.

I immediately sense the man is dead. Blood loss and shock in too short a time period.

But the carnage does not end there. The wolf bares its teeth at me in a crimson grin and then, to my absolute horror, tears the soul from the body and shreds it. Barrymore's spirit locks eyes with me in a beseeching plea just as the deadly fangs end his existence forever.

"No!"

The wolf howls and leaps through the crater it'd made in the wall.

"You will _suffer_ for this!" I vow in a ragged whisper. To end a soul's existence in such a manner is one of the ultimate crimes a non-Reaper can commit. I snarl wordlessly and apparate outside, unleashing my Demonic affiliation as I do so. My bones crack and morph as I change into Athanasios, my Wendigo embodiment.

A moment later the transformation is complete.

I raise myself onto my hind legs, rainwater slicking my black pelt, and swivel my head around to try and find the Demon Hound. A mournful howl echoes across the land and I spot a glimpse of the mutt hightailing it for the forest. With a guttural roar, I charge after the beast on all fours. I will not let this go unpunished!

My long limbs eat up the distance and my claw-tipped paws leave furrows in the mud as I gain upon my prey. The Demon Hound squeals as I lunge for it, catching its hindquarters with my claws as it dodges. It growls at me, red eyes gleaming in the gathering fog when it turns tail again. I extend my long tongue and lick along my incisors and mandibles and then swipe it across my talons, savoring the taste of rain and blood. Euphoria thrums through my body at the taste.

"_Run! Run little puppy!_" I grin. "_You're making the Hunt more fun._" I toss my antlers with a laugh and chase after the fleeing Demon Hound. The wind whistles through my deer-like skull as I run. I keep my gaze locked on the flash of white fur streaking across the moor, heading for the forest. Shouts and screams ring out behind me from the town, but I ignore the clamor. The Hunt has consumed me.

My target pauses and looks back. The beast appears stunned that I'm still on its tail. Lightning arcs overhead, illuminating the world in brilliant white-blue relief. With a confused bark the Demon Hound doubles its pace and reaches the tree line and into the woods with me only a few meters behind. I smash through the trees, roaring in frustration as undergrowth ensnares my antlers. I hack at the vegetation until its nothing more than a trampled pulp and sniff the air. The sour tang of fear and confusion taints the breeze. Thunder roars overhead, but below the din of the storm and the villager's cries in the distance, I can hear the rapid tattoo of the wolf's heartbeat. With a joyful hiss, I turn westward and give chase.

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I pursue the Demon Hound all throughout the night and into the gray hours of the morning.
I do not tire thanks to my form's natural endurance and only pause now and again to toy with my prey or lock onto its location. I finally corner the nuisance in a maze of crumbling ruins just outside Houndsworth. It must have been part of the original town years past. The fog is so heavy I can barely see two feet in front of me, even with my improved Demonic vision.

I prowl through the dilapidated building, ears pricked and nose to the wind. I know the wolf is here. I can hear its wheezing pants and the humming of its heart. I can smell its sweat and exhaustion.

The Hunt is finally drawing to a close.

Unfortunately, I haven't learned my lesson when it comes to Demons. They never react the exact way one thinks they will.

A bloodcurdling shriek bursts from my throat as a stream of fire suddenly engulfs me. Excruciating pain lights up the left side of my ribs as the flames consume my flesh. It can breathe fire!

Gasping, I drop to the ground and attempt to mold myself into the wet earth. I frantically scrape dirt upon the fire, successfully smothering it after several heart-stopping minutes. However, before I can get my paws under me, I'm bowled over.

Son of a-!

Claws dig into my damaged side and sharp teeth clamp down on my clavicle. I bellow in pain and twist around, trying to snatch the Demon Hound off me. My foe snarls viciously and bites down harder making me buck in retaliation. Blood stains my fur and the stench of burnt flesh and wet canine invades my nasal cavity. My burnt flesh... The thought makes me sick.

With a desperate snarl, I roll onto my injured side, crushing the Hound beneath my weight. I can't hold back a scream as the creature's claws sink deeper into my ribs before pulling free with a wet slurping sound as I scramble to my feet.

My sides heave, nearly to the point of hyperventilation, as I risk a glance to assess my wounded side. My skin hangs from my torso in thin, bloody strips. Chunks of fur have been ripped away and I swear I can see a bit of bone poking out. At least the fire cauterized the wound. I shudder from my antlers to my tail bone and turn back to where the Demon Hound lays winded.

Before it can gather itself I descend upon it.

I rip into the wolf, gouging at it with my wicked talons and pull away mouthfuls of fur and skin. My prey wails and whimpers, kicking at my underbelly with its claws. I ignore the pain and renew my attack, determined to end the Hunt. It stole from Death! It will repay him with its life!

Blood, the Demon Hound's and my own, smears my jaws in red and coats my tongue in iron. The beast's struggles grow weaker and weaker until I at last strike the killing blow. I crunch down upon my prey's windpipe and listen to its heartbeat fade into silence.

Th-Thump.

Th-Thump.

Th-Thump...

The Hunt is over.

I let the body fall from my jaws with a dull thud and back away. The Demon Hound's corpse is in pieces, viscera scattered about the battleground in random intervals. There is barely a patch of
white left on its fur, stained as it is with dirt and blood. A deep, rattling sigh escapes my jaws in a cloud of steam. I'm beyond exhausted!

"Justice has been administered. Rest in peace," I rumble in my deep, smooth baritone.

Agony flares along my ribs as I turn to leave and I hiss softly. This really sucks!

I limp my way past the now hauntingly quiet ruins and am about to shift back into human form when I finally notice the apparition trailing me. I wearily turn to address it, only to still in stunned amazement.

Floating before is a person I had long ago lost the name of, but the face is so achingly familiar it brings the identity rushing back.

"Sirius?"

The spirit of my long-dead Godfather says nothing, nor makes any motion of affirmation. It simply hovers above the remains of Demon Hound and gazes back at me with piercing gray eyes. Pulse racing I call upon my magic and transform. I stumble briefly upon my human legs and scramble upright.

But when I look up and blink Sirius is not there.

There is nothing except for the rapidly cooling body of the wolf and the looming fog-shrouded ruins and me.

"Sirius!" I shout, my hoarse voice echoing. I scan the area frantically, but I find no trace of my Godfather. My gaze comes to rest upon the corpse and that is when the memories assault me.

I only get flashes.

Sirius laughing at something someone had said.

A large, black dog challenging a werewolf.

His touching words of advice on the nature of Dark and Light.

Sirius falling through a Veil that leads to the Realm of Death.

I come out of the memories with a sharp cry and fall to my knees in the blood-stained grass. My breath leaves me in shallow pants as shock freezes my inside. I finally have a few memories from my previous life! I can finally recall someone's name from the past! I did have someone who cared about me!

And I got them killed.

"It's my fault," I say in a rough whisper. "It was all my fault!"

Guilt and shame and rage and a thousand different emotions all slam into me with the force of a tidal wave. And I can do nothing to stop it, to make things right. To erase my mistakes and fix my past.

So I bow my head and give in to the maelstrom.

For the first time in over five hundred years, I weep.
Chapter End Notes

Hi everyone! I'm still alive!

I'm so sorry for the long wait! A lot of stuff, good and bad, has happened since my last chapter.

In a nutshell:
Start of new semester of junior year in college.
Sickness.
Dealing with several deaths, sadly including a suicide, on campus.
Processing and dealing with mental health.
Writer's Block.
And finally having to adjust and deal with this freaking corona virus pandemic!
Life is really weird sometimes, huh?
Anyway, those are the reasons I've been gone for a while. So, I decided to try and make it up to y'all with a super extra long chapter! I really hope y'all enjoy this because I worked very hard on it! It's literally past 4am where I'm at and I only just now finished this bloody monstrosity! XD

Please, please, please let me know what you think of this! Comments, constructive criticism, questions, the whole shebang! I love hearing from you guys!

Please stay safe in the midst of this covid-19 crisis, but don't give in to fear either! I'd recommend giving Psalm 91 a look-see. Even if you are not spiritual its still a pretty good pick-me-up.

Blessing and Favor and Protection be upon you all!

~ Lightseed

P.S: I have Harry's Angel name picked out! Just waiting for him to get a bit of a better control on his new powers and then I'll introduce Angel-Harry to his companions! Also, I know James' in the Black Butler anime did not have a last name, but I decided to give him one because it sounded more professional, idk. Ettore means "loyal" in Italian, or that's what Google told me!

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