The Children of Men
by rsfahrudeen

Summary

(Season 13)

Sequel to A LIFE OF VIRTUE

After filling the empty at a devastating cost, our wayward children must deal with rebelling reapers, the overcrowding of the veil, opportunistic underworld dieties and an unforeseen consequence to their meddling with the abyss that could spell the end of humanity.
The Emptied and The Filled

Chapter Summary

Hel takes charge after losing her father to the abyss.
Castiel finds himself in the strange world of the no-longer-empty.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The ground stills, the light from the abyss fading. Hel slowly gets to her feet and looks to the edge. The abyss is still the same, nothing but a vast emptiness, but for a brief moment she could have sworn she'd seen a world beyond. The tether is in tangles by the edge. Did it break? Is there still line to pull? Is it stuck? Her heart sinks as she sees the familiar knotting and when she lifts it up, she can see the harness, whole and empty before her.

He's gone. Her father, Loki, Gabriel is gone, somehow. Lost in the abyss. Before her heart can crumble to pieces, the air around her freezes so severely its like plunging from a sauna into a frozen lake. She looks back and sees Sam's shade manifest, his eyes are wide, his skin pale as snow. Upon seeing Gabriel's loss, he looses all control.

"Stay down!" She commands as his rage and grief explode out in a torrent of wind and weapons hurled chaotically about the abyss. "Sam! Samuel!" Hel holds out her hand parting the waves of power. "You must stop! You'll hurt the girls." But its futile, nothing can reach him in this state and its too dangerous to let him wear himself out.

"Sam!" Alex slowly gets to her feet, "Please! You have to calm down. She might not be..." a blade narrowly misses her and plants itself in the ground. Claire quickly bolts up, tackling her to the ground as a broken helmet smashes against them.

He's not going to listen, He can't listen. Everything he holds most dear has been lost to the abyss. His brother, his best friend, and now his lover. His pain must be unimaginable.

"Hela!" Yuri snaps. "Stop fucking around!" She gives him a glare and takes a breath. May her father forgive her, she has to bind him. Claire's wallet, thrown at her earlier, is still in her pocket. Patent leather with nickel rivets instead of iron or steel. Perfect, absurd but perfect. Hel strides forwards and thrusts the wallet fist deep into his shade, pulling his soul from the trappings of self into the organic construct in her grasp.

"I'm sorry, Sam. This is only temporary." She sighs, and sends it deep into her vault. Everything drops onto everyone's heads, the weapons, the armor, the amber gems of her father's discarded memory. Fortunately no one gets hurt.

"Where is Gabriel?" The two angels who grabbed hold of the tether, ending the tug of war
with the abyss, walk over to her. Amitiel and Zuriel, she remembers them from the bar at karaoke night with Harahel. The woman disappears briefly and re emerges with her arms holding something of almost opalescent beauty, a mass of feathers, and she rushes back out through the portal to Hel's throne room.

"I don't know." Hel looks back to the tether. "Possibly in the abyss." The angel looks furious.

"Hel!" Alex calls. She looks back to see Claire lying unconscious in her sisters arms, a deep gash across the side of her forehead.

"Hildr, Eir, Hrist, gather all the gem stones. Brunhilde, Hlokk, take Sam Winchester's body to Jotunheim and place it with his brothers. You, Amitiel." She turns to the bristling angel.

"Zuriel." he snaps.

"Uncle, will you help Claire?" There's no reply but an angry stare. "Then get the fuck out of my way." Hel brushes past him, and gathers Claire up in her arms. "Are you injured as well Alex?"

"No." She gets to her feet and follows Hel back to Neflheim.

"What have you done with my sister, pagan." Zuriel demands. Hel ignores him and steps through the portal to her throne room. The other angel is in the corner, kneeling by Rhys' cushions, the masses of feathers are on the floor in front of her.

Hel stops moving as she recognizes them as an enormous pair of wings. Harahel's wings made flesh, brought forwards from the ether where Azrael had cut them off. She's seen angle feathers before but none so beautiful. They each shine like mother of pearl.

"Miti?" The vulnerable tremble of the angel's voice makes Zurial seem less insufferable and more pitiable.

"They're gone." The angel on the floor says quietly.

"Alvitr," Hel calls to the nearest warrior. "Take Claire to my room," she hands the hunter over. "Geirdrifulf go fetch my mother and bring her to tend to Claire. Alex, go with your sister." Hel nods to the stunned girl who's just staring at the body of her friend. "Alex." Hel softens her voice and touches her shoulder. "Go with Claire. It will be alright." She touches her cheek. Alex nods and chases after Alvitr and Claire.

Hel kneels down by Krissy's body. There's nothing wrong with it. At all. Her soul is also nowhere to be seen.

"Why is she dead?" She looks to Amitiel.

"Harahel died." the angel states blankly. "When an angel dies in a vessel, the vessel dies with them. She didn't cast him out." Her voice breaks, "This human girl could have saved herself but she didn't cast him out."

"Is she in heaven? Can you bring her soul back? I can resurrect her myself but only if I have her soul." Hel asks gently.

"No. I don't know where she is. No reapers can enter your halls, they're warded against them. Her soul should still be here." Amitiel covers her face, "I didn't know it was so bad. Why did I leave him?" Zurial just stands there in abashed silence.
"Your brother died bravely. A warrior's death. You should be proud of him and rejoice in his memory." Hel places a hand on Amitiel's shoulder, though her words sound hollow to her own ears. She's not rejoicing with her own loss, how can she tell another to."When we mourn those lost today, we will honor Harahel as well." Hel gets back to her feet. "Prudr, take miss Chambers and place her with the Winchesters, then enquire as to the whereabouts of her soul. I want my halls searched at once."

"Where is Azrael?" Zuriel sounds as if he intends to fight the angel of death himself.

"Dead, Father slew her." Hel sits on her throne, her fingers gripping the arm rests as she tries to think. The reapers will surely return and lay seige to Helheim. At the very least in vengeance for Azrael.

"Gabriel was not your father." Zuriel almost sounds offended at the thought, but Hel has reached her limit.

"You know nothing of our relationship, of father hood. You know nothing of me, but know this while you are in my halls you will treat me with respect or, uncle though you are in my eyes, I will teach you to." She looks steadily at the defiant angel. "I am the Queen of Neiflheim and you will address me with the deference due me as long as you are in my halls. You are welcome to stay and honor your fallen siblings with us, but do not think for a moment I will allow such impertinence to continue. Especially if you choose to deny kinship."

"Zuriel." Amitiel speaks as her brother is poised to give a doubtlessly unfortunate reply. "We have to tell our brethren about Gabriel and Harahel. Queen, Hela, I will come back for the wake." She disappears. Her brother reluctantly follows her.

"Hela," Yuri slowly approaches the throne.

"Don't you speak to me." She refuses to look at the one who freed their father to do this foolish venture.

"You know it's what he wanted." He ignored her like the irritating favored child he is.

"As if you cared one whit what he wanted, you selfish, ungrateful brat." Hel's voice trembles despite her efforts to control it.

"I'm not the one who pushed him in, you hypocrite." He retorts, but the look on her face silences him, but even more effective is when she drops her disguise to reveal the scars disfiguring half her face and arm, remnants of a disastrous fight the two had so many thousands of years ago.

"Get out of my sight before I say something we will never recover from." Her voice is low and deadly. Jormungandr wisely leaves the room. Fenris slowly approaches as Hel buries her face in her hands. He nuzzles his big sister's hands until she wraps her arms around his neck, holding onto him tightly. "I killed him, Rhys." The words break her tears free and she just cries into her baby brother's fur until she can't cry anymore. The valkyrie around them politely pretend not to see.

Castiel is aware. Aware of light and a rope around his waist. Aware of something where there was once nothing. Nothing but Dean and the pull of his soul. He could almost reach him, almost touch him. The world around him crashes into being. A vessel, a shirt, a tie, a jacket, a trench coat, a cabbage patch.

He frowns and looks around himself. Cabbages. Nothing but rows upon rows of cabbages as
far as the eye can see. In the distance, something white is moving down the rows bending to each plant in turn. As he walks over to it, stepping over each plant in turn, he sees its a stork. Or at least its a stork as humanity would prefer it to be. Clean, white, streamlined, neither smelling of carrion nor feces. At his approach, the bird startles and flies away from the cabbage it was inspecting. Curious, Castiel kneels down, moving back a few of the looser leaves.

Beneath then is a human soul, tinged with black like the tainted tortured souls in hell, all condensed into a small cabbage shape bundle. He frowns and checks one of the even smaller ones. The soul within is pitch black. But as he views it a spot of light appears. It's then that he notices the black roots beneath it, that aren't roots at all. They're small rivulets of darkness, streaming slowly, steadily into the earth. The largest ripest cabbage he can see has the rivulets fading away from it as he watches and the leaves start to unfurl.

Castiel moves closer as the newly exposed bright pure shining human soul coalesces into the form of an sexless infant like a wingless angel. Castiel plucks the child from its bed of leaves and it gives a distressed cry. Instantly a stork flies down and plucks the soul from Castiel's hands with a swift motion, swiping it into a clorh pouch around its neck and wings. It gives Castiel a reproachful glance and flies away into an empty sky.

"I am looking for Dean Winchester." He informs the bird. The crow nods and takes off straight up into the sky. Castiel manifests his wings and follows it. Oddly enough all six seem to work in perfect harmony and equal strength, giving him not only an even course but speeds he never could reach before.

Suddenly the crow is gone. Castiel stops and looks around himself. Beneath him all he can see are dotted lines of cabbages. But at this height he can also see the rows turn and twist into patterns and pictures like those in south america. A faint glint in the point of a dagger catches his attention. A soul shining so brightly it calls to him like no other ever could. Dean.

Castiel flies down to it reaching it just as a stork moves back the leaves to check its progress. He doesn't even pause, he just snatches the spotted soul right out from under the storks beak, clutching it tightly to his chest as he soars back into the sky.

"Gadreel!" He exclaims waving to the angel in greeting. The charging angel pulls himself up short, eyes widening in surprise.

"Castiel?" Gadreel's face lights up, and he sheaths his sword. Castiel discreetly slips Dean into his pocket and embraces his brother. The angel feels as fragile under his grasp as any human, though he knows Gadreel is as strong as he ever was. "Did you succeed? The angel tablet, is it destroyed?"

"Yes, thanks to your sacrifice. How are you here? Are there other angels as well?"
"I do not know. I became aware of myself at my post in the garden with Abner. You are the only other angel we have seen." His voice falters slightly as he speaks his friends name, his face wracked with guilt. "There was a call, a human soul in danger. I felt deep within my grace I had to respond and so I did."

"Which way did you come from? I can see only cabbages." Castiel asks checking again.

"Back the way I came, just straight. But first I must find the soul in danger and secure it." He nods and starts to fly away.

"Gadreel." Castiel stops him. "I took the soul."

"Why would you do such a thing?" Gadreel sounds so hurt at the thought.

"It belongs to Dean Winchester." He explains. "I need it to resurrect him." Castiel's reply makes Gadreel give him a pitying look and place a hand on his shoulder.

"Brother I am sorry. I know how you loved him,"

"I'm not leaving his soul in the abyss, Gadreel." Castiel states firmly looking his brother steadily in the eye prepared to defend himself if necessary.

"Indeed I could not make you." Gadreel looks over the newly minted archangel. "Even if I could, I know a Winchester in your hands is in no danger. I must congratulate you on your promotion." He looks to Castiel's wings. "Did father return, then?"

"It's a very long story."

"Well, come back with me and tell it on the way. I know Abner will be pleased to see another of our brethren. Inside the garden... I do not know what is inside the garden exactly, but you will see for yourself when we arrive.

It doesn't take long to fill Gadreel in on the events he's missed. How Metatron killed Dean and made him a demon. How the mark of Cain was sealing the darkness away and when he and Sam removed it... The tale is nothing but a litany of mistakes and errors culminating in Dean's loss and Castiel's entry into the abyss. Most painful to relate is when he said yes to Lucifer, but Gadreel of all angels deserves to hear and know he's not alone in his folly.

"This is the empty." Gadreel states blankly after a moment.

"Yes."

"It does not live up to its name."

"It appears to have been filled. I can only assume that Sam and Gabriel have something to do with that." Castiel smiles proudly.

"Gabriel? She is alive?" Gadreel looks astonished, "But Lucifer killed her. Of heaven felt her demise."

"I'm not entirely clear on the details. However, she's human now, in a female body this time, an extremely small one, diabetic and missing half of a leg, but she is alive."

"Our poor sister. How is she faring as such?"

"As well as can be expected. I've done my best to care for her and protect her but we all
agreed that Sam had to be the priority."

"Azrael can be very punitive." Gadreel conceeds. "But Dean should not have killed Death."

"No, perhaps not, but what's done is done." Castiel sighs and lands down beside Gadreel at what appears to be the entrance to Heaven's garden, though nothing is inside of it except a grassy field full of small crude nests with anywhere from one to four bright shining chrysalises. Most of them are tainted with black, very few consumed by them, but some are clean and starting to form cracks. Castiel walks over to the nearest one where Abner is examining a cracking one.

"Abner. Look who I found." Gadreel announces tentatively. Abner looks over, his face almost pouting and gapes as he sees Castiel.

"Castiel!" He exclaims, embracing him without thought. "I haven't seen you since we drove the leviathan from the ocean all those days ago. You've changed. Have you been promoted?"

"Its complicated." Is the best reply Castiel can give. Abner's face falls as he remembers himself and his crimes.

"Brother, can you ever forgive me? For the harm I did to humanity, to my brethren in abandoning my post. With everything I am, I swear it will not happen again." The pain and distress in his eyes pierce Castiel to the core. not so long ago he would have condemned him as thoroughly as he condemned Gadreel, with held forgiveness. He hadn't known what it was it was like to be tempted beyond your strength.

"Yes, Abner. I forgive you. We have all made mistakes, and we have all paid for them." Castiel pats his arm. "What are these things? Not souls. They don't feel right." He pace his hand on the crystal. Shadowed textures shift and mold beneath his touch.

"You may not believe this, brother." Abner frowns at the nests. "But I believe they are angels."

Chapter End Notes

For those of you that dont remember season 9 that well. Abner was Gadreel's best friend and his only comfort when they were tortured and imprisoned after their respective mistakes led to lucifer entering the garden and corrupting humanity. Abner was also one of the people Metatron had him kill to prove his loyalty. Needless to say their reunion was a bit awkward and will be for quite some time.
Chapter Summary

Alex and Clare return home to take care of Babe and Krissy's affairs
Castiel finds and speaks with Death.

Chapter Notes

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Also please comment, even if just to call me a heartless bastard for what I've just done to your favorite character. I love hearing from you.

"Are you sure you're alright?" Alex takes hold of Claire's arm as they walk up the driveway to their house, their valkyrie escort close behind them. Jody's car is in the driveway. Hopefully she'll understand there's no reception in Neiflheim.

"Yes." Claire says unconvincingly, though her head aches slightly. Angrboda's healing mixture left only a small scar, but it'll be enough to raise questions. Jody opens the door before they can reach the knob. She opens her mouth to scold them for disappearing without a word, but the lecture dies on her lips as she sees the distress on their faces.

"Thank god you're alright." She pulls them to her instead. Brunhildr gives a snort at her phrasing. "Who's this?" Jody looks over the leather clad redhead.

"This is Brunhildr, one of Hel's valkries," Claire motions back to her. "Brunhildr, this is Jody Mills, She's the sherrif of Souix falls." She introduces her. "And the designated den mother for the local hunters." Jody gives a wry grin at this introduction.

"Sheriff." Brunhildr extends her hand, clasping Jody's forearm and gives a hearty shake.

"Oh, okay." Jody recovers herself after the odd greeting, "Brunhildr."

"I'm here to help guard your daughters and assist them in tending to the affairs of their fallen comrades." Jody looks back to the girls. Claire's face is impassive, but Alex looks as if she's about to cry. In truth it looks as if she already has.

"Please, come in,"

"I need to go lie down for a minute." Claire excuses herself and goes to her room shutting and locking the door behind her.

"It was a glorious battle, however brief and they both acquitted themselves quite well." Brunhildr excitedly relates the affair in great and gory detail, from the first rush against the reapers
to Alex banishing the entire reaper army with a single sigil.

She apparently paid close attention to Claire's contribution and praised her for being both a skilled amateur and brave, almost fearless fighter. But her eyes light up when describing the fight between Gabriel and Azrael as well as Harahel's brave sacrifice which allowed Sam to get to the scythe in time to get it to Gabriel so she could deal the fatal blow.

"I never knew Loki had such prowess in him. I had of course, heard stories of the war with the Vanir but I had assumed they were merely polite exaggerations." Brunhildr confesses. "Oh, my apologies, I mean, Gabriel. Gabrielle? Abrahamic pronunciations are so confusing."

"Gabrielle." Alex hugs her arms to her chest. "We called her Bree though. Sam called her Babe, Hel called her father, Quetzalcoatl called her coyotl. I have no idea how many other names she has."

" Doesn't that get confusing?" Jody asks, deciding to wait and let Alex get to mentioning why she's using the past tense, on her own.

"If you're dealing with Loki, you have to take chaos and confusion as a matter of course." Brunhildr counsels her. "I like him better as woman, though I may just like him human and powerless as he really seems to be the same otherwise." She considers.

"You mentioned fallen comrades." Jody prods, glancing at Alex. "Who didn't make it?"

"Sam, Krissy and Harahel, Bree..." Alex stiffens. "Sam died just before the battle. Its what started it, Azrael coming for his soul. Krissy and Harahel died together from their injuries. Bree... she's lost to the empty."

"I have doubts about Loki's reputed demise. He's never dead when you think he is. Last time he even left a body. I don't think you can really count anything out unless his father descends from wherever the frick he's hiding and says flat out that his child is dead and gone and he's not coming back."

"Actually. I think Castiel said something along those lines happened after the last time." Alex gives a brief smile.

"What were the exact words? Jehovah always was a tricky manipulative bastard. Honestly I can understand why he and Lucifer were so at odds, they're far too much alike to coexist peacefully." Brunhildr shakes her head. "Is that right, Jehovah? Or is it Yaweh? What is your god's name? He has as many as the next but no one seems to agree on what it really is."

"I don't know." Alex says quietly as Jody just tries to process the claim that god and the devil are 'too much alike'. It's an incredibly disturbing thought. "I did ask Bree but she said she didn't really know either and that she always just called him 'Dad'." Alex stops to think moment. "Of course its really likely she was just screwing with me."

"You know, Queen Hela can easily revive Krissy if ever find her soul and if we can find someone or something to repair the mess that is Sam Winchesters body she can revive him as well. She doesn't usually do such things, but for her father's sake, I believe she would make an exception. Of course she is the only pagan who would be willing to help a Winchester." Brunhildr shakes her head. Jody's not sure whether she does so at the other pagan's foolishness or Hel's. "The angel is lost to us though. Only their father can revive them and he's off getting milk and cigarettes for another two thousand years, give or take a few. Say what you will about Odin but at least you always knew where the allfather was."
"Jody." Claire comes back out, not looking at all rested. "I need to go to Bree's apartment and put her affairs in order, pack up her things contact the landlord let him know she's MIA. So I'm just gonna stay there until I get everything taken care of. And I need... I need to let Kriss... Krissy's friends..." Her voice catches in her throat and she puts a hand to her eye.

"We just need to find her soul, Claire." Alex says quickly.

"Oh, well is that all?" Claire rolls her eyes. "And how the hell do we do that? For all we know Harahel dragged her down into the empty with him."

"Don't talk like that." Alex snaps at her.

"I'll talk how I want to fucking talk. It's over, Alex. This is over. We've lost everybody. I can't... I can't do this anymore..." Claire tries to hide her face in her arm as she start to cry. Alex just gets up and quickly hugs her, letting her cry into her shoulder. "She wouldn't even look at me..."

"No, no," Brunhildr intercepts Jody as she moves to comfort Claire. "This is not a time for mothers. Do you have a kitchen? When she's done giving up she'll need to eat so she has strength for her quest." Jody just gives the redhead a quizzical look. "I know her kind. When she begins to despair, that is the moment her enemies should begin to tremble."

"This way." Jody motions to the kitchen when Alex shoos her away.

"I never should have gotten Krissy messed up with this. I told her not to get involved with angels. Not to be a damn vessel, but would she listen? No... And now I have to find her freinds and tell them I got her killed."

"Claire, stop talking like a Winchester and start acting like one!" Alex says firmly, startling Claire with her lack of sympathy. "Talking about how you can't do this. Fuck that. I bet you didn't think you could castrate a greek god either but you did."

"What did you just say?" Jody is back in the living room in a flash.

"And yeah Krissy did something stupid and is in trouble. When you were stuck in Hades as Hypnos' little amnesiac love slave, Krissy and Harahael went in and rescued your sorry butt and got your memories back to you, didn't they?"

"Alright, girls, sit down and starts talking. Now." Jody points to the couch. Claire glares at Alex who innocently looks away. "Both of you, Claire."

"Why are you singling me out?" Claire protests but sits down at Jody's raised eyebrows.

"You know why, young lady. Now spill," Jody crosses her arms standing above them. Brunhildr leans against the kitchen doorway for a front rows eat of the scolding, making Claire blush.

"C'mon Jody, please. Don't embarrass me in front of the valkyrie." She pleads quietly. But Sheriff Mills does not give a single fuck about the valkyrie in her kitchen.

"Angels?" Castiel kneels down by the nest and puts a hand on the chrysalis. The contents press against his hand and he gets a sense of recognition, "Daniel. This is Daniel, the little one in my batch who fell into the sea and got eaten by leviathan."
He looks up as there's a noise like thunder and a crack appears in the sky. Something deep inside tells him to fly and he does, shooting up to it as fast as he can. Wisps of grace bleeds into the center of the break, swirling into a faded wingless form.

Its Harahel, only his wings have been severed completely off. As Castiel reaches him, flakes of snow start to fall surrounding him and the empty volume of his nonexistent wings. The wind swirls the flakes around him, slowly forming a thin shell like that around the chrysalis below. Where it solidifies, darkness starts to coalesce, almost threatening to consume the angel. Castiel draws his blade and smashes it against the gap where his wings aren't, shattering the thin layer. He takes the angel in his arms and flies up through the rapidly closing crack in the sky.

Harahel opens his eyes wide in surprise and reaches out for someone who's not there.

"I have you, Harahel, It's alright."

"Krissy," he looks around, wrapping his arms tightly around his big brother's neck in fright as he sees the bright grey emptiness around them. "Where am I? What is this?"

"We're in the abyss. Hopefully we are leaving it." Castiel looks back but there's nothing there, no crack, no nest filled garden, no cabbage patch. Just grey nothingness. "Who did this to you? What happened?"

"I interfered with Azrael and she cut off my wings. I was trying to heal Gabriel and... I don't know. If... If I'm dead. Krissy may be too. Maybe, probably... I... I died slowly, not explosively. I tried to draw myself in as small as possible so maybe she survived. She wouldn't cast me out. I told her too but..."Hara buries his face in Castiel's neck. He pauses in his flight to stroke the angel's hair in an tempt to offer comfort.

"I suppose I should have known." An almost bored, mildly amused voice reaches their ears. "Not even the empty can keep hold of a Winchester for long." Castiel turns to see Death, standing in the air beside them, cane in hand. Harahel shrinks down, trying to make himself as small as possible.

"Hello, Uncle."Castiel nods respectfully.

"Castiel. I see this augmentation was more successful." He casually examines the archangel before him.

"It was unintended." Castiel confesses. "I am here to retrieve you."

"Are you? You already have one too many passengers. But we can discuss that later. Sit, both of you." He nods to the side and three wicker lawn chairs and a small patio table appear as does a lawn of plush grey grass. "Lemonade?" A pitcher appears with some lemon and lime slices floating in with ice.

"I can't eat or drink. I'm an angel." Harahel states as Castiel sets him gently down on the ground, though he keeps tight hold of his brother's neck until he's tested his weight on the grass.

"The rules are different here." Death pours a glass. "I'm finding it quite entertaining. Oblivion was becoming... monotonous." He holds the glass out to the reluctant little angel. "Take it." Harahel gingerly stretches out his arm and tries to take the glass without touching his uncle's hand. He doesn't succeed and snatches his hand back to his chest instinctively. When nothing happens despite his fear, Harahel feels a little embarrassed.

"You are already dead, little one." Death reminds him gently, still holding out the glass.
Hara's slow timid approach and Death's patient stillness reminds Castiel of one of the old men in the park trying to coax a chickadee to eat birdseed from his hand. Harahel's cautious taking of the glass furthers the illusion, as does the way he keeps looking at Death even after sitting down.

"What is this place?" Hara asks as Castiel graciously accepts the lemonade and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

"I don't know, she hasn't named it. It's no longer oblivion, though it sits on the edge of it. For the sake of clarity we shall simply refer to it as the Abyss. It seems one of my elder nieces has sussed out one of your fathers little cheat codes. Her and that nuisance of an elder brother of hers. Its a little pocket of creation all of her own making. Incredibly amusing. Whie the Cabbage patch is my personal favorite, Valhalla is a close second. It's by far the most detailed replication here."

"Gabrielle filled the empty." Castiel gives a proud smile. Death gives a single dignified nod.

Harahel finds the thought of a world entirely of Gabriel's invention a bit frightening and attempts to drink the lemonade. He's not sure how as he has no stomach or throat or taste buds or internal digestive organs to process it with, but he puts it to his lips and attempts to mimic the swallowing of his brother. The force of the sweet tartness makes him blink and hold the drink away from him for a moment before he can compose himself and place it down on the table.

"You might enjoy this more." Castiel hands him half of his pbj. Harahel takes it but doesn't eat until Castiel takes a bite himself. His brother gives such a happy satisfied sigh that Harahel decides to make the attempt. This isn't tart but it does have an odd slimy texture to it that he can't seem to overlook.

"It... it tastes like the smell of strawberries planted in the walls near a concession stand in a baseball stadium." Hara frowns at it. "And it feels like slimy sandy mud. He puts the sandwich half on the table as well.

"It's different when you're human." Castiel takes another bite. "I suppose you have to have had the experience to appreciate it."

"If you please, sir. How do I leave here? I need to go make sure Krissy is alright." Harahel places his hands in his lap. "Please."

"I am afraid you can't leave of your own volition, little one." Death says kindly. "This is an afterlife you see and you have just arrived. So far as I can tell, each soul is here until it heals the wounds its gathered during it's life time. Each angel as well. You can see these wounds as bits of darkness infesting the soul or grace in the various constructs such as the eggs in the mock garden."

"We're in... eggs?" Hara frowns. Death nods. "That makes no sense."

"You, however, were intercepted and removed before you could even be properly placed and no healing could be done."

"Meaning I'm the same flawed broken mess I died as." Harahel can't help but look over his shoulders at wings that are no longer there. The pain is gone, but the loss remains.

"Even when healed you must be fetched. A living being may enter the abyss and bring one other being out. Castiel, you entered the abyss whole and under your own power so you may leave the same way, however you may not take both your brother and your lover with you. No one will stop you, the exit simply will not appear."

Harahel just sighs at this news and looks over to his brother.
"I'll help you go find your Dean." He volunteers.

"He's already in my pocket." Castiel removes Deans soul from his trenchcoat. Harahel narrows his eyes at it.

"Why is he a cabbage?"

"I don't know. You'd have to ask Gabriel." Castiel shakes his head. Not That either of them would expect a sensible response from her.

"Oh. Well, when you find Krissy, if she's still alive, can you... can you give her my feathers? Azrael cut my wings off at the edge of the abyss so they should still be there in the ether. She's a hunter and they might come in useful for spells and things."

"I'll come back for you." Castiel places a hand on his little brothers shoulder. Harahel just nods.

"Is there any way to avoid being an egg?" He asks Death anxiously. Death gives a slight shrug and removes a small manual from his pocket, handing it to Harahel.

"Its not very comprehensive I'm afraid."

"How do I leave?" Peers at the booklet as Harahel examines it.

"Let me see," Harahel flips to the index. "Egress for flying creatures...." he turns back. "Second star to the right and straight on til morning."

"Those are the directions to Neverland. And there are no stars."

"I don't think it actually matters. Even in the book, they're nonsense directions. I think it just means fly until you can't fly anymore and as long as you know where you want to go that's where you'll get to."

"Thank you."

"As it seems Azrael is in a brief time out herself. I could use a temporary adjutant in her place. If you'd care to accompany me as I look over this new domain, little one, I believe you can avoid being encapsuled."

"I don't have my wings. I'm not sure how I'd travel," Harahel worries. Death just raises an eyebrow at him. "I-I mean, yes, sir. I'd be honored, sir." He looks down at his hands desperately waiting for Death to stop staring at him.

"Is Gabriel in the abyss? If so do you know where she is? I'd like to speak with her before I go." Castiel politely requests.

"She is, as much as she is anywhere. All creation requires sacrifice, Castiel. Gabriel has made hers. I am sorry, but there is nothing for you to speak with."

Chapter End Notes

A peanut butter and jelly sandwich is the first food Castiel ate as a human after
Metatron stole his grace. It's also the food he tried to eat after regaining it and lamented not being able to taste anymore.
Thanatos

Chapter Summary

Castiel and Hel revive Dean and prepare to defend neiflheim against the reapers. Krissy wakes to find herself in the wrong afterlife with definitely the wrong psychopomp.

It feels as if he's been flying for days. The lack of any real way to mark the passing of time wharps minutes into seconds into hours into weeks. His energy seems endless, but his spirit is beginning to falter. If he just stopped flying, how far would he fall? How long? It's tempting to see but he has to get Dean's soul back home. There's a sudden sense of weightlessness, then a pull and the darkness clears into the edge of the abyss.

Several valkyrie draw their swords. It looks as if there was a battle. There's blood on the ground, a thicker tether, yellow gemstones scattered all over and several reapers blades. There are no wings in the either, however, only one large mother of pearl tertial.

"Are you a reaper?" A valkyrie asks as Castiel doesn't make a move to attack or even draw a weapon.

"That's obviously Castiel, Eir. Don't you see the trench coat?" Another says and resumes gathering the gems.

"Castiel is not the only being to ever wear a trench coat, Hildr."

"I am Castiel."

"Prove it." A third demands. Hildr just sighs and shakes her head. "Don't sigh at me, he just heard us say the name, he could be anyone."

"I have no time for this. I must resurrect Dean." Hildr gives the other two a pointed look. They just sigh and start gathering gems again. Castiel just walks past them to the portal, stepping out into the throne room of Helheim.

"Castiel!" Hel rises from her throne, astonished. "You... how did you leave the abyss?"

"I flew. To the second star to the right and straight on til morning." He replies, drawing Dean from his pocket.

"I see." She frowns and looks down at the object in his hands. "Why did you have a cabbage in your pocket and why is it glowing?"

"It's Dean's soul. I don't know why it's a cabbage. All the human souls in the abyss were cabbages. The ripe ones turned into infants and were taken away by storks. It's very strange inside the abyss." Castiel examines the soul. It seems unharmed but still retains its cabbage-y shape and makes as little sense here as it did in there.

"It it was created by my father, it would be." Hel smiles fondly, looking beautiful despite the visible scars that make half her face a mask of painful death. "Did you see him? Is he coming back
"Out behind you?"

"No." Castiel says quietly. "Gabrielle sacrificed herself in it's making, there's nothing left to come back. Hela... I am sorry. I wish I hadn't failed in my attempt, so she would not have had to do it herself." the renewed grief on her face makes him wish he could have said anything else.

"What's done is done." Hel takes a breath and draws herself together, restoring the illusion of perfect symmetry to her features, and smooths out her gown. "Come, we'll revive your lover." She strides towards the halls exit. "I'm afraid with Heimdall gone, the bifrost is inaccessible. We'll have to journey to the base of Ygdrassil and climb to the branch of Jotunheim we desire." It's more evidence of her distress that she doesn't think to manifest a fuzzy pink hat and gloves until the cold air of Neiflheim hits her.

"No need." Castiel places Dean back in his pocket and puts his hand on Hel's shoulder, whisking them to the cavern before Dean's coffin of ice. "Transportation is no longer an issue."

"Wonderful." With a snap of the fingers she changes the coffin to an ornate bed frame with silk sheets and down comforters, turns Dean's outfit into a classic princely garb, and repairs the fairly simply stab wound. Castiel raises an eyebrow at her. "In this strife filled world, so unfriendly to the peace and care of lovers, we must take the opportunities for romance where we can, Uncle. May I?" She gestures to his outfit.

"No." Castiel simply removes his coats and tie and unbuttons the top few buttons of his dress shirt. Hela has to admit it looks suitably charming on the angel.

"When you've returned his soul to him, a simple kiss will finish reviving him." Castiel just shakes his head and drapes his discarded clothing over the foot of the bed. Apparently Claire and Hela both share the same romantic streak. He sits on the side of the bed a moment, holding the cabbage in his hands, unsure of how to return Dean's soul to him. A normal soul would just re enter his body once freed to do so, but while the soul is in an oddly stable shape, it's still nothing but a soul. "Feed it to him maybe?" Hel suggests, though the thought of the angel saving his sleeping prince by tenderly, lovingly feeding him raw cabbage makes her almost laugh out loud. But she valiantly resists as she doesn't feel like unearthing the cavern after an avalanche of snow.

"I don't believe it would fit." He frowns. "Are you alright?" He turns to Hel who's leaning against the door frame in a kind of coughing fit.

"Yes, no, I'm fine. Hold on." She takes out a cell phone and brings up the camera. "Alright go ahead." Castiel just stares at her, "Don't look at me. Look at him." Castiel just looks annoyed. "Very well, this will have to do." She snaps a picture. "I will leave you two alone." She quickly walks out of the cavern to the hall and sends the saved picture to Claire, with the caption 'They have returned'. At least her aiskling can have her fathers back, even if she doesn't care to call them that. Will she call when she receives it? Will she come back? Can Hel ever look at her again without seeing her father falling into the abyss? The phone rings. It's Claire. Hel almost answers but turns the phone off entirely instead, cursing herself for her cowardice.

What could she possibly say to her though? Yes your guardian angel and his lover are back. No, my father, your best friend, is gone for good. You are all that inspired the worship of lesser beings but I can never bear to look upon you again. It's not even because of Claire's hands pushing her father small, female, human body into the abyss, but because of Hel's own beside them. It's not Claire's fault. But Hel can't afford to drown in her darkest feelings right now. She has a kingdom to defend. Though, what the reapers are waiting for she doesn't know.

By now all the souls in neiflheim must have been gathered into her halls. All those who don't
wish to fight at least. The children and their caretakers, the pacifists. She should be there, not spying on her lover's parents. But one must take romance where you can. And if she must intrude she may as well actually do some spying. Hel peers around the corner to see Castiel crush the construct between his hands and allow it to slowly siphon into Dean's partial open lips. When the last bits of soul have been returned to him, the angel bends over and gently kisses his lover's lips. It's remarkably easy to forget how very pretty Dean Winchester is.

"What the fuck?" And of course that emotionally constipated oaf has to ruin the moment.

"My niece thought we could use a little romance." Castiel explains.

"My ass is frozen and I look like a damn cartoon." Dean complains. Hel just sighs and re-enters the room as he gets to his feet. "Where the hell are we?" Hel is about to snap his clothing to something warmer, but Castiel drapes the trench coat around his shoulders which is just so very sweet and charming, she doesn't want to interfere.

"We're in Jotunheim." She informs him. "There is too much to explain but we must return to my domain immediately." Hopefully they won't notice the other two..

"Sam?" Dean voice is heart breaking and he bolts over to his brother's ice preserved body. "What the hell have you done to him you pagan bitch?" he goes for his weapons, but of course, she wouldn't leave it. He maybe some kind of idiot, but she certainly isn't.

"I have risked my entire kingdom to keep his body and soul safe and may loose it yet." She responds icily. "I lost my father for all of your sakes and am in no mood for your foundless knee jerk accusations, Winchester." But he's seen the other coffin as well, and slowly approaches it

"Krissy..." Dean looks stunned, putting his hand on the ice. "What... what happened?"

"She was killed by Azrael while hosting the angel Harahel." Hel says gently. "As soon as I find her soul, I will revive her as well. Come, Sam's poltergeist is destroying my treasury as we speak. Perhaps you can calm him." She walks over to Castiel. "Uncle? If you would? And He takes them back to her halls.

"Queen Hela!" Hjorprimul runs up to her. "The reapers have swarmed the abyss."

"Have Eir, Hrist and Hildr returned?" She asks and walks over to the portal when the valkyrie nods. Hel takes a breath and repeats the enochian incantation to close it. "Dodeh d esiasacahe bulape ascha." Or in layman's terms, 'fuck it, three of us are plenty.' Which ever of the archangels decided on this particular incantation likely didn't anticipate anyone having to close the portal to the abyss after having lost Gabriel to it. Castiel looks a bit distressed at the words himself.

"Brunhildr wants to know if she should bring back both the girls for the battle or just Claire." Alvitr asks.

"NO!" Both Hel and Dean snap at once. They look briefly at each other. As she's saying what he wants her to say Dean respectfully motions for her to continue.

"She is to stay with them at all times and neither of them are to return Helheim until we have secured victory. Have you contacted our allies?"

"Not yet. If you're invoking the treaty, you should be the one to make the calls." Hjorprimul reminds her gently.

"Of course," Hel rubs the bridge of her nose, hand on her hip. Messengers used to be
sufficient until they managed to link up a satellite phone, now if it's not done personally, it's an insult. "Hjorprimul, show Dean Winchester to the treasury. Hopefully he can calm his brother."

"Yes, your majesty." She bows and ushers Dean out of the hall.

"Castiel." Hel calls as he goes to follow Dean. "I'm reluctant to ask, but father spoke well of your prowess as a tactician. If you would serve as my general and help me to organize my defense, it would be helpful." Not the least as it would make the prospect of their victory seem far more sure to hesitant allies.

"Of course." He nods, and follows her to her study instead.

The soft kiss on Krissy's lips come as a surprise and she opens her eyes to a richly decorated cavern full of tapestries and flowers. There are lillies, orchids, roses and countless others she can recognize but not name. It's decidedly not Heaven and despite being on a cold stone slab, the wakening is too gentle and air too fragrant to be Hell. Above her is a familiar face, pale skin, gray hair and beard, grey tunic, but his eyes, instead of being the night sky are an odd pale milky white that shine like Harahel's wings.

"You're not Hypnos." She says, slowly sitting up. The handsome god smiles and shakes his head, writing a word down on a slate. "Thanatos? Oh." She looks down, not sure what to say to that, and pauses looking at her dress, a familiar ankle length pastel floral sundress. It's the one Harahel dressed her in while he possessed her body before taking her to Hades to rescue Claire. The angel had no sense of practicality at all. Even her nails are the rainbow of pastel polish again. The sight of it makes her want to cry. Harahel's gone, lost to wherever angels go when they die. The abyss maybe?

The god smiles, though and puts a hand to her cheek. It makes no sense. Why would he be smiling at her? She and Harahel burn his brother, Hypnos, with the light of his grace and gave Claire back her memories. And why would he put her back into this thing? Why is she in Hades? She died in Helheim, didn't she? Shouldn't she be there?

"You resemble Proserpina. She favored the lighter spring colors as well." An even more familiar voice comments. She looks over to see Pluto standing at the cavern entrance. "Was it by design or coincidence?"

"I.. I don't know. Harahel, my angel, chose the outfit." She replies. "What am I doing here?"

"Thanatos had intended to exchange you for his brother's... missing pieces, but he appears to have changed his mind. However this is my realm and the decision is ultimately up to me." he gives her an imperious nod. Thanatos looks annoyed at the statement and steps between her and the god of the underworld.

"Huh. Sorry about your brother's... bits and pieces." Krissy wrinkles her nose. "I has not idea Claire was going to do that, much less keep them. But lets be honest here, he drugged her with lethe so she'd sleep with him and not leave, essentially raping and kidnapping her. So I won't apologize for burning his skeevy ass, I just feel taking a trophy was a bit much. Of course I'm not the one he violated. Touch me again by the way and I'm taking you the fuck out. I may be a dead hunter but I'm still a fucking hunter. Got it, Thanatos?" She grabs his toga forcing him to look at her. He just nods.

"Looks like Proserpina, acts like Persephone." Pluto sighs. "Enjoy your guests. I will inform
you of my decision." The gloomy god vanishes without another word. Thanatos gives the empty space a dark look and odd probably obscene gesture.

"Not a fan of the P-dog huh?" Krissy looks at the glowering Thanatos who grins at the appelation. "Yeah, he seemed like an asshole at the convention." She slides off the slab and stretches, looking around the room. "Your brother has a better bed." she bumps it with her hip. Thanatos shrugs as if to say 'He is hypnos, I am Thanatos'. "Hypnos is sleep right? You're death?" she makes a stabby motion. Thanatos frowns and shakes his head. He makes a tender cradling motion with his arms, moves two fingers up and down slightly a little ways above it and lays the invisible bundle gently down. "Dead children?" Krissy guesses. Thanatos grabs the slate again and writes something down far less understandable than 'thanatos' "I'm sorry. I don't read or speak ancient Greek." she apologizes. Thanatos nods and vanishes, blowing out the lights in his wake.

"Thanatos is a gentle, peaceful death. Violent death was our brother, Keres, who quite ironically died in his sleep after the empire fell. He... oh no, I am not saying that to that... angelic sheath... No!" There's the sound of a scuffle, "Ah! Fine! My brother went to fetch you as ransom but was unaware of the extent of your beauty." the voice says in the bored, yet annoyed and slightly exasperated tone of a brother forced to woo a girl he can't stand for his sibling. "Or the kind gentle courage you displayed by sacrificing your own life to help soothe and usher the frightened angel into whatever awaited him." He sounds as if he couldn't care less about the death or feelings of the creature that burned him. "Ah! Stop it! I'm getting there! Give me a damn second!" Hypnos snaps and gives a sigh. "And he knew at once that he must have you as his bride because he's a lonely fucking idiot who... Ah!" There are a few greek explatives she can't quite make out. What the hell is it with greek gods? Why are they such indiscriminately horny bastards? And why the hell would anyone worship that?

"Well, thank you for the compliment, and for not defiling me as I slept, but being ushered into the greco-roman underworld as a potential bride for death is not exactly my idea of a good first date. So, thanks but no thanks. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm getting the fuck out of here." Krissy backs up until she can feel the cave wall and starts trying to walk out.

"You'd rather be trapped in the veil for all eternity?" Hypnos asks testily. "I'm fine with that, but I don't think you'd enjoy it."

"I'm fairly sure I belong in heaven." Krissy informs him. "With my father and mother and yes I'd rather wait for an eternity to gain entry."

"I wasn't being hyperbolic. The reapers have vanished and even if they hadn't the gates of your heaven are closed. It's getting extremely crowded in there. Better to stay here, whether you marry or not.... what do I care, Nato? Let her get chomped. She'll learn... Ah! You can't get out of Hades, Kristiana." Krissy tries not to cringe at her given name as she's fairly sure if he knows how much she hates it, he'll just keep calling her that. "Cereberus won't let you and you couldn't make it across the Acheron anyway."

"I bet you your prostate I can." She makes her way up the slope to where Cerebus is waiting, the now well gnawed soccer ball she left the last time in his center mouth. "Hey you!" She beams and reaches up to scratch behind the ears of the nearest head. "Who's a good boy? Who's a good boy? You are, yes you are! C'mon, gimme the ball. Give me that ball." She snatches it from him and tosses it out the cavern towards the shores of the Acheron. Cerebus excitedly races after it.

"Oh amaen!" She hears an astonished exclamation behind her as she races after him and plays with the hound of hades until he's exhausted and plops down at her feet turning over so she can rub his enormous stomach.
"Sorry, Berry, but I'm all out of snausages. I'll have to go pick some up." She apologizes when he gives her the big soulful eyes of a starving animal begging for food with two of his heads, the middle one is actually asleep. The other two fall asleep soon after, and she walks over to where Charon is watching from the ferry with an amused expression. "Hey it's me again. Can I row you across?" She asks. Hopefully he didn't just agree last time because Claire asked him and he prefers blondes. Charon just raises an eyebrow and holds out his pole. She tries to grasp it and it slips through her fingers. "Oh."

She sighs and looks at the river. Well, she's dead, so she can't drown. So, what the hell. Krissy lifts her skirts, tying them in a knot around her hips and walks into the waters of the Acheron. It's oppressively cold with a feeling like the weight of an ocean of tears bearing down on her. She has to remind herself that she's dead and doesn't need to breathe, no matter what the realm is trying to make her think. She also can't freeze because there's no body to freeze and no temperature to drop and above all she will not stay where she doesn't belong.

Feelings of sorrow, pain and despair crass against her with the current, increasing in pressure with every step. Every loss, every burden she's even borne presses against her, as if pulling at her nonexistent flesh to rend it from her nonexistent bones. But the pain is nothing new, nor is the heavy sense of loneliness that hollows her out from the inside. It's nothing but the life of a hunter condensed into a raging river and she won't break or be swayed, not under a million fathoms with a million currents battering her from every side. She's too damn stubborn to give in and when her head breaks the surface at the other side, it's like being born anew.

"Definitely more Persephone than Proserpine." Krissy turns around to see Pluto on the ferry dock, looking both exasperated and impressed. He shakes his head at her and with little effort, drags her back into the depths of his domain.
Chapter Summary

Tensions are high as Neiflheim prepared for war with the reapers. Alex recruits angelic help. Dean's still a dick about Babe.

"No, you calm down!" Claire snaps at Alex. "Dean and Cas are back and the reapers are massing to attack Neiflheim and little miss overprotective thinks she can just shove me out of harms way like some little fucking damsel in distress? I don't fucking think so."

"She is our queen." Brinhildr chides Claire, who just looks at her. "Right. You're not a valkyrie. I keep forgetting."

"Since when do the Valkyrie serve Helheim?" Alex desperately tries to change the subject. "I thought you served under Odin and Freya in Valhalla."

"Oh, that. Well, once people stop worshipping their gods, they stop going to the pantheons afterlife. And when there's no one to reap from battle, what exactly is there for a valkyrie to do? A third of us got tired of all the bullshit as we were pretty much reduced to serving wenches and hand maidsen which quite frankly was not what any of us signed up for no matter what an 'honor' we were told it was."

When Hela offered us a place in Helheim helping other pantheons collect, we jumped at the chance. Sheol kept trying to take all the souls that weren't destined for your heaven and while the reapers wouldn't deliver those earmarked for us to Sheol, neither would they lift a finger to make sure we got what was rightfully ours. So we got to fight at least."

"What's Sheol?" Claire frowns.

"Hell, double 'l'." Alex informs her.

"Obviously we refuse to call it that. It annoys our Queen to no end." Brinhildr shakes her head. "Of course, then Lucifer killed Odin and Baldur and Loki as well. Freya kills herself like a dutiful wife and terrible goddess as it causes Valhalla to collapse. It's only due to Hela's extensive emergency planning that my sister in arms and as many souls there escaped that did."

"Wow." Is all Alex can think to say as she pulls out the tubs of movies. "Claire, what do we do with all of these?"

"Well, she made a will, so nothing until we find it." Claire takes some folders from the top of the closet shelf. "I doubt it's in the big box o pornos."

"Really? Because last time she left a video will which was in fact a modified Casa Erotica dvd." Alex opens the tub.

"What, seriously?" Claire stops to look at her. Brinhildr just tries not to laugh.
"C'mon, Claire. I know you read Hammer of the Gods."

"Yes, but I didn't memorize it. Besides, I couldn't keep going after Lucifer killed Gabriel."
Claire confesses. "That must have been afterwards. But I'm not watching every single porno in that
box just to figure out whether or not she did it again."

"The girls and I are on it." Brunhildr grabs the tote and vanishes.

"I can't believe she's pulling this crap." Claire starts to mutter again and flips angrily through
the papers. "First sending me that nonsensical photo to tell me they're back. I don't even know what
the fuck that glowing cabbage was meant to be. And not taking my call. Which by the way is
another thing as I thought there was no cell service in neiflheim."

"If Dean was being resurrected, she was probably in Jotunheim." Alex suggests helpfully.
Claire just ignores her.

"And now keeping me out of Neiflheim because of reapers? Did I not kick ass at the abyss?
Did I not castrate a greek fucking god? Does she really think I suddenly lost my ability to hack it or
something?" Claire demands angrily, almost like she expects Alex to answer which makes no sense
as there's no reason Alex would know any better than Claire.

"I'm sure Dean and Castiel were equally involved with that decision." Alex scoots over to the
treasure chest. "And she did just lose her father, again. She probably just doesn't want to risk
losing you. Plus there's that whole head injury." Claire just blows a raspberry at that. "You were
unconscious for almost an hour, Claire. That's really serious. I still think you should go get a cat
scan or something."

"Yeah, or, you know, the next time someone says to stay down you could stay the fuck
down." she snaps at Alex who feels both irritated and embarrassed.

"Okay, well, my being stupid isn't a reason for you to be stupid, Claire." Alex shoots back.

"I'm fine. Hel's mom took care of it. Its fine." Claire plops down on the nest of pillows and
comforters that was Gabrielle's bed. And keeps going through the papers. "This is pointless. Its all
in enochian or some shit." She lays back, covering her eyes.

"Well, take a break I guess." Alex starts trying out keys on the lock. "Anyways, its better
we're out here. I mean we can't save Krissy and Sam if we're trapped in neiflheim once its under
siege by reapers, can we?"

"What are you talking about, woman?" Claire looks out from under her arm at Alex, who just
gives an exasperated sigh.

She does not want to be the advocate for getting more involved with the supernatural. At all.
She has school, a life plan, a fucking life, and once they get Krissy back that's it. Absolutely finally
it for her. If Claire and Krissy want to hunt, god bless then, but after this she is out. And thats all
there is to it. O-U-T out.

"I'm talking about finding Krissy's soul. I've been thinking. It's not in Helheim, right? Where
it should have been and it wasn't taken by reapers as the place is warded against them. So that
means it was probably taken by someone else. One of the other underworld dieties most likely.
One who went to the conference at least. With an underworld still intact to take her too."

"Probably Pluto, then." Claire scowls. Alex looks over at her. "What? He's a douche and
Krissy invaded his domain and had an angel burn one of his underlings. So you know, prime
"We don't know that. And I wouldn't go barging back into Hades again regardless. Not without more than a hunch. I'm fairly sure hypnos has a meaner deadlier brother in there who's taken exception to your little Lorena Bobbit impression."

"Hey, Hypnos raped and kidnapped me. If he wanted to keep his frank and beans he shouldn't have fucking drugged me."

"Yeah but did you have to take it with you?" Alex protests. Claire just ignored her.

"Anyways, there's still Sam. We have to find someone who can resurrect him. Obviously Castiel is still having upgrade issues or he would have. Maybe another angel could do it. Wait, didn't you invite an angel in at the abyss when we were loosing the tether?" Alex asks as she finally finds the right key. "Oh my god." She picks up a wad of cash from inside. "You know, I think we can just pay her rent and stuff until we know for sure she's not coming back."

"That works, and yes, I did but I have no clue what happened with that. Where he or she went or what his damn name was even...." Claire's voice trails off. "Do you really think we can get Bree back from the abyss?"

"Maybe. I'm kind of past believing in the word impossible at this point. Do you think... maybe one of Harahel's siblings would help?" Alex muses. Krissy died because she refused to just abandon the wounded dying angel. Maybe they might feel a sense of obligation.

"With who? Sam? Krissy? Bree? All of the above?"

"Any of it, honestly. We need all the help we can get." Alex puts the money back in the chest.

"Sure, why not? Let's call the winged fuckers who don't give a shit about differing two out of three of those and ask for help. That couldn't go wrong. Not at all."

"They're not going to smite us for asking at worst they just ignore us. So, should I pray or try for a summons?" Alex considers. A prayer is politer but a summons can't exactly be ignored.

"I dunno. Whichever is less likely to piss someone off?" Claire shrugs.

"Prayer then. I'll pray to Zuriel and Amitiel as they seem to be close to Harahel."

"Knock yourself out." Claire gets to her feet and heads to the bathroom. "I will be using the john."

"Okay." Alex gets to her knees, and clasps her hands together. In truth she had no idea how to pray. It's not something her vampire mother taught her and if the human mother she was born to did, she's long since forgotten how. Sure just calling for Castiel works but Hara's siblings are not her friends or allies. Something more formal then.

"Amitiel, angel of truth, Zuriel, angel of harmony, I beseech thee. Please grace me with your presence for we are sore in need and I must treat with thee. And... I'm sorry about Harahel. He was a wonderful angel and..." she really doesn't know what else to say. Though mentioning Harahel probably won't do anything but remind them why they shouldn't get involved with human in the first place, much less hunters.

"Don't you talk about our brother." Zuriel's angry voice makes Alex open her eyes again. "You know nothing of him." Though his words are harsh, Alex is more astonished at his presence.
than anything else. Amitiel is standing beside him as well.

"She was complimenting him, Zuri," Amitiel places a hand on her brother's shoulder.

"I don't care. She has no right to invoke his name." Zuriel crosses his arms. Amitiel sighs and decides to ignore him.

"What did you need to see us about?" She kneels down in front of Alex much to Zuariel's disgust.

"Well, we need some help. Sam is dead and we need help resurrecting him. Krissy's soul is missing and no one knows where it is. Pluto is a prime suspect but we can't know for sure. And we want to find out how to get Bree back from the abyss. We don't believe she's gone for good. After all Dean and Castiel got out."

The angel still at the news. Amitiel seems in awe, but Zuriel just vanishes without a word.

"Can't Castiel help you? He's an archangel, now, and so much more powerful than any of us." Amitiel asks quietly, though in a way they conveys pure curiosity, not an attempt at dismissal.

"No. If he could do any of that it'd be done. Besides he's trying to help protect neiflheim from the reapers right now." Alex sighs. It would be so much easier.

"Oh." Amitiel thinks a moment. "I don't know anything about the abyss. Castiel would know the most since he escaped it. And resurrection is just so very difficulty. There's a reason we don't do it very often. First you have to have access to the soul. And secondly the worse the condition of the body, the harder it is. Resurrecting someone who's body is such a mess like Sam's is... well... only our Father and Raphael could do that. I'm not even sure that we could resurrect anyone who didn't die of something simple like a stab wound or something like that at all now that they're both gone." Amitiel shakes her head. "But I don't really know."

"Oh," Alex hears her voice tremble slightly

"I'm an average fighter and not much of a healer outside basic structural damage, but I can do one thing other angels can't. I can speak to people and know if what they tell me is the truth. So in honor of Harahel, I can try and find the human who stayed with him until the end."

"Thank you." Alex smiles, but Amitiel is gone.

"So," Hjorprimul says casually, "Your brother is now a being of unquenchable rage and fury. Personally I think he's stuck that way, but I'm not the queen." She shrugs. Dean gives her an irritated glare that doesn't cow her at all. "Just, you know, don't expect miracles. This is the wrong pantheon for happy endings."

Hjorprimul stops at a chained pair of large rune engraved doors and unlocks them. At the sound of the chains moving, Dean can hear the countless coins and gems and not a few large objects, some of them breakable, start crashing around the treasury. There's definitely an angry poultergiest in there.

"Good luck." She pushes Dean inside, closing and locking the door behind him.

"Sam!" Dean calls to the flickering figure in the center of the room. A goblet smashes into a large mirror on the wall. "C'mon, man, that's seven years bad luck. What are our lives not shitty
enough for you already?" The shade stops moving and everything drops. "Hey, Sammy." He says gently. Sam turns around, his eyes wide.

"Dean?" He runs over to him, giving a surprisingly firm embrace for being a discorporeal being. "I thought... the reapers threw you into the empty. Cas and I...."

"They did. Cas is... well he was right behind me. I'm not clear on the details honestly. I just woke up on a bed of ice looking like something disney crapped out. I think little miss Queen of the Dead has some sort of costume fetish." Dean grumbles looking down at his princely garb, half hidden by the trenchcoat. "So.. Are you okay? I mean, obviously you're not okay. You're dead. I mean, aside from that. What flipped your switch?" Dean fumbles for the right thing to say, the right way to say it, but fails miserably. Sam's face falls. Whatever it was, its bad enough to take the joy out of Deans being alive.

"Babe's dead." Sam says quietly, thankfully looking closer to tears than he is to going postal again.

"Ah, Sam," Dean puts a hand to his brothers face. "I'm sorry. I know you felt about her."

"She found the right ritual, or the other half of it after Castiel went in after you and got lost to the empty." Sams words freeze Dean's heart for the breif moment it takes to remember that Cas is fine. "She filled the empty, and now she's gone and you and Cas were gone and I just... all of you were gone because of me..."

"Hey, no, stop that. You know damn well this whole mess with the reapers was because I killed Death. I was cleaning up after my own mess. Cas was just being Cas and Gabrielle, Babe, yeah, she should have gone to heaven but..." Dean stops as Sam looks away. "Sa"

"Angels don't go to heaven when they die."

"Yeah, but what does that have to do with... wait..." Dean holds out his hand. "No..."

"Apparently, It's supposed to be pronounced Gabrielle, you know like Castiel. Gabriel is just an... anglicized mispronunciation." Sam gives a slight smile. Babe would have loved the look on Dean's face right now.

"That little shit... she... he's a... she's a he or he's a she? Gabriel is Gabrielle? What the fuck!"

"Tell me about it." Sam gives a half hearted smile.

"And here I didn't think he could get any fucking weirder.... are you sure?" Dean runs his fingers back through his hair. Its almost scary how much sense it makes. It sure as hell explains a lot of the questions he had about her and her pagan connections. Not in any kind of reassuring way, though.

"Yeah, she was human, no grace or powers at all, but it was Gabriel." Sam shrugs.

"Man, what is it with you and supernatural chicks?" Dean the hypocrite, shakes his head at his brother.

"Says the man sleeping with an angel." Sam retorts. As annoying as Deans attitude, it feels refreshing to finally be able to say something about his relationship with cas. Especially in regards to Dean's reactions to his own love intrests.
"That's different. That's... it's Cas."

"I see you're wearing his trench coat." Sam reaches out and straightens the collar. Dean blushes.

"Its not because of anything naughty," he protests.

"Naughty?" Sam grins.

"I was freezing my ass off. Jotunheim is cold as fuck. Anyway, " Dean blatantly changes the subject. "I'm glad you didn't listen to me an hook up with the little psycho." Dean grimaces. "I can't believe I was trying to talk you into having a fling with Gabriel. Jesus, how did you find out?"

"Quetzalcoatl outed her after you died. Did you know that aside from being Loki she was also Huehuecoyotl of the Aztecs?" Sam sits down on a pile of gold lumped into one of the corners. "Apparently she and his brother Xolotl were best friends."

"You didn't right?" Dean ignores his hint to drop it.

"Didn't what? Make sweet tender love to the trickster?"

"Yeah, that." Dean winces at the statement.

"No."

"Good,"

"We had wild, freaky, I-may-not-wake-in-the-morning, passionate, animal sex."

"Dude!" Dean looks at him, horrified. "Why would you even tell me that?"

"Because she died trying to save you and you're being a complete asshole about her?" Sam snaps, glaring up at him.

"And when you had this wild freaky sex, did you know who he was?" Dean challenges.

"Not the first time. She wasn't trying to trick me, she was just too afraid to tell me," Sam runs the back of his neck. Rationally he can't expect Dean to react any better than he did, but he doesn't feel rational about her. He can't.

"I bet she was afraid, after everything that asshole did..."

"Such as die for us?" Sam interrupts him, "Twice now?" The air starts to get a bit frosty.

"Right. No, you're right, but still, it's Gabriel." Of course Dean just can't let it go. Sam just glares at him until he stops talking. Dean looks around awkwardly and clears his throat. "Alright, then. You coming? I hear a whole bunch of shits about to go down."

"I can't leave the room. I tried." Sam shakes his head. "I think Hel bound me to something. I didn't notice what."

"I'll go get her to unbind you. Just... stay here and think happy thoughts." He motions to his brother to stay put.

"Sure Dean. Hey, did you know you're wearing tights?" Sam points out. Dean just looks down and scowls. Of course he is. He just pulls the trench coat tighter around himself and knocks
to be let out.
The Delible Angel

Chapter Summary

Amitiel goes to Hades to look for Krissy. Unfortunately she's not much more saavy than her brother was.

Chapter Notes

Amitiel, being the angel of truth is a bit of a philosopher. She can recognize the truth but only so far as its known. As she described it in A Life of Virtue, lies are like crunching ice (which her vessels hated). However, fiction is like crunching ice but sweet like biting popsicles. And so much is subjective, and there are partial truths and evasions and misleading statements which are even worse.

Since talking to Castiel and listening to the stories in the garden, she's been determined to find the truth, whatever form it takes. So it makes her very philosophical but also pretty much heaven's detective with all the questions she asks. Unfortunately she is very new to sussing out truth (secrets) and very unprepared for the dangers of that kind of role.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Humanity has always surprised Amitiel. They're always doing things that she thought couldn't be done, nor could she understand why they did them at all. For example making pagan gods to worship. Why would they create replacement gods when they had her and her Father and siblings looking out for them?

Granted there were quickly so many more humans than angels and Father tended to focus more on the long term goals. But he existed, and they all knew that at first. Maybe they thought he'd abandoned them much earlier than he did. Maybe they were scared and alone and confused and were just trying to make sense of things. If so she understands the feeling.

Its a very human thing to do, make little replacements for the ones you want. Their children do it with security blankets and dolls or pets or even friends. But making their own gods to replace one who's not as involved as he once was? Why? Maybe they didn't even know they were doing it. So many gods started out as stories ways to explain things they didn't understand. That's why so many of them are associated with weather or nature. And why they all act so very human.

Amitiel sometimes wonders if she and her brethren and her father aren't just stories made life as well. And that like the pagans they only think they're real because at one time so many humans believed them to be until they were. But that would make humanity their gods and creators, life givers and protectors and not the other way around. But then who created humanity?

It's a question impossible to answer and frightening to consider. And pointless. Why doubt the reality of your own existence? And what does it matter? There are so many more important questions and when those are answered there will be more and more. Always more. The more she
searches for the truth the more she just finds she knows less than she ever thought. Maybe the only universal truth is that there are no universal truths. Or at the very least that they're so incredibly vague as to be completely and utterly unhelpful.

What is the answer to life, the universe, everything? Just to praise God? If so why did he make everyone and everything so flawed and imperfect and strange? Why create things that could reject him so utterly? Why make the greatest and best bravest and most beautiful of them in such a way that he could do what he did? When the prophet said that the meek would inherit the earth, Amitiel never thought it would be because the best and brightest all killed each other off.

Not that humans make much more sense. If you're going to create your own afterlife, why make it in a cave? Hades is supposed to be their heaven and hell in one. Why put them both in the same place, deep underground. Its smaller under ground than on the surface or above it. How did they expect everyone to fit? Are they shrunk down the way angels have to shrink down to fit in vessels? Is that shrinking the reason why an angel with a damaged vessel dies the way they do, almost exploding out of it? Raphael would know. But he's dead and he hadn't been in the kind of mood for answering endless questions in a very long time. He was always the most honest of all the archangels, though.

Not that Michael was dishonest, she just disliked saying she didn't know as much as she had to to answer Amitiel's questions and eventually stopped answering them with anything other than 'because I said so' or 'because you will fly laps around heaven until you start to molt if you don't stop asking questions and just do as your told, Amitiel.' Which were honest but not real answers. Finally any attempt at a question just resulted in an angry glare. Amitiel wasn't trying to cause trouble though, she was just curious and wanted to know. And if Michael didn't know, who would?

Lucifer told the truth almost as much as Raphael, but somehow, and she never understood how, the truth somehow became lies. He was almost never honest, yet he almost never lied. It made her so incredibly ill she could rarely even bear to listen to him even though he had such a beautiful voice. So soft and soothing. Only when he sang with Gabriel in the throne room was it always the way it should be.

Gabriel was just as confusing. She lied so much, so blatantly, and yet she somehow took those lies and turned them into truths. For a while it was almost as upsetting to Amitiel as listening to Lucifer. Now she knows she'll never never hear it again and she wishes she'd paid more attention to her big sister earlier. Who knows maybe if they'd all known how much they wanted and needed her around and let her know, she wouldn't have left. Maybe if they'd loved her enough... But they didn't. And she did.

So many questions without answers. Harahel had been helping her find some this last year. Searching human writings for clues and treatise of various subjects. Truth is harder to spot in print,couched in opinion, metaphor, hyperbole. But books never tell you they're busy or get mad at you for wanting to know what they know. Of course Hara didn't either, even if he didn't know much more than how to find things in the library. You could just tell him what you were trying to find out and he'd know the best places to look. He was curious about this thing called Google, which is a number she thinks, but also an artificial reference librarian and somehow a synonym for research. He'll never get to learn about it now.

That Alex girl had called Harahel a wonderful angel and she believed it. But he wasn't, not by any definition of the word. Hara was at best an ordinary angel and he was seldom at his best. He was timid and cowardly and emotional and weak. He had his good qualities, but he was supposed to be a soldier, a guardian of humanity. Instead he was a librarian and so unfit to be in any kind of regiment that he broke after almost killing a sibling in a training accident and actually threw his
sword into the darkest deepest depths of the ocean. He threw his blade away!

Michael was furious when she found out. Amitiel remembers so clearly, she burned so hot she was positively yellow, almost white. She'd seen it as an unthinkable act of defiance and rebellion, when really it was just an emotional impulse that was not even slightly thought out. Of course when Michael ordered Harahel to retrieve it, she didn't realize it was in the main waters where the leviathan still were. Lucifer of course intervened if only for the chance to call Michael a jackass and didn't help matters much. He just told Michael that if she wanted to condemn one of the children to death then she should have the brass tacks to just execute him herself.

Of course, Harahel started crying his eyes out and shedding feathers. That's when Raphael came and took Harahel in his arms to comfort him and reminded his elder siblings that Hara was barely a full Day old and besides that was part of Raphael's special needs regimen, which meant that he, Raphael and Raphael alone was responsible for Harahel's training and punishment both.

It was probably the closest Amitiel had ever seen Raphael come to getting really angry at Michael. Of course, the archangels were all out of sorts to begin with after the affair with Gabriel 'teaching' Castiel to fly and all the chaos that ensued. Hara just had the bad luck to come to their attention in the middle of their arguing. And he stayed in people's attention too because he was confined to the Garden until the Leviathan were cleared and he could go safely get his sword.

Of course by the time that happened, Lucifer had created the library to store edicts and laws and rule changes. But it was mostly for Michael's battle plans and training manuals and such because as he had said in a very public argument, her room was becoming a fire hazard. Which was a particularly bitchy thing to say as Michael is a living divine flame and implied power incontinence in front of the entire host. As much as they all still loved Lucifer then, no one really thought that the following beat down was either unnecessary or undeserved.

Harahel was the only angel without anything else he could be doing so Lucifer got their fathers permission to place him in the library. All he had to do was make copies, organize things, and make sure everyone got access to what they needed. And so he kind of disappeared from general notice. So much so that they even forgot to make him go find his blade after the Leviathan were cleared and he could go safely get his sword.

Amitiel remembers that when Lucifer fell, everyone thought Harahel had joined him for that very reason. But he didn't. Some idiots even thought it was ungrateful of him not to have sided with Lucifer even though they didn't and incomprehensibly marked his not rebelling against heaven as a character flaw. At least until Raphael heard and tore everyone a new one for it for such a stupid way of thinking. Harahel just stayed in the library and set up a system where he didn't even have to talk to anybody to help them find their things.

The same attitude came back when Harahel somehow managed not to take a side in the civil war between Castiel and Raphael, by virtue of being completely and utterly forgotten by either side. But that time gossip about him was overtaken by the gossip about Castiel and the Winchesters and the fact that they kept almost destroying the world and enormous arguments over what exactly was their brothers relationship with Dean Winchester and whatever it was had it really made one of their favorite brothers go outright insane? And why did their father keep bringing him back every time he died, no matter how many horrible things he'd done? It was easy to forget about broken little Harahel under all that.

All of them did. Because he wasn't a wonderful angel or even a very interesting one. He's just a broken and flawed one who somehow managed to avoid Death on just pure chance. Just like so many of them that are left. At least he was until Castiel needed help with research because Sam
was too sick and he went to heaven's library. Hara still felt so guilty and ashamed for almost killing him all those Days ago that he went the extra mile to do so. And He met Krissy Chambers, who started to court him, wanting to be his vessel which made no sense at all.

Humans hadn't wanted or actively sought out the chance to be an angel's vessel since Solomon's time. Not with the full knowledge of everything that entailed. Even when they did, none of them were wanting heavens skittish little librarian. They wanted warriors or healers and Hara was neither of those.

Yet that girl wanted Harahel. Even after he grew frightened of her partner and abandoned her in Hades, she still wanted him. She wasn't even mad. And when she needed help she called to him and he went and he died. Zuriel blames that girl for Hara's death, but he doesn't seem to realize how it elevated their brother. What Harahel did, the bravery and love in that fatal act, no matter how fruitless or foolish or badly executed it was, it brought him closer to being the angel he was supposed to be than anything else. If Krissy's responsible for his death, she's responsible for that miracle as well.

But she wasn't. If anyone was responsible for Harahel's death it was Zuriel and Amitiel themselves. They just left him there, wounded in the halls of helheim drawn so tightly into himself and his vessel the girl had to tell them he was even there. He'd lost his wings and they still didn't realize how bad it was. They didn't even check, they just heard Gabriel was in trouble and Harahel ceased to matter.

How he must have felt, when they did nothing. They could have dragged him out of her and taken him to heaven to be healed, or called for a healer before they left. Something, anything besides just leaving him there. He didn't know how to bind with a whole vessel as an emergency patch to hold in your grace, or how to latch onto a human soul to help heal and repair yourself and your vessel. He was taking care of the library when they were taught that. They knew that but they forgot. And he died and his vessel died with him. Because she refused to cast him out. She refused to abandon him though it ended up costing the girl her life. Even if she didn't know it would, like Zuriel thinks, she had to know it was at least a risk.

That's not how its supposed to be. Its not supposed to be a human comforting an abandoned dying angel. They're supposed to be protecting humanity, not the other way around. They're supposed to die for humanity not have humanity die for them. Maybe that's what it was. Maybe that's why their Father kept bringing Castiel back, because no matter what he did, what mistakes he made, it was all about a desperate desire to protect, and save mankind.

So it doesn't matter if Amitiel is a lone angel walking into pagan halls she has no business going in. Or that Zuriel will yell at her for doing this. Or that should she try to usher the girls soul to heaven where it belongs, the reapers will take umbrage. It doesn't matter, because she has to find her, because she's an angel and a soldier and that's what she was made to do.

"Excuse me," Amitiel walks up to the man on the boat at the little dock. He looks at her a bit oddly. "Can you tell me where I can find Pluto? I need to ask him a few questions." The man shakes his head. "Oh, does he have a throne room here?" He nods. "Will he return there eventually?" Another nod. "Can you tell me which direction it is, please?" He points across the water. "Thank you." Amitiel smiles and steps out onto the water, standing easily on the surface.

"Oh," she turns around as it occurs for her to ask. "You haven't seen Kristiana Chamber's soul have you?" The man shrugs. "Um, she's a girl almost twenty, this big, brown curly hair, a beauty mark near her eyes. She was here before when she was alive, maybe with a pretty blonde with blue eyes. She and my brother burned Hypnos? Before the blonde castrated him?" She really
does not like saying that or that he seems to find it funny as the boat man gives a twitch of a smile before he nods. "Is she still here?"

"Thanatos." He surprises Amitiel by speaking.

"Wonderful, thank you." She smiles and looks him over, "Are you human? You seem very old and your body is very broken. Would you like me to heal you a little? I think I can help with the arthritis at least." He widens his eyes a bit at this and nods, so she quickly climbs back up on the dock and touches his forehead, reversing most of the internal wear and tear. It is fairly simple stuff. "Thank you again."

"No, thank you." He demurs and watches the angel walk across the surface of the water to the other side. "The People of the Book have gotten very interesting lately."

Thanatos is just sitting there, staring at her.

"What?" Krissy snaps at him, lifting her head from her arms. He just offers her a package of twinkies. At least it looks like that could be twinkies though the words look like arabic, she thinks, which makes no sense. "I'm not eating any food from the underworld." She snubs it. He hands her what looks like a gas station receipt, also in arabic. "Oh. Well, I hate twinkies." She turns away, the chains on her leg rattling as she does so.

Thanatos just sits there in perfect silence for a very long time until he finally gets up. The lights go out, indicating he's brought his stupid brother to translate his nothingness again.

"He's trying to be nice, so take the stick from your behind and take the cakes." The familiar sound of Thanatos smacking Hypnos in some way almost makes Krissy smile, but she doesn't need him to defend her.

"Why don't you go fuck yourself. Oh, wait..." she keeps her back to him for the sake of rudeness. Why not, he can't kill her, she's already dead. There's a heavy sigh.

"He doesn't like seeing you so unhappy." Hypnios says clearly through clenched teeth.

"Then leave. No one's forcing you to just sit there staring at me like some perverted creepy stalker." She buries her face in her arms, resting them on her knees. Doesn't want to see her unhappy? Maybe he shouldn't have abducted her soul in the first place, the stupid bastard.

"Listen you ungrateful mortal wench..." Hypnios starts but there's silence and the lights return.

Ungrateful indeed, what does she have to be grateful for? The unwanted interest of some death god? No, thank you. But Thanatos doesn't like seeing her unhappy does he? How miserable does she have to be before he actually does something of substance about it?

Well there's only one way to find out. She'll have to get completely fucking despondent. She think about her mother, her father, but those wounds are so scarred over they're nothing but an empty aching constant in the background of her existence. She can't cry about them anymore. Especially since they're in heaven. Maybe even together. Her insatiable restlessness and becoming a blatant third wheel to Aiden and Josephine, is just one of those things.
Trying to find a partner to hunt with, only getting condescending old assholes not half as cool as Dean, who either tried to act like they were her father or like they just wanted her to call them 'daddy'. That was more annoying than heartbreaking. And she wasn't loosing any sleep when a few got themselves killed. Besides one sent her Claire's craigslist ad as a joke, and that was great. Claire is beyond awesome, though neither of them really had the whole partner thing down yet as much as they should have. And it let her end up meeting that adorable angel with the beautiful wings. And leading the poor innocent thing to his death.

That thought is what breaks the dam, and all the pain and sorrow the Acheron tried to drown her with before overtakes her completely. And of course now that she's started crying she can't seem to stop. She desperately wants to; its as if her soul is dedicated to creating a pool of endless misery with her tears in the middle of Thanatos' cave. When the god himself places a hand on her back, she punches him in the chest, startling him if not knocking the wind out of him.

"Go away, you mute heartless bastard!" She shoves him away, "Why don't you go back and bother your brother?" Thanatos makes a face. "What? He's not good company? What a shock."

Thanatos just shakes his head and makes the universal jabberjaw sign with his hand. The roll of the eyes though is what makes Krissy laugh, despite herself.

"Well, compared to you who isn't?" She tries not to grin. Thanatos just shrugs. "Sorry I called you mute. I mean, as an insult. It's not. And has nothing to do with why I think you're an asshole." The god just sighs and shakes his head, looking away. "Look I know kidnapping women to express your interest is just standard greek god stuff, but this is the Twenty first century. And we will gank your asses for rape and kidnapping just as much for human sacrifice. Capice?"

He just gives her a dark look and sits on the stone slab. Its funny how very close to handsome his face is. Its just that enormous greek urn bears that's just getting in the way. Sure it was obviously fashionable at the time, but now it just looks weird.

"Have you thought about losing the beard? I know its a greek thing but it really doesn't suit you." Thanatos considers and shrugs. "Well maybe not the whole thing. Just less like Clive Owen from 300, more RDJ from iron man. Any of them honestly. You don't shape shift do you? Because I don't hate you enough not to just shag the fuck out of you if you could do RDJ as Tony Stark. And I do mean RDJ as Tony Stark specifically." Krissy sighs longingly. Thanatos seems a little pissed off at this statement and crosses his arms. Honestly it kind of makes her respect him a bit more that the thought offends him.

"I do think the style fits your features though. Let me show you. Can I see your slate?" She holds out her hand for it. He hands it to her along with some chalk, his curiosity getting the better of him. Krissy sketches a brief front and side view of the god's face, pausing briefly to manually turn his head for a better look. "Okay, this is you now, see?" She turns it to him. He leans over and nods. Krissy slowly wipes off most of the beard, then accidentally too much. "Whoops. Well, that's why we don't shave with blunt objects." she wiggles her chalky finger. Thanatos gives a laughing smile and when she finishes replacing the beard, takes the slate to look at it. "See, use the beard more like an accent, or contouring than protection from the cold I know you don't feel. There's no reason to have a muff on your chin. Well..." she considers. Thanatos just take the slate out of the room. Probably to consult with his brother.

"Jesus, what the fuck am I doing?" Krissy leans back against the wall. So much for emotional manipulation.

"Kristiana Eloise Chambers?" She hears an almost familiar voice and cringes.
"Ughh, yes, unfortunately." She can't help making a face at her horrible names, so obviously taken from her Russian and French grandmothers its not even funny. She looks up to see Harahels sister in Thanatos' cave. "A-amitiel?" Her heart leaps from her chest.

"Oh, thank father I found you." She embraces the surprised soul. "I can't believe it. Come with me, I'll take you back to helheim or would you rather go to heaven? You've more than earned it." Amitiel helps pull Krissy to her feet.

"I'm chained," Krissy lifts her skirt to show the shackles around her ankle, not sure what else to say. Amitiel kneels back down and tries to manually pull it off, but it won't budge. Neither will her blade cut the chain. "Try the cavern wall, It's just rock." Krissy points to where the chain is embedded in the wall. Just one blow easily crumbles the area around the chain peg and it falls out of the wall.

"We'll have to..." Amitiel starts to speak, but the lights go out and Krissy hears a thump and clatter. Apparently Amitiel did not think to bring a partner. Krissy gets quickly to her knees feeling around to find a fallen blade, but its no use.

"Amitiel?" she calls softly.

"The wonderful thing about angels using human bodies is that while I have no power over angels, I do over their vessels." Hypnos is back. Wonderful.

"Did you kill her?" She demands as she can't find the blade. She can only assume he has.

"Not yet." A hand brushes Krissy's eyes and she can see the room again. Thanatos is standing in the corner, slate in hand, and Hypnos is kneeling down beside the unconscious vessel, blade in hand. "Why do angels flock to you? You can't be a virgin." Krissy just blushes and doesn't reply.

"They're not unicorns, you ass!" She crosses her arms.

"I'd be a little more polite if I were you." He points the tip of the blade to Amitiel's throat and starts to slowly draw it across.

"No, stop. Please." Krissy, puts her hand to the angels throat, covering it as best she can. "What do you want? Tell me what you want to just let her go and I'll... just don't hurt her."

"Well, I believe my brother wanted you to be his wife?" Hypnis grins. The fact that Thanatos strides over and punches his brother in the back of the head for this makes Krissy like him a little bit. Hypnos turns and yells at him in greek, pointing to Krissy and the angel respectively. Thanatos just crosses his arms again, and glares at his brother.

"Thanatos," Krissy turns her eyes to him. "Please, she lost her brother. There's only one other left from the same... batch." She can't help saying it awkwardly. Its a weird thing to call a group of angels made at the same time. They're not cookies, for god's sake."Please."

"Actually that's a good idea." Hypnos says after a glance from his brother, and leaves the cave. Krissy looks down at the cut. It's bleeding grace, just a little wisping through her fingers, but the sight makes her feel absolutely desperate.

"She's losing her grace. Please." She begs him, tears starting to form in her eyes. Thanatos goes to a shelf and takes a small vial and stopper. Not sure what else to do, she holds it to the grace and it curls itself inside like a hermit crab trading up. Amitiel is oddly still alive afterwards. Though her throat is just plain bleeding now. Krissy rips off some of Amitiel's shirt and bandages the cut, trying not to suffocate her as she does it.
Why didn't loosing grace like that kill her but Harahel bled out when his wings were cut off and died from it. Is it because she's fully in her vessel and not hiding in it? The kind of injury done to the vessel? What? Will she just die anyway? Krissy tucks the grace into her cleavage as Hypnos enters the room again.

"I'll tell you what, little miss angel bait." He says almost cheerfully. "I will let this angel live, after taking a few memories." He lifts up a skin full of what is presumably lethe. "And if you let me take your memories of the same subject, I will even let her go."

"No." Krissy says flatly. "I don't trust you to keep your word."

"Very well." Hypnos readies the blade to strike down at the angel.

"Yes! Fine okay, yes." Krissy holds out her hand for the skin. Hypnos pours some out into a small clay cup first and hands it to her.

"Thanatos? He holds the skin out to his brother, who just gives him a look. Hypnos sighs and hands him the blade instead. "Drink." He looks to Krissy, kneeling down beside Amitiel and lifting up her head. When she does so, he pours some lethe between the angels lips, with a cruel grin as he opens his mouth to identify the memories to steal.

"Angels."

Chapter End Notes

Archangels and their elements and associated colors

Michael- red and orange, fire (warmth, passion, destruction etc and yes, Michael's generally a redhead)
Lucifer- blue and silver, water (ice after being slowly poisoned with the mark)
Raphael- brown and green, earth (healing, sturdiness)
Gabriel- white and gold, Air (speed, capriciousness, flighty, etc)

It's not what it is in apocrypha but that's because Gabriel fucked around with angel lore (see Book of Daniel) partly for shits and giggles, partly for his and his siblings protection.

'The People of the Book' are how Muslims refer to themselves Jews and Christians, as we all worship the same god but disagree on the rules and rituals in effect, the exact number and names of prophets and whether or not the sequels should be considered canon.
(My apologies for the irreverence but its the best way to put it and you are reading Supernatural fan fic so...)
Chapter Summary

The Valkryie try to help take care of their stressed out queen on the eve of battle. Dean doesn't help matters any. Claire's a bit difficult as well. Hel gets her affinity for ridiculous costumes from her father.

Chapter Notes

Elasa ooaoana par- (enochian) you saw him

Mein libben guben-(norwegian) my little man

"Hey," Dean announces himself to the three huddled around the map on neiflheim in Hel's study, discussing strategy.

"Where's Sam?" Castiel asks.

"He's stuck in the treasury. But he's fine now so if you could let him out, your queenliness?" The tone of Dean's voice makes it clear it's not really a question.

"No." Hel responds flatly. "It's safer that he stay there."

"Safer for who?" Dean challenges. Hjorprimul just sighs and rolls her eyes. This is why she prefers working with Amazons. They're murderous batshit misogynists but they don't think their dicks automatically make them in charge.

"Everyone. He is secure where he cannot harm others and cannot be harmed himself. His last fit resulted in giving Claire a dangerous head injury. You are free to stay with him, as apparently he is as absurdly attached to you as father claimed, but he is currently a wild card I cannot afford to play right now. Until it's less risky to free him than hold him, that's what I will do." Hel doesn't bother to look back, hoping he takes the hint. Unfortunately she's as unfamiliar with Dean Winchester as he is with her.

"You can't keep him locked up! And isn't this an after world? How could he even be a poltergeist here?" Dean protests. Hel sighs and turns to face him.

"In case you haven't noticed, mein leibben gubben." She gives him a sweet, patronizing smile, "We are preparing for war at the moment. One started by my attempts to assist you and your brother. Now you have two choices. Respect my sovereignty as Queen of Neiflheim, and my sacrifices on your behalf by staying out of my affairs and keeping your demands at bay until after we know if we survive this. Or walk out of these halls into the open without your brother where the reapers can and surely will toss you both back into the abyss regardless of what is now inside it. Either way, I have neither the time nor the energy to spare for your arrogant american authoritarian bullshit. Do you understand me? Winchester?" She stares firmly into his eyes. Deans cheeks turn a
"You are back." Zuriel glares at Castiel. "Again. How many lives do you have left? Father couldn't have spared at least one for Harahel?"

"Zuriel. I am sorry about Harahel, but once we resolve matters with the reapers, I will be returning to the abyss to retrieve him." Castiel says gently, putting a reassuring hand on his little brothers shoulder. Zuriel expressions cracks briefly into a portrait of pain and sorrow, before resuming its usual sullen mask and he moves away from Castiel's touch.

"Elasa ooaana par?" He asks half hopefully, half accusingly. When Castiel nods, the angel grows angry, clenches his fists and begins to almost yell at Castiel.

"ENOUGH!" Hel draws out Death's scythe from her belt and holds it between the two. "Castiel, take your sibling in hand and do not return until everyone is capable of behaving in a manner appropriate to the situation!" The angels both stare at the scythe in silent shock for a moment.

"Is that?" Dean starts to ask but doesn't get to finish before he's snapped back to his brother in the treasury.

"I don't know why men always say we're the emotional ones," Alvitr shakes her head.

"Girls. Focus." Hel puts the scythe back in her belt and turns back to the map. "Were you able to procure the holy oil?"

"Yes but its a limited supply."

"Make sure each of our best archers gets a flask each. Instruct them to aim for the sword arms. They're the only things that will defeat them. I want this understood. If you do not have an angel blade in your hands you are to focus on defense and disarming your opponent only until you get one. How are the jotun coming along with learning the banishing sigils?"

"Unfortunately, its success is dependant on your ability to free hand a circle in your own blood and very few of them are both able to do so and willing to come to the defense of neiflheim." Alvitr says reluctantly.

"Excuse me?" Hel turns to the valkyrie who cringes as the queen is just as pissed off at this as she assumed she'd be. "Did you just tell me that my blood relatives are unwilling to come to my defense?"

"Well, not all of them, just most of them." The Valkyrie look sheepishly up at her. "Your grandmother said to as your father why. I told her he was dead again but she didn't take me seriously."

"Where is my mother?" Hel demands, not believing her ears. After all they have done for the Jotun, for Jotunheim. Distracting and placating the Aesir, directing them to the problem citizens when they couldn't be either. Protecting them from Midgard and the venir almost entirely. That any of then would bow out even without that blood connection is just unthinkable.

"She's still in jotunheim trying to convince them."

"I will speak to them myself. Is there anyone else who knows how to work the bifrost?" Hel demands angrily. The Valkyrie just look at each other, a bit anxiously. Hel just storms out of the
study, slamming the door behind her.

"Someone needs to tell Brunhildr to bring her lover back. Like yesterday." Hjorprimul comments before chasing out after her Queen.

"At least she has a lover to call this time." Hris refastens her braids. The others nod. "So, who's going to make the call?" But no one seems willing to throw themselves on their blades just yet.

"We could... send an anonymous text to her?" Gandull suggests, leaning against the desk.

"From Hel. Brunhildr won't go against orders."

"Alright. But who will send it?" More anxious silence. After a good bit of arguing they decide on all but one of them typing up alternating letters of the order, with the short straw pressing send, and a vow never to reveal their compatriots on penalty of full body baldness for a year. Unfortunately there is no cellular service in outside Midgard and Jotunheim, for some reason, though they all have phones for excursions there and they're forced to send an email from the Queen's old Aol account instead.

"When did we get wi-fi?" Goll asks.

"I don't know. I think the younger Winchester helped her set it up." Skoll shrugs and leans over the laptop.

"The Liesmith always did like 'em tall, didn't he?" Hrist comments.

"And hot." All the others nod in agreement.

"So, so hot."

"By Odin's left teat, I just want to see him in a beard."

"And nothing else." All the valkyrie sigh at this.

"Think he needs some comforting?" Alvitr purrs.

"Oh, come on, we're valkyrie, not vultures." Goll scolds. "He just lost his dearest lover, this no time for a relationship casual or otherwise. Besides he's a Winchester. You'd have better shelf life as a Bond girl."

"I dunno." Skuld muses dreamily. "I kind of think Mrs. Winchester has a nice ring to it. He probably wouldn't make me quit and keep house either." The others just look at her wide eyed. "What?"

"You do know that if Loki comes back, he will rip you into shreds."

"Or just torment you to suicide like he did that Arab trader who tried to buy Hela when she was seven."

"You are all insane for even discussing this, you know that?" Hrist scolds them. "You know that. Forget Loki, it's Dean you have to worry about. He is very protective and does not like supernatural women putting the moves on his baby brother."

"Maybe so, but the way I see it, any man who can both hold Loki's interest for so many years without putting out and tolerate him no matter what form he's in has got to be worth the risk."
Skuld points out, and adjusts her breasts in her bodice, fluffing and pushing them closer together. "If you'll excuse me, I'm going to go offer my condolences."

"Ten to one she gets shot down." Hrist takes out a small notebook as soon as the brunette leaves.

"I don't know, men are pathetic lonely creatures desperate to be in relationships. Look at all those horrible stepmothers widowers keep marrying. I bet he'll at least sleep with her." Goll puts down a few coins. Soon Hrists notebook and purse are filled with wagers.

"So we each took one and nothing. Did you have any luck?" Brunhildr reappears to find Alex and Claire on the nest of cushions and comforters, both crying. Claire's resting her head on Alex's lap with just a few brief drops escaping as she shoves her mouth full of popcorn. Alec has gone through half a tissue box. There's some movie on with a funeral for a man dressed as a woman named Angel.

"Give us a minute, its almost over." Alex blows her nose. "They had their first kiss to this movie.

"No we didn't. We took a movie break." Claire wipes her hand on Alex's leg.

"Oh, come on!" She shoves Claire's shoulder a little. "Did you just wipe your buttery fingers off on my favorite jeans?"

"You say that like you didn't notice me doing that the entire time." Claire turns her head and wipes her mouth off on Alex's thigh.

"You asshole!" Alex smacks her ear.

"Hey! Watch it! Jesus, are you trying to blow out an eardrum?" Claire sits up rubbing the side of her head.

"Now I have to go home and change before the grease stains set and because Bree was ridiculously small and I cant fit in anything she owns." Alex gets up going to grab her jacket.

"No wait!" Claire grins and scrambles to the closet. "I saw something that'll fit you. Voila!" She whips out a strange white and green outfit with red floral decorations, large white petticoats and liederhosen as well as a white puffy off the shoulder bodice and tights.

"I am not wearing that." Alex crosses her arms. "Why would she even have that? Did she, like, buy that just in case I needed a change of clothes at her apartment one day?" Alex gives the outfit a bewildering look.

"Probably," Claire gets an evil grin.

"I'm not that desper-oh you bitch." She gasp as Brunhildr 'accidentally' spills a small canteen of mead all over her.

"Oopsie, my bad." Brunhildr gives a charming smile.

"C'mon." Claire dances the outfit on its hanger. "You don't want to freeze,"
"Kind of think I do."

"Brunhildr! Undress the woman!" Claire hangs the clothing on the doorknob and grabs Alex under the armpits.

"What? Have you lost your... hey!" It actually takes about ten minutes to strip her and force Alex to dress through threatening to cut up her new jeans.

"I will get you for this, Claire!" Alex snaps from the bathroom. "I swear by all that is unholy and vile, even if I have to get your girlfriend involved."

"Oh, right." Brunhildr slaps her thigh in remembrance. "Queen Hela wants to see you when she gets back from Jotunheim. Can you do me a solid and not tell her I briefly skipped out of guard duty to watch porn in the barracks?"

"Sure thing, dudette." Claire fist bumps her.

"Do you have everything you need?"

"What? No. You're not taking me back to Helheim, if that wench has something to say to me she can come here and say it to my face her own damn self. I'm not her damn subject and neither am I her little beck and call girl. So why don't you go tell little miss mother hen to go fuck herself." Claire leans against the wall, arms crossed and just looks at Brunhildr defiantly. The valkyrie doesn't say anything for several minutes, and wisely, neither does Alex.

"You do know that's not going to happen, right?" She sighs. Claire's look indicates she knows no such thing. "Because Hela Bodasdottir is my queen and I am in fact at her beck and call. Besides she's kind of preparing for war and may lose absolutely everything she holds dear including her own life, so, really now is not the time to get all independent american woman on her. She really has a lot on her plate right now and if you care about her, I think you should cut her a little slack."

"Yeah, right." Claire sighs pushing her hair back out of her face. "Did she say what she wanted?"

"No. Just that she wished a private audience with you when she returned from Jotunheim."

"Is she okay?" Claire looks down at her boots.

"I can't say." Brunhildr shrugs. "I really can't imagine how she could be. She just helped kill her father and is about to loose her kingdom. I don't believe for a second any of our allies will take up arms against the reapers. We didn't even get half of the Jotun which makes no sense. They're her family. At the very least she's tense as anything."

"This better not be a fucking booty call." Claire grumbles and knocks on the bathroom door. "I have to go, Alex. I'll be right back."

"How long?" She opens the bathroom door.

"She has to come, too. I can't leave you alone without even Claire, Alex." The redhead apologizes. "Especially not with so many other pagan gods knowing you're a virgin now and with you being connected to Loki and the Winchesters and Hel's lover. You're kind of a bit of a prize."

"What the hell? How do they all know? And why is that anyone's business? I'm not saving myself or anything, I just don't want to end up sleeping with someone who turns out to be a
supernatural creature who wants to kill me." Alex protests. "Besides how else will I have a chance of being the final girl in this horror movie that is my life? I'm not exactly the action girl type."

"I really don't think that's going to happen. I mean what are the odds of that whole situation even being possible again." Claire reassures her.

"What are the odds of my lack of sexual history somehow being outed to a conference of pagan gods, Claire." Alex glares at her, though the outfit and Brunhildr causally reaching over to braid Alex's hair make her look less than intimidating.

"Don't look at me," Claire lifts her hands in protest.

"Honestly, no one had to have said anything. There were Greek and Roman gods there. They have a sixth sense about these things. Like gaydar but for virgins, virgidar." Brunhildr explains.

"God, that sounds like the name of the lamest transformer ever. Virgidar, useless, defensless, easily broken, and can never be repaired, yet somehow as valuable as dutch tulips." Claire rolls her eyes.

"No she just gets an upgrade into Gestitron, creator of miniature cybertronians from spare parts and misapplied condecentration." Alex retorts.

"What are you talking about?" Brunhildr frowns. The girls just shrug. "Anyway, Pluto likes to do whatever he can to screw with Queen Hela. Especially after she laughed in his face when he brought suit after Proserpina died. He made the mistake of going 'over her head' to her father Loki when she refused. Neither of them appreciated that. Poor Cerberus was the one to pay for it."

"What do you mean?" Claire asks, "He seemed just fine to me when we went down there. I don't think Bree would torment animals. Even three headed ones."

"Oh, well, first he was a giant poisonous snake. Then because of the whole thing with Rhys' adopted wolves, Hati and Skoll being turned into constellations, Loki turned him into a three headed dog with snakes for hair and a dragon for a tail. I don't remember if that was part of the apology or part of what he was apologizing for after the pantheons made amends." Brunhildr finishes Alex's braids and pulls a couple red ribbons from her pocket to tie them off. "So when Pluto pissed him off, he turned Cerberus into nothing bit an enormous three headed pitbull, which are the sweetest most friendliest of dogs and this time made all the Greco-Roman gods except Pluto forget that Cerebus was ever anything else."

"That makes so much sense." Claire muses."Are all mythological inconsistencies just Bree fucking around, do you think?" Brunhildr shrugs and grabs hold of Claire and Alex as they ponder the question, bringing them back to Helheim. "Hey!"

"I'm the Queen's Woman, I told you." Brunhildr apologizes. "You can wander these halls safely, Alex. Claire, I'll go inform Hela you're here." She opens the door to Hel's bed chambers and ushers her in.

"I'm not wandering the halls in this." Alex follows her in.

"Well, you're not staying here whatever Hel wants, I want privacy for it." Claire grabs a red hooded cape with fluffy hems and a pompom drawstring from the wall. "Go find Sam or something. Work on that dumb game a little or here." She piles a couple english written books into Alex's arms and fastens the cape around her shoulders, but its a little long and when Alex goes to
turn around she trips on the hem and drops the books. "Hold on." She empties out a basket puts the books in it and gives it to Alex, leaving her a free hand for the cape and pushes her back out into the hall.

"Of course I have no clue where I'm going." Alex looks around.

"I think he's in the treasury." Claire informs her. "Don't talk to any strangers now, and remember don't leave the path." She shakes her finger at her confused sister before closing the door.

"What the hell are you..." Alex starts to ask before realizing she's in a red hooded cape holding a basket. "You are such a little shit, you know that Claire? Dean was right, Bree was a bad influence on you."

Claire just reopens the door, places a half eaten box on chocolates on the top, pulls up the hood, pats Alex's head and takes out her phone to take a picture.

"You know when you claimed I hated you, I thought it was a misunderstanding, not you stating your new life goal."Alex scowls at the unrepentant girl who recloses door with a little wave. She sighs and turns to see Rhys in his usual gigantic wolf form standing next to her with a quizzical look as he glances down at the basket then up at her, well, Hel's cape. "My what big... everything... you have." She comments looking into the big gold wofty eyes exactly at eye level.

The face he makes is one of almost convulsive silent laughter and he ends up crouching down on the floor, his tail thumping fit to break tiles. Really she's not sure whether he's just laughing his ass off or having some kind of seizure.

"I don't suppose you could take me to Sam?" She asks when he calms down enough to just flop down completely with a sigh. He gets back up and leads her down the hall, the wofty grin still on his face the entire way.
In Those Days There Were Giants

Chapter Summary

Hela's grandmother enlightens her as to why so many of the Jotun won't help. The Valkyrie's attempt to help relax her is not relaxing.

Chapter Notes

amma- (norse) grandmother
sotnos- Norwegian for sweet nose (it's a term of affection I swear)
daudi-(norse)death
kind- (norse) child (yes, her grandmother scolds her by calling her death child.)

I swear by all that is I am not making up the story of Ymir that Hel replies to her grandmother with.

"Hello, amma." Hel kisses her grandmother's cheek.

"Hela, my tiny one." She hugs her kissing her cheek in return. "Are you well?"

"No, amma. I'm not. I'm going into battle, and most of my family won't join me. I don't understand why." Hel sits at her grandmother's feet, tucking her own feet under her skirt, holding her knees and resting her chin on them, making herself look as small and helpless as possible. It works better on grandfather Faurbati but he doesn't have as much say in Jotun affairs.

"You're fighting the reapers. The old ones we all made an oath that we would never raise arms against the angels, or even leave Jotunheim for midgard on pain of death and annihilation." She pats her granddaughters head.

"What?" Hela lifts her head. "Why would you ever make such a promise and who would possibly demand it of you?"

"It's a long story, sotnos." Amma informs her. "Do you know how the Jotun came into being?"

"Yes, amma, Ymir sweated some out of his armpits and his feet fornicated with each other to make more, then the Aesir came and killed all but a pair of Jotun and they sired all of us." Hel hopes strongly that she's avoided a long and dragging story as they're on the brink of a celestial assault.

"The story is that Ymir sweated us out and all the first Jotun were killed in a deluge of his blood except for bergelmir and his spouse and they repopulated us, but that's not exactly true." Which is almost exactly what Hela just said.

"Amma," Hel sighs starting to ask her to get to the point but her grandmother shushes her with a tap on the head.
"Hush, daudikind, you came for answers, so sit and be quiet for them." She eyes her granddaughter until Hel nods.

"Yes, Amma."

"So, as I was saying, the story you have been told as to our origins is not the exact truth."

"Really?" Hela asks with mock incredulity, getting another tap on the head.

"Don't be fresh, either tiny one. The truth is that Ymir was born to a human woman and a man possessed. Back then, all sorts of beings were dallying with humanity. It was mostly those who consorted with human women that got caught, though, for the same reason women are known to be sexually active despite all possible protestation." She pats her stomach. "And these children grew to be very troublesome.

"Now, he was only one of many but Ymir was the chief scourge of the norsemen. Doing what he liked, taking who and what he pleased for he a special skill, you see. Ymir could create pockets of reality, Neiflheim, Jotunheim, Asgard, Midgard, Alfheim, Vanaeheim, Muspelheim, Svartalheim, Helheim which as you know is connected directly into Neiflheim almost completely merged now. All are connected to the same Tree, Yigdrasil, though Ygrashil and the eight other worlds are connected to Midgard, and Ygdrasill is not the center as assumed." Hela is entirely unastonished, having reached the same conclusions herself centuries ago. "And when any who could harm him would come near, he would escape into one of these worlds and hide, generally Jotunheim.

"In those days giants ran rampant on the earth. They made themselves gods, humanity made other gods to counter them. The norsemen were desperate for a respite from Ymir's rampaging. How else could they have come up with the Aesir. The Vanir were mainly gods of pleasure, but the Aesir, fought."

"Amma, I am very familiar with the Aesir." Hel says as politely as she can.

"And they told stories of the aesir, those consummate warriors and giant haters, who through retelling became gods. Giants had become a plague upon the earth, crushing mankind from who all gods gain sustenance. Human women were too frail to give birth to them, and died, often before siring any purely human offspring. This left many men, aimless, bitter, and lonely with no families to be tied to, wandering the land stealing warring for those rare brides. That is not to say the women all behaved any better. Many would take advantage of their value, causing wars and demanding obscene tribute, manipulating those within their reach. The world had become wicked like you have never seen since, twisted in a desperate struggle for survival. And then the waters came.

"Many people have their own tales of the great flood. Many reasons, many saviors, but all agree it was a punishment on us for our weaknesses and immorality. Only the best, most virtuous and most intelligent survived, though rarely possessing all three qualities at once. And the offending giants were slaughtered by their celestial kin as they attempted to escape the waters or save loved ones. It was a massacre the likes never before seen and never seen again. A deluge of blood and death in figure if not fact.

"But there was one of those spirits, a being of justice and a lover of children and innocents who knew when this deluge was to come. Shortly before hand, he snuck through the cities and wildernesses, taking all those motherless infants from their resentful homes, and rescuing mothers who were with child as well as select giants, though we could never figure out what exactly the criteria for their selection was. And he brought them to Ymir saying 'My kin, I bring you a future army, dark times are coming and you would do well to be prepared. So Ymir took them and the
mothers in, and they hid. And the waters rose and flooded midgard until almost none were left.

"When the waters receded, Ymir raided the survivors against the spirits warnings never to reenter midgard. While he evaded the other spirits, the stories of the aesir, retold with faith and desperation bore fruit and Odin, Villi, and Ve found and slaughtered him as he lay in a drunken stupor in the ditch between Jotunheim and Elivagar in Ginnungagap. They then claimed the lands of Asgard for their own. The spirit, much better at hiding than Ymir, gathered the children and Giants together and told them.

" ‘You are and ever shall be considered abominations unto the most high. Your mother's families resent you, your father's abhor you and you have no place among the creatures of midgard. But the fault is not yours, and I would not have you put to death so unjustly for the crimes of others. These lands I give to you, stay to them and you will be safe. These gods, the Aesir, the vanir are your wardens, make peace with them and they will show you mercy. And above all do not expose yourselves needlessly to the eyes of gods and men until you have bred out the vital spark within you.'

" ‘But, uncle.' The eldest cried. 'We have no food, no animals, no weapons with which to defend ourselves. If we are abominations surely there are those who would hunt us down without mercy regardless of where we stay. Beyond that, do you know the people of which you speak? Make peace? We must win it or do you wish us to be slaves to the aesir?'

"And so the spirit gave thought to the questions. Food and drink meant nothing to him and as they were his kin, he'd assumed it meant nothing to them as well. There must be trading and defense as the aesir were a warlike people and shown far too eager to subdue the giants, the Jotun. And so the spirit considered and brought them some special iron smelted in the heart of the hottest star.

" 'With this you may craft tools and weapons of extraordinary strength and trade them and use them for your own benefit. But in exchange for this gift, you must make a vow to never, ever raise arms against any of my brethren. For if you do I will come and strike you all down without mercy. Now until each of you with this vital spark within you has sworn this oath and vowed to teach your children and their children the same. For even if one day I am lost to you, such acts would lead to the destruction of all jotun.'

"And so we all swore upon our lives and that of our progeny that we would never raise arms against the race that sired us. The spirit left and was seen no more. At least we assumed as much. It wasn't until that fateful night Loki and your blood kin were killed across the seas that we realized that nameless spirit had been among us the whole time. Granted his actions make only slightly more sense now." Hel can hear the familiar irritation in her amma's voice that always creeps up when she discusses Hel's father. "Those of us usually taken out by his treachery were admittedly the most blatant violators of that vow. Reckless, careless jotun who we simply assumed drew the attention of the aesir through mere ill luck. Now I'm inclined to attribute deeper planning and motivation to it."

"Are you... Amma, are you telling me that the Jotun are the children of angels and men?" Hel straightens up in shock. Her grandmother nods.

"Yes. I believe the angels called us nephilim. After a few generations the angels grace bled out, but the power and purity of the stock largely remained. You get your powers from the godhood of your sire, Baldur, combined with the human soul within you. None would recognize you as descended from angels, nor indeed acknowledge you as such."

"Thank goodness." Hel frowns.
"The fact remains, Hela. We made our vows and we will never dishonor his memory by breaking it, no matter how much we wish to otherwise." Her grandmother reaches down to caress her cheek. "Knowing this would you ask us to bring the wrath of all of heaven down upon us and condemn our race to death? Even the uncle you consort with, the one in the trenchcoat has slain his share of nephilim. The last being an innocent girl simply trying to live her life without harming anyone. Not even the children would be spared."

"No, Amma, I suppose I wouldn't. I'm sorry. I didn't know what I was asking." Hel looks down at her hands.

"Ah, mein aiskling kind." Her amma bends over to embrace her. "Didn't I warn you about Misgard, about humanity and their angels?"

"Yes, amma." She rests her head against her grandmother's. "You did. I was warned, but I couldn't help myself. My father... no it wasn't my father. I went for my father but I stayed for her. Oh amma, I understand why angels would fall now." She says though she knows better.

"Why do you keep with those childish romantic notions?" Her amma tsks at her, not unexpectedly. "You need a man, Hela. If you had a husband right now, you wouldn't need us. But no, you persist with these silly girlhood crushes. They will never get your children."

"I don't want children, Amma." She reminds her for the thousandth time.

"None of this nonsense, daudikind. Maybe it's not too late. That handsom Grecian man may still be interested in forging an alliance." She pleads. Hel's face grows sullen and she pulls away.

"Roman. Amma, I'm sorry. I will never be the woman you want me to be. I'm afraid you'll have to accept that I am to be forever a disappointment." She gets slowly to her feet.

"No, Hela. No." Her grandmother tsks her again and takes hold of her hands. "You're not a disappointment. Just disappointed. No husband, no child, a life alone." She holds her granddaughter's hands to her chest, kissing the wrists. "I love you, Hela, I want you to happy and fulfilled. That's all."

"I know, Amma." Hel sighs. She's never spelled it out so plainly before. She must think her granddaughter is going to die in the battle. "I will consider what you said."

"Please do. Before it's too late." One last squeeze of the hands and Hela's are released.

"Amma." Hel looks up, a detail of the story striking her memory. "Did you make any deals regarding the weapons made with that special iron?"

"No, why do you ask?"

"Will you and the other Jotun give me any of those weapons you have left?"

"I don't see why not. The aesir are largely gone. Thor is much less likely to murder us for fun now that mjolnir is gone. And he seems oddly fond of Jormungandr given they're destined to kill each other." The woman muses.

"They're lovers." Hel says flatly. "And he's our uncle. Perhaps Yuri is the one you should be talking with."

"Oh, well, boys will be boys." Her amma waves off her complaint, pissing Hel off to no small degree, not only is that the phrase she can't stand in general but its just more on piles of
evidence that Yuri is not just her father's favorite child.

"Until we demand they be men, they absolutely will," Hela replies sweetly. Amma just raises and eyebrow.

"Alright, daudikind, go back to your war. I will have the weapons sent back with your mothers shade." She shoos her off.

"Thank you, Amma." Hel gives one last kiss and heads towards Ygdrassil. As soon as this is over she's assigning someone to figure out the bifrost. By the time she gets back to neiflheim, she's cold exhausted, hungry and even more out of sorts than before. While she loves her father, the majority of his family is another thing entirely. Finding out that half of her ancestry was purportedly sired by the beings of the annoying upstart religion thats nearly destroyed existence several times over makes absolutely nothing the least bit better.

Why didn't her father tell her? She thought he'd trusted her. If he was really protecting the Jotun as Loki, why did he run when christianity approached? Granted the aesir were scattered to the wind already and thought he was still in the cave with Yuri. While she couldn't tell anyone the real reason Loki helped Hodr kill Baldur, she could let several people know that Baldur was screwing around with her mother. Rumors quickly spread about the obvious fact that at least one of 'Loki's children looks an awful lot like Baldur. And so by the time he decided to get the hell out of meso america, everyone decided to just let the whole thing go. That and Hel gave in and gave Baldur back. Mostly because he's a pretentious asshole and is only 'universally beloved' by those he feels its worth not being an asshole too.

He even tried to use kinship claims on Hel for the same deference and preferential treatment she gave her mother. Her response was to sew his mouth shut and bind him to a stool in the corner until he wrote 'it is the chef who is to be praised fort he meal not the grocer who supplied the ingredients.' Five thousand times on grains of rice. This was shortly after that years BiCUD and she'd spent a bit too much time getting drunk with the shinigami at the conference year. She'd underestimated both the strength of the shaojiu and the sake she started drinking once she was drunk enough to forget she was talking to the chinese shinigami and not the japanese shinigami. That was also the year she went to bed with a maenad. She still has the scars from that bad decision.

Not wanting to give an immediate report to the underlings, she snaps herself to her bedroom the second she enters Neiflheim. When she reaches to the wall for her fuzzy hemmed red cape to keep her warm on the walk out to her personal hot springs, its not there.

"I gave it to Alex so she'd give us privacy." Hela's heart almost jumps out of her chest at the sound of Claire's voice. She's here? Here despite Hel's direct orders to keep her away from the coming fray.

"You reckless, foolhardy infant!" Hel snaps not looking back at her, lest her resolve waver. "I suppose I should have expected something like this. You are absolutely insane. Do you want to die? You will die here, you stupid child!"

"Excuse me?" Claire sounds absolutely stunned.

"Go home, Claire. Hunt if you must, but don't go to war."

"Did you seriously fucking order me here just to call me a child and tell me to leave?" Always so incredibly irreverent. At least Pluto pretends to respect her authority as Queen of Helheim and Goddess of the Damned.
"I ordered you out of Helheim and Neiflheim and if you keep acting like a child I will absolutely call you a child." Hel walks over to her vanity. Her chocolates are gone as well. Dammit, Rhys. He's not even supposed to have chocolate. And her herbal tea... this is the last thing she needs.

"I'd be careful who you were calling a child, Hela." Claire says darkly. "Because if I'm a child, then do you know what that makes you? A pedophile. And I'll be damned if I'm gonna stand here and be lectured by a pervert."

"What did you just say to me?" Hel turns around both furious and astonished beyond belief. Claire sighs and rolls her eyes bewildering Hel further.

"Oh, come on. Family guy? It's a cartoon.... that's the funniest damn quote on the show." She holds out her hands. Hel, much less angry though far more annoyed just shakes her head in disbelief over the entire conversation. "Don't you ever watch tv?"

"No. I have more important things to do, such as ruling my kingdom of the dead." She replies dryly. "And did you honestly just quote a child's cartoon in response to being called childish? As an attempted rebuttal?"

"First off, Family Guy is not a children's cartoon. Its for grownups. And secondly what do you mean you didn't send for me? I was going through Bree's apartment looking for her will and Brunhildr told me you told her to bring me back. I told her to fuck off as you'd just made me persona non grata for 'my own good', but she brought us back instead." Claire crosses her arms, looking away. Hel strides over to the door to her room and opens it.

"Brunhildr!" She announces loudly. "To me this instant!" She claps her hands firmly together just once amid the valkyrie appears before her.

"Yes, your majesty?"

"Explain yourself. Immediately."

"We were just trying to find out if one of them was a video will. it was an awful lot of porn but we each took one and the apartment was warded, it was only a couple hours." Brunhildr quickly explains, cursing that little american twinkie.

"What?" Hel frowns, making Brunhildr realize she was talking about something else.

"What?" Is her brilliant counter. Hel pauses a moment, rubbing her temple and takes a breath, heaving a deep sigh before speaking again.

"Why did you disobey my orders and bring Claire Novak back to neiflheim?" She demands speaking slowly and deliberately.

"I... I didn't. You told me to. You... sent me an email." Brunhildr quickly takes out her phone.

"Do I even have an email?" Hel frowns as Brunhildr beings it up. Her father did try to show her the internet when it came out, but.... "Right. Aol. It wasn't me, but I will discuss this with all of you later."

"Yes, your majesty." Brunhildr bows as Hel closes the door.

"So, this wasn't a booty call?" Claire sounds almost disappointed. Hel smiles despite
herself and sits down on the end of the bed beside her.

"It may have been." Hel admits. "I can only assume I've been a bit....

"Controlling and bitchy?"

"Tense." Hel gives Claire an annoyed glance. "I am a Queen, Claire and a goddess. Controlling and bitchy is part of the job description."

"Are you okay?" Claire asks protectively taking hold of Hel's arm.

"No. Everything is coming down around me and my best hope may be to die in a blaze of glory taking as many as my enemies down with me as I can, scarring the landscape in a torrent of blood and celestial ash. On the plus side, if I can manage to feel enthusiastic about that I'll finally be a proper norse sheild maiden." Hel rolls her eyes.

"Don't you dare think that's your best hope." Claire puts her hand to Hel's cheek, the scarred one, without a flinch or hesitation, though she knows what's there.

"I don't want you to die with me, Claire." She puts her hand over her lover.

"I won't." Claire grins. "Neither will you. Now shut up and kiss me. I want to have at least one more night with you, just in case I'm wrong."

"I love you, Claire Novak."

"I love you too Hela whatever the fuck your last name is." Claire kisses her, though Hel starts laughing "Do you even have a last name? I don't even know."

"Angrbodasdottir. Shortened to Bodasdottir generally, or Lokisdottir. It's just identifying one of your parents."

"Okay, good to know." Claire smiles. "Though really, I... I love you, Hel. Now stop laughing and help me take my clothes off."
The Battle of Neiflheim

Chapter Summary

The reapers attack.

Chapter Notes

True story: Dog kisses and giant animals thinking they're lap dogs are why I'm a cat person.

Alex is a dog person, but there are limits.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"I'm starting to think you're not the most reliable of guides." Alex comments as she follows Rhys around what seems like endless halls. He give a her a look that says 'who me'? "This outfit is ridiculous and I don't want to be wearing it in public any longer than possible." Rhys just sits down facing her and waggles his eyebrows before giving her a wolfy grin. It's then Alex remembers that in the original tale, red riding hood does a strip tease to distract the wolf so the woodcutter could get there or some reason.

"Goddammit, Claire." She mutters. Rhys gives another silent laugh. "Will you please just take me to the treasury before I'm forced to shove this basket up your wolfy ass." She lifts it for emphasis. "This ridiculously heavy basket." Rhys just licks her entire face in one motion. "Oh god..." she winces, putting the basket down so she can wipe her face off with the cape. "This is why I'm a cat person." She lies. "Seriously." But when she's done, Rhys has taken the basket handle in his teeth and is trotting down the hall.

"Rhys. What by odin's beard are you doing?" A tall handsome oddly cleanshaven man snatches the basket from the wolf god's mouth. "You know you can't have chocolate." He scolds.

"He's carrying it for me so I can't shove it up his ass." Alex runs up to them. The man rises and eyebrow at her looking from her to Rhys.

"I don't know where you keep finding all these women into bestiality play. I'm starting to think Hati and Skoll actually were my nephews." The man, Yuri apparently takes the box of chocolates from on top and eats one as Rhys snarls at him in irritation, "What's that, baby brother? I don't speak stupid."

"And I don't speak old norse." Alex states.

"Yes, That's why I'm speaking english."

"I mean, if you're going to talk shit about your sister's guests at least be polite enough to do it in a language they don't understand. Can you take me to the treasury? Rhys is just leading me in circles I think." Alex begs. Yuri eats another chocolate and considers.
"Sure. Do you actually need this basket?" He nods to it. She shakes her head.

"Not really. Honestly, I don't even know why I'm carrying it." So Yuri hands it back to Rhys. "Don't bring it back to your sister yet though. She's with Claire." Of course this just makes Rhys get a mischievous gleam in his eyes and take off back down the hall. Yuri shakes his head at his little brother and looks back to Alex.

"So, you're the virgin."

"Every time someone asks me that I find myself inexplicably torn between fucking them on the spot just to get the whole damn mess over with, or making a lifetime vow of celibacy backed up by a machine gun and hand grenades just to piss everyone the fuck off." Alex snaps.

"Well, good luck with that." Yuri turns and starts walking down the hall. "This way." He motions with his hand.

"I'm sorry about your dad." Alex ventures after him.

"That creature is not my father." He snaps so vehemently Alec decides its probably best not to mention Bree again. "Double doors, gold handles. Knock yourself out." He points to the same doors she and Rhys passed at least seven times. "I'd stay in there until you get that whole whore or vestal virgin decision figured out or you are going to be causing a whole lot of trouble." He adds as she reaches for the handle.

"Excuse me?" Alex turns to look at him but he's gone. The door to the treasury opens revealing Dean in a trenchcoat and some sort of outfit with tights.

"Fetish Queen got you, too, huh?" He nods to her backing up so she can enter.

"No, Claire and a valkyrie kind of teamed up on me with some pre death preparations from our favorite archangel." Alex opens the cape to show the ridiculous outfit. "Bree, gone but not forgotten." She walks over to Sam who's sitting in the corner as Dean tries not to laugh. "Hey, how are you holding up?" Alex kneels down in beside him, not sure how exactly to sit in all these damn short petticoats. He just shakes his head and looks up at her.

"I'm dead and locked in a treasury but apparently, I can still eat so Skuld is getting us some food."

"But what she really wants to is to give him a little sugar, right, Sammy?" Dean teases him with a grin. Sam is not amused. "You'll see." He nods at her and sits down beside them. "What are you doing here? I thought you were back in Souix falls. Is everything okay?"

"Claire had to talk to Hel and our valkyrie guard couldn't leave me behind as apparently I'm horny god bait at the moment." Alex gives a sigh. "So I'm just going to wait here for a bit." Sam pats her back.

"What? How did that happen? And how do we fix it?"

"It's more along the lines of what hasn't happened. And you don't. You... no." Alex wrinkles her nose.

"Ohhhh," Sam realizes and gives her a sympathetic squeeze of the shoulders.

"What do you mean 'Ohhhh'," Dean mimics. Sam just gives him an incredulous look.
"What do pagan gods absolutely love, Dean?"

"Human sacrifice?" Dean frowns.

"Nothing. Drop it. Never mind. None of us wants to be discussing this. Sam? Is your shirt corporeal?" Alex asks hopefully. "Like, if you take it off. Can I wear it instead of this damn red riding hood?"

"I don't know. Let's see." Het takes it off without a problem, and hands the plaid flannel overshirt to Alex. But when he lets go it disappears, reappearing on his form. "Not corporeal."

"Great." Alex sighs. Suddenly the entire castle is shaken by the sound of a thousand blows striking the earth. "What?" She grabs at Sam to steady herself.

"The reapers are probably attacking. Cas, if you're not back, now'd be a good time." Dean gets to his feet and takes off the trenchcoat. "Here," he hands it to Alex. "Protect this." He gives Sam a meaningful look as she does so.

"Don't die again or you'll be wearing that forever." Sam attempts to be lighthearted.

"Oh, fuck that." Dean rips off the tunic and grabs a decorated sword from the nearby weapons rack.

"I don't see how bare chested and in nothing but tights us any better." Alex comments. "He does know how cold it is out there doesn't he?"

"Probably not." Sam sighs. "Just stay here with me, alright, Alex?"

"Of course." She gives him an offended look. "I'm not running out into that mess. I'm not Claire."

The room shakes so hard that the windows break.

"Shit." Claire grabs her shirt as Hel goes for the scythe, not bothering with clothing.

"Your majesty!" Hjorprimul bursts into the room, not getting turned into a poodle like Rhys. "The reapers are here. They're attacking the border between Helheim and Neiflheim. They're trying to collapse the walls."

"Claire." Hel sends her a breif pleading look to stay put before following her valkyrie out of the room.

"Yeah, I don't think so." Claire picks up Hel's dress and chases after her. They stop in the throne room where a dozen other valkyrie have Hel's armor ready and are giving reports in old norse. But before Hel can get more than a protective pair of tights on, Dean enters shirtless and armed, in only tights himself. He and Hel breifly look at each other.

"Well, one of us is going to have to change." He says primly putting a hand on his hip. Hel grins and snaps her fingers, dressing him in some simple leather armor, much to the dissapointment of the valkyrie present, and the gratitude of the approaching Claire.

"That sword is decorative." Hel informs him. "You are welcome to fight with us, but I cannot garuntee your safety on the battlefeild." She motions to a blonde Valkyrie who brings Dean
a plain worn iron alloy short sword. "The Jotun have blades that may possibly injure the reapers. Has my mother returned with them yet? No? Then our primary task is to get a force to the bridge to Ygdrassil and guide them back to Helheim. Gudrun, take your girls and the Winchester and... where's Rhys?" Hel pauses and gives a sharp whistle.

"Claire, go stay with Sam and Alex." Dean orders when he sees her.

"I don't think so..."

"Look, Sam's a ghost right now, okay? And Alex is pagan bait whatever that is. You need to go protect them, do you understand me?" Dean looks her straight in the eye. Claire looks poised to argue but thinks better of it and nods, passing a small purple poodle trotting down the hall. He stops and glares fiercely at Hel.

"Learn to knock." She says coolly and snaps him back to his original form. "We need you to help escort the Jotun weaponry back to Helheim. Where's your brother?"

"Here." Yuri races in, the enormous redhead Thor at his side.

"Uncle, I'm glad you're still here. Got the bridge with Rhys, the Winchester, and the girls to get the weapons from my relatives. Do not kill any of the Jotun. Do you understand me?"


"Give me your sworn oath, Aesir." The look on her face and tenor of her voice brook no argument.

"Fine. By the hair on Odin's left testicle, I swear I will kill no Jotun today." Thor sighs placing his hand on his heart, raising his hammer with the other.

"You know your father had repeatedly told you to stop making that oath." Yuri scolds him. The look Thor gives him indicates he does not give a fuck, and he's hardly one to talk about being disrespectful to your father. "You could at least honor it after his death."

"Fine." Hela waves him away. "Yuri, you're with me, but no manifesting until the reapers have done more damage than you would. Understood?" Yuri just nods, rolling his eyes. Hel shakes her head for a moment, catching a sympathetic glance from Dean in regards to younger brothers.

When the front gates open, Dean can see the reapers, pale grey wings manifest, alternately striking the earth to shake the fault connecting Helheim and Neiflheim and smiting every living thing outside of it, livestock, plant life, insects, even the frozen river itself is being shattered and scattered among the mountain tops.

Hela joins the archers, shouting orders in old Norse and a rain of arrows falls into the reapers clearing the way for the group at least until they're out of range. Then the reapers descend and attack. When Thor smashes his hammer against a reapers wrist hard enough to make him drop his blade. Dean snatches it up and pierces the reaper through.

It's then that the archers bring out the modern cross bows and start shooting holy oil soaked bolts through torches into the midst of the attacking reapers. When the angels start to drop injured, the norse men burst from the castle, grabbing the fallen blades and the battle begins in earnest.

"Not bad, pretty boy." Thor slaps Dean on the back, as they make it out of the fray,
knocking him onto Rhys.

"Thanks." Dean does his best not to fall down, holding onto the sniggering wolf’s fur. At least it sounds like sniggering. Can wolves snigger? This one apparently can.

"So, I hear my brodr repeatedly murdered you one tuesday." Thor slings his hammer over his shoulder. Apparently this is his way of breaking the ice, but with all the force of Thor's hammer.

"Your.. brodur?"

"Loki. We are blood brothers."

"What? I mean, why?"

"I like to fight and he causes alot of them. Plus he's incredibly funny, do you know the story about the goat?" There's an outcry from the valkyrie, begging him not to tell it judging by the tone. "Well, 'she' actually, I guess. Which makes more sense as no man would have ever thought to do that. Ha! Sigyn will throw a fit when she finds out she was not just married to an angel and not a jotun but a female angel at that. Then again, since Rhys Hel and Yuri weren't his, Nari and Narfi likely weren't either."

"So much for the goddess of fidelity." One of the brunettes sniggers.

"Why the hell would you bring any of this up?" Dean snaps, much to Rhys seeming agreement.

"I hadn't seen him so much towards the end. I wanted to especially when I lost Mjolnir again."

"Oh, yeah, some god of greed was auctioning it off. I think Sam killed somebody with it when we were retrieving the demon tablet."

"What! They were selling my mjolnir? Where is it now and why didn't they contact me to have me bid?" Thor grumps.

"I don't know I'll have to ask Sam what he did with it." Dean shrugs.

"And probably because you wouldn't so much as bid for it as you would have murdered everyone with your bare hands and stolen it back." Gudrun points out. Thor just nods, conceding the point.

"I don't get it, man. You were blood brothers with Loki? But wasn't he screwing with you just like all the time?" Dean shakes his head.

"That's what brothers do," Dean can't exactly argue against that.

"Didn't he trick one of your real brothers into killing your other brother, the most beloved of all the norse gods?"

"Helped." Thor corrects, as if its an important distinction. "And half brothers. And Baldur... Baldurs a little shit who crossed the line big time with both Loki and Hodr. If allfadr hadn't turned a blind eye to his bullshit, it wouldn't have happened." Thor looks increasibly pissed off again and likely to start smashing that hammer into things. "No one wanted Baldur dead more than Loki except Hodr. And that's all I'll say."
"Baldur took Hodr's eyes." Gudrun informs Dean despite Thors glare."He wanted wisdom like Odin, but didn't want to disfigure his pretty little face. So he challenged Hodr, our ugliest most trusting brother to a card game and got him drunk until he convinced him to wager his right eye. But that was the wrong eye. So he came back and 'exchanged' it for Hodr's left. If he had gotten the correct eye, he might have made the trade, as the first eye arguably belonged to him, but the second was stolen, so it didn't work. And neither did Hodr's eyes. He was twelve and thought doomed to Helheim when he passed.

"But did Baldur get punished? No. Odin thought it was clever and scolded Hodr for being foolish which was fine in regards for the first eye. Even at twelve you should know better. But Baldur was just as dumb for asking for the wrong eye and he had no rights to the second. He wasn't being clever either, he was being a selfish dick. You think it was beyond shitty too, you know you do." She scolds Thor for giving her dark looks at the retelling.

The conversation is prevented from going further by an exclamation from the bridge.

"What did they say?"

"Loosely speaking, they said 'Fuck it's Thor.'" Thor grins. "Calm yourselves, Jotun! I have sworn an oath to kill no giants today!" He raises his hands. "There are bigger..." a rock is thrown at his head by one of the younger members of the Jotun convoy. "Huglausi oskilgettin tik!" He hands Dean his ridiculously heavy not-mjolnir and chases after the young giant. The valkyrie sigh and go to move the weapons onto Rhys while Thor beats the Jotun man into a pulp and not a few of the others unwisely coming to the young mans aid. The older giants just sigh and shake their heads.

"Thor has a bit of a temper." Gudrun takes a drink from her canteen. "Mead?"

"No, thanks. And yeah, I mean, he is a red head." Dean shrugs. The valkyrie snickers at this.

"Thor is the reason everyone associates redheads with short tempers." Gudrin laugha. "Thor! We are ready! Angrboda, Hela would like you to return to Jotunheim for the duration of the battle."

"I'm already dead. What exactly is she afraid of?" The shade of a beautiful enormous woman scoffs. "I will be with by daughters side." Gudrun just shrugs and waves her and her token bearer forwards.

"So what's so special about these weapons?" Dean looks them over. "Why does she think they'll hurt reapers?" Gudrun just shrugs. "So what we just went to fetch these weapons soley on her say so?"

"Yes."

" Doesn't that strike you as a little odd?"

"Clearly you have never served a queen."

"Well, I did breifly lead the army of the Queen of Moons against the shadow orcs and stuff." Dean comments, though the memory makes him both sad and whistful. One of the valkyrie makes a comment in Norse causing the others to laugh. "What?"

"They said," Thor walks back over, fists covered in giant blood. "That clearly you are a queen. Don't mind them, they're just upset because they're prettier than they are." He pinches Deans cheek as he walks by.
"Cas, where the fuck are you?" Dean mutters, wiping the blood off his cheek with his sleeve and prepares for the march back.

Chapter End Notes

Huglausi oskilgettin tik-(norse) cowardly born out of wedlock female dog
Death's Adjutant

Chapter Summary

Harahel starts gathering memories
Death really enjoys staring at cabbages.
Gadreel is lonely

After an indeterminable amount of time walking through cabbage fields, a large building appears in the distance. Harahel's joy at the change in scenery is mitigated by the fact that Death still somehow seems to be overtly fascinated with almost every cabbage that crosses his path and the journey is just as slow. Not that it could be anything but slow without his wings. He's almost tempted to ask what Death finds so fascinating but for the fact that the being still scares the bejesus out of him and Hara still prefers the status quo of being largely ignored.

"Do you know why they hate us? Because of you." A young gangly blonde with a slight lisp accuses, though his visage is shadowed by the darkened cave."You're a traitor and a liar and a coward and friend to no one. Nobody likes you, they just laughed at you for thinking they do. You're a selfish fucking asshole and I hate you!"

Harahel steps back in shock at the raw pain coursing through him, and trips back over the cabbages. Death just turns to him, raising an eyebrow.

"I... something..." he stammers looking around and sees some sort of yellow gem in the dirt where he was stepping.

"I see you found one of your sister's memories."

"What a horribly memory." Harahel frowns before his attention is drawn by a flock of storks gathering around him, looking none too pleased. "Hello?"

"I believe they wish you to get off the cabbages." Death informs him dryly. Hara nods and gets to his feet as quickly as he can, managing not to land on any more cabbages when he pitches forwards this time, just on one of the indignant storks

"I'm sorry." He blushes. It's been a while it seems but he still can't get used to not having to counter the weight of his wings. When he's nervous or distracted, he keeps pitching forwards. "Sorry." He apologizes again and helps smooth out the birds ruffled feathers before moving back into the other row with the jewel. The storks poke and prod at the disturbed cabbages and put them back in place easily. With a disgusted look to Harahel they fly off. He just averts his eyes and looks at the jewel again.

One of Gabriel's memories. Was it her son Jormungandr? Well, not her son really, just... emotionally. The hurt and pain he felt at the boys words make Hara wish he could just go and give his sister a big hug and tell her that he loves her at least. Not that it would mean that much. Part of him wants to just bury that painful memory deep where it can never harm anyone again. But another part of himself tells him that no matter how hurtful it may be, its part of who Gabriel was and should be treasured. But he still doesn't want to touch it again.
After a moment's thought, Hara bends down and uses the hem of his robe to pick it up. As Death continues to inspect the cabbages, Harahel searches the surrounding rows for more gems. Soon the bottom of his robes are full of sparkling golden gems. They're not quite the same rich amber droplets that came from Claire. More like pieces of safety glass. One accidentally touches his skin again and he sees a familiar sight, the bottom of the deepest darkest oceans.

He doesn't recognize the specific area, but it might have been from too long before he was there. He hid himself in the ocean when the angels were cast out of heaven and the fighting began. He didn't even take a vessel he just went right into the waters as far down as he could, hiding in the depths. The darkness contained the glow of his grace and the salination prevented scrying. Hannah came to get him in the end, but she said she only found him through the sound of his tears. He was surprised no one else had hid down there. Apparently someone else had.

It's almost heartening to learn that Gabriel did the same thing when she first left heaven. That she felt the same way Hara did or at least something more similar than anyone ever admitted to. It makes the broken angel feel not quite so broken as he thought. Maybe of one of the archangels could have felt something, did something so similar to what he did, maybe Harahel wasn't the hopeless irredeemable mistake he and so many others thought he was.

Something taps his shoulder as he's immersed in the memory and he gives a start, dropping both the edges of his robes and the memory in his hand, letting everything fall to the ground. It's a stork with one of those cabbage baby pouches and some gloves in its beak.

"Thank you?" Harahel warily takes them from it and puts on the gloves before putting all the memory gems into the pouch. The weight of it on his back helps him keep his balance and soon they reach the buildings in the distance. When they enter, it's full of cribs stacked upon cribs in rows and columns. Those he can see are filled with swaddled babies with one foot peeking out of the bottom and a little blank white tag attached to the big toe with blue pink or purple silk ribbons. For some reason this gets a chuckle from Death. Some cribs looks as if they could use a couple babies. Some do, a few head to head, a few head to toe.

"Soulmates." Death says as he passes them.

"Oh." In a few cribs are some more gems.

"We shall go to the garden next." Death announces. "Your brothers are there and I wish to visit Azrael." Harahel clutches the strap of his bag to his chest. "She is in an egg. And you are already dead." Death reminds him with an amused tone. Feeling less like an adjutant than a jester, Hara nods and follows him meekly through the aisles.

Death opens a door in the wall that wasn't there before and they step out into a large field full of nests and large crystalized eggs. Though they remind her more of cocoons.

"I will return to fetch you once I have finished my visit." Death walks off among the nests, leaving Harahel standing there alone by the gates.

"Halt!" An angel alights before him, sword in hand. "Identify yourself."

"H-harahel." He steps back, bumping into another angel.

"Brother," a kinder voice asks. "What happened to your wings?" He feels hands on his back over the shorn stumps where his wings were.

"A-Azrael cut them off." He tenses.
"Abner, this is the librarian." The angel behind him explains. Abner? "How did you survive such an injury?" His hand moves to the smoothed out backs of his shoulders, shorn every bit as neatly as his wings.

"I didn't." Harahel moves away. If one is Abner then the other must be.. "Gadreel?" He clutches the bag even tighter to himself. They're the angels that betrayed the garden to Lucifer. Why are they here? Why aren't they eggs?

"The one who threw his sword into the sea and so could fight none of the battles." Abner's voice drips with disdain.

"Angels have done worse things." Harahel flushes, backing against the wall, not quite brave enough to point out that Abner abandoned his post and Gadreel let Lucifer into the garden. But apparently the meaning was clear enough and Abner just flies away without another word.

"I apologize for our brother. He has been out of sorts since Castiel left us so suddenly."

"Oh," Hara looks at the retreating angel, his heart aching at the sight of Abner's wings. "It was a bit disappointing, but he has things to take care of outside the abyss and Dean Winchester is much more helpful in those sorts of things than an angel who threw away their sword before they even finished training. Why aren't you an egg?" Harahel tries to change the subject but regrets the attempt as hearing such an odd question come out of his mouth makes him feel very bewildered.

"I do not know. I can only assume that this is our restitution. But I can't be certain. How did you fall afoul of Azrael?"

"I interfered with her assault on Gabriel. I was trying to heal her wound as she was mortal and bleeding heavily. But I never even got the chance, Azrael cut off my wings and alot of my back. I keep falling over, though this helps." he adjusts the bag.

"My poor little fledgeling." Gadreel hugs him to his chest. "That was such a brave act. I am proud of you, though I know how little such words come from a disgraceful angle such as myself."

"You did fall, but at least you had such a great height to fall from." Harahel accepts the gesture, grateful for any praise from his brethren. "You were the most honorable of us all, and the bravest, so if you say I was brave, that does mean something to me." He doesn't really seem to know what else to say. Though from how long the embrace goes on, he starts to think maybe his brother is as lonely as he is.

"Thank you for your kindness, brother." Gadreel moves back. "If I may ask, why are you not an egg?"

"Oh, um, Castiel interrupted the process and then Death said I could be his adjutant while Azrael slept which mostly seems to be nothing but staring at cabbages so far. But that means I don't have to be an egg." Harahel rubs his arm. "Castiel could only take one of us back out of the abyss with him. So I had to stay. He did say he'd be back for me though."  

"Then he will be. Castiel is an angel of his word." For some reason Gadreel's assurance comforts Hara.

"I hope so. I hope Krissy's alright." He adjusts the bag looking around. There's a small gem in the side of a nest. Hara races over to put it in his bag.

"What is that? I have seem them in a few nests but I did not know what they were and so did not dare to disturb them." Gadreel asks, looking at the bag.
"They're Gabriel's memories. She sacrificed herself to make this place. I thought... I don't know what I thought, but I couldn't leave them scattered about the abyss."

"Is that all you have in that bag? Gabriel's memories?" He seems astonished.

"Yes. I think she must have drunk some lethe. They look like the crystal of Claire's memories when Hypnos kidnapped her. It's an awful lot to feed her though. I don't know. I just couldn't leave them." Hara looks sadly at the crystal in his hands. Gadreel just pats his head.

"Come we will search for more."

It feels oddly wonderful to be doing something with one of his siblings. Even a disgraced one such as Gadreel who's only talking to him because there's no one else around. He was such a great hero too. How could he have fallen? Harahel has never understood.

"Gadreel?" Hera asks as they search the nest. "What did Lucifer offer you? To let him in?" Gadreel's cheeks darken at the question. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked."

"Is that what you think? That I was bought?" Gadreel looks away. "Is that what you all thought?"

"I... I don't know. I'm sorry." Hara cringes.

"I was stupid, not malicious, not... I didn't do it for personal gain."

"I'm sorry."

"I wasn't even supposed to be on guard at the moment. I had come early to relieve Abner. It was the only time we had to speak to each other. But he wasn't there. Lucifer was there in his stead. I was confused, but he explained... I don't even remember what he explained about Abner. It just made sense why Abner wasn't there. He offered to go fetch him.

"I do remember the rest. I said no at first, but he just kept talking. Hoping Abner wouldn't get in trouble, if father found him away from his post, things like that. That Abner was just so very fond of Eve. As fond as Adam was in truth. And he offered to stand watch in my place so I could go get him. But then if anyone came by both Abner and I would get in trouble, so he took back the offer. I was worried, because I didn't want Abner to get in trouble. But I knew better than to leave my post. If I stayed then he wouldn't get in trouble as badly as if I didn't."

"Lucifer was very sympathetic and seemed worried for him as well. He pointed out that if he had meant any harm he could have easily entered the garden at anytime after Abner left. That just because he wouldn't worship them above or equal to our father, that it didn't necessarily follow that he meant them harm. He said he didn't even know what I thought he would do to them, but he was hurt beyond measure that I could think so badly of him after everything he'd done for all of us. And I believed him. He looked so hurt and upset and swore he would do nothing beyond finding Abner and getting him to come back before anyone realized he was gone. So I agreed."

"But Father knows everything." Harahel frowns. "He already knew Abner had left his post because he just knows everything. And Lucifer couldn't have entered the garden, someone had to let him in."

"I know that. I knew that, but he spoke and I couldn't think of anything but what he was saying." Gadreel hangs his head. "I knew I was not to let him inside. But in my heart I felt he had been punished too harshly, perhaps even unfairly. I was tasked to keep evil from the garden but to hear him, to look at him, could you have truly believed our most beloved, most beautiful of
brothers to be evil? To be even capable of doing what he did before he actually did it?" He pleads, as if Harahel's opinion could even partly absolved him of anything.

"No." Hara admits. "I didn't really want to. I thought there must have been a misunderstanding or a mistake, but Michael... She was so hurt, so heartbroken it had to be true. I don't think she would have cast him from heaven if it wasn't. I know they fought but she loved him so much, more than anything, just like Father did. He wouldn't have had him cast out if it wasn't either." Harahel adds. Though it's so hard to think of their father in these things. They never saw him, never heard from him directly. Michael and Lucifer were more father and mother to them in feelings and experience. She can understand how easy it was for Gadreel to forget the omnipresence of a Father who would so often do nothing regardless of what he knew. Hara doesn't like thinking about it, and just picks up another gem.

"And yet, I still knew my orders and I disobeyed them. I thought I knew better and I was wrong. I chose the welfare of my dearest friend over that of the children in my charge. I was wrong, but it wasn't malice or greed. I know it makes no difference and never will. I know it's not about me or my honor or my feelings or pride and yet..." Gadreel sounds so forlorn, but Hara doesn't know what could make him feel any better. Knowing he wasn't alone in his cowardice, made Hara feel better, but what has he done that could be considered as bad as what Gadreel did. What's the worst thing he ever did?

"I killed my favorite song." Hara blurts out. Gadreel is silent, not judging though, just, silent. "When Lucifer was cast down, he wanted me to go with him. To join Lucifer in his rebellion. He said I owed nothing to a god that made me the way I was and had me put where I could do nothing but fail and cause harm. That it was Lucifer who put me where I truly belonged. That I would never be anything to them but the cowardly angel who threw his blade into the leviathan filled sea if I stayed. That I owed it to Lucifer to take his part as he had once taken mine. He said to me that everyone said after when they learned I had stayed.

"And I still said no, because he was wrong. Only I wasn't brave enough to say that so I just said I wouldn't leave the library because it was where I belonged, though it was also true. Raziel, he got angry and set the stacks on fire. He wouldn't let me go put them out or call for help, but how he held me he wasn't guarding his blade at all. Why would he? It was just timid little Harahel the coward who couldn't even bear to touch his own blade. Who could have thought that I would take it and stab him with it, but I did. I wasnt trying to kill him. I just had to get him to let me go and I put out the fires and when I was done, he was dead.

"Zizi was the only angel who didn't look down on me for my mistake and I killed him over papers and tablets. Maybe you made a mistake, but you did it for something real. For someone you loved who loved you. Maybe papers and books don't hurt you but they don't love you back and now I've lost Krissy and maybe I killed her too, I don't know." The more he talks the more it becomes clear, he only ever a danger to those he loves. It would be better if he never left the abyss again.

"Gadreel! Something's happening!" Abner races towards them as Gadreel moves to comfort the sad little angel. Was Harahel always this small? Or is it the lack of wings? Abner points up to the sky. The blank sweirula of darkness and light split into dark cracks just like when castiel left. One after another, shapes coalesce into huddled angelic forms, reapers with their pale grey wings being surrounded by snow and ice that turn into crystal eggs. First there's only a few, but then dozens, hundreds maybe a thousand appear in the sky and the eggs... spout parachutes? And drift down into nests where the chutes dissolve into mist, much to the watching angels confusion.

"Harahel. Attend." Death reappears beside him and hands him a lefal pad and pen. "Stay
within the veil, but take note."

"What?" Harahel looks up and suddenly finds himself in the midst of a battle field. Ancient warriors battling reapers loud and bloody and chaotic, just terrifying to behold. So many of the... the non-angels have angel blades. He can see Gabriel's daughter, Hela and she has Death's scythe, cutting down reapers right and left, several valkyrie at her back.

Death clears his throat and everything grinds to a halt with surprising speed as the reapers pull themselves up into the air. They all look astonished then overjoyed then terrified. Harahel can see Dean Winchester defending the front gate. But he doesn't see Castiel. Which is impossible. There's no way Dean Winchester could be in the middle of a brawl like this without Castiel at his side, or Sam. If they were able.

"Children." Death speaks to the reapers, his voice dry and mildly annoyed. All eyes are focused on him. "What are you doing?"
Cessation of Hostilities.

Chapter Summary

Death ends the war.
Cas is still MIA
Yuri's kind of a bitch
Thor gives Dean shit and helps Sam grieve.

Chapter Notes

For the uninitiated aeblskiver has not has any apple in the recipe for a very long time.

Yuri calls one nagarajah, the one in the temple cellar, john wayne because he learned
english from old john wayne movies, and the other Linda short for nagarajah
mucilinda, the one who helped shelter Buddah from the storms. (from A Life of
Virtue)

"Children." Dean looks to the battlefeild at the sound of familiar dry voice. "What are you
doing?" Death stands amidst the fray, his hands on his cane, looking completely unimpressed and
unenthused with the entire proceedings.

"Hey, Gudrun,"Dean grabs the nearby valkyrie. "That table in Hel's throne room with all the
food. How much of that is ridiculoualy decadent unhealthy junk food that'll clog your arteries and
give you diabetes just by looking at it."

"All of it. We're norse. We don't count calories." She gives him an odd look. "Why? Who is
that?"

"Get me a plate of the worst offenders immediately." He lets her go. "I mean it. That's Death
and your Queen is holding his weapon. That food is your best hope. Trust me." The valkyrie, not
wanting to argue wth the crazy clean-shaven berzerker, nods and runs back to the palace.

"Where is Samael?" Death demands. A small angel in the forefront of the fray comes slowly
forwards. "Samael. Why are my reapers waging war on a realm of the dead? Is that your job?" The
angel shakes his head. "What is your job Samael?"

"To serve under Azrael and by coordinating the reaping of souls in the western hemisphere
and deliver them to their respective afterlives." Samael repeats as if by rote, eyes to the ground.

"To serve under Azrael and by coordinating the reaping of souls in the western hemisphere
and deliver them to their respective afterlives." Samael repeats as if by rote, eyes to the ground.

"Who is doing this if you are herr waging war on those already dead and in their proper
afterlives?"

"N-nobed..." Samael replies, not looking up and starts fidgeting with his hands. Death just
looks at him, silent and still. "I... I'll we'll go do that, sir."
"When your underlings have resumed their proper duties, report back to me immediately."
Death says sternly. Samael nods and the reapers all vanish from the fields. Death turns towards Hel, who's still brandishing his scythe. The valkyrie gather protectively around her until she waves them away and starts walking towards him.

"I believe this belongs to you, sir."
Hel hands it back, handle first. Death nods his thanks, and examines it.

"Pork rinds and donut thingies?"
Dean lifts a large tray, one treat piled on either side. A valkyrie whispers in his ear. "Aebleskiver?"
Death gives him a sheepish smile. Death gives him a brief dismissive look, and holds his scythe out to the side. Nothing happens for a moment, until he directs his gaze in that direction and the scythe disappears into the veil.

"We should speak."
He informs Hela, ignoring Dean. Death follows her inside, taking a piece of aebleskiver as he passes, not giving the hunter a second glance.

"It has apple in it!"
Gudrun informs him hopefully. "It's an old recipe."
She turns to Dean who gives a sigh of relief and follows them in. As soon as Hela and Death are seated at the banquet table, Samael reappears.

"Explain yourself."
Death demands.

"They killed Azrael because she was trying to reap Sam Winchesters soul and send it to the empty."
Samael says defensively.

"Sam's soul belongs to me."
Hel says calmly, handing Death the contract.

"Excuse me?"
Dean exclaims. Hel just gives him a warning look as Death looks it over and turns his gaze back to Samael.

"It has always been policy to honor deals and allow the pagan gods their dead."
Death states.

"I... we... Azrael.... we thought he killed you."
Samael points to the seething Winchester.

"It appears there has been a fundamental misunderstanding of my nature."
Is the dry response as Death accepts a mulled cider from one of the valkyrie.

"Honor to meet you, Sir."
She gushes, keeping her voice low, but not low enough. "Big fan."
Hel just clears her throat and the shieldmaiden retreats to the side of the hall with her sisters. Rhys tries to sneak off down the hall towards the treasury.

"Rhys? Where are you going?"
Hel asks in almost the exact tone Death had used to address the reapers. Rhys stops looking very guilty. "Come here. Sit down."
She points to her feet. Rhys skulks over, making himself very small and whines. "Thor, Yuri, would you check on our guests in the treasury?"

"Have you met Hel's lover yet?"
Yuri saunters out of the room, the red headed thunder god beside him, hammer and all.

"I'm going to go... check on Sam."
Dean points over at shoulder at them, backing up a bit. Hel just nods, ans as Death seems intent on ignoring him and giving him the silent treatment, Dean turns and hurries after the two. Yuri says something Norse that makes Thor laugh with a great guffaw that causes a cracked ceiling tile to fall and he ounches the taller yet slender man in the arm full force. Much to Dean's surprise it doesn't even phase him.
"So, uh, Yuri, hows the nagarajah?" Dean ruvs the back of his neck, trying to break the ice. Jormungabdr looks back at him.

"John Wayne or Linda?" He asks dryly. Thor laughs at the nicknames.

"Either? Both?"

"Fine. Linda said to thank you for the ostridge eggs if I saw you again, and asked why they were bought from Australia when Ostridges were from Africa."

"I don't know. I totally forgot they were from africa. Whats that giant bird in Australia?"

"Cassowary?"

"No." Dean shakes his head. "Oh, emus. Thats it."

"Wait," Thor holds out an arms stopping their progress down the hall. "Are you still talking to that snakey fucker? You said you were done with him!"

"I am. He had a wine they needed for the ritual and Hel sent Dean Winchester to get it from him. Dean fucking Winchester to a pagan god. Thats like sending you to borrow a cup of sugar from the Jotun. I didn't want him to die."

"I can borrow a cup of sugar without killing anyone. I didn't kill anyone at the bridge. I mean, he'll at least live until tommorrow." Thor protests. "Wait, you're that Dean Winchester?" He turns to appraise him. "You're so small and pretty." Which is unfair because he's at least as tall as Thor, just not nearly as brawny. "Where's your beard?"

"He's out of the closet; he doesn't need one anymore." Yuri the snarky little bitch continues down the hall.

"No. Your beard." Thor strokes his large bushy red beard. "You're a warrior aren't you? You kill demons, you became a demon, and a vampire, you terrorized purgatory, seduced the darkness, travel the land slaying monsters and gods, killed death, and defeated the devil, right?"

"Actually, my brother Sam defeated the devil. I just kind of showed up and let Satan beat the crap out of me until Sam felt sorry for me, took over and hurled him and Lucifer into the cage so he'd stop."

"Christians are so strange." Thor makes a face. "But the other stuff happened, right?"

"Pretty much, though killing Death was apparently a bust, seeing as he just came back on his own." Dean frowns. Was he just off sulking? What?

"Ah, just because they're ressurrected, doesn't mean they didnt die." Thor waves the statement off. "It just means you get to kill em all over again."

"I think I'll pass on re-killing Death, thanks."

"So, where's your beard? You can't do all that shit without sporting a manly beard. I mean, you can, but what's the point?"

"Beards aren't in fashion anymore, Thor," Yuri explains and tries to push open the treasury doors but they're stuck on something. Thor waves him aside, forgetting that the world snake is perfectly capable of demolishing his sisters home. But Yuri is content to let him do it instead. Thor
proceeds to smash the fuck out of the door with the hammer, cracking the bolt on the other side then gives it a giant kick, sending the bodies piled up behind it flying.

"What do you mean they're not in fashion?"

"I mean, now a beard has to improve your face and not just grow on it to be considered attractive." Yuri tugs a handful of Thors beard. "You might try a little manscaping?"

"Do not ever say that word to me again." Thor shakes a finger at him, before striding into the room. He's almost immediately attacked by Claire who drives her blade up into the wrist of the hand wielding his hammer. Barely looseing a second, Thor grabs it with his other hand and goes to brain his assailent when Dean shots past him, tackling her put of the way while Yuri grabs hold of Thor's arm to effortlessly keep him from striking.

"Thor, this is Claire, Hel's twinkie." Yuri introduces her, "Snow bunny, this is Thor, God of Thunder."

"Oh, sorry about that," Claire gets back to her feet. "And fuck off, Yuri. Don't you have an ocean to go sulk in?" Claire stuggers a little, though Dean takes hold of her arm to steady her. "Okay, so, this was not as safe a place as they thought." She looks back to Alex who's leaning against the corner, if not unconscious close to it, her arm covered in cuts that Sam's bandaging with strips of her petticoats...the walls and floor around her are covered in banishing sigils, stone, wing prints and dead bodies. Dean looks up as a piece of ceiling falls down, to see a large hole to the open sky.

"I'm okay." Alex mutters, "I've lost more blood than this before."

"I'll go get Mom." Yuri leaves the treasury. "Bring the virgin to the guestroom, would you, sturmkind?" He smacks Thor's behind as he goes. The thunder god removes the blade from his wrist and looks it over.

"I've got her." Dean is just in time to catch Alex as she tries to get up and faints. "You okay, Sam?" He asks, lifting the girl up.

"Yeah, take care of the girls." Sam nods, "And stay with Alex, do not leave her alone and unconscious.

"Have you seen Cas? Alex didn't banish him, did she?"

"No. He wasn't with you?" Sam stands up. Dean shakes his head and carries Alex out the door.

"Did she seriously put my wallet in her treasury?" Claire grumbles seeing it on a small pillar, but when she tries to pick it up, it's stuck and won't come off. "Dammit Hel," she sighs. Thor hands her back her blade and tries to lift it but just breaks the pillar.

"Magic." He shrugs.

"Sorry about the wrist, buddy. You scared the bejeezes out of me. What did you guys forget how to knock?" She wipes it off on the cleanest dead body's shirt.

"Eh, It's a scratch. Spunky little thing aren't you." He appraises her, she sighs and accepts the intended compliment.

"So what happened? Why'd they stop coming?"
"Death showed up and told them to stop jerking off and get back to work. Good thing for
them too, we were kicking their asses to svartlheim and back."

"Death? I thought Dean killed Death. It caused all sorts of problems, what did Death fake
his own death?" Claire makes a face. Hunting makes the weirdest sentences come out of her mouth,
seriously. Thor just shrugs and looks over the carnage.

"Nice work. How many are your kills?"

"All of them. Sam had his hands full protecting Alex though since he was tossing the hell
out of the treasure and distracting them, I do have to credit him with all the assists." Claire starts to
turn towards Sam when a shoulder bag appears around her neck and shoulders, the sudden extreme
weight, wrenching her to the ground. "Ah, fuck!" Thor helps take it off her and a paper flutters
down with enochian on it. Then another with the words 'sorry' and 'They're some of Gabriel's
memories.'

"What? Who is this?" Claire rubs her shoulder and looks around. Another paper that Sam
catches flutters down.

"It's Harahel." Sam reads. "He wants to know if Krissy's okay." He can't bring himself to
answer right away.

"No, Hara. I'm sorry. Krissy's dead. We're trying to find her soul so we can resurrect her,
but... how did you survive?" Claire asks, feeling not a little resentful of that.

"He didn't." Sam reads the next one. "He's death's adjutant for now. Though all death just
seems to want to do is... what? Is that a mistake? Stare at cabbages?" He frowns at the paper.
Another appears on top of it.

"Sam?" Claire asks.

"He says he's going to keep looking for Gabriel's memories, that... that he thinks she'd have
wanted me to have them." His voice trembles. "He's going back to take notes of the negotiation." Sam
looks down at the gems.

"Huh, that's strange. You'd think Hara'd be scared shitless by Death. " Claire starts to pick up
the gems. Thor helps as well, though all Sam can do is stare at them. The air around them grows
slowly colder. "Hey, Thor." Claire nudges him. "You were all buddy buddy with Bree, um, Loki,
right? Have any stories?"

"You bet your perky little ass, I do." He sits down next to her, around the bag, so Sam takes a
seat as well. "Okay, so we were out fishing, me Dad and Loki and we caught this enormous trout.
It was fucking huge." He spreads out his arms. "It may have been a sturgeon, I don't know. It was
bigger than me. So that's our dinner for the night."

"What the whole sturgeon for three of you?" Claire makes a face.

"Well, we were roughing it, you kind of expect to have to go without a bit." Thor shrugs, "So
anyways for some damn reason, the fire just would not light. At all."

"Wait I think I know this one. Wasn't it an ox you were eating and odins brother not you?"
Claire corrects him.

"What? No. Father doesn't have any brothers. No one's that big of an entitled asshole without
being an only child." Thor snorts, "And of course it wasn't an ox. How the hell would you catch an
ox while fishing in a river? Anyways, it won't start no matter what we do. For hours and we're all fucking starving, except Loki who can eat like a motherfucker but never seemed to care if there wasn't anything. So I tell Loki to stop fucking around because if there's a problem and its not giants and potentially humorous to anyone in any way, its probably him. Even if we try to pretend it isn't because we're just not up to dealing with his shit at the moment.

"He swears up and down that it isn't him which means nothing as he's a damned liar. So I just tell him to light the damn thing because I was starving and if I didn't eat soon I was going to take that fish and shove it up his ass. And I didn't want any of that sweet honey bullshit he can only conjure, I wanted the charred flesh of a once living dumb creature. You have to get ridiculously specific like that with Loki or bad things tend to happen. Thats when this magic eagle shows up and offers to light the fire for a few bites of the fish.

"So what the hell right? It's am eagle, how much can it eat? An eyeball? Some entrails. This was a huge fucking fish compared to an eagle. Like giving an ant a bite of a whole banana. Not much of a dent. Right? Wrong, this dritsekk eats the whole damn thing in seconds.

"So Loki, gets pissed off because he knows I know he started fucking with the fire first at least and starts insulting it and tries to attack it and I dont know make it vomit the fish up or something, maybe give us roast eagle for dinner so I dont remove his face. But he gets grabbed and the thing flies off with him. Dad was just like 'he'll be fine lets just try and catch another fish.' But I wasn't so sure and went after them.

"He was a tiny thing, remember, and my blood brother, and when I catch up the eagles just smashing him into a mountain repeatedly. Mjolnir was back home with the gloves getting repaired because Mother didn't want me going out looking like a thrall. So I just threw things at him, he wouldn't be hit. I ended up having to promise him three of our golden apples so he could get down to murdering range. I hadn't promised not to kill him and burying three of the apples with him would have fulfilled my oath just fine. Of course, he doesn't and just drops him on me instead.

"So I'm fucked. Loki starts laughing and calls me an imbecilic meathead who should have just kept throwing things until he dropped him. So I pounded his stupid ungrateful face until my arm is tired. Finally he's all 'Relax, kiddo, I got this,' and took an oath to fulfill my moronic oath for me. We get back and Dad got another fish cooking and just tosses Loki a honey comb saying he can't have any meat because he was fucking around with the fire earlier. He still claimed it wasn't him but didn't protest too much as he really preferred the honeycomb anyways.

"So we go home and next thing I know Idrunn our magic apple girl is missing and so we're getting all old and shit. So I was like, Loki, what the fuck did you do? And he was all, 'I fucked up, bro' of course that little shit Baldur heard and tells everyone Loki's responsible because the brat has to be the center of attention unless that center involves a beating. And everyone's angry but he's like 'Relax, I've got this'.

"So he borrows Freyjas feathered cloak to fly which I don't know why he needed because he's a fucking angel and has wings. And she lets him because they were knocking boots. And just to be clear Freyja is not Frigga as some people think. He ws my dad and my blood brother and there are certain things you don't do."

"Bro's before ho's?" Claire smirks.

"Exactly."

"Where does banging his son fall in that viking bro code?" She teases. Thor just ignores her as she's a woman and not norse and her lover Hel scares him a little.
"Anyway, we get this big ass bonfire ready and see him hauling ass holding something that looked way to small to be Idrunn but we light it anyway just in case he didn't fuck us over and he crosses and the eagles starts to cross and woosh the fire flares up and we get roast eagle for an appetizer that night."

"What about Idrunn and the apples?" Sam asks, Claire gives a small smile at his question and the fact the air's no longer chilled.

"Oh, he'd turned them into a nut and turned them back. He didn't rat me out about my stupid oath either, though I did tell dad myself. He just cussed me out for letting Loki take care of it. But anyway, I told you that story to tell you this one." Thor confesses. "So apparently the eagle was really a giant and that giant had a daughter and she was pissed..."

That tale makes Sam wince slightly though, Claire laughs her head off, not being a man and unable to properly appreciate how cringeworthy it was.

"Sam, tell him how you and Bree met. Like the first time, when she was the trickster." Claire nudges him. "You'll get a kick out of this, Thor."

"Really?" Sam wrinkles his nose. "That one?" Claire nods emphatically. "You know I never got my laptop back from that one."

"Was the password Mahatma79?" Claire asks. Sam just looks surprised. "Then yeah, she's still got it." Sam just sighs and shakes his head, "C'mon. Spill."

"Alright! I don't know why you want this story, I was trying to kill him then." Sam rubs his hand back through the fuzz of his hair, it was barely growing back from chemo when he died. Sam as a short haired ghost for all eternity, it makes Claire want to cry.

"That happens alot. Never mind that." Thor reaches over to pat his shoulder reassuringly.

"Besides I want his buddy to recognise him. You two are ridiculously lovey dovey when she's visibly a she."

"Like he wasnt with Sygn or Boda?" Thor scoffs "But no, its your turn, let us revel in his memory, rejoice on the Life that was." He takes a canteen from his belt and takes a drink, offering it to Claire and Sam in turn.

"Alright. Not exactly a memory I rejoice in, but fine." Sam smiles a little despite himself, "So, this professor died under mysterious circumstances. A ghost story was connected to the hall and mentioned in the news story. So Dean and I went to the college to check it out."

Chapter End Notes

Dritsekk-(norwegian) shit bag
Prisoner of Love

Chapter Summary

Krissy gets an offer she can't refuse.
Zuriel has a complete and utter breakdown.

Chapter Notes

Reminder, Zuriel is the angel of Harmony. When things are chaotic and full of strife if affects him as badly as lies affect Amitiel.

There are so many gaps, so many holes, reasons and actions she doesn't understand, but most of everything that happened these past few months is just missing. She tries and tries to reach for it, but there's nothing and the effort makes her head hurt. Thanatos sits down beside her, offering her a cool drink, which she refuses, and a plate of grapes which she also refuses. But the chess board she can accept, and they play a game or three to block out the emptiness.

He's a handsome god, with a gorgeous iron man style beard. His pale off white eyes are a little creepy but she's starting to get used to them. She almost wishes he could speak, but the silence isn't always unpleasant. She could speak but for the first time in a long time she can't seem to find anything to say. All that comes to mind is an aching sadness and sense of loss and loneliness that had, for a brief time been sated by something though she can't remember what. She died but she doesn't know why or how or when.

The last thing she remembers with any unbroken continuity is meeting Claire Novak in some karaoke bar. But everything after is just bits and pieces of nothing that makes any sense. Dean was in europe. He died and she never even got to see him again. Sam had cancer. He died too. But she remembers that she was a match for bone marrow so she donated as much as she could first. There were a couple local hunts with Claire that they survived. Basic salt and burns. Claire had a shitty car. A station wagon she repaired. Badly. But everything else...

She can't concentrate on the game anymore, so she pushes it away and just sits chained to the floor until Thanatos attempts a hug. She lets him this time, its comforting, sweet, gentle, peaceful, and can't kill her because she's already dead.

"Won't you help me escape?" She pleads, He doesn't reply. "Are you unable to or you just don't want to?" She pushes away. But of course he can't answer or won't. Which makes no sense as why would there be a mute god? Maybe he pissed off Pluto or something. "Are you actually mute or did you just take a vow of silence or trade your voice to the sea witch for legs or what?" Thanatos just rolls his eyes and stands back up. "Well, since I can't escape, can you at least show me around? Or do you think I'll try and trick you or something and escape?" He taps his nose. "Ah, well, I swear on my death that no matter what opportunity presents itself, large or small, I will absolutely fuck over everyone and anyone possible to get the hell out of here. And I'm a hunter so you know I can do it. So really its just better to be on my side from the beginning." She winks at him. He just gives
Zuriel just covers his eyes, as if that would block out the chaos in the garden. Unbelievable.

"He's going to kill us when he gets out." The angel nearest him whispers. Which is stupid as he could have easily killed any number of them already yet didn't.

"Maybe if we can just explain."

"I say we keep him locked up."

"As if he hasn't broken out of jail before. He just escaped from the abyss. The ABYSS, brothers. How long do you think a simple jail cell is going to hold him? We have to think of something."

"For a light in the darkness, Azaiel. He's messing with oblivion now. OBLIVION! Even Lucifer was just content to destroy humanity alone. Castiel won't be happy until every thing in existence is destroyed!"

"But he's only doing these things to protect Dean Winchester and, you know humanity like we're supposed to do. Maybe if we just make sure nothing happens to Dean Winchester, he won't be so reckless anymore."

"Are you seriously suggesting we protect the Winchesters? They've made enemies with all the reapers this time. All of them, Azaiel. We cannot wage war on the reapers. That's suicide, and even if we win then what? Who's going to get us the souls we need? Nobody and they'll all just be out there ripe to be stolen by pagans or hell."

"Well what exactly can we do? If Dean dies because we locked up Castiel, Castiel is going to murder us all. Did you hear what he did to Rahab?"

Zuriel does his best to block out the noise and disharmony and walks over to the cells where a few angels are keeping guard.

"What do you want, Zuriel?" One demands, obviously in no better mood than he is.

"I want some peace and quiet and this is the only place everythings not clanging in complete and utter discord." He explains, though Nathan should know this even if this joker doesn't.

"Seriously?"

"Yes."

"Hey, Zuri," Nathan finally notices him. "You need to go have a word with Harahel. Its been three days and he still hasn't found me those poems I requested. The child is slacking."

"The child is dead you insensitive tool!" Zuriel storms past them to solitary where he retreats into the corner as he often does to get some peace. His siblings have all lost their minds. He and Castiel came back to talk in the garden and let heaven know he was back. But first he wanted to discuss Castiel abandoning Harahel in the abyss. For a Winchester. He chose a Winchester over his siblings AGAIN! And not even one on the opposing side. Harahel was helping them. Poor little
Hara just.... no... it doesn't matter.

But he didn't even get to discuss it. As soon as their siblings saw he was alive they just swarmed him. Zuriel doesn't know why he thought there'd be any privacy in the garden. And everyone found out that Gabriel, who they just got back, died AGAIN trying to save those damn Winchesters from their enormous cock ups and Castiel was moments away from waging war ON THE REAPERS on behalf of a PAGAN GODDESS OF AN UNDERWORLD, which is at best a conflict of interest, and of course the damned Winchesters.

And everyone collectively snapped, bound him limb and wing and tossed him in the most secure cell they had which won't hold an archangel. Its only holding him now because he doesn't know how to use his powers, and he's surprisingly weak from the abyss. But he's in heaven now and recharging and will have nothing to do but figure out how to destroy his confinement.

Meanwhile his idiot siblings are split between finding a way to punish him or get him the help he so desperately needs to fix whatever is causing him to behave in such a recklessly suicidal way. And everything is just chaos and disharmony again. And what's worse now he can't even find Amitiel anywhere.

"Zuri." There's a gentle voice at the door. "I'm sorry, but we're really not supposed to allow anyone in here alone."

"You know I always come here, Nathan." Zuriel doesn't turn to look at him. "Please. I need this."

"I know, but we can't... we don't want him to..."

"Escape? You think I'd help him escape? Right, because I just adore Castiel so much. Is that it?"

"No." Nathan sighs, leaning on the door frame. "But he's as bad as Lucifer when it comes to persuasion, you know this."

"Well, fine, then. How badly do I have to beat you to get a few hours in the cell, then?"

"Don't be an ass, Zuriel. I guess if you wanted I could lock you in until my shift is over. Just... no suicide bombing the cell, alright? We just got this place fixed back up." Nathan closes the cell door as Zuriel shoots him a look. "I'm sorry about Harahel. He was a great librarian."

"Right. Just make sure you tell someone I'm not actually a prisoner this time. I got in trouble for not making my shift the last time you forgot." Nathan retorts, then covers his face. "I'm sorry, Zuri. Everything is just..."

"Discordant, I know." Zuriel lies down on the bench. "It wouldn't be so bad if it didn't keep getting so good in between." He folds his wing over his head, letting the other hang down over the side.

"Do you want me to have someone find Amitiel?" Nathan offers.

"Yes please, but I don't know where she went. For all I know she's dead too." Nathan just locks the cell door and returns to the front.
"Would you care to walk with me, Ms. Chambers?" Pluto offers gallantly. Krissy looks up at him, not bothering to rise.

"No, I think I'd rather stay here in death's bedroom chained to this rock and staring at the wall."

"Sarcasm is such a very unattractive trait for such a lovely lady." Pluto scolds her.

"I wasn't being sarcastic." She smiles sweetly.

"Come, walk with me." The chains around her leg dissapears.

"Pass." She turns away.

"As you wish, I thought merely that you might be interested in helping an old freind of yours." He shrugs and turns to leave.

"What old freind?" She can't help but ask.

"Samuel Winchester. He is, I hear, in need of ressurrecting. Unfortunately his body is too corrupted to function, even should it be repaired enough to retain life, it would not keep it for long. If you're not interested on a solution to this problem..." his voice trails off.

"I am." Krissy gets to her feet. Granted, she doesn't intend to do anything for the bastard, but it will be useful information to have for when she manages to escape and murder him. He offers his arm, which she ignores and just follows him up the cavern into the third entrance and the middle way when that splits.

"I'm not certain how well versed you are in our scriptures." Pluto says smoothly and opens ornate gates to a beautiful hall with marble pillars and crystal walls. Not very gloomy.

"I've seen Disney's Hercules." She comments flippantly. "And both 'Clash of the Titans'." Pluto looks annoyed. "the greeks get all the publicity, don't they?"

"Are you familiar with Panacea?" He recovers himself fairly smoothly.

"Cure all, right?"

"Yes, a cure for all but death." There's a large ice coffin in the center of the room on a bed of pastel carnations. Inside is Krissy's body. Wearing the pastel robe she has on now that she knows damn well she would not have willing worn at any point. On the top of the coffin are three things. An ornate golden box, a large chalice of water and a small bottle, all shiny and purple and green. The stopper is mother of pearl, shining with pastels. The beauty of it strikes something within her that she can't understand, stirring a feeling of inexplicable loss. "Of course death is my domain."

"Are you offering to help cure and ressurrect him?" Krissy's heart leaps in her chest. She knows, somehow that Dean is beyond ressurrection, but Sam. If she could save Sam for him....

"My offer has a price."

"No shit."

"My patience is not limitless, child, now be quiet," he snaps, Krissy just crosses her arms. "Hypnos has been causing me no end of trouble. He allowed you to remove certain memories I
wished you to have. If you agree to reacquire certain memories, I will present Hela Lokisdottir with the opportunity to ressurrect Sam Winchester and heal his broken form."

"I find your worsening very conspicuously specific and suspicious as all hell." Krissy crosses her arms.

"Would you prefer plain language then? Consume these memories and I will sell Hela the panacea." Pluto picks up the gold box, removing the lid to reveal dozens of small pastel pearls.

"You'll 'sell' her the thing?"

"She would be suspicious of a gift."

"Just regain some memories." Krissy goes to pick up a pearl but he moves the box away.

"That's all."

"Why would you be okay with Sam Winchester being ressurrected? And why do I need the memories?"

"Becauze if I simply told you, you wouldn't believe me. As for Winchester, I prefer him alive to being one of Helheim's residents. The underworld olympics are a small thing, but I have no intention of losing them to that giantess."

"Sports." Krissy says flatly. "This is because of sports." Its just so stupid it might even be the truth.

"This is because of war, or a socially acceptable substitute. Hades has reigned supreme in the games since they commenced and I fully intend to stay that way."

"Alright. Fine." Krissy sighs and rolls her eyes. "Those don't look like any memories of mine though. I'm not so big on pastels, really."

"That's because you don't remember them." Pluto smiles. "I disn't think they matched your personality either." It feels like an insult, but Krissy isn't sure why she should care, or why it actually does bother her. "Please. Sit." Pluto motions to the stool near the ice coffin, but as its also in line with one of the thrones, Krissy decides to be a little shit and sits there. Pluto's almost amused expression makes her feel uneasy.

"So what about my body? Why is that here?" She gives him her sweetest smile. Pluto gives a grin and pours the pearls into the goblet. It steams as he stirs it in, the memories dissolving into what looks like melted rainbow sherbert mixed with milk, except swirls of color not that disgusting brown it blends to.

"That is a discussion for after you have regained your memories." He hands her the goblet. Krissy looks at it a moment. She doesn't trust him. At all, but she's already dead and his prisoner, so if there's a chance to help Sam... Krissy takes an illusory breath and drinks the steaming liquid.

Zuriel stretches and gets to his feet. Nathan should be back soon. As peaceful as it is in the cells it's also lonely and he feels up to braving the chaos and disharmony of Heaven again for the company. He never understood how Harahel could bear being all alone in the library so often.
Maybe because being around other angels was more painful than solitude. It wasn't supposed to be this way. They were happy and loving and together once. It wasn't perfect but it wasn't like this. Everything just fell to pieces that sixth Day.

"Zuriel." Oh, wonderful, Castiel has managed to ungag himself it seems.

"Just so we're clear, I don't like you, but I had no idea they were going to react the way they did and for so many conflicting reasons. I wouldn't have come back here to talk if I did. Not that you shouldn't be locked up, but you can't rescue Harahel from the abyss like you promised while locked in a cell. Not that I'm going to help you escape, though, so whatever you have to say, shove it."

"You know, you could rescue him yourself." Is the surprising suggestion.

"I could... How? Just waltz in there, grab him and fly out? It can't be that easy." Zuriel scoffs.

"I don't know if it will be, but you could try. He is missing his wings though. I'm not certain how to address that issue."

"Oh," Zuriel sighs. Maybe there was a reason besides just wanting his boy toy back that made Castiel leave Harahel. "Raphael could have healed him."

"I know." Castiel says quietly.

"At least he could have if you hadn't killed him." Zuriel reminds him cooly.

"I know."

"Did you have to kill him? Really have to?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know? You let Lucifer out of the cage after putting him back in to no end. You let him live and the darkness killed him. But you 'don't know' if you had to Kill Raphael or not? What is wrong with you? Do you even know all the trouble you've caused? Only Lucifer has caused more disharmony as you!"

"I was simply trying to protect humanity."

"FUCK HUMANITY!"

"Zuriel..."

"No, fuck them. I've lost everything for them and does anyone care? No. Humanity came into the picture and suddenly everything else ceased to matter to anyone else! But Lucifer saw, didn't he? And he refuse to accept that we don't exist just to be tossed aside and sacrificed to beings who reject everything we stand for. We are not just cogs in some celestial machine!"

"Of course we aren't. That's not what protecting humanity means."

"No? You used to care about your brethren. You used to love us. There was a time you would have died for us. You defied orders to fight the leviathan with us, facing your fear over and over again saving so many. And now you slaughter us like dogs at the slightest provocation. And why? Because of humanity. So fuck humanity and fuck you, too!" He punches the wall.
"Zuri..." Nathan quickly unlocka the cell door. "Are you al..." but Zuriel just pushes past him and gets the hell out of heaven.

S
Chapter Summary

Zuriel confronts Dean
Hela makes a deal with Pluto

Chapter Notes

Bild Lilli, for the unaware, is the inspiration for Barbie. She was a novelty doll of a character of a raunchy sex filled adult comic strip who was not designed for little children.

Fostri-old norse for foster parent, child, sister etc.

"Then we have an understanding." Death gravely takes another pork rind.

"I believe so," Hela nods, glad the negotiations are finally over. "I would shake your hand, but..." she gives him a friendly smile which is wryly returned. "I can't promise the other gods will be cooperative or even should be included in the arrangement. We can trust the Japanese shinigami, but..." she shakes her head.

I leave it to your discretion. Should you need to reach me simply direct your prayers to my adjutant, Harahel, to arrange a meeting." Death rises to his feet. "My condolences on the loss of your father. She was... amusing at times. Should you ever have the choice to visit the Abyss, I believe you would find it quite entertaining." He bends over to sign the contract between them.

"I hear there are a lot of eggs and cabbages. She says, much to the confusion of everyone else in the room. Death just nods and disappears. "Well, girls," Hel grins at her valkyrie. "It looks like we'll be a lot busier than we were. Yuri... where's Yuri? Rhys, go get your brother, and stay away from the virgin." He just gives her a look and skulks down the hall. "Dammit, Gudrun, go with him." Hel sits down on her throne, grabbing the last pork rind on the way.

She'll have to repair Neiflheim, set up temporary shelters for the Heaven-bound souls that can't gain entry yet and expand Helheim. The elder Jotun wouldn't help with fighting, but she'll be damned if they bow out of the reconstruction. But that can wait. She's sore and exhausted and bruised all to hades.

"Hjorprimul," she calls the Head of the Valkyrie. "Report our losses."

"Indeterminate at this time. It will take a bit to get the exact numbers." She says gently, reminding Hela they just stopped fighting several hours ago.

"How long?" Hela sighs resting her head on her fist.

"About a full night's sleep, a hearty breakfast and extended healing session in the hot springs..."
"length of time at least, your majesty." Hjorprimul replies. Hela looks over at the valkyrie who looks innocently to the side, and smiles.

"Hint taken. Tommorrow we'll feast and honor our fallen. Well, the day after tommorrow. " she corrects herself getting to her feet, and pats Hjorprimuls shoulder as she heads back to her room.

"You rang?" Yuri catches up with her on the way.

"Yes. I did, I shouldn't have though. I need to rest, I'm sorry." Hel rubs her eyes.

"Don't worry about it." He gives her a kiss on the cheek. "Your little Bild Lilli attacked Thor." He grins.

"Is she alright?"

"Of course. Granted I was forced to act in a way that reminded him I was stronger than he is, so he's all sulky. She did very well defending Sam from the reapers that broke through. Though the virgin drew so many banishing sigils she fained from blood loss. Mother was attending them in your chambers, though she should be done by now. I moved the pillar with the wallet to your room so the Winchesters could stay with the girls. Are you alright? Were you injured?"

"As if Rhys wouldn't have dragged me to be tended to if I was. I will miss that scythe." She gives a whistful sigh. "Where is he?"

"He ran into Hlokk and decided to forget about virgins for a few hours."

"Good." Hel feels intense releif, nothing to distract a randy wolf from innocence like a decided lack thereof. "By the way, my lover's name is Claire Novak and I'll thank you to address her as such."

"Let's give it a year, and then, maybe." He shrugs and puts his arm around his sister, "How are you doing otherwise?"

"You mean, in regards to losing out father again?" Her sheer tone dares him to deny the man who raised them. Yuri clenches his teeth briefly and takes a breath.

"Yes. That. I know how close you were."

"I don't know. There's so mich to do. We'll mourn him again next week, I'll need your help with all of this, Yuri. I really will. Hopefully Rhys is still inclined to show off. " Though in truth she can't leave him on the throne again for any length of time.

"He can't. You threatened to skin him alive and use him for a rug if he takes human form around your blow up dolls adopted sister."

"Oh, right."Hel sighs, "Well, she'll be going back to school soon. Why did you shove everyone into my rooms?" She gives him an annoyed glance as she realizes what he said a few minutes ago.

"Dean didn't want to leave Alex alone, what with her being pagan bait, but he didn't want to leave Sam or his fostri either. Blondie didn't want to leave Sam alone as Thor was running out of stories to distract him with and Sam obviously needs his brother. Also we now have thousands more of our fathers memory stonea in the treasury courtesy of Death's adjutant. Apparently a being that existed since the dawn of time has acquired alot of memories."
"Alright, but none of that explains why it had to be my personal bedchambers." She frowns at him, Yuri just gives her a shit eating grin thats so much like their fathers that if she told him he'd never smile again. "Oh, right because your a dick."

"No, I knew you'd want your Blue eyed Bunny. You get all snuggly when you're upset and I'm going to keep an eye on things while you rest. Seeing as I didn't get to really let loose, I'm still fairly fresh."

"Oh, well, thank you, Yuri." Hel gives him a squeeze and opens the door to her room. Sure enough, Alex and Claire are asleep on the bed with Dean asleep in the chair beside them while Sam reads one of her books by the broken pillar reclining in the corner. "Sam," she nods. He nods back. "My brother put you in my personal quarters and since I am queen I am still going to use them and am going to sleep in my own bed, but feel free to keep a candle lit."

"Hela?" He asks gently. "How am I still a ghost, and not like the other residents of Helheim?"

"You need to drink a special mead before you're bound to this specific underworld. I'll get to it as soon as I can. But, here." She walks over to the pillar and carries it out to the hall. "You have about a twenty foot range so you should be able to go to the library across the hall."

"Thank you." Sam nods and puts his book back. "For everything."

"Just don't let your brother murder me for purchasing your soul." She stretches and removes her bloody armor. Luckily, Claire is in the middle of the bed and let's Hel spoon without protest.

Zuriel calls and calls for Amitiel, but there's no answer. Where is she? He needs his Miti, but no one can seem to find her. What have they done now? Have they taken the last of his close siblings away from him? Is she lost now because of getting involved with these human hunters? He calls for her begs her to reply, just a little, but she doesn't.

Something inside him breaks. If they can take his loved ones from him, he'll take theirs from them. Starting with the presumptuous little whelp who likely got Amitiel involved in whatever happened to her. They are done destroying his family. He doesn't care if he has to send every single one of them to the abyss until there's no one left who wants to bring them back.

Unlike Amitiel, she's easy to find. Back in Helheim with the pagans. Her and her freind she calls her sister asleep in bed with a goddess Gabriel claimed as family and that damned Dean Winchester his brother abandoned him for. All of them asleep and helpless before him. Who to kill first? It's a hard decision. But as he stands there, he becomes aware of a wonderful horrible thing, peaceful joyous harmony, a symphony of loving hearts all beating as one. They're injured and bloody but they're together and content, bound by love and affection or at least respect. He can't break this apart. How could he? It would be blasphemy of the highest order.

Instead of stabbing or smiting someone as he intended, he just sits on the floor reveling in the aura. If Heaven was ever this peaceful it was a long time ago. It isn't fair. How can they have this with so much blood on their hands, when it's the blood on his brethrens thats taken theirs away? Why couldn't their Father love them enough to let them have just a little of this? Just enough to be able to stop hurting all the time.

"Boy, why are you crying?" Comes a tired question from the bed.
"I'm not crying." He wipes his vessels eyes. Alex blinks and looks him over.

"Zuriel?" She slowly crawls out of the large bed, and sits down on the floor in front of him. "Are you alright?"

"No. Where's Amitiel? What did you have her do for you?"

"She was going to ask questions about Krissy's soul to try and find it. Is she okay?" The human girl actually sounds concerned. As if they really give a shit about angels besides being some sort of servant.

"I don't know, there's no trace of her." His expression hardens and he stands up. "You never should have gotten her involved. You can't be happy destroying your own lives and families, you have to tear mine apart too. As if we haven't lost enough for your sakes."

"I'm sorry." Alex apologizes, but the tirade has woken the Winchester, who grabs a gregori blade from beside the night stand and gets to his feet in an instant. "No, it's alright. He's a freind." The girl reassures him.

"I am not your freind. I have lost too many angels I love to your nonsense to ever even want to be your freind. I hate you, all of you and if Lucifer were still alive I'd join him in destroying every last one of you. But he's not and I love my siblings even if when they don't care about me. So I have a proposition for you, Winchester." He points his blade at Dean, ignoring the girl at his feet. "Your lover is in Heaven, in jail, imprisoned by both the angels who want him disciplined and those just concerned for his well being. If you find my sister, Amitiel and return her to me, and bring Harahel back from the abyss, I will help you break him out. All three of us will." He can say this honestly as the trick would likely be to get his stupid siblings to just let Castiel cool his heels.

"I have to say your declaration of undying hatred doesn't exactly fill me with confidence that you'd keep your end of the bargain." That Winchester says carefully, motioning to Alex to move away.

"I don't care. They're only in trouble because of you so I shouldn't have to give you anything to do this. But everyone knows the only angel you care about is the one you're laying with and the only thing Castiel cares about anymore is you. So find them!" Zuriel disappears before Dean can utter another word.

"What the fuck is he talking about? Who are Ami-whatsit and Hara-who?" He demands.

"This'll take a while," Alex yawns, rubbing the sand from her eyes. "Come on." Dean helps her stand up. "I think there's a library across the way."

"No, you need to rest." He leads her back to the bed, refraining from comment about the goddess holding tightly to Claire like she's some sort of Teddy Bear. Though he'll sure as hell have a few things to say to her in the morning. If they slept through that, they must both be beyond exhausted. "Where's Sam?"

"I'm here." His brother passes through the door, "Is everything okay?"

"You need to fill each other in and Harah and Amitiel." Alex informs them, lying back down on the down comforters.

"C'mon." Dean ushers Sam out of the room just as a large wolf brushes past them into the room. "Hey." He snaps. The wolf just gives him a look and curls up on the end of the bed. "I'm talking to you buddy. girls only. Out of the bed." Rhys just gives a large yawn showing his many
large teeth and ignored Dean completely closing his eyes and going to sleep. "You little shit."

"Dean, they'll be fine." Sam pulls him out to the hall.

"We'll be right across the hall, do you hear me?" Dean informs the wolf who just gives a dismissive flick of the tail as the door closes. "Alright, look, we've got a big problem, Sam. Cas' psycho siblings have locked him up and probably the psycho-est is offering to help us free him."

"Wait, what?"

When Hel awakens in the morning the only other thing on the bed is Rhys, sprawled out over the length like the spoiled little brat he is.

"Please tell me you didn't eat my guests." She smacks him with a pillow. He just gives her a look and stretches before going back to sleep. It is a little disappointing not to see that blonde head next to hers when she woke, but neither was she murdered in her sleep by an overprotective Winchester, so over all, its a good awakening.

Rhys is still asleep after her leisurely soak in the hot springs. Her body feels like a giant bruise and likely looks like it as well. Enchanted armor protects against sharp edges but not against being pummeled repeatedly with great force.

"Queen Hela." Hjorprimul greets her as she sits in front of her vanity. "Pluto of Hades has requested an audience with you." Pluto of Hades, as opposed to Pluto the Planet or Pluto the Cartoon Dog? Not today, she is too tired and too sore.

"I don't think so."

"Your majesty, we cannot afford to alienate Hades. We are not in as strong a position as we were and have been disappointed by our allies."

"To be fair it was an extremely short war." Hel shrugs. "And do we want to advertise our weakness? No. I have never not trifled with that arrogant douche, now is not the time to start acting suspiciously polite."

"He has been waiting to see you for several hours." Hjorprimul informs her.

"Oh, well, thats different. I'll meet him in my study. Have my breakfast brought there. And some lutefisk for our guest."

"He is already there."

"How is my Claire? Have you seen her?"

"No. We assumed she was with you." Hjorprimul frowns, Hel just shakes her head. "I will see if I can find her. Please remember, Hades did not just fight a small war with celestial beings."

"I know. He wouldn't be here to annoy me if he did." Hel snaps herself into something presentable, and walks down the hall to her study. "Pluto, always late to the party. We gained victory almost a day ago." Hela greets the God cheerfully, and strides to her desk, the long black gown trailing behind her.

"Indeed? That is good news." He seems unphased, "Though I had completed my obligation
as an ally by providing you with lethe, I had hoped to make you an offer, as a gesture of further good will." Hela's smile turns deadly as he reminds her of the Lethe fiasco which resulted in Hypnis drugging her Claire to seduce and retain her in the underworld. If the huntress hadn't decidedly enacted her own retribution, Hela would have done something much similar.

"Now, Pluto, I couldn't possibly accept anything from you. What's that saying? Beware Greeks bearing gifts?" She smiles sweetly sitting gracefully down in her Chair, though her every limb aches at the effort.

"I am Roman." He reminds her flatly.

"Beware Romans then." She shrugs. Pluto just places a small green and purple sheened bottle with a pearl stopper on desk. Hela recognizes it instantly as the elixer of Panacea. It was rumored he still had it, but no one could be sure.

"I give no gifts. I merely offer a trade."

"For?"

"Three of Idrunn's golden apples." Why is three always the number that people request?

"Have you run out of ambrosia?" Hel raises an eyebrow. Pluto looks breifly annoyed.

"No of course not," he scoffs.

"Why do you want our apples then?"

"Insurance," he says simply, "Also the Hesperides are making a fuss since developers demolished their tree. They want golden apples, they don't care what their properties."

"I see. And I dont suppose this has anything to do with depriving me of my most valuable soul for the upcoming olympics."

"I don't see how, you are after all free to do or not do whatever you like with the elixer." He nods to the bottle. "You do have a lover now, and he guardian angel has been nuetered or so I hear. And she is prone to inserting herself where she does not beling. Though, speaking of which, I would accept two apples and the return of certain... items belonging to Hypnos that the young lady absconded with, if she is amenable."

"I don't know. I kind of like my little gift." Hel looks up to the wall where the burnes and severed genitals have been encased in bronze and attatched to a plaque labeled 'Aiskling's first castration'. "I might be willing to part with it and no apples for the elixer."

"Hardly an equitable exchange." Pluto frowns. "The elixer is worth far more than that."

"I believe Hypnos would disagree." Hel can't help but smirk.

"The trophy and one apple."

"Very well, but be warned, if this is not the real elixer of panacea, I'm taking the trophy back and an extra besides."

"And if yours should prove false, I'm taking the virgin." Pluto replies smoothly.

"You have no basis for that. Alex does not belong to me."
"Who does she belong to?" Pluto clasps his hands together.

"Herself." Hel says coolly.

"Ah, I see." Pluto nods sagely with a condescending air that makes Hel regret his inclusion in the alliance more than anything else. "If you'll have the apple brought to me, I shall be on my way. I have a guest at my home and can't be away for much longer."

"Of course." Hel claps her hands together. "Hjorprimul." The summoned valkyrie appears before her.

"Yes, your majesty?"

"Get me one of Idrunn's golden apples."

"Your majesty?"

"You heard me."

"Yes, your majesty."
Proserpine

Chapter Summary

Pluto is a terrible husband
Sam and Dean have a disagreement

Chapter Notes

Hades and Persephone had a wonderful healthy marriage, Pluto and Proserpine, not so much. But then they did come into being from the tales based on those spread by the bitter overbearing mother in law Demeter(Persephone eloped, she wasn't stolen), so they never had much of a chance.

"Did you really think you could keep his attention?" A strikingly beautiful blonde in rich red robes taunts her.

"Well, I am still his wife and you have lost how many husbands and lovers? You couldn't even keep the crippled smith." She replies coolly. "You may be beautiful Venus, but it takes more than that to keep a man's attention. And I am sorry to say, you aren't very interesting."

"And you think that you are? A barren doormat with a personality as dead as her kingdom?" Venus flips back her hair. "Its a wonder you were able to hold onto him as long as you have, but he is in my bed now."

"You may play with him all you like, but when he is done with you as all your other lovers were, I will still be Queen of Hades and you will be nothing but a transient whore. Ad long as I am alive, that is all you will ever be."

"I'm not infertile, husband." She speaks, staring at her empty plate.

"Are you saying I am?" Pluto snaps, wine glass in hand. His thirteenth glass of the night. Hopefully that will be enough.

"I'm saying I'm not infertile." She repeats raising her eyes to him. "Because I am pregnant. And its not yours." Thirteen glasses are enough to beat the child from her womb, but not enough to let her die, even when she tells him whos child it is.

It's spring. How can there be spring if there's no Ceres to grow the seeds? How can the seasons change when her mother is dead and the empire has fallen? Did any of them ever truly matter at all?

"Where exactly do you intend to go?" Pluto is standing behind her.
"I don't know," she replies, "Olympus maybe. See what's left now."

"The door is always open." He kisses her cheek. "Be it eight months or eight hours."

It's so empty. A room for a babe never born. Is she cursed? Is that why nothing has come? Did her mother think she was like Persephone and complicit in her 'abduction' and so curse her womb? She never wanted this, never wanted him. Never wanted to leave the surface where it was bright and beautiful to come to this dark waste.

Perhaps it's for the best. What kind of child would grow up here? What kind of child could stand it? Not one like her. And giving birth to a creature like him is the stuff of nightmares. It's for the best. It has to be.

A beautiful flower so large and bright, impossible to resist. Mother would love this, look how it shines. But when she touches it its cold and the sharp edges cut her hand. It's made of glass or gems. When her blood trickles down the stem to the earth, the ground tears asunder and there he is, rising from the depths in his dark chariot. She screams, but no one hears her and he takes hold of her, dragging her down into the darkness among the dead, away from the light.

Krissy gasps, opening her eyes amidst the ice. Everything swirls together. Krissy, Proserpine. They can't both be real.

"My love." Pluto, her husband, bends to kiss her. Her hand curls into a fist and she strikes him in his smarmy face.

"Venus?" She yells at him. "You had an affair with Venus?" He looks briefly surprised and abashed. No. Wait. Why should she care? She hates him. Both of her hate him, but... "Ahh," she clutches her head. "I hate you."

"I'm sorry." He tries to kiss her but she just hits him again and blimbs out of the ice. Running to her rooms. The soft pastel shades take her by surprise, though they shouldn't. They should be comforting, not depressing. Why do pastels make her sad? It makes no sense. Proserpine loves pastels. She's not Proserpine. What the fuck is he doing?

"You bastard!" She throws a lamp at the door, breaking it. The oil spills all over it and the floor and the wall. Setting it ablaze. What does it matter? She's dead. At least she thinks she is. Krissy is. The smoke fills the room making her cough, or at least makes her think she has to cough. The Acheron made her think she was drowning so why shouldn't this make her think she's suffocating?

The door is kicked open and a wet blanket thrown over her before she's grabbed and hauled out into fresher air, though how fresh can air in the underworld really be? It's not until she sees the soot on her clothes and feels the burn on her hand, that she realizes that she's no longer dead after all.

"So, Harahel is krissy's angel who died and is now Death's adjutant because Gabriel killed Billie, otherwise known as Azrael otherwise known as the angel of death and not just Gargamel's smurf eating cat." Dean rubs the back of his neck. "And he had his wings cut off?"
"That's about right," Sam nods.

"So someone has to go into the abyss and convince him to leave and Death to let him go."

"Exactly. Ordinarily I'd say it shoud be you as you seemed to be on good terms, but you did kill Death the last time you approached him, so he probably doesn't like you as much anymore."

"Yeah, he was kind of giving me the silent treatment in the conference hall. But he ate the aebleskiver so maybe we can make up. This Harahel sounds like kind of a sucky angel besides, so it shouldn't be too hard to convince Death to hire someone else." Dean picks up one of Sam's books from the desk. Angel lore. It seems Hela queen of the damned decided to bone up after finding out her sort of father was one.

"He's a librarian." Sam chides him.

"That's no excuse. Didn't you see those movies? Librarians kick ass man. Oh, right." Dean slaps his hand with the book. "The skittish little thing in Greece. Yeah, no, it definitely can't be me, I scare the fuck out of him. It's really kind of pathetic. How can he be Krissy's angel though. Didn't he have a vessel?"

"Krissy won him over. I don't know why but she really seemed to want to be used as a vessel." Sam flips through the pages of his notes.

"Good god, why?"

"She didn't say. Harahel did the research though, when I was too sick to even think straight. And maybe he's no Cas, but he did die trying to help Babe save you and Cas. And that means something, Dean." Sam chides his ungrateful brother.

"I know. What about this other angel chick? Ami?" Dean flips through, looking at the pictures. For some reason all the angels look kind of like white washed Gabrielles. Actually pretty much any angel anywhere in artwork does. "Why is she so special that this psycho will forgo killing us all to get her back?"

"Her name is Amitiel, Miti to her freinds and she and Zuriel and Harahel were all siblings from the same batch." Alex informs them from the plush chair near the window. "She was helping me find what happened to Krissy's soul."

"Batch? What are they cookies?" Dean frowns, noticing her for the first time, "When did you get here? Are you sure you should be out of bed? You still look really pale."

"I'm fine and apparently the wolf that ends the world snores like a rumbling train." Alex curls her feet back up and pulls the throw off the back of the chair to snuggle into. "So, what are we doing? How do we get them back?"

"You are doing nothing. You are going back to Souix falls and back to school away from all these pagans and their virgin fetish with a valkyrie guard, and Sam and I will take care of this."

"Okay." Alex yawns, and rests her head back.

"Okay?"

"Yeah, Jesus, guys, I'm not Claire. I don't want to be here or be involved with this. If you need me for anything sure, but I'm already way deeper into this than I ever wanted and may have gotten an angel killed trying to help krissy, so if you say go home and leave this to the
professionals, I will gladly do so."

"Okay, then." Dean eyes her suspiciously. "Good."

"Amitiel had Harahel's wings." Alex comments sleepily. "So I'd find Amitiel's first. Maybe she can go with you and help get Hara."

"So, how do we find a lost angel? She could be anywhere? Maybe warded, maybe dead." Dean pulls closer to Sam.

"I found a tracking spell that uses a globe. It searches the veil, where they tuck their wings, as well as the material plain so if she's alive, it'll find her. Though we will need one of her feathers so we'll have to contact Zuriel and see if he has one."

"Alright." Dean doesn't sound to thrilled about that. Hopefully the genocidal little psycho will help at least that much.

"And I can't cast it because I'm dead." "That's your excuse for everything," Dean waves him off. Sam just gives him an annoyed glance.

"...and it requires the blood of the caster." He finishes. "Frehly given and not frozen and congealed in death."

"Alright. You're not doing it either Alex, you've lost enough blood as it is." Dean pre-emptively forbids her.

"Did I offer?" She sounds annoyed, and extremely tired. "What part of, I don't want to be here or do any of this, was unclear?"

"Right. I got the spell then." Dean nods, then sees his brother's expression. "What, I can cast a spell just as well as you can."

"Generally, yes, but the spell is in norwegian and it took you a decade to learn to pronounce latin correctly."

"Why is my patient out of bed?" An angry giantess booms, storming into the room.

"Jesus Christ," Dean exclaims looking at the eight foot tall woman for the first time. "No wonder the ceilings are so damn high."

"I'm fine." Alex mutters.

"As long as you are my patient you will do as I say, and I say you must stay in bed and rest."

"I can't rest there. Your son is just hogging the bed and snoring fit to wake the dead." Alex protests. Angrboda just starts muttering in old norse and lifts her from the chair like a woman trying not to disturb a sleepy toddler and takes her back across the hall.

"Fenrisulfr remove yourself at once!" There's the sound of skittering claws on marble and a slamming door.

"So, the norse goddess almost as big as you are is actually a ridiculously short giant." Dean looks to his brother.
"Pretty much. They've gotten smaller with each generation, apparently."

"Hel really looks like her mom, doesn't she?" Dean muses. "How did a shrimp like Gabriel get with that?" Sam just looks at him, a bit amused, as the proportional differences of his and Gabriel's female body are arguably the same as Abgrboda and Gabriel's old male vessel. "Never mind, forget I said anything. Yuri looks kind of like Baldur though, remember?"

"Yeah, none of them are Babe's biological children."

"He raised them anyway?"

"She did, yes. And loved them all very much." Sam gives him a warning look just daring Dean to make a basty comment. His brother just raises his hands defensively.

"No, I just... that's actually kind of cool. It kind of makes me like him a little better."

"Her."

"Her, fine whatever." Dean shrugs and puts the book back down on the table, absentmindedly tapping it with his fingers, a worried look on his face.

"Cas is okay, you know that right?" Sam says gently. "He's an archangel now, they can't kill him."

"Yeah, but they can hurt him. And what if they try to, I don't know, mind wipe him again or brain wash him or something." He rubs his fingers back through his hair. "Man, I thought things were getting better up there. Everyone was getting along, he was forgiven and treated only as shitty as a relative, and then they all just turn on him like that?"

"Well, it's not as of we haven't done the same thing." Sam says slowly, expecting his brothers reaction to this.

"Excuse me?" Dean slowly straightens up, bringing his hands back down.

"How many times has one of us locked up another one of us to try and keep us from doing something rash or stupid? For our own good. And be honest, everything we've been doing, Dean, from the outside, doesn't it look kind of bad? Maybe even suicidally insane?"

"No." Dean stubbornly crosses his arms. Sam gives him his patented 'I know you know you're full of shit' bitch face, but Dean doesn't relent. "Are you saying that they were right to lock up Cas?"

"No that's not what I'm saying, Dean." Sam sighs, leaning back in his chair. "But we have to stop thinking of the other angels as just this big nebulous monolithic enemy except for the ones we like who help us. They're his family and he loves them and we really need to try and help make peace with them, not just tolerate his spending time with them trying to help them."

"Yeah, that's great, Sam. But how about we break him out of jail first and then work on the whole peace love and harmony crap. Is that okay with you?" Dean snaps.

"We need to rescue his siblings first." Sam corrects him, then looks at his big brother more closely."Dean, are you okay?"

"Seriously? You're asking if I'm okay? Cas is in heavens jail, Alex is pagan bait, Claire is dating a goddamn pagan goddess of death who currently owns your soul because you are dead,
Sam, You're a fucking ghost and you're asking me if I'm okay?" he slams his heads into the desk, pushing himself to his feet. "No, I'm not okay, Sam. Nobody is fucking okay!"

"If you like, I can help you address one of those issues." Dean looks over to the door to see Hel standing there with a small bottle in her hands. "Sam, how would you like to rejoin the living?"

Krissy just looks at the burn on her hand. How do you not notice returning to life? Though being beset by a stranger's memories would likely do it.

"That was incredibly foolish." Pluto chides her.

"These aren't my memories." She glares at him. "You gave me some of your wife's memories? What the hell is wrong with you?"

"Proserpine," the condescending tone makes her want to hit him again, but her hand is burned so it would likely hurt her more than him. "Those are your memories."

"Yeah, sure, well, if they are, fuck you, you unfaithful bastard. Now you'd better either kill me again or let me go because whatever the truth is, it does not incline me to stay with you for a single minute longer than I have to." Krissy pushes him away and starts to walk out of the cavern. He doesn't try to stop her, but the tunnel quickly fades into darkness and footsteps begin to echo her own. "Don't mess with me Hypnos." She warns but a hand touches her arm and everything fades from awareness.

And into Proserpine's pastel abomination of a bedroom where she's sitting at a small table with Thanatos and a chess board.

"What now?" She asks despite knowing he can't or won't answer.

"The recipe for ambrosia has been lost." He replies.

"Oh, so you can talk."

"No. He removed my tongue after I let slip his affair with Venus to Proserpine. This is a dream, the only way I can converse with you directly and privately"

"Courtesy of Hypnos?" She crosses her arms. He nods. "So I'm just supposed to trust that I'm really talking to you."

"No, which is why I didn't attempt it before. But my brother is not the kind of man you seem to think he is. Your friend slept with him of her own free will. He did not use threats or force or coercion or magically induced distraction or even a disguise. He was very much a gentleman and did not deserve to be treated as he was."

"Excuse me? She said no because she had a lover and he erased her memories of her lover so she'd say yes, and her memories of not wanting to have sex without protection, and memories of her quest and the time and everything that kept her from agreeing to just stay and sleep with him for who knows how long. What part of that exactly was coercion and enchantment free? Women are not yours to just reprogram as you please until you get the results you want, Thanatos. That is not even close to letting them act of their own free will.

"This shit is why people stopped worshipping you assholes. Maybe my god is a bit of an absent father, but at least he's not running around raping people, expecting them to be grateful for
it, cursing those that manage not to be raped, and killing those their loved ones had their way with, demanding sacrifice and still doing next to nothing for anyone but themselves. It's a fundamental truth in any relationship that being alone is better than being with the wrong one and you fuckers are so many levels of wrong I don't even know where to begin."

"Are you through?" Thanatos crosses his arms. "Because I am here, trying to help you."

"Of course you are. And what's your price? Let me guess, sex right? Well, you can go fuck yourself. Or go fuck your brother, you greek gods are into that right?"

"I'm trying to help you because its my fault you are in this situation to begin with. So will you please stop insulting me and just listen?" He asks, not a little exhasperated. Krissy just looks at him a moment.

"Fine."

"Thank you. The recipe for Ambrosia is lost. The last person to hold the knowledge of its making was Zeus and he was killed by Artemis' arrow along with Prometheus several years ago. Since then, the supply has been rapidly dwindling and we will soon run out and age and perish. Proserpine had been taught by her mother in her youth, but she and Venus slew each other and vanished from existence."

"How do I have her memories then? Pluto had that elixer, did he find her dying and decides to just let her die and take her memories instead? , Because regardless, I doubt I could hate him more."

"No. He had been routinely erasing her memories since she was first abducted, ever since she first attempted to end her own life after her mothers death. He loved her and preferred to make himself indebted tothe remaining greeks than lose her to her misery. If you know how they are about each other you know what a large sign of devotion that was." Thanatos says pointedly, but Krissy's having none of it.

"I'm sorry I lost all potential sympathy for the widower at 'routinely erasing her memories.'" Krissy says just as pointedly. Thanatos just sighs and drops it.

"Since Zeus's death, Pluto has been attempting to find the memory of the recipe, but the crystals of memory are closed to the gods. Only the dead may partake of their secrets with out absorbing them wholly. And the living may consume them once they have been dissolved in a cup of water from the pool of mnemosyne and said memories are forever made their own.

"You're not the first he's done this to, carthage is littered with young girls convinced they are Proserpine. Some are locked away for their illusions, protected from themselves, but most end up killing themselves from the undending greif and sorrow no mortal has yet been able to bear. But you... you crossed the Acheron, thw river of woe. Few have ever done so. If you can bear that, you can bear Proserpine's memories, and our lord of Hades will never rest until you have consumed every last one."
The facts of Life and Death

Chapter Summary

Zuriel does not understand the subtleties of hunting
Thanatos assists Krissy in 'handling' Pluto
Amitiel has women's troubles
Krissy is not a seductress

Chapter Notes

Apparently Tunisia (where the city of Carthage is where Hades moved it's entrance to after the fall of the roman empire eg. A life of virtue) has one mental hospital, Al Razi. It's not great, but I couldn't find a whole lot of useful information about it, aside from everyone being medicated with different levels of the same zombifying meds.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Why would my sister be here?" Zuriel demands, staring at the Al Razi Mental Hospital.

"We'll make sure to ask her." Dean comments and walks up to the entrance.

The angel refused to leave after returning with the feather for the spell. Sam refused to help with the spell until Dean agreed to let him stay a damn ghost until they've rescued Castiel. Claire refused to go home with Alex until Krissy was back safe and sound and Hel refused to relinquish her claim on Sam's soul, citing it as his only protection or some bullshit. Everyone's just been incredibly uncooperative all around, and honestly he almost hopes someone makes a wrong move shortly because he hasn't wanted to fuck something or someone up this badly since he got rid of the mark.

"Hey. You." He knocks on the front desk. "You speak English?"

"Yes. You are lost? This is hospital for mental." The person looks bored almost.

"Nah, I heard my sister in law was brought here. Amitiel? So high, brown hair, what color are her eyes? Zuri, help me out here." He turns back to look at him but the angel is gone. "Zuriel?" He turns around in a circle, looking for him. Where the fuck did he go? There's some women's screams from inside and yelling and among the foreign languages he hears the name Amitiel. The guards by the door look at him suspiciously. Shit.

An hour and a very unpleasant interrogation later, someone grabs his shoulder and takes him back to Helheim.

"What the fuck?" He sees Zuriel walk over to a chair and kneel beside a very scared looking young woman.

"Someone's removed her grace." Zuriel informs him.
"Dude, you can't just do what you did. You can't just grab someone in broad daylight in a locked highly populated ward and disappear and you can't just yank someone out of interrogation in front of witnesses." Dean holds out his hand incredulously.

"Apparently I can." Zuriel comments dryly and puts a hand to Amitiel's face. "For some reason she doesn't remember much of anything except her name. Or who I am. I only just managed to get the medication out of her system."

"You can't do that, Zuriel." Dean continues. "Were there cameras? How many people saw you? You could end up on the news or with hunters after you. Do you want that?"

"I don't care. They had my sister. Miti, don't you remember me at all?" He pleads. "It's Zuri." The young woman just stares at him and shakes her head.

"Are you sure this is the right person?" Dean brushes his hands back through his hair. Zuri just shoots him a look.

"I know my sister. What kind of idiot can't recognize their close sibling no matter what state they're in?" He snaps. Amitiel cringes slightly.

"Hey, Miti, it's okay." Dean says soothingly. "Can I call you Miti?"

"No." Zuriel replies, as Amitiel nods. So Dean just ignores him and moves closer to the angel.

"I'm Dean. Hi. How are you?" He smiles at her, she blushes a little and looks down, then back up again.

"Dean Winchester?" Her eyes widen.

"Have we met?"

"No." She frowns. "I don't like you, but I can't remember why." her face goes briefly blank as she tries to remember and she puts her hands over her eyes. "Everything is so empty. Please stop asking me questions."

"Miti, who did this to you?" Zuriel pleads.

"I don't know. I was unchaining her and then I was in a hospital. My throat hurt and there were voices, one voice, calling for me over and over and I couldn't shut it off and everyone was lying all the time and I couldn't take it." She starts to cry. Zuriel quickly puts his arms around her hugging her tightly.

"Unchaining?" Dean puts a hand on her arm, removing it slowly at Zuriel's glare of death. "Unchaining who? Miti, did you find Krissy's soul?"

"Kristiana Eloise Chambers?" Fuck, is that her full name? Poor kid. No wonder she was all attitude. "Yes, I did."

"Where?" He tries not to sound too insistent.

"Hades."
"He wants me to what? Consume her memories and tell him the recipe for ambrosia?" Krissy laughs derisively. "Even if it worked, I would never tell him. In fact I would be more than happy to help speed his way. Show me where the rest of the ambrosia is and I'll destroy the fuck out of it."

"I don't want to die, either." Thanatos says reasonably. Though Krissy's not exactly in the mood to be reasonable.

"What, you can dish it out but you can't take it?" she crosses her arms. He just gives her a scowl, that she hates to admit finding kind of adorable. "Okay, so you have a point there, but I'm not doing to do anything to help that bastard even conceivably. Can you take the memories out again? Like with Lethe?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"The same way you remove any memory. Drink it, say what you wish to forget. In this case, it would be simply 'Proserpine' and you'd loose all memories of being or knowing about Proserpine, yours or not. It's limited, but it is what it is."

"Alright. So, help me murder Pluto?" She suggests, hopefully. No one seems very fond of him here, so maybe they won't care if he's deposed.

"No. Without Pluto or Hades on the throng, this underworld would collapse and our souls would be devastated possibly confiscated by Hell. I will not be party to that even if do survive it. It's very likely my brother would not as he requires absolute darkness to survive, and while I know you could care less about him, I do." He looks very stern and really she can't fault him for his loyalty. And by greek god standards Hypnos wasn't nearly as big a bastard as he could have been. But that's not going to win him any prizes.

"Fuck." Krissy slumps down in her chair. "I don't want that either. I don't suppose you could use Lethe to make him forget what an asshole he is." She pouts up at Thanatos, who actually laughs at this.

"No. It erases memory, not personality."

"Well, damn." She looks over at the chess board. "I can't kill him. I can't escape. I'll die fairly soon as I can't eat anything without being stuck here... Won't be a fun death. Not even sure how well I can hold out, honestly."

"I'll bring you food." Thanatos promises.

"If I eat it, and I'm stuck here. I will kill you or worse. You know that right? I've read a lot of lore, and I can get pretty damn creative." She narrows her eyes at him, though he doesn't look too worried.

"I know." He smiles at her. "Not to pry, but seeing as you're a huntress if you're also a virgin, you could try appealing to Artemis. She should still be around."

"Well, define virgin." She gives a sheepish smile.

"If you have to have a definition, you're not enough of one." Is the flat reply.

"Oh." Krissy shrugs. "Oh, well."
"I have to go. I will bring you food shortly." He promises.

"Sure. Thanks." She rests her head on her arms, fairly sure she looks pretty pathetic and damsel in distress-y especially in this stupid dress. She knows she did not die in this damn dress. From the bottom of her heart, she knows that. Pluto better not have been the one to put her in it. Thanatos looks at her all soft and stupid for a moment and starts to lean forwards, probably about to try for a kiss. "Don't even think about it." He just vanishes instead.

"And where did you run off to this morning?" Is what Claire is greeted with when she returns to the throne room. It's almost sweet how Hel stops everything she's doing to greet her, though the greeting could use work.

"I went for a walk." She rubs her neck. "It was a little longer than I intended. Why? What's up?"

"I traded your trophy for a cure all to fix Sam Winchester's cancer ridden flesh when I resurrect him." Hel informs her coolly. Which is fine, as she did give it to her to do with as she pleased. Hel is after all a giantess and a shield maiden, so she correctly assumed she would be more pleased than weirded out like Alex and Krissy were.

"Good trade. If it turns out to be fake, does that mean I can go take it back?" Claire walks up to her and gives her a kiss.

"I don't see why not." Hel considers, placing her arms around her waist and onto her backside. "Your fostri has rescued an angel. I believe he wishes to speak to you. There is a development I am unfortunately unable to help with given various treaties." Hel sighs regretfully. Krissy's soul, while being abducted from her halls, was not one she had any claim upon. And as heaven has been closed, the reapers see no need to interfere as she couldn't be places in her proper realm as it is. They also are especially stubborn about not giving a rats ass about the resurrection of anyone connected to Dean Winchester in the slightest, not that they did much before their 'father's impromptu forced vacation in oblivion.

"Okay, where are they?"

"I believe they're in the library?"

"Thanks." Claire gives her another kiss that turns into a longer one. "Think we can get a private room tonight?"

"I could clear the hall right now." Hel offers. Claire leans back, giving her a questioning look. "It's good being the queen."

"I would, but I don't want to get caught enflagrante by my... fostri? Is that what you called him? Because your halls have no doors. We should ward the bedroom too for when Cas comes back. He's not great about knocking either." She explains.

"I don't know how to ward against archangels. And apparently the wards for regular angels wore out enough not to work. Be careful around Zuriel. Dean says he's a bit unhinged. I'm not sure how I feel about that."

"Will do. Later, toots." Claire breaks away, and makes her way back to the library.
"Well, I don't care, we're not getting the other one until Krissy's soul is safe and sound, and if you can't fucking deal with that, you are free to go back to heaven and sulk there." She can hear Dean snap.

"Dean...." Sam's familiar exasperated sigh is next.

"Typical. Even when the only angel that matters to you at all is the one in danger, he still matters less to you than some human woman. When he wakes up to your lack of loyalty, I hope I have a front row seat."

"You listen to me you little..."

"What's an angel?" The meek question makes the room go dead silent as Claire enters the library. Sam is kneeling down by a rather frightened looking angel. Amitiel, she thinks, an the other one, Zuriel, is kneeling on the other side looking almost horrified by the question.

"You are," Sam says gently.

"Well, not at the moment." Dean adds unhelpfully.

"Hey." Claire walks in. "Miti s'up." The former angel shrugs uncomfortably.

"Hi, Claire." She says, much to Zuriel's dismay.

"You remember HER? Some human thing you met maybe twice?" Zuriel sounds almost jealous.

"Yes, she's a hunter and the demi god of karaoke, right? Alex's sister." Amitiel looks up at Claire almost pleadingly. Claire smiles and nods.

"You remember Alex too." Zuriel seethes.

"Alex asked me to help find Krissy's soul and I went... I don't know how I went, I just went..." Amitiel starts looking distressed again.

"The demi-god of karaoke?" Dean raises an eyebrow at her.

"I came in second." Claire explains. Sam gives a weak smile at the mention. "Amitiel are you okay?" She notes the woman hugging her stomach in a familiar manner.

"I don't know. My uterus hurts."

"Yeah, come with me." Claire goes over to her, taking her hand. "Excuae us, boys. I think we need to have a little girl talk. And a dip in the hot springs."

"You are not taking her from my sight." Zuriel is immediately to his feet.

"Sorry, no boys allowed." Claire leads Amitiel out.

"It's okay, Zuriel. It's just, a women specific issue." Sam attempts to reassure him.

"Amitiel's pregnant?!"

"Pretty much the exact opposite, dude." Dean grins.

"Menopause? She's too young. Isn't she?"
"Dude, she's cramping up, she's getting her period." He explains. Zuriel does not seem to comprehend. "That thing that comes once a month where they go crazy for a week straight and want to murder everyone?"

"She's a werewolf?"

"Jesus christ. Menstruation. How can you know what menopause is but not menstruation?"

"I was the assistant to the choir director. Not a healer. Why would I need to know human biology?" Zuriel snaps.

"There's really a choir? Wait, never mind. Sam...?" Dean shoves the ordeal off onto his brother, who sits down in the chair with a sigh.

"Every month a woman's uterus discards its lining to replace it with a fresh one to better prepare her womb for a possible pregnancy. They discard exits through the cervix and the process takes from three to seven days. For a portion of women, the uterus contracts so tightly during or beforehand that it temporarily cuts off its own blood supply resulting in cramping pain. This can make them as irritable as anyone undergoing regular pain and makes them neither crazy or homicidal. At worst there are special disorders where the hormonal shift drastically affects their moods, but this is rare. However suggesting a woman is on her period due to her emotional state is a very quick and easy way to piss her off to no end because its an incredibly sexist way of dismissing their thoughts and feelings as irrelevant and not worthy of consideration, which would piss off anyone." Sam gives Dean a pointed look. Meanwhile Dean and Zuriel just stare a him in horror.

"Dude, how the hell do you know this is such terrifying detail?" Dean demands.

"Do you remember when we got ambushed by the safe sex talk? I decided to brush up on these things. Didn't exactly expect to have to give this talk to male angel, though." Sam leans back in the chair.

"I am never taking a female vessel again." Zuriel intones flatly. Not that angles have to worry about that when they still have their grace but apparently the off chance of losing it is enough to warrant the declaration. Honestly, Dean kind of agrees. "How do I help her through this?"

"Chocolate, ice cream, midol, agreeing with everything she says." Dean suggests. Sam just gives him a disapproving look. "How did you deal with Gabriel when he was on his period?" He asks him. "Holy fuck, I did not just say that." Dean covers his face.

"SHE was fine. She didn't get cramps and had fairly consistent levels of sanity, so... but binge watching Impractical Jokers always helped when she was upset or her leg was bothering her." Sam suggests.

"Where do I get all these things?" Zuriel demands.

"The mall probably but you can't just... and there he goes off to crazy land again. You are not going up to heaven with that lunatic, Sam, I mean it. He actually said he'd join Lucifer if he was still alive."

"He does seem a little unstable." Sam admits. "But all the more reason not to leave things in his hands entirely. You know as well as I do that one of us needs to go up with him to help do this. The three angels we'll potential have helping us aren't exactly professional anything. They'll never do it on their own and since I'm already dead, it really just makes more sense that it should be me."
We've been over this. I'll be fine, Dean. Now let's work on finding out how to kill Pluto. If he took her, I doubt he'll just let her go."

A hamburger has never tasted so good. Krissy just sighs and leaves her mouth buried in the burger for a moment. There's a knock on the door and she quickly shoves it back in the bag, and under Proserpine's pillow, spritzing the room with perfume to hide the smell, hastily chewing and swallowing her bite.

"Come in." She replies sweetly. Grateful he actually knocked. Pluto opens the door and enters, followed by a few skeletons carrying a tray of food and wine.

"As you are alive and must eat, I have brought you dinner. You are of course, free to starve to death, but that would compromise your healthy beauty." He puts a hand to her cheek. She considers biting it, but as she's still not sure whether that would count as eating food of the underworld or not she resists.

"Wait, did you just call me fat?" She puts a hand to her stomach. Maybe she is getting a little pudgy, but still what a way to woo a woman. 'Healthy' indeed.

"What?"

"It doesn't matter. You can go fuck yourself. You are a terrible god I will never worship and a terrible husband I will never love. I will never do anything for you, so bite me."

"You are aware I can do unspeakable things to you." He looms over her.

"Yes, I am. I know some of what you have done as well. That's why I feel the way I do." She smiles at him. "But you see, you need me to find the recipe for ambrosia. And even if I find it, all I have to do is not tell you until you run out and die and the entirety of Hades collapses around us, dragging us all into oblivion."

"Thanatos will die as well, if your own nonexistence means nothing to you."

"Yeah, I really don't give a fuck about any of you. I like him well enough not to murder him for abducting my soul in the first place, but not enough to give you a damn thing. Now you can torture me and deepen my desire to take you with me, or..."

"Or?" Pluto stands up straight.

"You could try convincing me you're not a steaming pile of shit and are worth leaving alive and in charge of human souls. I doubt it will happen, but seeing as I'm a vindictive, bitter, wrathful bitch of a huntress, it has a much higher chance of success than torturing me."

"You impertinent little whore!" He grabs her by the throat. "I gave you your life back, I can take it away again."

"Go ahead. I won't need to eat then, and yet will retain this healthy beauty." Krissy stares directly into his eyes as he squeezes tighter and tighter, but she doesn't blink.

"Have you thought about trying a gentler approach?" Thanatos asks as she's clearly dreaming again. Likely that means she's unconscious not dead.
"Nope." Krissy puts a hand to her throat which still hurts for some reason. "Too late for that. He'd never buy it now. Please tell me he's not violating my unconscious body because that really seems like something you people would do."

"He can't. He has... problems." Thanatos represses a smile. "Ceres had Pertuda curse him. He can only lie with Proserpine. Of course Venus could overide such a curse at least for herself and there are other ways but few befitting a god." This makes Krissy start laughing her head off. Thanatos doesn't find it quite as amusing but he is a man. "Have you tried bargaining? Setting him certain tasks?"

"What like as a stalling tactic?"

"Maybe, but an equitable exchange. A price for your services. Nothing as nebulous as 'be nice to me' and hope I give you what you want. He's not Apollo." Thanatos sits down on the side of the bed where krissy's laying. "Something specific you want from him.

"All I want from him is to be let go."

"Not even the salvation of the poor girls before you?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, Lethe could take Proserpine's memories from them and leave them with their own. You could ask for me as your personal manservant, and the return of my tongue so we could converse outside of dreams. And you could ask for these simply in exchange for consuming a portion of her memories. Not even for the recipe itself." It's actually a pretty good suggestion.

"Hmm." Krissy drums her fingers on her stomach, considering.

"I'd suggest twelve. With negotiations for the ambrosia to commence after the last task is completed."

"Sounds like a good number. It gives me time as well. I'll ask for your tongue back on one condition." She looks slyly up at the god, who suddenly looks uneasy.

"I won't betray Pluto unto death in anyway, you know why."

"I'm not asking you too. Actually I want you to take a message to my partner Claire, to stop her from coming after me and murdering him. At least not yet. I want to figure out how to depose him without dooming everyone. Sound good?" Krissy holds out her hand.

"Sounds very good." Thanatos takes and kisses it. "My lady."

Chapter End Notes

Pertuda- Roman goddess (of marriage) who enables penetration. Not making this up people, they had a god for friggin' everything. I figured she'd be the go to goddess if you wanted it not to happen as well. I couldn't find a roman god(ess) of impotence.

As for the befitting a god comment, it was considered demeaning to be penetrated in roman society.
Labors of Love

Chapter Summary

Zuriel's a good brother.
The gang get Krissy's letter
Amitiel's first lie

Chapter Notes

CONFESSION
No where in canon does it say what Krissy is short for or what her middle name is. I decided it was Kristiana Eloise Chambers purely for comedic purposes.

"I don't understand." Amitiel lies down on Hel's lounge by the window, "Why does my body do that? What's the point? Surely there was another way to accomplish this."

"I don't know. That's just the way it is. If you ever see God again be sure to ask him." Claire shrugs.

"I never saw him a first time." She replies. "I remember that much."

"That sucks."

"Yes it did." Amitiel sighs.

"Miti, I brought you some things." Zuriel appears in front of her, his arms full of bags.

"You did?" Buy the poor girl doesn't have the energy to sound properly enthused.

"I got you ice cream. Vanilla as its the most popular flavor." He lifts a small bag. "Some people said swiss chocolates were best, some said belgian, and a couple people swore on all that is holy that cadbury cream eggs were the best. But all I could find were cadbury scream eggs left over from halloween and they said that's the same thing pretty much. So I got a bag of all three. I got midol, asprin, tylenol, ibuprofen and this thing called mersydol thats supposed to be good for pain. I got impractical jokers but it looks like its all lies and being mean to each other and I'm not sure you'll like that, so I asked for the exact opposite of that and they gave me these." He hands her the bag. "It's called Veggie Tales. " he informs her, "Talking vegetables tell stories from the scriptures. Since you don't remember any of that, it should be interesting and informative."

"Okay?" She looks the case over with a confused frown.

"They said it was cute and sweet and funny, which really sounds more like you." He adds.

"Awww." Claire can't help but comment as he looks just absolutely adorably sweet and thoughtful and not crazy for a moment. He just gives her a dark look.
"And this bag has all the different sheets and pellets you're supposed to use when you start bleeding. I didn't know which were the right ones so I got a variety pack of each. Are you feeling any better? Did the hot springs help?"

"Let me put the ice cream outside in the snow so it doesn't melt." Claire opens a window.

"Claire Novak," a familiar voice says. She whips out her blade and turns around. "I have a message for you." Hypnos, or someone who looks a lot like him as he's not burning in the light, holds out a scroll.

"Who the fuck are you?" She demands.

"I'm Kristiana's manservant, Thanatos."

"Who the fuck is Kristiana?"

"Krissy," He gives her an odd look, as if he can't believe anyone could be that stupid.

"Seriously? Krissy is short for Kristiana?" Claire looks surprised much to Thanatos' annoyance.

"I will return for your reply in three hours." He tucks the scroll on the tip of the blade and vanishes.

"Okay?" Claire draws her blade back and unravels the scroll. As she reads it, she starts to laugh. "Oh, I love that girl." She sighs. "Hold on, I need to go talk to Dean." She runs across the hall to the library. "Dean, hey." She taps his shoulder with the scroll, making him and Sam look up from the large book of Roman lore. Funny how Hel has that handy. "So, Krissy's fine and has Pluto by the balls and it's hillarious and awesome." She smiles and hands them the scroll. "Wait here, I'm getting Hel. She needs to get in on this." She runs back out of the library.

"He's going to murder and/or torture her as soon as he has that recipe. You know that." Sam comments as Dean finishes reading.

"I know, but it gives us time. We can get back Harahel and more importantly Cas and figure out how to take care of the whole destruction of Hades problem." Dean raps his knuckles on the desk. "I'd really rather just gank this mother fucker, and take her back, though."

"I know." Sam looks over the tasks again. "Do you really think she can handle Proserpine's memories? If they make so many women kill themselves?"

"I don't know, but she's got moxie. She always has." Dean grins.

"I hear Miss Chambers needs some assistance in devising labors for my most trusted ally." Hel announces gleefully, plopping down in the fluffy chair, an amused smile on her face.

"Yes. Apparently Pluto needs her to take in Proserpine's memories to get the recipe for ambrosia." Sam looks back at her as Claire sits on the arm of the chair, Hel's arm around her waist. "She's splitting the memories into twelve portions and will consume one after each task is done. The first was already accomplished. Restoring Thanatos' tongue and making him her personal attendant. Now she's making him help the previous girls he experimented on by removing the memories from the living and making sure the souls of the dead are in a place of divine reward. If they aren't he's to trade souls from Tartarus for them and place them in the Elysian fields."

"Next is my favorite." Claire announces, "Where she makes him and the remaining gods in his
domain attend and pass comprehensive sensitivity training, through pure learning only."

"Here's one for you, Sam," Dean lifts the edge of the scroll. "She wants him to raise and set aside the money needed for you to build that hunters school you were thinking about. And she wants him to convince Artemis to help train the hunters children. Though I think that really counts as two labors."

"That depends on how you word it." Hela snaps up a legal pad for the boys to take notes on and a pen. "Assist Sam Winchester in the creation of a hunters school by providing funding and convincing Artemis to patron the children. That's four, what about the others?"

"He has to create an ethics board to regulate how pagan gods treat humanity to make sure they're not needlessly abused. I don't like the word 'needlessly' added in there, but baby steps I guess." Sam shakes his head.

"Like PETA, except Gods for the Ethical Treatment of Humans. What does that spell GETH?" Claire scrunches up her face. "What a horrible acronym."

"The nagarajah should be in charge of that. They have the best relationship with their worshippers by far." Hel nods. "Also some sort of angel should be included on the panel. Presumably one fond of humanity and at least benign to pagans."

"No chance of that." Dean says dismissively.

"I'm fairly sure Bree was the only one who even considered pagans worth not murdering indiscriminately." Claire sighs.

"True," Sam says quietly. "Though honestly I think all gods should have sensitivity training, with an emphasis on human rights."

"Ooo, write that down. Make him create a sensitivity course for pagan gods centering around human rights and responsibilities to their worshippers." Claire waves at him. "She's asking us for suggestions after all, since she's only come up with five herself."

"Wait, where's Amitiel?" Dean looks around suddenly realizing the angel's not there.

"Zuriel's being all sweet and adorable and pampering the crap out of her in the other room, feeding her chocolate and watching Veggie Tales."

"How? I don't have a television or digital video disc player." Hel frowns. Claire just looks at her.

"Digital Video Disc player?" she raises an eyebrow at her. "What do you say Automatic Tellar Machine and refrigerate too?"

"What else would I call them?"

"Dvd player, atm, fridge?"

"Well, I don't have any of those. And my personal bedchambers are not a public house!"

"Have a heart, she's having major cramps, like, seriously bad. Not even the hot springs helped that much." Claire pouts at her.

"You took another woman into my private hot springs?" Hel asks coolly. Claire just looks at
"Okay. Now. Are you getting territorial over me or over your hot springs? Because one with get you an apology and the other will result in my telling you to fuck off." Claire pushes away.

"A little of both, actually."

"Oh, well, then, I'm sorry but you can fuck off! Do you really think I'd be doing something inappropriate with that poor little innocent amnesiac angel even if I wasn't with you?"

"No of course not."

"Ladies." Sam gently interrupts the budding argument. "Do you think we can focus on Krissy's situation?"

"Of course." Claire gets off the side of the chair and walks over to Dean. "You know, Charon needs some sort of pet or something."

"Karen?"

"Charon, the ferry dude? That's a tough thankless job," She rubs her arms in memory of the trip ferrying him across the Acheron. And she switched out with Krissy, too. "And he's all alone. He needs like a small pet or companion who's immortal, doesn't mind the dark, can talk, preferably one who's smart and not an annoying little shit. I know he doesn't get to ferry souls across anymore either, but he deserves something in recognition of all those years of service." She leans over the desk.

"As a bonus or more like 'employee appreciation day'." Dean asks.

"Something like that. You know what? Why not make it a massive party in honor of all the ferriers of the dead. What?" Claire glares at Hel who's laughing.

"A ferrier is a blacksmith who specializes in shooing horses." she informs her. Claire just shoots her a withering look.

"You know what I mean. Have him throw a massive name for all the... psychopomps?" Claire looks to Sam who nods. "On the banks of the Acheron where he honors Charon presenting him with an animal companion. And the banks on the outside, not across it. He seems like the kind of asshole who'd make Charon ferry all the guests to his own party too and from it unless you get specific like that." Hel just nods.

"So that's seven." Sam looks at the copied over list.

"Yes. Oh, have him find Amitiel's memories and grace. I'm like eighty percent sure lethe was involved and return it to her."

"I have a task." Hela speaks up. "Have him withdraw from the next underworld Olympics to offer his best athletes as trainers to the worst performers in their sports. Actually, I think that should be standard protocol for victors. Each year the winners of an event withdraw for the next one and coach those who came in last. Of course that might end with the underdogs competing for last place, which would admittedly be hilarious." Hel muses. Claire tries not to let her see her grin at this.

"That's nine. How do we think of three more? Thanatos will be back in a few hours to bring our letter back to her." Dean looks it over.
"Well, we have until he finishes the ninth to think of more and that's if Krissy doesn't." Sam shrugs, and looks over the list again. "Any other ideas? Claire? Hel?"

"We should get Zuri and Miti to go with us." Claire says as Dean writes down the ingredients to open the portal to the edge of the abyss.

"Us?" He looks at her.

"Yeah, us, Harahel's terrified of you and a little scared of me, so we need her siblings. And you know you don't want to go into there alone with Zuri and Miti." Claire points out. "Zuri's psycho and Miti will need a babysitter. And Sam's dead so he can't go in. He'll turn into a cabbage and then what will we do?"

"A what now?" Dean frowns at her.

"Yeah, apparently human souls turn into cabbages planted by crows and turn into babies harvested by storks." She doesn't know how but she manages to keep a straight face while relating this true yet incredibly absurd fact.

"What the hell? Wait, are you telling me I was a cabbage?" Dean's eyes widen. In response Claire takes out her phone and shows him the picture Hel sent her of an irritated Castiel holding the glowing soul cabbage, sitting next to a sleeping Dean in princely garb. "You've got to kidding me." Claire just shakes her head not able to keep the grin off her face any longer.

"I'd really feel better if you stayed out of the abyss, Claire." Sam says gently. She just crosses her arms. "I'll.... have Hel resurrect me and go in with Dean myself."

"What? No, you're not going near that place either. Who knows what psycho shit is in there?"

"Okay, I'll stay dead. Maybe Thor would like to go." Sam suggests. Dean glares at him.

"You are a manipulative little shit, you know that?" Dean scowls at him.

"What do you mean?" Sam looks at him with big innocent hazel eyes that are a complete lie.

"Oh, you are so full of bullshit, if you were any shorter your eyes would be brown."

"Nice one." Claire holds out her fist. Dean smiles and fist bumps her. "Either way, you know we need Miti and Zuriel."

"Fine, go get them while I discuss things with my brother." Dean looks back at Sam who's doodling in the margins of the paper. Claire just shrugs and crosses the hall to Hel's room. Of course, only Hel is there, toweling off her hair after a soak in the hot springs.

"Can I help you?" She's almost but not entirely unfriendly.

"Um..." Claire just stares at the body before her, temporarily forgetting what she was going to say. At least until Hel smiles at her."I mean, yes. We're going into the abyss to get Harahel and then go and rescue Cas after. Probably. Where are Miti and Zuriel? We're taking them with us."

"I sent them to the Valkyrie's barracks so they could watch their discs. I'm sorry, Claire. I
get was jealous and I shouldn't have been. I know it. But I really do prefer my private quarters to remain private. I get enough of that invasive nonsense from my brothers. Unless of course it's your subtle way of telling me you want to move in. the goddess makes eyes at Claire, who blinks and looks bashfully away. It's adorable how even after sleeping together she's still so shy about things.

"You have a point." She looks down. "I'd probably get a little pissy if you were naked in a hot tub with. Another woman. But she's an angel, pure and innocent as the driven snow. With cramps like a mother fucker. I should have asked, though. I'm sorry."

"Do you have to get the angels right away?" Hel asks walking over, and brushes Claire's hair back behind her shoulders.

"Probably," Claire sighs regretfully, tracing the edges of Hel's scar with her fingers. "When we get back?"

"Of course. I'll have Gudrun show you the way." Hel sbaps her clothes back on, much to Claire's dissapointment, and claps her hands once. "Gudrun!"

"Yes, your majesty?" The valkyrie appears.

"Take Claire to the barraks. She needs to fetch the angels"

"Oh, but they're so cute, even the grumpy scowly one and poor little Miti is having such a hard time being human." Gudrun pleads.

"Gudrun. They are soldiers of the god of Abraham, not wounded baby birds." Hel scolds her.

"They're still cute." She mutters and leads Claire out to the hall. "It really is adorable, he's just holding her and feeding her chocolates and watching veggie tales commenting on everything. Did you know that was Loki... um Gabriel... Gabrielle? Who protected the three men in the flames? Apparently it was actually hellfire and burned him so badly he almost died but he just stayed there for hours. I never knew he could be so badass." Gudrun sounds so impressed. "And fighting the angel of death. Did you see that?"

"I did. It kind of surprised me."Claire confesses.

"You know, I wish we'd made him a valkyrie when he became a woman. Then we could honor him properly. Have you thought about it?" She slyly turns the conversation to Claire. "We could always use another sister and you get a horse. Oh, also immortality, but the horses are absolutely amazing."

"Sorry. I'm a hunter. I hunt, I roam, I use a car, and I don't worship pagan gods."

"Thats not what I hear." Gudrun nudges Claire who blushes and looks to the side as they enter a large hall full of weaponry and armor.

"What the hell?" She walls over towards to large posters under a banner of runes. One is of Hel and one is of Dean, both topless in tights from the day of the battle. Who took these? There are dozens of lip prints in bright red lipstick on each one. "What does that say?" She demands, pointing to the banner.

"Who wore it better?" Gudrun gives a Claire sheepish smile.

"Where's the lipstick?" Claire holds out her hand. Gudrun smiles and fetches it.
"Hello, Claire." Amitiel greets her just as she plants a lip print over Hel's heart.

"Shit. I mean, hi." She turns around and wipes her lips off on the inside of her shirt.

"What are you doing?"

"Voting." Claire explains. Amitiel looks at the posters blushing a little.

"Want to vote?" Gudrun takes the lipstick back from Claire. "Just kiss the poster you think looks better." She helps Miti to apply the lipstick, which actually looks pretty good on her, and uses some to put a blush to her cheeks in the bargain. "Anywhere on the poster is fine. You don't have to be nasty little thing like the huntress over there." Gurdrun tsks her fingers at Claire who just flips her off.

"Just... who I think looks prettier?" Amitiel asks, Gudrun nods. The angel walks up to the posters, looks back cautiously and jumps up a little to plant a kiss on Dean's cheek. "He's very pretty. I still don't like him, but..." She explains a bit unnecessarily. Gurdrun laughs, making Miti cover her face. Claire just rolls her eyes.

"I agree." Gurdrun nods. "He could use a beard and a bit more muscle, but those eyes and those lips. Mmmm."

"Please stop," Claire begs.

"Amitiel!" Zuriel sounds a bit shocked. "Did you kiss one of those posters?"

"No," Amitiel replies meekly and about as convincingly as a toddler caught in the act. Zuriel's jaw drops.

"Did... did you just lie to me?"

"No?" She shrinks into her shoulders a little. Zuriel just gapes at her looking as if he's going to start crying any second, then just vanishes.

"Okay, well, that's a hell of an over reaction." Gurdrun puts her hands on her hips.

"Zuriel's a bit... unstable." Claire sighs and puts an arm around Amitiel's dejected shoulders.

"I just didn't want him to be angry with me." She looks at her hands.

"Hey, no, it's okay. We all do it. I'm sure he's lied before, he's just a bit on edge that's all." Claire gives her a squeeze. "C'mon, let's go watch some more veggie tales while we wait for him to come back." She ushers her back to the other room.

Chapter End Notes

Am honestly stuck on the last three labors, so suggestions are welcome. Credit to Ameliacareful for G.E.T.H. (Gods for the Ethical Treatment of Humans)
One Little, Two Little, Three Little Angels

Chapter Summary

Brunhildr doesn't understand modern education
Hel resurrests Sam
Nobody understands the abyss

Chapter Notes

So in the supernatural universe we know God exists as do all the other gods and that there are afterlives and such, but almost nobody in the rest of the world does.

How do you deal with atheism in that situation? Like, you know angels personally, you've been in Helheim, your sister is dating a goddess and everyone you know has died multiple times and come back and some idiot is like 'if there's any sort of afterlife.' What can you do? What can you say that won't make you look crazy?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"What kind of weak crap is this?" Brunhildr scoffs, feet propped up on the seat in front of her as Alex takes notes.

"You have something to add, Ms..." the professor looks at the seating chart. "You look different today, Mr. Akuto." He peers over his glasses.

"I'm sorry." Alex raises her pen. "This is my cousin Hilda from Norway. She's visiting for a bit."

"Hallo." Brunhildr smiles broadly and waves.

"Well then, Hilda, do you have something to add to the discussion?" He clasps his hands on the podium.

"Yes, this greif counseling, talking about feelings crap, this is not how you treat the dead, by being made miserable by their memory. You celebrate their life and honor them and know that they've moved on to other things." She takes out a small paring knife and starts cleaning her nails with it. She's worse than Claire.

"But that's just it, we can't know that." Brad turns around. "Even if there is life after death, which I doubt..."

"Is he serious?" Brunhildr turns to Alex who just shrugs.

"You can't know that it's better. How do you know they're not in Hell?" Of course the phrasing just makes Brunhildr snigger.

"Well given she's a lesbian..." she whispers to Alex who just covers her eyes.
"Brad, I'm fairly sure anyone who truly believe the deceased is going to be damned for all eternity is not going to be mourning them." The other Alex interjects dryly.

"Well said!" Brunhildr raises her canteen.

"What about religious parents of gay children? They can still love them and think they're going to hell."

"Students." Mr. Erin interrupts. "Let me remind you that this is a psychology course and not comparative religions. Lets direct our conversation back to the matter at hand."

"You can't discuss greif and mourning without talking about religion." Ellie points out.

"No, but you can just focus on how said religious beliefs helps you deal with the loss instead of the merits of the religion. I mean you wouldn't be telling your patient that their religion is baloney and their loved one is either in hell or consigned to the nothingness of oblivion. At least I hope you wouldn't." Alex gives Brad a pointed look. "The idea of eternal happiness can provide comfort for a greiving family and enable them to cope with the loss regardless of whether or not it's true." Brunhildr just raises her eyebrows at her charge. Alex pretends not to notice her slowly shaking her head and drinking more mead.

The discussion quickly deteriorates into a discussion of wether its better to believe a soothing lie or accept a harsh truth and long term vs short term gains of either in regards to coping with greif.

"What the hades was that?" Brunhildr demands as they walk out. "I thought you were supposed to be learning not squabbling like drunken elders."

"He's a big fan of the socratic method, but yeah, we do tend to get off subject a lot. The next one is just straight lectures. You'll probably like that better." Alex adjusts her pack.

"Everything in midgard is so strange. And changing so very fast now. " Brunhildr sighs. "Look at that." She points to a student using a tablet under the tree, "Less than a hundred years from the first thinking machine that filled a building and now you have one infinitely more powerful the size of a small slate. No wonder so many gods are angry and restless. They're becoming obsolete. What can they offer that cant be provided by your own hands? Soon Death will be the last realm in which any one is needed."

"You shouldn't focus on that. Just celebrate the days that were and know that life moves on to better things." Alex comments slyly.

"Thats cold comfort as its our lives that are unshakably altered and transformed for the worse by these changes." Brunhildr scowls, mostly because she drank all her mead.

"If only there was a way to learn to deal with the loss in an appropriate manner."

"You twisty thing you." Brunhildr laughs and puts an arm around Alex's neck to give her a squeeze. "Alright I get it.

"You... selfish brat!" Zuriel appears before Alex, almost in tears.

"Shit... Zuri, you can't just..." She looks hastily around. A few people look confused, but don't say anything. "Are you okay?"

"This is your fault. Why did you ask her to look for that horrible girl?" He demands.
"Whats wrong? What happened? Is Amitiel okay?"

"She lied to me. She lied. Amitiel lied." He looks more distressed than she's ever seen an angel before. Not that she's seen many distressed angels.

"You feathered drittsekk!" Brunhildr exclaims stepping forwards. "Are you actually yelling at the virgin for something someone else did wrong?" Of course she practically shouts this gaining more attention than Zuriel's appearance did, because no one's deaf.

"Will you please stop calling me that?" Alex blushes, but brunhildr doesn't notice.

"Of all the absurd things to be upset about, too." Brunhildr continues, but Alex puts a hand on her arm.

"Amitiel is the angel of truth." Alex informs her. "It's like if Thor went missing and when you found him he'd become a celibate teetotaling pacifist." The look on Brunhildr's face is torn between amused and horrified.

"My apologies." She mutters and turns away.

"Why don't we go someplace private and figure out what to do." Alex attempts to soothe him. Zuriel looks about to give an angry refusal when Brunhildr snorts.

"Dont waste your time with this winged wretch. You have class dont you?"

"Not until one thirty. Besides helping Zuriel and Amitiel is more important." Alex corrects her. "Come on. We're near the student union." She eaves to him to follow her. Oddly enough he does without a word. Luckily a peer counseling room is empty. "Brunhildr can you wait outside?"

"How can I protect you if I'm not in the room?" She demands not unreasonably.

"By not letting anyone in. Zuriel is a good angel and he's not going to hurt me." Alex informs her with more confidence than she really feels, but she can whip out a banishing sigil in seconds now, so she'll be fine. Probably.

"You don't know that." Zuriel says as she closes the door. "I could easily smite you. We may not all be as fearsome warriors as Castiel, but that doesn't mean we're all like Harahel."

"I know you could. I never said you couldn't." Alex sits down, "I know about her grace and her memory already. What did she lie about?"

"Does it matter?"

"A little." Alex nods. "Humans lie instinctively and for many reasons, not all of them bad. There's what's known as a little white lie for instance. Like when I tell Claire her new car is nice. It's not, it's a hideous horrible wreck. But its hers and she likes it and earned it and that's what matters. Saying my truthful opinion would only needlessly hurt her feelings and I'm working on not being quite so abrasive. So why you lie and what you're lying about is often as important as that you lied in the first place." Though he's only partly paying attention.

"Amitiel's truthful, not an asshole. She'd never say something cruel, however true." Zuriel crosses his arms shifting uncomfortably. "She was always finds the nicest way to say true things."

"So what did she lie about?" Alex prods. Zuriel looks a bit embarrassed and looks away.
"There... there are these posters in the valkyrie's training hall." He begins reluctantly.

"So we're agreed, I'll go with Claire and the angels into the abyss and when the time comes, we'll... give you an out of body experience to go help rescue Cas." Sam states firmly as he and Dean wait in the cavern of ice for Hel to come back with the elixer.

"I said yes." Dean snaps.

"It doesn't sound like a yes."

"What, do I have to be fucking thrilled about it, too? We worked like hell to keep you out of there and you want to go right in now?" Dean points out, running his hands through his hair as he starts to pace.

"We were trying to keep each other out of the empty, Dean. Its not the empty anymore," Sam reminds him. "Do you remember why? I do."

"Sam..." Dean sighs and stops, rubbing the back of his neck. "I'm sorry about Gabriel. You know I am. But... you know that she's gone, right?"

"I know." But his voice is a bit distant.

"Sam." Dean turns around. "Sammy. Look at me, Sam." He demands. Sam lifts his head just enough to meet Dean's eyes. "I know it's... I know it sucks. I know it hurts but..."


"That's different."

"And didn't you give me hell for trying to suck it up and accept it and move on when you and Cas got sucked into purgatory? Or am I not remembering that right?"

"Like I said that's different."

"Why because its people you care about? Look, I understand that right now, this trip is to get Harahel, but don't tell me not to even think about it or hope or look for... something anything that might indicate a way to get her back while I'm in there."

"Sam, Cas said..."

"I know what he said."

"Forgive the delay." Hel re enters the cavern and pauses, looking at the empty space where Krissy's ice coffin used to be. "That incautiouys bastard." She shakes her head, though oddly enough is smiling at the same time. "Are you ready, Sam?"

"As ready as I'll ever be. Especially for a change of clothes. I'm starting to feel like a cartoon character." He tugs at his overshit.

"Plus Claire probably wants her wallet back." Dean jokes.

"It wont survive the unbinding. I already bought her a new one." Hel snaps the coffin into a dry wooden platform and puts a drop of Panancea's elixer to the blue frozen lips of Sam's
body. The second it touches his skin, healthy color expands like a ripple across the surface of the water, restoring his body to good condition. It doesn't exactly restore him to his former glory, but what's there is healthier, mildly plumper and strong. "The wallet?" She turns to Dean who takes it from his pocket and hands it over. "This is your wallet."

"Right." He takes it from the other pocket and exchanges with Hel. She closes her eyes and presses the wallet between her hands. It disappears as does Sam's shade and Sam opens his eyes. "What that's it? No mushy fairy tale crap for him?" Dean sounds a bit put out. Hel looks over at him, raising an eyebrow.

"My apologies." She says dryly. "I didn't realize you were that close."

"What? No, that's not what I... why are you laughing?" He accuses Sam who's chuckling at the joke.

"Come on lets go find Claire and the angels." Sam gets slowly, and only slightly unsteadily to his feet.

"He looks awfully relaxed." Dean eyes Zuriel suspiciously. Amitiel asks him something in enochian and he takes an earbud from his ear and puts it in hers. In the next second their heads are side by side looking at the ipod together. "Okay, now that's just adorable," he looks to Sam who nods, though he's still just staring at the altars and jars of wine. "Hey, you going to be okay?"

"I'll be fine."

"Are you..."

"Yes, Dean," Sam gives him an annoyed look, which is better than pining and miserable, at least.

"Okay," Claire walks over to them, looking at her phone, "So I know we all think being a therapist for the supernaturally afflicted is a good way to be permanently broke with a college degree and the student loans that go with it."

"Actually, I think she might be the only one of us to end up getting paid a living wage for her job." Sam corrects her. Dean does not say anything.

"Whatever, but apparently she just spent three hours just talking with Zuriel, explained humanities relationship with lies and fear, and gave him her ipod to help him block out the 'dissonant cacophany of life' that's been driving him up the wall, you know as the angel of harmony, and that's why he's actually okay right now. So I really think we should make it our mission in life to make sure she gets every piece of professional training she can, as uninterrupted as possible. Because that girl's got a fucking gift."

"Are you saying psycho over there got some intensive therapy?" Dean looks back over to the angels.

"Pretty much."

"You get cell reception here?" Sam looks at her phone.

"What? God, no. This is an email I saved from when I got it in Helheim. How did you get wifi set up in neiflheim, anyway?"
"We ran a cable across the bifrost and up Ygdrassil." He explains.

"Huh."

"Claire." Hel calls to her. She's holding a satchel of some kind.

"Be right back." Claire heads over to her.

"You remember when she was just a little thing?" Dean looks at her whistfully.

"Yeah." Sam smiles at him.

"So are they like official now?" Dean asks. Sam just shrugs. Claire puts the bag over her shoulder and gives the miniature giantess a kiss.

"Be safe, kjaerlighet." Hela tenderly puts her hand to Claire's cheek before stepping over to Dean and Sam.

"Ready angels? Ready Sam?" Claire walks over to the ledge, "Miti?" She holds out her hand. Amitiel takes hold of it prompting Zuriel to protectively take hold of his sister's other hand.

"See you soon." Sam pats Dean's shoulder and walks over to the others. After a brief hesitation, they step out into the void. Dean and Hela just stare at the edge in worried silence for a few moments.

"So," she turns to him, "How long should we wait until we go in after them."

The first thing Claire notices is that there are a lot of odd grey grass nests and even more black streaked crystal eggs. The second is that Zuriel now seems to have a large visible pair of wings almost the color of white gold. The third is that Sam is nowhere to be seen.

"Well, fuck." She looks around. Nothing but eggs and eggs and eggs and nests and more eggs. Amitiel lets go of her hand and touches a clear egg with a visible crack in it. A blurry hand moves to mirror hers. Something is inside of it. Something with feathers.

"Amitiel, come on. Why don't you back up a little." Claire goes to pull her away. The crack in the egg starts to lengthen and splinter into a million others as soon as Miti removes her hand. The crystal shell crumbles into almost glittery flakes that melt away into nothing. The huddled form in the nest starts to straighten up, stretching two beautiful emerald wings out to the full spread. Its skin is an almost glowing fawn brown with hunter green eyes and short curls.

"Zachariah?" Zuriel gasps, taking hold of Amitiel's arm.

"Zuriel..." he looks a bit confused. "Are you in a vessel?" He asks it almost like asking if his brother was a beggar in a diamond studded plate mail, as if the thought of him even being given one to use was absurd. Assistant choir directors must not get many assignments on earth. Zuriel looks understandably pissed off at the tone of the question and doesn't bother answering. "When did humans get so big?" The poor angel looks positively bewildered as is Claire until she remembers that angels are the size of skyscrapers and beyond that should be bright enough to kill her just by looking at them.

"They didn't. You're incredibly small and dim." Zuriel says flatly, making the other angel bristle, "Which I suppose is a good thing as you're not killing Miti with your visage."
"Miti?" Zachariah turns his attention to Amitiel and a look of horror and utter dismay crosses his face. "Oh, sister, what have you done?" He steps towards her, but stops when Zuriel protectively folds his wings around her.

"She didn't do anything, you selfrighteous ass." The insult surprises Zachariah as much as Amitiel's graceless state. "This was done to her. How could you think... do you know her at all?" What did he think? That she fell? That she tore out her grace?

"Miti, I'm sorry." The angel looks slightly abashed and looks away.

"Do we know each other?" Amitiel asks confused. "I'm sorry," she apologizes at his further distress.

"Her memories were stolen as well as her grace." Zuriel explains,

"Oh, child, you were my favorite song." Zachariah sighs, irritating Zuriel again though Claire's not sure why. He looks her way, "This human was a vessel for Castiel." He looks a bit awed. Claire tries to not let her face show how little she likes the memory. "Did we succeed? The righteous man, was he saved?"

"What?" Claire feels a little startled. Is that when this angel died? That long ago? Yeesh.

"Castiel was the commander of our garrison. He led us into the depths of Sheol to rescue the righteous man. I..." he puts a hand to his chest and curls his wings over his shoulders as if they had bones of rubber, which they might. Its not like Claire knows angel anatomy or if they even have bones.

"Wow, um," Claire rubs the back of her neck as Zuriel seems to be leaving the questions to her now for some damned reason. "Yeah. You missed kind of alot though."

"Yes, he did." Zuriel says through clenched teeth, back to being the little ray of sunshine she's used to. He doesn't follow it up with anything though, he just puts the ear pieces back in and starts flipping through songs on the ipod.

"The apocalypse. Is it time for the final battle? Is that why I've been brought back?" He straightens up looking almost eager. "I won't fail again."

"Jesus christ, "Claire face palms, "No, that was canceled. It's kind of... you know what? Wait until we get out of here. I'll lend you Bree's copy of the Winchester gospels. That'll catch you up on that hot mess."

"I don't..." he darts forwards as Claire's awkward neck rubbing reveals a flash of her sword, and grabs it from her. "Why do you have one of our swords?" He demands, "Where did you get this?"

"I took it from the grigori who ate my mother's soul and killed her." She looks him defiantly in the eyes and steps forwards. "I killed him with it."

"I am very sorry. That we had neglected to kill them all is... unpardonable," Zachariah says gravely and turns the blade around. "Tamiel. Impressive." He hands it back to her, hilt first.

"He underestimated me." Claire takes her sword back and puts it away. "We're actually here for Harahel, but we can probably take you out with us as well."

"I will need to report back to Raphael." He nods and climbs out of the nest. Claire can't
help but wince at this. "What was that face for? Did something happen to Raphael? Did... did Lucifer kill Raphael?" That's an odd assumption to make.

"No, um, not Lucifer... look, we can go over all of this when we're done here." Claire desperately wished Sam was here. Where the hell could he be? Maybe they should have all held hands.

"This is the location formerly known as the empty. Bree... Gabriel sacrificed herself to pull everything and everyone ever lost to it to the edge of the abyss and this, apparently is the result. Weird, huh."

"Gabriel was still alive?" The angel sits down on the edge of the nest. Claire just puts a hand on his shoulder. The touch makes her feel all weird and tingly. Zachariah looks at her oddly for a second as she pulls her hand away. It's like touching a live wire.

"Novak," Zuriel suddenly pulls out his blade, looking up at the sky behind her in alarm. Claire draws her sword and turns around as Zuriel prods Amitiel between the three of them. "Zachariah, do you have your blade?"

"No." He sounds a bit astonished and joins Zuriel in looking at the sky. It's an empty void of swirling black and white but they must see something Claire can't. "Give me yours." Zuriel pretends he didn't hear him. "Zuriel."

"Protect Amitiel. Humans are very fragile." Zuriel gets in a fighting stance. Zachariah heaves an exasperated sigh.

"Don't be foolish, child. You know I'm the more skilled warrior the two of us."

"Well, I'm the one who hasn't died yet and it's my damn blade." Zuriel snaps.

"Zuriel," Zachariah says softly. "Answer me honestly, I...oh father!" He suddenly exclaims.

"What?" Claire looks back at him.

"It's Abner. And Gadreel!" He sounds terrified. "We must flee!"

"Get Amitiel out of here. We'll hold them off." Zuriel turns a little pale though. Claire just sighs and puts her blade away. Well, this is going to be fun.

Chapter End Notes

Kjaerlighet- (norwegian) love
The Garden

Chapter Summary

Sam finds a garden
Zachariah and Zuriel do not get along
Abner's crime
Sam meets Idrunn

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It seems oddly appropriate that he appears at a crossroads. A barren empty crossroads at that. Each branch is decorated with colored brick. White with gold edges, blue with silver edges, red with orange edges, brown with green edges. The colored bricks swirl together in the center, underneath his feet. Claire and the angels are nowhere to be seen. Hopefully they're still together, but there's no way of knowing.

Neither does he know which way he should go. Granted the lush meadow that sprouts up around the gold and white path as he looks, seems to be a clue. As does the sign with a blinking red arrow and a small white rabbit in a waistcoat that pops up out of a hole at the sign's base and hops on down the path.

"Gee, I wonder if I should go this way." Sam grins. Flowers bloom, birds chirp, and when he checks behind him at the other roads, they've dissipated. It's definitely not taking the subtle approach, whatever it is. He carefully walks down the road, the wilderness around him becoming lusher and greener and thicker until he's in a lush natural garden surrounded by all sorts of fruits, nuts and fragrant herbs. The smell is incredible and reminds him that he's hungry. Not that he would eat any food in a strange place, but he's sorely tempted.

Food isn't as filling when you're dead. And apparently if you never tasted it in real life, you can't taste it as a ghost. The first thing he's going to do when he gets back to Helheim is take a bite of every single item on that table. The path beneath his feet starts to soften and he looks down to see the bricks have turned into small white lilies and a strange white flower he can't recognize, and identical plants only with a small round flat seed pod instead. What is it called? Honesty. Lillies and Honesty are the flowers associated with Gabriel, symbolic of the traits of purity and truth. It's funny to consider, as neither of those traits is associated with the trickster.

Though whatever she did, she did do it thoroughly. Pure chaos, pure cowardice, pure love, pure hedonism. As for truth, well, she tried. Even if it wasn't a clear or straightforward truth, she was ultimately trying to get the truth across. Maybe he's just rationalizing, though. He is admittedly, a little biased.

Regardless, he doesn't want to crush the flowers beneath his feet so he steps off the path onto the grass beside it. He can walk along side it.

"Why did you leave the path?" A low exasperated voice asks him. Sam turns to see a man with rich earthy skin l, dark almost metallic curls and a mossy green cloak over his shoulders. He has a staff and plain robes covered with a grass, dirt, and berry stained apron. "Who told you to do
"No one's told me anything, either way. I just didn't want to crush the flowers." He eyes the man carefully. "I'm Sam. Sam Winchester."

"I know who you are," the man sighs and turns, starting to walk away.

"Wait. What is this place? Do you know where Claire, Zuriel, and Amitiel are? Is Gabriel here?"

"Her memories are. These are her memories of the Garden of Eden. If you're hungry you may eat of anything but the quince and the fruit guarded by the flaming swords."

"Well, obviously." Sam can't help but roll his eyes.

"Not so obvious as you were foolish enough to leave the path in the first place." He continues to walk away, going behind a large tree.

"Wait!" Sam runs after him, but the man is gone, there was something familiar about him that Sam just can't place. Of course, now he can't find the path again either.

"What are you doing?" Zuriel exclaims in a panic as he sees Claire put her sword away. "They're the greatest villains in all of heaven."

"Yeah, no. That distinction belongs to Lucifer. These two are just criminals. They fucked up but it was like the difference between accidental manslaughter and being a fucking serial killer. Besides Castiel said they were the guardians here. Will you put your blade away?" She scolds him. Zuriel doesn't. "Hi!" Claire attempts a perky smile and wave that she hasn't pulled off since she was eight. The angels just light down before her blades in hand.

"Identify yourself." The light bluish one with seafoam wings demands.

"I'm Claire Novak, a hunter. Castiel's ward? These are your siblings Zuriel, and Amitiel who's currently human and amnesiac and holding her is Zachariah who was recently a cracked egg." The statement makes Zuriel choke back a laugh so much so that he has to clear his throat. "We're here to find Harahel and bring him out. Zachariah hatching was kind of a surprise." The brief, stifled grins on the other angels and Zuriel's failure to contain his laughter this time, indicates some sort of angel joke that she's unaware of. She'll have to ask later.

"How did you get him to emerge?" The one who looks a bit like dying flames with wings of blackened embers asks, looking to Zachariah, though he spares a pitying look to Amitiel.

"No clue. Miti just touched his egg and he moved inside it and it cracked and turned into dust. Also the three of us kind of came in with Sam but he dissappeared on the way somehow. Have you seen him?" The fiery one looks a bit uncomfortable.

"Sam Winchester?" He clarifies, though he sounds as if he already knows. Claire nods. "No. It would likely be best if I didn't." Ah, this one must be Gadreel.

"You're allied with that abomination?" Zachariah exclaims in disgust, this irritates Amitiel and Gadreel, though not nearly as much as it does Claire.

"Excuse me?" Claire turns around, her voice absolutely deadly. "What did you just call
"Does Castiel know you're consorting with the devil's own?" He chides her as if she were an errant child and not just old enough to drink.

"Given they're best friends, I'd say yes."

"My commander would never associate with..." he stops to give Zuriel an irritated look when he laughs again. "What this time?"

"You have a lot of catching up to do, brother." Zuriel grins, shaking his head. "Not only is he friends with Sam Winchester, he's lovers with Dean, the so-called righteous man. Not only that but Castiel himself has been Lucifer's vessel, killed Raphael and half of heaven personally in a civil war, helped banish all the angels from heaven closing the gates, and released the darkness, declared himself the new god, released the Leviathan from purgatory, and what's more in the averted apocalypse he molotovsed Michael with holy fire during her confrontation with Lucifer." Well, Jesus, put like that it all sounds so incredibly damning.

"That's... that not possible." Zacariah shakes his head.

"You're leaving out a hell of a lot Zuriel." Claire crosses her arms, "And if you hate him so much, why did you take his side against Raphael in the civil war? And against Metatron?" She demands. Zuriel doesn't say anything but his eyes flicker to Amitiel.

"Where is Castiel? I must speak with him." Zachariah demands, looking as distressed as she's ever seen.

"He's currently in heaven's prison. Our remaining siblings freaked out when they heard he was about to wage war on the reapers on behalf of a pagan goddess." Zuriel just has to inflame the situation. Maybe the little shit should be called the angel of disharmony.

"Amitiel, is he telling the truth?" The newly awakened angel demands.

"I don't know," she sounds startled at the question. "I can't remember anything. Why would you just assume he's lying though? What possible reason would he have?"

"Zuriel is a spiteful jealous little thing and has been since before the fall. He'd be determined to think the worst of my honored Commander simply for the fact that he is one of the best of us, someone he could never hope to measure up to. No matter how you attempt to defame him, Zuriel, you will always be a second-rate, useless angel."

"That is not true." Amitiel breaks away from him, furious. Even Claire thinks that was going a bit too far. "Zuriel is a kind, thoughtful, caring man and if this Castiel was so completely wonderful and perfect and blameless as you seem to think he is, Zuriel wouldn't think so badly of him." She stands protectively in front of her close brother, who looks a little touched by this.

"He has kind of made a lot of mistakes, Zachariah." Claire has to interject. "But he always meant well and tried his best and always, always attempts to fix what he messed up. Given he's been resurrected by God every time he died and finally was promoted to archangel, that obviously means he's doing something right. Right? But at the same time, he hurt a lot of people and we have every right to be upset about that."

"We?" Zuriel looks at her, not expecting that statement.

"My father is dead and Castiel is wearing his body. Because Castiel used him as a vessel he's
lost to me forever. Sometimes it hurts just to look at him. I know you know how badly the loss of a
father hurts. I was just a little girl and as far as I knew, one day he just walked out and we didn't
even hear from him for a year. The first words Castiel said to me were 'I'm not your father' I was so
angry at my mother. I thought she'd had an affair and that I really wasn't his. She'd said he'd had a
psychotic break, but I didn't believe her. Not until he came back and the demons... He left again as
soon as he came and then he was gone."

"How can you still care and trust and vouch for him after what he put you through?" Zuriel
asks.

"Because she knows her inconvenience was for the greater good and is willing to sacrifice
her own needs to heavens, of course. She is clearly every bit as worthy to be a vessel as her father
was." Zachariah informs him scornfully. Claire just rolls her eyes.

"No, I don't give a fuck about heaven because heaven clearly does not give a fuck about any
of us. I care about Castiel because he's Castiel. Because he's good and he cares and he tries and
that's worth so much, plus he's not nearly as big of a dick as he was at first." She gives a small
smile, "Now, I'd really like to break him out of jail. I'd also like to not have Dean kill me for
loosing his brother in the abyss. Wrecking the impala is one thing, but Sam is a whole other level.
So if we could go find Sam and Harahel before we go into all this crap, I'd really appreciate it."

"Are you willing to help us break out Castiel?" Zuriel asks, much to his brother's surprise.

"You're going to help break out Castiel? After all the things you said of him why would
you... Zuriel." Zachariah looks distressed. "Have you fallen?"

"Oh fuck." Claire covers her eyes. Someone's going to get the crap beaten out of them for
sure. Possibly Zuriel, which she oddly finds herself opposed to. "Look," she steps out in between
them before violence can start. "Both of you just stop. We are in the middle of a rescue mission
here, so just act like professionals and put it away until we've found everyone and get out of here.

"He started it." Zuriel puts his earbuds back in.

"What are you in middle school?" She turns to him, but he just ignores or can't hear her.

"His entire batch was troublesome. You can't expect more from them." Zachariah says
condescendingly, shaking his head, hopefully forgetting that the angel he just called his favorite
song is part of that batch.

"Zip it, Zach, you're behaving no better. Now, if I remember correctly, you're going to need
one of us to get you out of the abyss and if you keep this attitude up I'm leaving you here until
things settle down out there. Because seriously we do not need another winged asshole to deal
with, and Zuriel was here first. Do you understand me." Claire points a motherly finger at the angel
who just crosses his arms and scowls at everyone. "Now behave, both of you."

"Zuriel and his batchmates are specialists," the blue one feels the need to put his two cents in
now apparently. "Each one has a unique special talent or attribute. And while it often led to
training issues, that was a failing of the method of instruction, not because of personal inadequacy."

"No? Then why did so many join Lucifer?" Zachariah accuses. "More of that batch fell than
in any other."

"Because he understood them and was largely responsible for ensuring they were in their
proper places. He made them believe he valued and appreciated them. Maybe he did corrupt
them, but he couldn't have if their brothers hadn't made them feel so worthless and unwanted on the first place. People and angels don't want to feel bad. It makes them susceptible to things that make them feel good. Including misleading half truths and lies you just want to believe."

"Is that your excuse then, Abner? You didn't feel special enough?" Zachariah says rather boldly for someone who was just wanting to flee them. Gadreel puts his hand on Abner's shoulder but it's brushed away.

"No. I was selfish, entitled. That's all there was to it. If Lucifer committed the first sin in refusing to bow, mine was the second. I took what wasn't mine to take. I deceived them both and my daughter..." he looks away.

"Your daughter?" Gadreel backs away a step.

"Lilith." He looks down. "Lilith was my child with Adam."

The garden seems to go on forever. So many different edibles, the likes he's never seen. There's even a plant with a fruit that looks like eggs. The man is nowhere to be seen.

"Who are you?" A voice demands and he feels a sharp tip pressed against his spine.

"My name is Sam." He slowly raises his hands.

"Sam... what kind of name is that?"

"Short for Samuel?"

"Oh, an israelite." She sounds entirely unenthused.

"Not exactly."

"You worship the god of abraham?"

"Sort of, I serve him, kind of." The blade is removed.

"What are you doing here? This place is off limits for humans." He turns around to see a blonde woman with braided hair and familiar style tunic, holding a spear and a large empty basket.

"You're Norse."

"My name is Idrunn. You should leave." She looks at him sternly.

"I would love to but I don't know how." He slowly puts his hands down, giving her an innocent smile.

"Fine, come with me. Don't touch anything. There's a new guardian here and I don't wish to attract his attention." She walks past him, leading the way.

"Was he wearing a moss green cloak?"

"That's not a cloak." She says simply. "I have to get more apples. We'll fetch them and then go."

"Apples..."
"The golden apples that keep the aesir young and strong? Its my job to fetch them,"

"You get them from the garden of eden? I thought the fruit was a quince."

"The fruit of the knowledge of good and evil is a quince. This is crossbred with the tree of life. The tree of life's apples provide immortality with just one bite but not eternal youth. I cross pollinated one with the golden apple of the hesperides. But it would only grow here in aelfheim." She sighs. "And only next to it's parent. It can be difficult to tell them apart just by looking. Of course the fruits may have cross pollinated so thoroughly they are the same now. They're the only trees I've seen that are annuals." Which is interesting but Sam has no idea what to say to this.

"So..." Sam starts after a few minutes of silence. "I see you're not a cabbage." Idrunn just pauses and gives him an odd look. "No, all the human souls turn into cabbages in the abyss."

"I am a goddess, young man." She scolds him. "Are you well? Did you obtain any sort of head injury?" She looks him over.

"No, you didn't know you were in the abyss?" He says gently.

"What are you talking about?"

"Its kind of a long story."

"Well talk as we walk, its a fair journey." She resumes her course.

"So, you know Loki?"

"Idrunn?" Sam asks as gently as he can as she just walks in silence.

"I didn't believe her." She finally speaks. "When Hel said Valhalla was about to collapse, I didn't believe it. It was impossible for the all father to die before Ragnarok. And I went to check the store of apples and then... I awoke in my bed and assumed it was a dream. Odin and Baldur were there. Frigg and Freya were there. Though we can't seem to get to midgard any longer. The bifrost won't work, not even for Heimdall.

"How interesting that you said Loki built this place by sacrificing himself. I don't believe for a second he'd do anything to bring back Baldur, especially sacrifice himself. Or for anyone at that." She stops walking and turns to look Sam over critically examining his features, "Perhaps if you had a beard. And a little muscle," She considers and looks very unimpressed with his thin form. She shakes her head slightly . "He always was a peculiar thing.

"Really you should consider yourself fortunate. He was an absolutely insufferable lover. Never knew when to stop joking, always so guarded, always holding somethung back. Though I understand why now." She gives a whistful sigh. "Very hard to keep him interested in anything for too long, even people. I don't know how Thor managed to do it. At least this way you lost him to a noble and loving sacrifice and not another lover. And thats probably the best ending you could have hoped for." Idrunn puts a hand on his shoulder. "How are you at climbing trees?"

"Alright, I guess."

"Good, we're here. Climb that tree and pick apples until I tell you to stop." She points beside
them to one of two large trees of golden apples. One of the trees, looks a bit more metallic than the others.

"This one?" He points to the more shiny one.

"Yes. Don't go on the branches near the other tree or the flaming sword will appear and come after you." She informs him. Sam just looks at it and tries to find a decent foot hold. "Throw them into my dress." She orders. Sam nods and climbs out to the branches, plucking the most fragrant golden ones, tossing them down. She quickly fills the basket and her apron. "That's enough. Feel free to take one for yourself. Maybe it will help improve your wasted physique." She suggests kindly.

"I really don't think I should."

"Then don't. It doesn't matter." She shrugs. "Come down and carry my basket. We can return to the hall and see if we can find your friends."

"Thank you." Sam climbs down. In the corner of the root, he can see a small yellow crystal. One of Gabriel's memories. Not wanting to leave it behind, he bends to pick it up.

Chapter End Notes

There's a theory that aelfheim and the light elves refer to heaven and the angels and the dark elves that live underground are the demons. Its argued against but it suits this universe.

I once saw a quote that says 'there's no such thing as fiction just non-fiction in the wrong reality.' Combined with the theory of 'every choice or action that can be made has been and will be made' splintering of realities into infinite different threads with each choice, that's established in The Book of Daniel, it also fits that in this 'verse the theory is true while in others it may not be.

So every single fan fiction written is merely a view of a different reality with different choices made at key points and thus equally valid as any canon material.
Chapter Summary

Communication is not a problem
Abner's full confession
Harahel reunites with his siblings.

Chapter Notes

The memory Idrunn sees is one of the archangels fighting the Darkness. (as told in my fic Sibling Rivalry)

ANOTHER SHAMELESS PLUG
If you like alternate versions of fairy tales, check out my fic Kill Phil- a retelling of Sleeping Beauty. (On my works page)

I'm spelling it Rye because thats how you pronounce it. Ri looks like ree. Doesnt really matter enochian has a different alphabet anyway. Also it just looks better, which is why fenrisulfr is shortened to Rhys instead of Ris (which looks kind of like its said riz) english is such a fucked up language.

"Don't touch those!" Idrunn exclaims "They give terrible nightmarish visions of unspeakable horror." Sounds like a tuesday, but Sam's hand is already on it and he sees nothing.

"These crystals are her memories." He informs her, looking at it in his hands. He almost wishes he could see what's inside.

"You see nothing?" She seems confused and walks closer, transferring her apron to one hand and goes to pick it up with the other. But as soon as she touches it she gasps, turning pale. Sam quickly grabs it back from her. "Oh by odin's right eye, how can that be one of Loki's memories?

"What did you see?"

"Darkness, threatening to engulf everything. Black winged serpents emerging, chasing me, catching me, infecting me with their poison. Such pain, worse than even the venom of the world snake and then a being of pure flames like one of the eldjotnar, but with six wings of white flame and a deadly sword, she burst through and saves me, slicing them to ash. Another being of water with two wings like the spray of a water fall cradling me in his arms. He was so beautiful and his voice was so calm and soothing, almost hypnotising until I didn't feel the pain anymore, like drowning in the mere murmuring of a babbling brook. The new guardian of this garden came and healed my blackened wounds." she holds her hand to her chest as if it still burns her. "These can't
be his memories. I have never heard of such a thing."

"They are. I was there when they came out of her. A lot of them were drawn into the abyss." Sam gives a weak smile, "We had to remove her heart and mind to empty her enough to be filled with the consecrated wines."

"You'll give them back to him then?" She looks skeptically at the item.

"Give them back?" He puts it in his breast pocket, picking up the basket of golden apples.

"Since you removed them, you can put them back." She looks at him like he's an idiot.

"Death told Castiel there was nothing left, nothing left to talk to I think, were his exact words."

"Well, I imagine not if his mind was gone." Idrunn scoffs at him and starts to lead him back through the garden.

"I don't even know where to find her body or if it even still exists, much less how to get all those memories back to her." Sam looks down at the basket.

"That's why it's called a quest, not running errands." The goddess comments dryly. "And honestly, the next time you're on a path in a magical forest? Don't leave it. Have you never done this before?"

"Gone on a quest in a strange magical land to ressurrect my lover? No. Not really." He admits.

"Hmm, well, maybe the aesir can give you some advice. Just don't say it's for Loki or whatever he is. Odin and Baldur haven't forgiven him for helping Hoder kill Baldur and they'll never believe your little story." She shakes her head.

"Wouldn't the fact that her death is what brought them back to life make up for it?" Sam asks, though he really doesn't expect a good answer.

"Of course, that's why they won't believe it. The fairest of all the gods and his father hold grudges like no other. Given what they did to him and Boda, though, it's kind of hypocritical. Of course, the aesir usually are." Sam's glad to see her unbridled scorn isn't reserved for him alone.

"You're not part of the aesir?" He asks, she shakes her head disgustedly. "Vanir? Jotun?"

"Goodness, no, what a thought. I'm from aelfheim. Well, my father is. He's actually the one who wielded the flaming swords I warned you about at the tree. My mother died giving birth to me and the aesir took me in. When I was old enough I searched for my father with Loki's assistance, though he got 'lost' on the way and found the tree. I wanted to find a way to repay them for all they'd done for me, so I planted one of the apples of the hesperides nearby. My father thought it was cute until the apples bloomed. But after confirming they were not the same, he relented and it me keep it. Odd that he didn't say hello."

"You're a nephilim." Sam look at the now annoyed young woman.

"I am aelf. Don't speak nonsense now. You were doing so very well with your norse, it's as if you were born to it." She scolds him.
"I'm not speaking norse. You're speaking english." Sam corrects her.

"English is not a language. It's seven languages stirred together into a nonsensical verbal slurry." She frowns at him. "I would certainly not be speaking it even if I were able."

"Well, whatever you're speaking I'm speaking and hearing english." Sam insists.

"I'm speaking and hearing norse." Idrunn counters. They both just stop and look at each other for a moment.

"Well, Gabriel was an angel of communication." Sam suggests. Idrunn just sighs and shakes her head.

"I wondered why Freyr and Freyja were being unusually catty. They thought they were speaking that twin language they used to so often. Even dead that man is a trouble maker." But she says it with a full, affectionate grin. In all honesty, Sam can't really disagree.

"You... seduced Adam?" Claire gasps. "How? What... could... Did you use Eve as a vessel? To seduce her husband?"

"I wasn't prepared for those feelings!" Abner tries to defend himself. "I was just curious about taste and food. And you don't know how dull and boring and lonely it gets being all by yourself. Everything evil was gone from the world. No angel was capable of entering without our permission. I didn't see the harm in possessing Adam every now and then doing a quick patrol of the borders and eat some fruit. He'd come talk to me a lot. Whenever he and eve were arguing or she was unhappy and when his body started changing and she just couldn't understand. Then hers started changing too and he didn't understand that either. She didn't appreciate him. How could she? She never knew what it was to be lonely like we did.

"One day, I was waiting for him to come by and Lucifer decided to say hello. He noticed I looked sad and asked what was wrong. We kind of got to talking and I ended up telling him about Adam. I wanted him to see how perfect he was. I didn't want our brother to stay in disgrace. I hoped if he could see Adam how I saw him, maybe he'd relent and say he was sorry and that our father was right and bow to humanity." Abner gives an uncomfortable shrug, bashfully smoothing out the feathers on his left wing. "It seemed after a while that he was starting to understand."

"Okay, but I thought you said you had a child with Adam, not as Adam." Zuriel interrupts. "If you disliked Eve so much how did you decide to use her as a vessel?"

" Lucifer pointed out that if I went on the rounds as Eve I could both talk to Adam and see him as well. Things look different through human eyes. I dismissed the idea immediately of course. I did not like Eve at all. She was bossy and rarely wanted to do what Adam wanted to do or go where he wanted to go or build what he wanted to build. She just kept renaming things all the time after he already had. And not even in a way that made sense. She named this one bird sky because he was so blue, but another of the exact same kind and color bird Little Abner! I was never more insulted in my life. She kept pulling things up and destroying things to make her own things. And the crying. She cried so much more easily than Adam. He never knew what to do about it."

"Crying removes toxins and stress hormones from the body. Women are designed to shed tears more easily as a way to safeguard fetal growth and development." Zachariah informs him.

"Well, it was still very upsetting to him and she was constantly doing reckless things and
getting hurt. She jumped onto the back of a goat once and it ran and threw her and she broke her arm. Of course Raphael came to fix it and scolded Adam for letting it happen which was unfair. When she first was made, she would put everything in her mouth even the things she wasn't supposed to. She was so fast they had to have Gabriel keep an eye on her until she grew a little bigger because she was the only one who seemed to know what she was about to do before she did it."

"Wow, Eve sounds almost exactly like a small human child," Claire comments dryly, much to Abner's annoyance.

"I know that now, but Adam was so well behaved. He did what he was told, paid attention to what he was taught. He was so steady and stoic and calm until she came. If father had just stopped with him, then everything would have been fine." He seethes. "She fed him the quince. He never would have done it on his own."

"Abner. The baby." Gadreel cooly brings him back on subject.

"Right. Anyways, I couldn't stop thinking about it. I wanted to see Adam with human eyes and maybe even touch him with human hand and so one day, I saw Eve running and playing with a pack of wild dogs and called her over. I asked if she was willing to be my vessel for my rounds. She was usually Michael's vessel for when she taught Adam things and she was curious as to what having another angel was like, so she agreed. I wanted to talk to Adam without her listening in so I set up a little miniature heaven with training courses for her to play in, in our mind.

"I immediately went to find him and ask him to walk on patrol with us and I saw him and there were so many new and strange and strong feelings that I just couldn't speak. He saw me and thought I was Eve and said he was sorry for yelling and asked if I was mad, I said no because I couldn't really think of what else to say. And he smiled and he kissed me and even though they hadn't seemed to quite figured it out yet, I knew what we both wanted and let our bodies take over" he looks away. Claire has never heard such a bullshit cop out.

"Adam didn't know it was you and not Eve, did he?" Claire demands.

"No, he didn't." At least the bastard can't meet her eyes.

"Well, congratulations." Claire starts clapping her hands. "That was deceptive rapey fuckery equal to any of those asshat greek gods. Maybe better as you managed to violate two people at the same time. You selfish entitled fuck." Abner cringes at her words.

"When Lucifer came looking for me because someone let him in." Abner glares at Gadreel. "We had been together just over and over again and Adam had fallen asleep. I panicked and tried to leave her body but for some reason I couldn't. I was stuck and didn't know why. Lucifer informed me that my grace had attached to the body because Eve was now with child but not to worry because he would help me leave. So he ripped me out, tearing my grace in the process. It hurt so badly, I couldn't even move. I couldn't call out to Raphael for help though or he'd have found out what I'd done and I was incredibly afraid.

"Eve was startled and confused and began to be upset so Lucifer took her off to calm her down. He was so beautiful and his voice so soothing, she went with him willingly.

"Raphael later informed me that he'd shamed her. He made her think she'd done wrong and that she'd corrupted me with her desires. He made her believe that those feelings she'd been having were wrong and shameful instead of just part of being human. He implied that she was to blame for allowing someone other than Michael to use her as a vessel. That she had made me fall from grace.
Then he told her that if she ate from the fruit of knowledge, she would know better in the future. She did protest that no one told her the other things but they did say not to eat it or they'd die. Which he assured her was nonsense as it wasn't the least poisonous."

"That was true." Zuriel sighs, "Lucifer always told just enough truth. Though, that was the most I've ever heard of him lying outright. The most horrible thing about that was that our Father was going to let them choose when they had stopped growing. Knowledge or Life. The fruit of knowledge would have made them and their offspring age to death, but the fruit of life would have made them sterile so they wouldn't over run the earth. And any children they'd had prior would have had the same choice, though increasingly younger until the last one had chosen."

"I never heard that. Its not in any of the scriptures or apocrypha." Claire looks over to the angel, turning her back on Abner. Better not to start this fight right now, better to just pretend he no longer exists, because there is too much other nonsense to deal with. The others seem to agree and just collectively turn from him.

"I never heard that either." Zachariah crosses his arms.

"Gabriel told me before she left. After Lucifer was cast out she was so upset she'd retreated to the choir room where I'd gone to get away from the discord and she was crying and said so many things. That was one of them. Gabriel had wanted them to choose life so they'd stay young and playful always. It makes sense, though. Why put the trees there just to tease and tempt them with?"

"What else did she say? Did she say anything about leaving?"

"I'm not sure. She said something about threads and how she wasn't going to watch it happen, that she'd let some other Gabriel make that choice. It was all very confusing and I grew concerned and went to get Raphael because after Lucifer he was the best at comforting her. But when we got back, she had broken all the stringed instruments, which were Lucifer's favored ones, and was just gone. I didn't see her again until that karaoke bar. And then she sacrificed herself to the abyss to get back Castiel and Dean and everyone and everything ever lost to the empty. Which includes you, so not one word." He snaps at Zachariah.

" Martyrdom does not grant perfection retroactively, Zuriel, no matter what you might think."

"You know just because you and that seraph shared the same name doesn't mean you have to be as big an asshole as he was."

"Was?"

"Dean Winchester stabbed him in the face. It was probably the best thing he's done." Zuriel smiles almost fondly.

"Zachariah the seraph worked for Michael, zuriel. He is above reproach."

"No, he was a douche who tried to shut down the choir. He also sent you in too late to stop Dean from breaking the first seal on purpose and was working with Raphael to ensure that the apocalypse actually happened. Every single one of your damn heroes has done horrible terrible sinful things. And then, they left Sam Winchester, an innocent child who had no choice at all about being Lucifer's intended vessel, totally unprotected against the demons trying to corrupt him. They did everything they could to make him desperate alienated and alone. What's worse, instead of just being content in doing nothing, we helped them hurt him and try to drive him to sin and damnation. That is not what we're supposed to do. That is not who we are! We are so far from
where we're supposed to be that it's nothing but a clamor and racket dissonance and disharmony even when we agree. We are so lost I don't even know how we can even call ourselves children of god anymore.

"And the funny thing is that even with all this pushing him towards evil, he still managed to be a good enough to be willing to condemn himself to an eternity of torture and pain to save the lives of billions of strangers." Zuriel shakes his head.

"He is a very kind man." Amitiel adds.

"I thought you didn't like Sam." Claire asks, confused.

"I don't like any of you, I just dislike him the least," Zuriel shrugs. "Can we leave this place and just go find Hara and go home?"

"I would love to but I don't know how," Claire sighs. "How do we find Death?"

"He goes to visit Azrael's egg frequently. You could all go and await him there." Gadreel suggests. "It is a distance so flying would be best."

"I'm afraid Amitiel and I have misplaced our wings," Claire says dryly.

"You had wings?" Miti looks astonished.

"No, just you. I was just making a joke." Claire explains.

"Don't worry, Miti, Krissy will be getting your grace and memories back for you. You'll have your wings again, soon." Zuriel hugs her. "I can carry you for now." Amitiel just smiles at him.

"Who's Krissy?" Zachariah asks curiously.

"A hunter, my partner and Hara's vessel." Claire responds before Zuriel can say something inflammatory again.

"Harahel had a vessel?" Zachariah looks astonished. "But only the best most trusted angels were ever sent down to earth to take vessels. Who would even take a librarian?"

"Krissy, that's who." Claire snaps.

"Besides, brother. Every angel alive has been on earth and most have taken vessels. You asked if I'd fallen, well, all of us have. Metatron returned and cast all the angels from heaven, closing it from entry for any more souls in the bargain. We got back in but we still can't find away to reopen it for souls." Zuriel informs him. Zachariah just sits down on the edge of a nest, looking so bewildered and dismayed, Claire can't help but feel a little sorry for the asshole. But not that much as he's clearly one who has been marching in time with Hevaen's propaganda every step of the way, and with a smile on his face in the bargain.

"Would you allow me to escort you, Ms. Novak?" Gadreel asks a bit hesitantly.

"Sure, why not? You've pissed me off the least so far. Come or not, Zach, it's up to you."

"I prefer Rye." He says after a moment.

"Okay, Rye." Claire shrugs and turns to Gadreel. "So how do we do this? Piggy back? Neck tie? Princess carry? Over the shoulder?"
"I can't have you on my back or shoulder as it would interfere with my wings. I assume necktie means facing me with your arms around my neck, however you'd need to either wrap your legs around my waist or I would have to hold you in place by grabbing your posterior and I've seen enough movies to know that either would be considered overtly sexual. I assume you wouldn't be comfortable with that for an extended flight, both emotionally or physically. So carrying you in my arms like a small child may be preferable."

"So it's either be groped by an angel or held like a baby. Let's go with option number two." She sighs.

"You'll have to put your pack in your lap." He informs her. So she switches it around in front and puts an arm around his neck as he scoops her up.

"I expected you to be warmer," she puts her other hand against his shoulder. "You look kind of like a living flame, so..."

"That's very flattering, but on us lesser angels, the coloring is just coloring. Michael is the living flame. You should have seen her. She's so handsome and strong." He sighs. "She will never forgive me for what my actions made her do."

"I'm sorry, but I am just very tired and completely emotionally exhausted. So do you think we can just... enjoy the flight?" Claire begs him as they take off into the air.

"Of course." He sounds a bit embarrassed. Good Lord. Maybe Alex needs to add another specialty helping both the supernaturally traumatized and the traumatized supernatural. Because these angels seriously need some fucking therapy.

Harahel looks at the ground and the nests as he passes them, hoping for more pieces of Gabriel's memories, but the garden seems to be cleaned out now.

"Interesting," he hears Death murmur and lifts his head to see a group of angels and a few humans sitting around Azrael's egg on the nest. Gadreel is holding Claire, who's fast asleep, her head resting on his shoulder. How did she get so big? Is she alright? She's much less frightening when she's asleep. The other human...is Amitiel! She's lost her grace. Harahel starts running over to them, only falling once on the way.

"Hara!" Zuriel helps him up and embraces him. "I'm so sorry. We left you. I didn't... I didn't remember you didn't get the emergency training. I didn't know it was that bad. I'm so sorry."

"It's okay," Hara pats his back. I know you were worried about Gabriel. And she was more important.

"No, you're my little brother and you needed me."

"Actually, I was the first one made of our whole batch. I'm just so small everyone forgets that."

"Oh, well..."Zuriel's not quite sure what to say to that. He certainly doesn't act like he's older than anyone.

"What happened to Miti? Is that Zachariah the healer? Her favorite song?" But his question causes Zuriel to look angry.
"Yes. Miti touched his egg and it woke him." Zuri pouts.

"They always did love each other so much. I haven't been able to fins Nathaniel..." Hara sighs. "But no. Why is Amitiel human?"

"She found your vessel, got her grace ripped out and her memory erased or removed or something. You lost your wings and died because of that human. What did I tell you about getting involved with humanity?"

"Not to." Harahel sighs, looking down at his fidgeting hands. "But they're so wonderful. Krissy is so brave and funny and kind and forgiving and she's so nice to me and... and she died just so I wouldn't die alone." Hara starts to cry. Zuriel winces and just keeps hugging him.

"It's alright. She's alright now." He reassures his emotional brother.

"And she didn't come with you?" Harahel sounds almost heartbroken. What is it with him and humans?

"She can't. She's kind of trapped in Hades by Pluto. It's complicated."

"You have to take me out and take me to Saul." Harahel demands. "I need a vessel so I can help save her.

"Hara. You have no wings. When we take you out, we are taking you straight home until we get back Miti's memories and find away to get your wings out back on. And you are going to stay safe and sound in your library and never get yourself or anyone else hurt or killed again. Is that clear?" Zuriel firmly insists.

"No."

"What exactly do I need to explain to you?" Zuriel snaps.

"No, I mean, I understand but no. I don't care if I die, I'm going to her and I'm going to do everything I can to help her."

"Librarian?" Zachariah walks slowly over to him. "What happened to you?"

"Azrael cut off my wings when I got between her and Gabriel and I died. Hello, Rye. Is Claire okay?" Harahel asks, nodding to the sleeping hunter.

"She's just tired." The angel looks back. "She doesn't get enough sleep and isn't eating properly. Are you alright? Do you hurt?" He examines Harahel's back. Hara shakes his head.

"I just get off balance and fall a lot."

"You poor thing. Maybe you should just go stay in the library. If Raphael is dead, I don't think there's anyone who can reattach your wings. I'll try but nobody's ever had to do that before." He places a hand to the spot where Harahel's wings attached, it's almost completely smooth. "You poor fragile thing. And they were the best thing about you, too."

"Really? Because I thought what he did with the library was more wondrous than even Lucifer's wings." Zuriel snaps. Harahel blushes and gives a small smile. "Not that you didn't have the prettiest wings I'd ever seen on an ordinary angel." He corrects himself. "But they weren't the best thing about you. Just the easiest to see. So don't listen to Zachariah. I mean, he did just hatch from a cracked egg."
"Zuri! Don't be so mean." Har frowns at him. "Zachariah is one of the best healers in heaven. He's very intelligent. And he's our elder."

"I'm being literal." Zuriel grins at the irritated healer, who give a reluctantly confirming nod.

"Oh."

"Alright, lets find the damn winchester and get out of here." Zuriel looks back towards Claire.

"Don't wake her." Hara and Rye both say at once, though in very different tones because only one of them is an arrogant douche.

"And I believe you're forgetting one important detail." A dry voice intones. The angels look back to see Death standing behind them. "Harahel, is my adjutant."

Chapter End Notes

Alternate garden of eden theories suggest that Eve was seduced by Gadreel. But in the SPN universe, Gadreel only let Lucifer into the garden and you need a vessel to physically interact with humanity and can't even speak to any but a few special few.

So obviously if anyone used one of the only two humans bodies as a vessel and seduced the other, it would be more rape by deception right?

And if so, wouldn't the kind of confusion involved in finding out that had happened make you feel all sorts of vulnerable and confused especially if you were so young. And gaining the knowledge of good and evil would further confuse things because they'd be aware of how their decisions had led to things that hurt each other. And even if they did understand it wasn't their fault, they might not understand how they could still want to do such things again. They might feel ashamed of their bodies, blaming their visually appealing forms for inciting lust. Which is why even if they really hid because they knew theyd done wrong by eating the fruit, their lie was that they were ashamed of their nakedness, because it wasn't so much a lie as a partial truth.

Sexual desire is natural and necessary, and rape is universally reviled. But victim blaming and even shaming a person for having sex, that's truly the devil's work.

Plus it fits in with Abner's words to Gadreel (before Gadreel killed him) of if you want something pay any price do anything to get it. Abner hasn't had the growth of character Gadreel had yet. He still
"I don't understand." Idrunn frowns, "We're supposed to have reached the edge by now?"

"Did I not tell you that you could eat absolutely anything here except the fruits of knowledge and life?" Sam hears an exasperated sigh. He turns to see the man from earlier.

"I didn't." Sam says. The man looks pointedly at the basket. "They're hybrids belonging to the aesir. I didn't eat any of these either."

"Very well, Winchester, give them to the pagan and follow me."

"Her hands are..." Sam turns to see the apples in her apron disappear.

"Don't be greedy." The man chides her.

"I just wanted to have a day off." She looks embarrassed.

"Don't we all." Is the dry response, but he snaps his fingers and the basket enlarges to hold the missing apples. Idrunn catches it before Sam can drop it under the sudden addition of weight.

"You should really work on regaining your strength before going on any sort of quest." She shakes her head at him and his scrawny form and leaves with the basket.

"She is right." The man says as soon as she's gone from sight. "You will not be able to bring back my sister until you have obtained significantly more athletic ability than you have now." His sister...

"Raphael?"

"I am the memory of him," the angel leans against his staff. "Before he was overcome with the pain of thousands of hurt and mourning siblings, thousands of deaths he couldn't prevent, over thousands of years. This entire realm has been formed around her memories and thoughts and knowledge. It is a very strange place."

"I wouldn't expect anything less." Sam can't help but smile.
"At least this absurd crush actually appreciates her." The angel mutters, shifting his folded wings slightly, and turns,"Follow me."

"What was Gabriel like? As little sister." Sam asks as they walk.

"The same as she is as anything else; a complete and utter pain in the ass." Is the reply. "And of course, infinitely funnier when you're not tye subject of her posts. If she wasn't so adorable I'd have likely tossed her into the abyss myself Days ago. She and Helel once spent half a Day convincing the fledgelings that my name was actually Labbiel. There are yet hundreds of them that still believe it once was."

"She does have a thing for nicknames." Sam admits. "I think I've lost track of how many she used for me.

"This wasn't a nickname or a pet name. She was simply unable to pronounce Raphael for the longest time, though somehow she managed Helel Ben Sahar just fine. I have no idea how she mangled into Labbiel. I'm sure Helel had something to do with it." The angel sounds annoyed, with an expression that's everything you'd expect from a brother with a younger sibling like Gabriel.

"Who's Helel Ben Sahar?"

"Our older brother. You'll encounter him in the next area, but not today. In order to retrieve Gabriel, you must gather her shattered peices and pass her three guardians to reach the castle of the winds. Then you must return her memory, heart and grace to her. Her memories are scattered across the abyss. Her Heart is with Quetzalcoatl of the Aztecs and her grace is held by the third guardian. You must convince her to entrust it to you."

"I see." Sam nods, and look at the ornate gemstone studded wall as they draw closer. He can see a picture of a small golden angel with tiny golden wings, climbing on top of a small annoyed Raphael who's filling some sort of pit in the grass. What grabs his attention even more though is a large open arch beside it leading to blackness. "Is that..."

"The exit. When you return and stay on the path, it will lead to the next guardian. Right this moment, it will take you from the abyss."

"I can't leave yet." Sam stops walking, much to the memory of Raphael's surprise. "I came with three others to find a fourth. I won't just leave them behind."

"Very well." He taps the darkness with his staff. It ripples and changes into an image of two squabbling angelic forms arguing over a third as an annoyed Death sits on the edge of a nest with a large black spotted egg. There's an angel cradling a peacefully slumbering Claire in his arms and wings on the nest as well. Amitiel sits between them and Death, eating a twix and holding the pack Hel gave to Claire. The memory of Raphael just sighs and shakes his head the earthy looking angel grabs an uncomfortable looking soft blue angel with no wings to him, grasping him protectively. "Go. See if you can get them to stop fighting before one of them becomes an egg." He waves to them. Sam nods and steps through.

"I am the oldest and you will do as I say, fledgeling." the brown angel orders Zuriel, who takes that about as well as Sam would. The wingless one just covers it's face with it's hand at the statement.

"Really? Because, it seems to me, given as you literally just hatched from a cracked egg, that I'm the elder sibling now, buy about six Days." Zuriel retorts. If only death and resurrection
"Stop saying that!"

"Let go of my brother!" Zuriel grabs the blue one's arm.

"He's my brother as well."

"Excuse me." Sam clears his throat. "What's going on here?"

"Hello, Sam. It's nice to see you again." The blue one politely holds out his free hand. "I'm glad to see you alive again. I hope you're feeling a lot better."

"Harahel? I am, thank you." He goes to shake his hand when the brown angel, eyes widened in shock, tries to bodily remove his younger sibling from the potential contact. At least he tries to as Zuriel still has hold of the other arm and doesn't let go, so the other's attempt at flight just ends up in them tumbling down in an awkward feathered heap. Sam helps Harahel out of the mess as Zuriel and the other angel start actually physically fighting each other. "Are you okay?"

"I don't know. I think so." He rubs his arm. "That's Zachariah, the healer, not the seraph." Hara hastily clarifies at the look on Sam's face.

"Angels share names?"

"Well, yes. I mean, you're not the only Sam on earth, right? Though we try to keep one name per color to reduce the confusion. Is Krissy really okay?"

"For now." Sam says gently. "We have to figure out how to depose of Pluto without collapsing Hades and loosing all the souls there and the remaining pagans."

"Why is that a problem? Won't they just come here?" Harahel asks.

"Some of them, but Hell might snatch some of them before the collapse is complete and nobody wants that."

"What the hell?" Claire exclaims. Sam looks over to see her sit up in the next, The angel who was holding her is gone. "Did I seriously fall asleep?"

"Yes." Amitiel answers and offers her half a twix. "You needed it. Candy?"

"No, thanks. So what, he just landed and dumped me here?" She grouses, getting up and half tripping over the edge of the nest.

"No, he held you like an infant and covered you with his wings when the boys started fighting so they wouldn't wake you. It was very sweet." Miti smiles at her.

"Oh, dear god, please tell me you're being sarcastic." Claire looks almost appalled. Sam gives a brief smile at this, looking back at the quarreling brothers. They haven't brought out weapons so probably best to just let them get it out.

"No. You looked so very cute all snuggled up to him. I took a picture, see?" Amitiel takes out a phone and brings it up. "You look so very young."

"Yeah, I do have kind of a baby face." Claire sighs, debating whether to grab the thing and delete it before it can get sent to anybody. Of course it is a picture of an actual angel outside a vessel so
"I don't know why, but he put you down and took off as soon as Sam appeared."

"Sam?" Claire looks over to him. "Oh, thank god." She puts a hand to her heart. "What happened to you?"

"Nothing much, I was just given a detour. I'll explain later. You?"

"Well, babysitting angels and apparently falling asleep midflight. Oh great, what the hell is it now?" She spots the wrestling angels and storms over to them. "Hey! Children! Stop this right this instant!" The both pause and look up at her.

"Who are you calling children?" Zachariah demands, in probably the first thing Zuriel seems to agree with him about.

"The two angels scrapping in the mud like goddamned fledgelings that's who. What's the matter with you? Is this how soldiers of god behave? And brothers besides! And why is Harahel holding his arm?" She demands, putting her hands on her hips. The two just look over to Harahel who's attempting to hide behind Sam, but is very clearly holding onto his arm as if it pains him.

"Answer me before I beat you six ways from sunday!"

"She sounds just like Michael." Hara whispers behind Sam as the other angels scramble to their feet, almost on instinct.

"I think... we may have pulled on it a little too hard." Zuriel says quietly. "I'm sorry, Hara. Are you alright?"

"I'm fine." the little blue angel lies.

"We're sorry. Please, step away from the... Winchester." Zachariah holds a hand out to his brother, correcting himself in time as Clarie gives him a sharp look. "And let me heal you." Sam gently prods Hara towards the other angel, who gently examines Hara's arm.

"What were you fighting about this time?" Claire demands.

"Hara can't go because Death needs an adjutant until Azrael is back, but he won't let me stay because Miti won't leave if I do. But he can't stay because we don't have many healers left and we need him. Especially if we want Hara's wings put back on." Zuriel points out.

"I told you I can't do that!"

"You can fucking well try!"

"BOYS! Look, if we're going to rescue Castiel, we need all the able bodied angels we can get. You're both leaving the abyss." Claire demands.

"I'll stay." Miti offers.

"Oh, no you won't." Both the angels retort.

"We are not leaving you behind, Miti and that's that." Zachariah insists. Of course that only leaves two people to do it.

"I'll stay." Sam offers much to Claire's annoyance.

"Ha! No you won't, because if you stay with Death, Dean is going to loose his frickin mind and I really can't deal with any more emotional crap today."
"Just until you rescue Castiel. Then we'll find a replacement." Sam tries to soothe the irritated huntress.

"No. No, no, no, I am not leaving the abyss without you." She stubbornly shakes her head.

"I'm not entirely comfortable leaving Satan's vessel around the eggs." Zachariah just has to say because of course he does.

"He died in the assault on hell to save your brother." Harahel whispers to the mildly annoyed Sam. "He doesn't know any better."

"Sure." Sam sighs. Not that it would have made a difference as far as angels are concerned.

"Well, who's going to stay then?" Zuriel demands.

"And Zuri," Harahel turns to his brother. "You can't stay if you want Zachariah and me and Amitiel to all leave because we're all angels and are classified of winged creatures so we have to fly out. But Miti and I don't have wings at the moment, so you'd have to carry me and Rye would have to go with Miti." He tests his arm. "Thank you, big brother."

"Next time, if you're hurt, say something." Zachariah gives his little brother's forehead an affectionate kiss.

"But Amitiel's human now."

"No, she isn't." Harachel insists. "She looks human, and is stuck in the vessel without her grace, but she's not human. The manual's very clear on that."

"So, if we want Harahel to leave, one of us will have to stay." Sam turns to Claire.

"I will." Claire states fully, pretty much as he expected her to. "Tell Hel and Dean I'm fine and to just work on getting Castiel back."

"He's not going to like your staying here any better than he would if I did, Claire." Sam crosses his arms attempting a paternal look, that kind of falls flat.

"Well, let's ask Death then, let him decided, which one of us he'd prefer." Claire suggests.

"Or you could leave me here." Harahel speaks up. "I'm really the least useful one of us. I couldn't help you rescue Castiel and probably couldn't do anything for Krissy anyway. Both you and Sam are much better choices for that. Death honestly doesn't really do much here except travel and see what's around and talk to Samael. And I can keep picking up Gabriel's memories."

"I can do that." Amitiel protests. "I can't exactly go up to heaven without my grace, right? But you can."

"Yes, but you'll get your grace back soon and your memories and you're one of the best fighters in the batch. Even with my wings, I don't even have my blade and couldn't use it properly if I did. Besides, Zachariah needs to leave with you, remember? No one could take me if Zuri's taking Rye. It's better if I stay."

"Are you sure about this?" Sam asks, gently. It's unfortunately true that Harahel isn't useful for much besides research, especially without his wings.

"Just take care of Krissy, okay?" The angel gives a dejected shrug.
"That's really sweet and noble and self effacing and all that, but you are forgetting one incredibly important detail." Claire crosses her arms.

"What's that?"

"We kind of came here, specifically to get you back and if Krissy ever finds out that we had the chance to get you and just left you behind? She will murder all of us. She can do it, too. She controls the greek god of death now. Do you really want five deaths on your conscience? Do you? Because I don't want to be a cabbage, Hara. Do you want to be a cabbage, Sam?"

"Not particularly."

"And Zachariah just hatched, do you really want your siblings to be eggs?"

"I really don't think Krissy would actually murder you." Harahel gives a small but fairly pleased smile.

"Maybe you don't, but I'm not taking that chance. So, you five go back, rescue Castiel, save Krissy somehow. I'll just keep scheduling Death's appointments and collecting Bree's memories for you, okay? Besides I can't exactly help break Castiel out of prison. Maybe you could. I mean, heaven's library probably contains heavens blueprints somewhere, right? Like of the jail? Useful stuff for a jail break."

"I should. It'd be way in the back, though." Harahel perks up a little. "You'd really take my place? Even after I abandoned you in Hades and my stupid ineptitude cost krissy and me our lives?"

"Yes, Hara." She pats his adorable little head. Harahel just hugs her.

"Thank you so much. I'm sorry I said you were as scary as Dean Winchester."

"No. Its fine." Claire pats his back. Sam refrains from laughing at her.

"You two can be surprisingly frighteining for two such incredibly pretty people." Amitiel comments, making Claire blush. "No, really, you are. If you were up there I'd have kissed your poster instead."

"Poster? What poster?" Sam asks, oddly stemming Claire's embarrassment.

"Valkyrie training hall, do not tell Dean." Claire winks at Sam.

"Wait!" Zuri says, "If we take out Hara and Zachariah, they'll blind or kill anyone waiting at the edge of the abyss."

"That's right, whatever is keeping us at the dimness and size we are now won't be in effect."

"Crap..." Claire covers her face. "You're right."

"Well, you and Sam are vessels." Harahel suggests. "You could take Zachariah out that way."

"Hell, no. Sorry Hara, there's a limit to what I'm willing to do. Does Amitiel work as a vessel now? Since her grace is gone? Oh, god, what happened to the person you're wearing? Is she still in there?"

"I... I don't know. I'm in someone else's body? Vessels contain actual people?" Amitiel puts
her hand to her chest. "Oh no. What do I do? Is she okay? How do I tell?"

"We'll find out, Miti. I promise. No one will try to use you as a vessel until we know. I promise." Zuriel enfolds her with his wings, missing the point entirely. "Besides, Sam was built to hold Lucifers grace. I'm sure he can hold one and a half regular angels without any problem."

"I am not going to use Lucifer's vessel!" Zachariah looks horrified. "How could you even suggest it?"

"I don't recall being asked, either." Sam says coolly. "No one is using me as a vessel again, understand?"

"It's just better if I stay." Hara insists.

"If you stay I'm staying. I'm not abandoning you again, understand?"

"And we still have the same issue of getting Amitiel back out. Because I am not letting that ungrateful brat into my body either. Or any angel." Claire reminds them.

"Miti, if their soul is still there, you're not usable as a vessel because she's still there, but if not she's passed on. I really don't know because usually angels that loose their grace while in a vessel die in the process." Zachariah says gently. "It wont be pleasant."

"I have to know." Amitiel closes her eyes and clenches her fists in preparation. Zachariah reaches inside her as gently as he can. She doesn't make a sound, though Sam winces in sympathy.

"Miti, I'm sorry. There's no one in there but you."

"Can you bring her back? When I get what I'm missing? Can you put her back in this body?" Amitiel begs.

"I suppose so. Isn't there anyone else left who could do ressurrections though? I've never done one without Raphael supervising. Only the seraphs really did. We'll have to find her soul. If heaven is closed off, I'm not sure where it'd be. Where you lost your grace maybe? I can't really promise anything."

"Aren't you supposed to be a healer?" Claire exclaims. "All I hear is you cant do this, you cant do that."

"Ressurrection is the hardest thing there is! And reattatching wings? You're asking for things so far above my skill level you don't even know." Zachariah protests.

"Amitiel," Sam speaks up. "If you take Zachariah out as his vessel, then Zuriel can take Harahel and stay in the veil until you all get back to heaven."

"That will be a little problem for me, too. A lot of places in heaven are restricted to flyers only. There aren't a lot of floors in the old parts of the library. Almost impossible to navigate without wings. I don't want to fall out of heaven trying to navigate the stacks. I definitely wouldn't survive another fall from heaven and I don't think there'd be much point to take me out just to have me killed immediately. I'd rather stay and skip being an egg thank you."

"You're not staying." Claire snaps.

"We won't let you fall. I promise." Zuriel reassured him. "I'll stay with you every second."
"Okay." Hara relents.

"Good, that's settled." Claire sighs and turns to where Death is waiting with a more amused look. "Hello, my name's Claire. Claire Novak. I'd like to take Harahel's place as your adjutant, if you please? My main qualification being that I'm not a Winchester." This elicits an actual grin from him.

"You'll do."

Chapter End Notes

'hatched from a cracked egg' is a phrase that means both stupid and unangelic.
Like psuedo-Father, Like psuedo-Daughter

Chapter Summary

Claire is a stubborn infuriating individual.
Zachariah catches up on things,

Chapter Notes

I hate my touch screen. Unfortunately since I'm broke, not getting paid for this, and have no other internet access than a stupid phone, mishaps will probably continue to occur. One day I swear, I will get internet access again. But until then, please accept my continued apologies for typos and premature postings and whatever weird things my phone does without my meaning to.

For your pleasure some more norse insults

Miklimunnr- big/loudmouth
Blot-heathen
Meyla-little girl

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"How long has it been?" Hel asks, pacing back and forth along the length of the abyss.

"Not long enough."Dean replies, checking his watch. "We agreed we'd give them 48 hours and it's not even been ten yet. Why don't you go do queenly stuff? I'm more than capable of waiting anxiously for the both of us."

"I should. It isn't as if I don't have things I should be doing." Hel crosses her arms. "Why did I get involved with another shield maiden?"

"Hey," Dean puts a hand on her shoulder. "Gabriel made that place, right? There's no way he'd make anything that'd hurt Claire; they're pretty much besties."

"Oh? Then why are you so worried about Sam?" She challenges. Dean really doesn't have a good answer to that, at least not that wouldn't utterly undo his attempt at getting the goddess of the dead to chill out a little.

"Because he's a ridiculously overprotective big brother, that's why." Sam informs her, walking over from the edge of the abyss.

"Welcome back." Dean grins at him.

"Where's Claire?" Hel demands before Dean can.

"Is she with the angels?" He asks. Sam gives a kind of sheepish guilty expression. "Oh, please don't tell me Harahel needed a vessel to get out."
"Not exactly. Things got a little complicated. We picked up an extra dead angel, a healer, and leaving him behind wouldn't have solved any of the transportation problems. For some reason even graceless and amnesiac, Amitiel still counted as an angel and had to fly out with the other three, so that's two angels with wings and two without, which you can see is a problem. And Death wouldn't let Harahel go without someone staying as a replacement." Sam reluctantly starts to explain.

"WHERE IS CLAIRE?" Hel grabs him by the collar with one hand. The act of having someone look into his eyes, at eye level is incredibly disconcerting.

"She stayed behind as Death's adjutant at least until we rescue Castiel and Krissy." Sam informs them.

"She what?" Hel's voice is deadly, making Dean more concerned for his brother at that moment than anything else.

"Alright, hands off the Winchester." Dean tries to pry her hand off, succeeding only in tearing Sam's collar.

"How could you let her do this?" Hel demands.

"I tried to convince Death to take me instead, but he refused to deal with anymore Winchesters. " Sam explains giving Dean a pointed look that says he shouldn't really have to explain why that may be.

"How the hell is taking on my damn daughter not dealing with anymore Winchesters? Wait no, what the fuck did I just say?"

"I'm sorry, but since she refused to leave Harahel behind, it was the only way." Sam apologizes. Hel lets go of him and strides over to the edge of the abyss, muttering nordic curses before stepping off into the darkness.

"You know, I'm actually starting to like her." Dean grins briefly before smacking Sam upside the back of the head. "How the hell could you leave Claire behind?"

"It's just until we rescue Cas and can figure something else out. The angels went up to heaven to figure out how to break out Cas. The other angel, Rye, was part of his garrison and died in the assault on Hell when they rescued you way back when. Apparently he's one of Castiel's biggest fans."

"There's an angel name Rye? As in Pastrami on?" Dean smirks, not paying attention to the important part as usual

"As in short for Zachariah, and no, not that one."

"Okay, well, you're going to have to explain things to me a little better than that because I'm the one who's going to have to tell Cas how I lost our ki-Claire in the abyss." Dean squeezes his eyes shut, pinching the bridge of his nose. Just because he and Cas are finally... a couple, dating, screwing? Doesn't mean Claire is their daughter. Especially since just because Cas is wearing her father it doesn't mean she's now his kid, and really thinking of it that way is all kinds of fucked up. Though let's face it, 'all kinds of fucked up' is the only kind of family he's likely to have. The only kind of family even remotely likely to survive him.

"Dean, she's okay. She's just... doing a little temp work, that's all." Sam attempts to soothe him, putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Right, Claire's 'temping' as the Angel of Death." Dean glares at him, "In the Abyss. I really
"Of course not because she's spending winter in the Goddamn Abyss! Why did it have to be you or her, Sam? Explain this to me in a way that makes sense." But Sam's explanation doesn't seem to make it any better. "Why would Amitiel count as a winged being? And what... you know, your girlfreind is a pain in the ass even when she's dead." Sam opens his mouth about to automatically correct him, but nothing he's said is wrong at the moment.

"True." Sam concedes, "Hopefully she can make a few changes to things when I bring her back."

"You found a way to bring him back?"

"Her, Dean. And yes, I did. I'll be going back in to get her but not for a while. I need to build up my strength, fond a way to gather her memories and get her heart from Quetzalcoatl."

"Whos a what now? You mean the aztec? How the hell did he get her heart?"

"He got it in exchange for removing it for the ritual. And its not her physical internal organ heart, its like, heart as in heart, mind, and soul."

"Or my heart belongs to you?" Dean asks. "So what, we gank him and take it back? Sounds good. Nice simple, straight forwards. And about damn time."

"We can't kill him, they're freinds." Though the set of Sam's jaw says there was probably a little more to it than that. Especially as he sounds as dissappointed at the prospect of not murdering him as Dean is.

"Muklimunn blot meyla!" Hel seethes as she storms out of the abyss. "What kind of father are you? That girl is a disobedient irreverent brat!"

"What? I'm not... she's not... is Claire alright?" Dean tries to regain his composure, especially as Hel is so angry she forgot to put up her illusion of not having a half melted face and right hand. Sam just refrains from commenting on how obedience and reverence aren't exactly something you should be expecting from a lover.

"Oh, she's wonderful, if you call being Death's thrall 'alright'." She catches his expression and quickly restores her disguise.

"Well, it is a major hallmark of the human condition." He unwisely replies. Hel just gives him a steady look, unmoved by his attempt at a charming grin.

"Don't try to get cute with me; you're the wrong gender." She snaps and heads back towards the portal. Not wanting to be 'accidentally' trapped there, the boys follow her out.

"Alright, so tell me about this plan of yours to rescue your lady fair." Dean urges as they're back in their room at Helheim.

"Well, I need to find a way to gather all her memories, Harahel's been collecting them as he toured the abyss with death. Claire's going to continue, but doing it ny hand will likely take years. I have no idea how many more there are, but if I can find some sort of summoning spell as well as
a way to get her to consume them a bit more quickly than one at a time. I mean, if I have to I'll do it, but there has to be an easier way. Some counteroart to lethe."

"Alright, we can ask Krissy to look into that. She is right there." Dean nods.

"And I have to get her heart back. Since Quetzalcoatl is an Aztec I assume it'll involve ollama." Sam frowns. It'd be hard enough even if he was at his peak health.

"Isn't that kind of racist?" Dean asks.

"What?"

"Assuming that just because he's Aztec he has this thing for llamas. That's like that whole Mexicans and donkeys thing. I'm honestly a little surprised at you, Sam." He shakes his head at his brother who just stares at him for a minute.

"Not a llama, you moonpie!" Sam exclaims. "Ollama, the ritual ball game where you try to get a ball through the hoop without using your hands."

"Did you just call me a moon pie?" Dean blinks. Sam just ignores him.

"It was popular throughout all of mezoamerica. It was a huge deal for pretty much every civilization."

"How is that even an insult? I love moon pies, you love pies."

"Dean, focus. They used to make wagers and sacrifice the losers, or the victors, as being sacrificed was considered an honor, that's kind of up for debate."

"Kind of an important detail there, Sammy." Sam just glares at him until Dean sits down and stops being a pain in the ass.

"The memory of Raphael told me I'd have to regain my strength, so that's probably why." Sam leans back in the chair. How long will it take to get back into shape? This is the weakest he's ever been.

"The what?"

"The memory of her brother, Raphael, as in not Raphael but an illusory facsimile of the brother she remembered. I have to get past three guardians to get to her and the last one has her grace. And no, I'm fairly sure none of them will involve killing the guardians." Sam runs his fingers back through his hair, or tries to as it's still too short to even pass the width of his fingers. "So it's not going to happen quickly but it will kind of take most of my time and attention."

"Understood, but first can we work on rescuing Clas, Krissy and now Claire?"

"Claire's not actually in danger, Dean." Sam reminds him, but Dean just ignores him. "And of course, just know that afterwards I'm not going to be going back to hunting. I'm going to be doing this."

"Fine." Dean says, not sounding as if that's fine at all.

In truth the angels should have expected the uproar caused by Zachariah's return. While Amitiel's misfortune was a subject of concern, it was far overshadowed by thoughts of being able
to retrieve lost loved ones from the abyss. Harahel, who insisted on just going to straight to the library, was overlooked almost entirely. Most of his brethren didn't even realize he had died. The extent of their emotions being pity at the sight of his crippled state.

It's hard for Zachariah to look at him in truth, and see the injury he can't fix, and as soon as the angels in the garden left for the abyss, he went directly towards the jail cells. The guards are still there of course, and while they obviously heard about everything, due to their lack of surprise at seeing him, they are still at their posts.

"I will never get used to the idea of an angel wearing another angel." Nathan can't help but comment as Miti and Rye approach.

"You're holding Castiel prisoner." Zachariah states flatly.

"Its for his own protection." Nathan says gently.

"And all of existence's." Hamuel adds darkly. The two guards just give each other irritated looks. They're the perfect embodiment of heaven's current split, 'Castiel's going to get himself killed (again)' versus 'Castiel is going to get everybody everywhere killed'.

"I'm glad you've returned brother, but this is not the Castiel you knew." Nathan gives Zachariah a pitying look.

"I know. I wish to see him, to speak to him." Zachariah states firmly. "Please, I have to see what he's become with my own eyes."

"Give me your blade." Nathan holds out his hand. Zachariah hands it over without a second thought. "Go on." Nathan opens the door to the corridor and lets him in. Hamuel gives him an incredulous look. "What exactly can he do that Castiel couldn't?" Nathan defends his decision, "He's in the last one on your right."

"Thank you." Zachariah's not sure what he's expecting. Something twisted and almost demonic? Something exactly the same as the fierce stoic warrior he knew and admired? The one who had it all together, more certain in purpose, faith, and strength than he could ever hope to be himself? But what he gets it something else entirely.

Aside from the shadow of the vessel, clearly Claire Novak's father, he looks almost exactly the same. The deep dark blue of either the deep sea or the predawn sky, with black wings like slick pools of oil shining with rainbows, reflecting of the light of others grace. Only now he's brighter, somehow, and the way his wings are bunched and folded around his shoulders and trenchcoat is exactly the same as Raphael often let his lie. It's the only way you can really tell there are six. The usual two don't fold that way.

He's softer, too. His expression is thoughtful and almost gentle, a little worried perhaps but it's more at peace than he's seen it in a very long time. More than he's seen any angel's, in truth. Castiel gives a small fond, almost amused smile, and Zachariah realized he's listening to a prayer. So he politely waits until it seems to be done. Castiel looks happy, genuinely happy and hopeful. How long has it been since he's seen someone look that way? Whatever his secret, it looks almost as if it's worth, falling for.

"Castiel?" He ventures after a moment. His commander turns to him. His vessel has the same brilliant blue eyes. Which is unsettling, though far less striking than it in his naturally darker form.
"Zachariah." He doesn't seem surprised to see him either.

"Was that... Sam Winchester just now?" Rye asks cautiously.

"No, Claire, wanting me to know what's going on and that Dean is overreacting, among other things." He replies. "Sam and Dean prayed to me earlier." A million questions fill Zachariah's mind. Are you really having carnal relations with the righteous man? Far too inappropriate for a first meeting after so long. Are you really friends with the demon boy? Also not a great conversation starter.

"Are you alright?" Is what comes out of his mouth.

"I'm alright. Are you?" Though it sounds like a genuine question as it always did, never a polite nothing coming from their commander. He always truly cared.

"I don't know. The last I remember I was behind Gregor, mending his wings as we pushed our way through the gates of hell. And then I awoke in a land of utter absurdity to hear that you.... I don't even know where to begin."

"I suppose we can begin at the gates." Castiel suggests. "Hell is where our story truly began, I suppose. Where I first met him." The look in his eyes, one of complete adoration, makes Zachariah's heart ache. Miti used to look at him like that, or at least as close as anyone ever did. He looks as if he hears the sound of their father's voice.

"You weren't the only loss in the assault. Deborah, Zebediah, and Rachel were lost as well, even more injured. We had to have a tight formation if we were to have any hope to break through at all, but they took advantage of that, shoving us into each other and each other's blades until I flat out ordered everyone to send their blades away and we fought hand to hand instead."

Zachariah sharply inhales at this. Your blades are an extension of your own body, you never enter combat without it if you have any choice at all. Smiting uses so much strength and energy and to do so that far from heaven was utter madness. It violated every martial rule that was ever drilled into their heads.

"How did you not all drain yourselves?" He asks, astonished.

"Well," Castiel says slowly, "Hell does have an overabundance of souls." They drained energy from enemy resources, even twined and blacked by sin and torture, a soul is still a soul. Zachariah feels the familiar admiration swell up in his chest. His commander is and always was absolutely brilliant.

"It took longer than it was estimated, five of hell's years worth of fighting, but there were no more deaths and we finally, finally broke through. We weren't expected to succeed, in truth. There was another garrison you didn't know about, more heavily manned with the most elite of heaven's soldiers attacking stealthily from the back as we hit the front full on. But they never made it past the gate."

"We were the distraction? I was... I was thrown away?"

"No. You weren't. Even if it had worked as intended you wouldn't have died in vain. You should have been told. You all should have, but they didn't believe you would have fought as hard as you did. I don't believe that, but then I just followed orders. For the most part." He corrects himself.

"The hellfires, they burned so fiercely, I thought I was going to be consumed. Ruth and
Hebron concentrated on those of us on the edges, most affected, those with affinity to water were placed on the outside as they were affected the least and shielded us all more effectively. But for some reason, my wings burned more fiercely than anyone else's. But I was the commander. I had to lead the charge. They were so damaged, even with the constant healing, I actually began to molt after taking my vessel. It was so embarrassing once I realized it. Fortunately he hadn't seemed to notice.

Which seems an oddly vain statement. It's true Castiel was always proud of his wings, they were second only to Harahel's in their loveliness, but he was never excessive about it. He just kept them well groomed, with never a feather out of place and that was the end of it. A compliment to them was always respectfully demurred, but made him smile none the less.

"That must have been quite an ordeal." Zachariah comments.

"I didn't handle it quite as well as I should have, though I'm not sure how I could. When I had hold of his soul, it was so bright and broken and I used all my strength trying to both hold onto him and yet not siphon from him, which was surprisingly tempting. Even broken his soul was the most beautiful brilliant thing I'd ever seen, and the pain in my wings was excruciating. I held on so tight, I accidentally seared my handprint into his left shoulder so thoroughly it even bled through to his physical form when he was ressurrected. Even now, though I healed it, the spot where it was won't darken or sunburn or even turn red in hot water. I found that out in the hot tub." He looks whistful, "Though obviously he already knew."

"The retreat was much quicker, though I was a bit over eager to contact him again. It was the most awkward ridiculous mess. First, they didn't let me finish ressurrecting him, because of my wings needing to heal and he ended up having to dig his way out of the grave. I rushed the introduction, not realizing he couldnt understand me. But it was a reasonable mistake. Though I ended up scaring the crap out of him, destroying a gas station, blinding a psychic who would not listen to my warnings and so when I finally got my vessel and went to introduce myself properly, he stabbed me in the chest with a demon killing blade. It was so adorable." Castiel gets an odd grin as he recounts it. Maybe he is insane.

The more he speaks, the more Zachariah can see him changing. His emotions so clear and powerful, doubt and fear and guilt are all so very present. Where once it was just a strong hardened mask of intense dedication and determination, with cracks of caring underneath, and a deep desperate desire to prove he wasn't just a broken seraph. In truth, Zachariah had forgotten Casitel had started out as a seraph. After egypt... how could he have forgotten egypt? How could he have forgotten so many things that he remembers now. Like losing Barathiel to the Leviathan on the fourth day, how it felt like loosing half his being. How could he have forgotten his feisty little Rath.

When the truth is revealed, that these memories were surpressed beyond recollection, and for the sake of stemming rebellion or 'fixing' problem angels, it makes him feel sick. Sicker than anything else Castiel has said, even when he was telling Zachariah how he came to kill Raphiel. Was his teacher, his mentor so broken and warped so as to do such a thing and no one noticed his decline? It had to be Raphael's initiaive. Who else could have known angels bodies and minds well enough to begin to know how to do such a thing. Were any of the other angels as together as they seemed?

He can remember Zuriel slowly becoming more and more sarcastic, discordant, unhappy when with others outside of drills and the choir. And Miti just retreating further and further from everything and everyone until she was almost as reclusive as the librarian no matter what he tried to do to bring her back out. Was everyone just breaking behind a mask of bitter indifferent
obedience and he just didn't see? Was it self deception and disharmony that drove Zuriel and Amitiel to such extremes? If it was, how could they have been affected any other way?

Do any of his siblings even realize the extent of their own suffering? How strange that this long painful tale of an angel slowly trying to piece himself back together no matter how many false stews and starts, is what makes Zachariah see, for the first time how broken he still is. How broken they all are.

Throughout the conversation, he doesn't say a word, he just does his best to listen, even in the moments his heart is breaking. He never thought anything could make him hurt like the final confrontation between the two angels he looked up to the most, and how it destroyed them both. And then He hears the feelings of worthlessness, purposelessness, and hopeless desperation that led to the worst of all possible acts, saying yes to Lucifer himself. Of course even then his heart was in the right place and he truly meant it for the best and the thought that good intentions and best efforts can still lead to such a dark path makes him wish he had never come back.

"Are you alright?" Castiel asks gently, Zachariah shakes his head, folding his wings tightly around himself, and sits down on the floor.

"How can you even still smile at all over anything?" He asks, "Heaven is broken, our siblings are broken or dead and so are we. The angels I loved and looked up to more than anything tore apart the heavens in a civil war. You killed him and all of them and... I just don't even know. Why did you even bother to keep fighting at all?"

"I had to." Castiel says simply. "And I'm not finished. We still have over a year between then and now."

"A year." Zachariah scoffs. "You might as well say a week, or a minor day. Or an hour."

"You'd be surprised what can happen in an hour." He smiles, and finishes his tale. Zachariah is almost surprised at the apathy and the anger he hears when Castiel mentions their father returning. And the fact that after the middle of the battle he remembers nothing at all until suddenly finding himself back where he was when they removed the mark from Dean.

But most surprising is the fact that when Dean Winchester confessed his love in a half mumbled drunken stupor that only his intense feelings conveyed to Castiel what he was truly trying to say, that moment was clearly the high point of Castiel's entire existence. It seems so absurd, almost idolotrous, but as silly as it may seem to hold such a strange being in such high regard, Zachariah can't help but think. If Barathiel had ever said to him that she loved him like the desert loves the rain, even if only in prayer, he would have likely been unable to think of anything else for Days. Even though between them, he is the desert and she the rain. It is of course total nonsense taken literally, but the metaphorical message is obviously understood.

Though, in truth, Zachariah's not sure why he'd have to be told. The human stayed in purgatory for year, A year in a human's life span, away from the brother he was so devoted to, just to find him. What more evidence of love could he have asked for? And he forgave him for everything, every mistake and well intentioned betrayal. Not that this particular human had any right to judge but that never stopped anyone, human or otherwise from passing judgement before. How could their siblings have hoped to compete with that? Especially as its incredibly likely that if Castiel is imprisoned much longer the righteous man will find a way to break down the pearly gates and free him personally. This whole imprisonment was very poorly thought out.

"I'll help you escape." He says quietly. He's not exactly innocent of wrong doing, but at this point, who of their siblings actually is?
"That's not necessary." Castiel says after a moment. "If you could simply deliver a message to Dean, tell him I love him, but perhaps its time I face judgement."

"And who exactly has the right to judge you?" Zachariah frowns.

"Our siblings are too divided on this. If I escape it could push the rift even further. I wont be the cause of another civil war. Not again. Tell him to help Amitiel, Harahel, and Krissy and to help Sam retrieve Gabriel. She is the archangel of Justice and Judgement after all, she is the only one with the real authority to judge me, sentence me, or pardon me."

"I really don't think he'll accept that." Zachariah says. Castiel just walks to the bars of the cell, and proceeds to rip out the one closest to the wall with little difficulty. "Wow. I see,"

"I found I regained enough strength to uproot the bench two days ago. I've been debating the right thing to do ever since."

"He's going to destroy everything in his way coming for you. You know that, don't you?" Zachariah reminds him. "What's the point in preventing another civil war just to have your brothers slaughtered by Dean Winchester instead? You can tell me to tell him but I really don't think he'll just take my word for it.

"You have a point." Castiel removes his trench coat. "You're wearing lipstick, do you have it in your pockets?"

"I have no idea." Zachariah checks his clothing and takes out both tube of red stuff and an odd black pencil with a soft tip. "Will these do?"

"Yes, thank you." Castiel takes them and proceeds to write out a complex message on the inside of the trench coat liner. "Would you take this to him? Be careful not to smudge it too greatly."

"Um, alright. How do I..." Zachariah looks at it, but the best way is simply to put it on. Its ridiculously oversize. Castiel grins and beckons him forwards, before placing his tie around Zachariah's neck.

"Also give him this." Castiel breaks off a small cross section of the bar. "Hopefully it'll condense properly in the physical plain. And not remain this size."

"Come to think about it, our fathers worlds are just as strange as Gabriel's Abyss." Rye sighs holding out his arms, Miti's fingers lost in the sleeves. "We're just more used to them."

"That's likely true." Castiel agrees and hand him the piece of bar. "Thank you, Zachariah."

"Its nothing. After all what exactly is morally questionable about trying to prevent an invasion and jailbreak." He shrugs, though Castiel's gratitude means more than it really should after everything he's just been told, and takes the bar and its pieces.

Chapter End Notes

Claire Novak,
Mother: Amelia Novak
Father : Jimmy Novak
Foster mother: Jody Mills
Foster fathers: Dean Winchester, Castiel
Foster sister: Annie 'Alex' Jones
Partner(s): Krissy Chambers(Harahel)
Occupation(s):
Hunter,
Demi-god of karaoke,
Angel of Death (temp, summer of '17)
Car: 1979 Oldsmobile Cutlass Cruiser aka the worst station wagon ever produced (gotten as payment for exorcising a house.)
Stubborn Lovers, Stupid Freinds

Chapter Summary

Zacariah gets pissed
Harahel looses his temper and gets back his old vessel, Saul
Dean is not happy, to say the least,
Sam mothers some angels.

Chapter Notes

So I wondered, given how often words are repeated in languages and such, if 'Miti' had any special meaning. Or because that would be hilarious if it was a kind of food that goes well with bread, specifically rye.
Its a kind of spicy coonut relish apparently. And a mixed drink.
But Miti is also a hindu name meaning 'truthful' which was just super cool. Probably some common linguistisitic ancestor between sanskrit and aramaic or the like.

"Zachariah, what have you done!" Hamiel exclaims as he sees him weilding the bar and wearing Castiel's trench coat and tie. Belatedly Rye realizes that this is probably a slightly suspicious and alarming image.

"Nothing. Castiel was just making a point about his imprisonment." Rye hands him the bar.
"As in, that I should let his lover know that he doesnt need to be rescued so the righteous man won't unleash his righteous wrath all over heaven." Hamuel just stares at the solid bar, clearly wrenched from the cell door. It even has Castiel's handprint on it.

"H-he's already escaped?" Hamuel's question angers Zachariah, pushing him to the breaking point. After everything he's heard about what all of them have done, this is the last straw.

"You know, you all claim Castiel forsook you and turned on you and stopped caring about all of you and is always choosing the winchesters over you, yet none of you even noticed when Harahel, who has always been on your side from the very beginning against all apparent logic, got his wings cut off by Azrael and died or even when he got resurrected again. Not to mention Amitiel loosing her grace and memory and being shut away in a human mental asylum and you never even noticed she was missing!

"Now if you'll let me out, some of us would like to try and actually help each other instead of just burying our heads in the clouds, doing nothing but throwing around blame steeped in self
centered hypocracy." He glares at Hamuel, who flushes a little looking ready to defend himself before Nathan opens the cell door. "Thank you."

"You weren't here for anything Zachariah." Hamuel states angrily. "You think that because you heard what he wanted to tell you, you know, but you don't. Do you know who's grace is inextricably part of his now? How he became an archangel? Do you trust that?"

"This isn't about Castiel. This is about my favorite song and what's happened to her. I don't know how I feel about him and everything he's done yet, I really don't. But I know exactly how I feel about this. She has had only an assistant choir director and the Winchesters trying to help her. Lucifer's vessel has been more of a brother to her lately than any of the host and I am ashamed of every single one of you!"

Zachariah storms out of the prison wing not caring who he startles as he goes. If they can't tell a short young hindu woman from Castiel's vessel that's their problem. Fortunately the walk back to the library is incident and angel free.

"Castiel wishes to remain in his cell." He announces as soon as he finds his younger brothers.

"Seriously?" Zuri looks down, from where he's holding Harahel up to the top of the stack. "He doesn't want us to break him out?"

"He doesn't need us to break him out. He's regained enough strength to tear the cell apart peice by peice if he wanted. I know because he tore a bar right put of the cell door with no effort and handed it to me."

"Was this before or after he bequeathed you his mantle?" Zuri comments dryly. Zachariah looks down at the trenchcoat and blushes slightly.

"I have to take this to the righteous man to try and convince him not to storm the gates of heaven."

"Yeah, Good luck with that." Zuri snorts, and starts to pull Hara back out of the shelf and down to the nearest bench.

"No, no, no. I almost got it, I think." Hara protests.

"We don't need it now, Hara."

"Not to break out Castiel but have you seen how crowded the veil is? Not to mention all the damage the darkness did. Maybe if we fix heaven up a bit we can reopen the gates or make new ones or something."

"Hara, only our father could reopen the gates." Zuri sighs, lifting him back up.

"Or Raphael. He did design and help build the soul annex in the first place." Zachariah reminds them.

"Yes, well, we also thought only our father could bring back angels from the dead, too, but here I am. So who's to say anything is impossible, really. At the very least it would give everybody something to do, right?" Hara's muffled voice comes from in the piles of scrolls. "Why didn't I update these to a medium more easier to access?"

"Because you're only one angel and this is an enormous library?" Zuriel suggests.
"I'm going to deliver my message and look for Miti's grace. I'll keep you updated."

"Do you think you could get out of her as soon as you do that? This is really disturbing. Somehow even more disturbing than seeing Lucifer wearing Castiel and I have no idea why because that was creepy as fuck."

"You need to watch your language, young angel. Since when was such profanity allowed?" Zachariah scolds him.

"You mean 'fuck'? It's a good all purpose word, largely perjorative, but incredibly versatile and good for emphasis. If anything was creepy as fuck, Cassifer was creepy as fuck."

"Cassifer?"

"A fusion of names to denote an inextricable pairing. Like Bennifer or Brangelina. Or Destiel. Though, not romantic in this case."

"I always thought of them as Lustiel. I mean, Lucifer did kind of have control. Right?" Hara pipes up.

"That doesn't mean anything. I'm fairly sure Angelina was the dominant one in that paring. It's just which way sounds best. I dunno, Cassifer just sounds better, plus whatever that unholy union was I don't think keeping a suffix meaning -of god would be at all appropriate." Zuri continues making Zachariah just shake his head.

"What do you think sounds better, Rye, Lustiel or Cassifer?"

"Both sound like the unholy screeching of demonspawn to me. Why are we even discussing this nonsense?"

"To distract me from how ridiculously heavy Hara is getting. We're beings of light, and you lost half your mass, how can you be heavy?" Zuri demands. Zachariah sighs and flies up, taking over. "Thank you." He grumble a reluctantly.

"What does Miti think?"

"I'm sure she would find the whole discussion as ridiculous as I do." Rye informs his little brother.

"Don't you have a communication system set up?" Hara asks.

"A what?"

"A communication system, to connect with your vessels room." Hara pulls out of the shelf looking a bit worried. "So you can talk and make sure they're still doing okay." But Rye is still confused.

"Hara, what are you talking about?" Zuri stretches out his sore wings and arms.

"You... don't you have rooms for them?" Harahel sounds appalled. "What did you just... cram yourself in and shove them aside wherever?"

"I wouldn't phrase it like that." Zachariah protests.

"What exactly else are you supposed to do?" Zuri shrugs.
"What? No! You... you can't... Both of you... Rye put me down this instant and you two go get out of your vessels immediatley!"

"Hara, if we're going to interact in the human... hey!" Rye exclaims as Harahel grabs the shelf top and pulls himself up out of Zachariah's grasp to seat himself on the top.

"Do it! I'll wait here." He crosses his arms.

"If I let him go we'll just have to get other ones, they almost never take you back afterwards."

"Besides you know Miti's safer with one of us inside her." Rye lectures him.

"Physically! Do you have any idea what it does to them? Did you even read the possession manual? You can't just...being a vessel is mental straining enough but without a room you're exposing their minds to almost pure grace. Of course they won't say yes again after that; it's complete mental and emotional torture!" Harahel's actually yelling at this point, which startles them so much they almost forget that Amitiel is now experiencing this. "Do it now! And don't take another vessel until you come back here and learn how to do this properly. DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?"

The angels quickly vanish, Zuriel returns his vessel with an embarrassed apology and his heartfelt thanks before going back to the furious Harahel. Zacharian just heads to Helheim where Castiel said they were still staying. He feels vaguely unsettled by the thought of leaving Amitiel in a pagan afterlife, but the righteous man has shown willing to care for her in her vulnerable state.

"Dean Winchester?" He steps from the veil into the large guest room, adrrssing the man in army surplus who's not the devil's own.

"Miti?" He has a deep voice for such a remarkably pretty man. Rye finds himself a little less confused at Castiel's decision to lovers with this man, which just confuses him in an entirely different way. "Is that Cas' trenchcoat?"

"No. I'm her brother, Rye." Rye quickly takes it off and turns the lining inside out before handing it to Dean. "He said to give you this. Close your eyes, please, I have to leave Amitiel immediately. Please tell her I'm sorry for subjecting her to such an experience." He sounds both embarassed and ashamed of himself, When Sam and Dean comply, Zachariah returns to heaven.

"Okay, what the hell was that about?" Dean demands looking at the surprisingly heavy trenchcoat in his hands. In the pocket is a large odd shaped metal disk the size of a saucer with what look like finger indentations or some thing. The lining of the coat seems to have some sort of message for him on it, amazingly not smeared, though god only knows how long it'll stay that way, so Dean quickly drapes it over the desk and pulls out some paper to begin copying it over.

"Amitiel? Are you alright?" Sam asks the trembling young woman, moving closer to her.

"Is that what being a vessel is like?" She hugs her arms to herself, looking as if she's about to cry. "I did this to somebody?"

"Hey, it's okay," Sam soothes, putting a gentle arm around her shoulders, leading her to a seat near the fireplace. She's not exactly dressed for neiflheim. "Dean, get her some tea or hot choclolate, would you?" He asks.

"What?" Dean looks up from the liner.
"Something to drink so she can calm down and tell us what's going on?" Sam looks at him pointedly.

"Right, sure," Dean takes out a flask, handing to her as Sam goes to get a warm blanket from the bed. Amitiel takes a large drink, and almost immediately spits it out right into the fireplace causing it to flare up and set the edge of her tunic on fire.

"What the hell, Dean!" Sam quickly pats it out and drapes the blanket around Miti's shoulders.

"You said a drink to calm her down." He protests.

"I said a tea or hot chocolate, not whiskey! Why would you..." Sam just shakes her head and lets her curl up in the easy chair slightly farther away from the fire. "Did you assume she was a heavy drinker?"

"I didn't think she'd set herself on fire with it!" Dean protests. Sam just glares at him until he relents. "Fine, I'm getting her some coffee, don't let any thing happen to that coat."

"Hot chocolate, Dean!"

"It's still not as bad as being a vessel." Miti hugs the blanket tighter, and waits for him to return.

"First Krissy wants to stay in Hades, Its like pulling fucking teeth to get you to agree to a damn resurrection, then Claire decides to stay in the abyss, and now Castiel wants to stay in fucking angel jail? What the hell is this?! The goddamned martyrdom olympics?" Dean yells waving the copied note in Sam's face.

"Dean, calm down." Sam attempts to soothe him, but his brother's predictably not having it. What the hell is Cas thinking?

"Don't tell me to calm down. You calm down."

"I am calm, Dean"

"Why the hell are you so fucking calm? He's in jail. In heaven and want to stay there! Do you see this?" Dean shoves the papers into his brothers hands and points at them. "You read that. There's no way he's not... tortured or brainwashed or.. or something." Though he doesn't really sound like he entirely believes that. Sam just takes and reads it as Dean starts pacing.

"And why did he send the tie too?" He stop and gestures at Miti as she sips her marshmallow filled hot chocolate. "What does that even mean?"

"Maybe he just thought it'd complete the ensemble." Miti suggests innocently looking down at it. Dean gives her an unamused look, though she wasn't joking. It does complement her outfit pretty nicely. Why don't girls wear ties more? She almost never remembers seeing them in one.

"And where are little Miti's brothers? Are they just, like, abandoning her here now? Are we babysitting lost angels now?"

"I'm not that little." She protests, "I'm just human and amnesiac."
"I don't know." Sam looks back at her. "All we can gather is that Harahel got angry about the way they were using their vessels. Not that I imagine he was at all intimidating, but Zuriel and Rye are feeling all sorts of protective over him and Amitiel at the moment. And while Amitiel is human, Harahel's trying to navigate the angels sections of heaven without wings which is a lot like playing the floor is lava, only instead of lava its empty sky on a different plain.

"And I don't think Cas is being coerced. I think he really fears another civil war." Sam frowns worridly at the paper.

"I thought they'd all finally gotten their heads out their asses. He was teaching humanity 101, they were all reconciling and becoming a family and now this bullshit? I mean, come on, what the hell's really going up there now?"

"Dean, they've been through a lot. They found Gabriel just to lose Cas and then to lose her again, and then he comes back. You really can't blame them for freaking out over all of this, Dean."

"They locked him up, Sam. Can I blame them for that? Jeez, its like a friggin soap opera up there."

"All our angels." Sam comments, pretending he didn't when his brother shoots him a look. Dean takes a drink from the now empty flask and tosses it aside when he doesn't get anything.

"You know what? Screw this. I'm going to Hades, dragging Krissy out of there. Go to the abyss, haul Claire's stubborn ass back home and then we are going to go heaven, kick down the damn pearly gates and... what the hell do you want?" He snaps as Thanto appears with another scroll from Krissy and a bag of smaller ones. Dean just grabs it from him before he can reply.

"I'll return in six hours for the reply." Thanatos informs them.


"No, I'm simply busy. I have to deliver the invitations to Charon's Employee Appreciation Dinner."

"Why the fuck is she asking who Amitiel is and for that matter why doesn't she know what grace is? Spill it, pale face." Dean looks up from it.

"I don't answer to you, hunter. So take your demands and shove them where you apparently take your manners from."

"How'd you like a tour of the abyss, chuckles?"

"How would you like to spend some time in the veil?" Thabatos cracks his knuckles. "Just one touch, my pretty little Ganymedes, that's all it'll take."

"The fuck did you just call me?"

"Dean." Sam snaps. "My apologies, Thanatos, you've caught us at a bad time. But, is Krissy alright?"

"Did she forget what angels were, too?" Amitiel's question makes Thanatos wince slightly.
"You son of a bitch, you took, her memories of angels? Why?" Dean demands grabbing the greek god's tunic.

"I did no such thing. I've behaved honorably treating her with all the respect and deference I would a goddess." Thanatos makes a extreme effort and resists just pinching the life from the impudent little mortal, removing his tunic from the hunters fists instead. "She traded them to Hypnos for this one's life." He nods to Amitiel.

"Oh, that brother of yours just keeps digging himself deeper and deeper." Dean laughs, shaking his head with a downright terrifying smile that Thanatos pretends doesn't disturb him.

"An agent of a rival after life invaded our realm. He was beyond generous. We will not be so merciful again." Thanatos gives him a steady look and disappears. As soon as he does Dean takes out his phone.

"How do you spell 'gan a me dees'?"

"C-a-t-a-m-i-t-e." Sam replies. When Dean types it out he looks up at Sam who just gives him a look. "Is he wrong?"

"He's... that's none of your goddamn business, is what he is." Dean turns red. "Are you? No, don't... never mind."

"Babe's a woman, Dean." Sam reminds him, but apparently that's somehow too much information as well. Miti just sips her hot chocolate not sure she really wants to understand what they're talking about as much as she thinks she does.

"I'm sorry I'm late." Harahel appears, stumbling in from the veil, somehow wearing his previous vessel. "I had to make a few thousand copies of the Angelic Possession Manual for our brothers. Apparently nobody was actually taught anything about taking a vessel more than emergency basics until it was time to be assigned on. And even then they ended up leaving way, way too much out." The angel actually looks angry, "So I made sure everyone at least has the opportunity to know what they're doing before taking another vessel."

"So, what they were all just like going in dry?"

"Dean!" Sam smacks his arm.

"I don't appreciate that metaphor. And given I've used Krissy as vessel I'm surprise at you for doing so." Hara scowls at Dean, before remembering who he's scowling at and kind of shrinks down apologetically. You can almost see the tail between his legs.

"Wait, how did you understand that?" Dean is more surprised that he got the joke than he is at being deservedly snapped at.

"Claire and Krissy made alot of dirty jokes when we were researching at the bunker" Hara replies, blushing slightly. "Saul kept explaining them until I begged him to stop."

"I did not need to know that." Dean wrinkles his nose. Well, at least, Alex is still a virgin. He should probably check in, see how she's doing. Maybe she can figure out how to talk some sense into Claire. "Wait, how'd you even get here without wings? Did you get them back?"

"No. Zuri took me through the veil. Its ridiculously crowded there though. Hopefully we can find out how to reopen the gates with the blue prints. Miti, are you alright?" He walks over to her, and kisses her cheek.
"I'm alright." She says quietly. "Harahel?" Miti asks as he kneels down beside her. "What were angels made for? What's our purpose?"

"To love our Father, love and protect each other and care for the earth as best we can," he says almost reciting. "But mostly to guide protect and make the world safe for humanity."

"When did we stop doing that?" She asks. Sam nudges Dean gesturing to let them talk privately. "And why?"

"Hell, no, I wanna hear this too." He whispers and sits down.

"I don't know. I was always in the library or hiding. Until Krissy, I don't know how much of that I really had. I was never a good angel or a very good brother. I didn't even make sure Zachariah knew how to treat his hoat when he took a vessel before he used you and I should have. That reminds me." he takes a small booklet out of his coat pocket and hands it to her. "I found one for vessels. I had to translate it from aramaic because I couldn't remember if you knew it or not. Don't let anyone use you as a vessel again until you do, okay?"

"Do you think you could you make me a copy of that?" Sam ask. That would be absolutely invaluable.

"Sure, would you like it in english?" Hara walks over to the desk. "Do you have paper?"

"Why don't you use my laptop?" Sam fetches it from the bed.

"Oh, okay. Can you tell me how Krissy's been doing while I type?"

"Christ, not again." Saul mutters, covering his eyes as he regains control of his body.

"Hara?" Sam gently puts a hand on his shoulder.

"Nope, sorry. The little angel is off crying in the corner again. And I think I thought he'd grown a pair since he came and actually threatened me to let me use him again." Saul shakes his head, the statement making Dean raise an eyebrow.

"Oh, Hara, don't cry." Amitiel hugs him, holding Saul's head to her decently sized chest, and starts speaking soothingly in enochian.

"Wow, well, hello to you too." Saul attempts not to pay too close attention to what are currently the most notable features of the woman embarassing him. Dean just clears his throat and gives the young man a dark protective 'I have a shotgun and as shovel' style look.

"He threatened you?" Sam asks, curiously. "With what?"

"Okay, so I'm a professional poker player." Saul sighs doing his best to ignore the angel attempting to soothe her brother. "In case you didn't know. And to cut a long conversation short, he informed me that every minute Krissy was in hades was a minute he had nothing better to do than bless my opponents cards."

"Can angels do that?" Dean looks to Sam who shrugs. If so he has to have a little talk with Cas when he gets back.

"I didn't believe him of course and went down to my tournament where I proceeded to
loose every single game, every single hand and somehow even managed to slice my finger open on the ace of spades. So I didn't really have much of a choice. Saul sighs. Dean gives a laugh, a little impressed at the angel. Even if it was a bluff it was a damn ballsy one. "It's not funny, he lost me a fifty thousand dollars entry fee for a five hundred thousand dollar pot and I almost needed stitches." He protests indignantly.

"When was this? Just now?" Sam frowns. "How long did you play?"

"The tournament was all yesterday and last night, bleeding into this morning starting at noon. He came a few hours before hand.

"We haven't even been home that long. We just ressurrected him maybe six hours ago. There's no way he.." Sam's interrupted by a look of shock on Saul's face.

"You little shit!" He gaps. "Hold on I need to have a word with him."

"Amitiel..." Dean waves her over.

"Yes?"

"Just, sit here for a bit, okay?" He pats the bench by the window.

"Okay." Miti shrugs, sitting down. She's oddly compliant. Must be the amnesia.

"Alright, so I really just had a bad night and was always going to have a bad night. So after my initial refusal when he approached me afterwards, he had went back in time to take advantage of that. An impenetrable vault, he is not. You know I can kick you out right now, you little brat." He scolds the angel inside him. "Now, I guess I don't. Fine. FINE! We'll go visit your girlfreind in Hades. Just wrap it okay, I can't afford child support." Saul's wincing lets Dean know there's likely no need for the slap on the head he intends to give him for the comment, but he does it anyway. "I was joking!"

"Don't, and you can relax, I'm going with you." Dean informs him.

"Thank you." Saul sighs. "And now he's sulking. Are all angels like this?"

"No, most of them are complete and utter assholes." Dean replies.

"Poor thing. Hey, what happened to his wings he wouldn't tell me and what did the big guy mean by ressurrected?" Saul nods over to Sam.

"They got cut off my the Angel of Death."

"What?" Saul's eyes widen in panic.

"Don't worry, she's dead too now. And it kind of killed him and Krissy but they're both alive again now so its okay." Dean tries to reassure him deapite feeling none of it is okay himself.

"You go straight home, Harahel Do you hear me, young man?" Saul scolds despite the fact a human in his twenties really shouldn't be calling anyone 'young man'. "Go straight back to heaven and you stay in that library, understand? This world is far too dangerous for you... well, no, I suppose that's true. Since you can't fly...Dear God, really? What the hell? That is so fucked up. Okay, new plan, stay on earth, you librarian it up by day, I'll play poker by night and we'll just do that, okay?"
Dean can't help but think how weird it is hearing him arguing with an angel in his head. The thought that a visible cell phone and some earbuds would make it seem actually normal is equally strange.

"Saul?" Sam calls to the man. "It's very sweet that you want to protect him, but Harahel is alot more capable than you're giving him credit for. He just needs some guidance and support and encouragement, that's all."

"But he's just this tiny little helpless vulnerable broken thing." Saul protests.

"No, he isn't. He is an angel of the lord and as such is much less helpless vulnerable or little than anyone you know. If you're afraid for yourself that's perfectly alright, but if you're really concerned about him, you should be helping him bolster his confidence in himself, not undermining it for his own protection. Do you understand?"

"I guess. He's just so emotional. I don't know what to do with that. I mean, come on there's a reason I don't have a girlfriend. I'm not exactly Mr. Sensitive."

"Yeah," Sam looks to Dean. "Maybe I should go with you instead."

"Like hell, you just came back from the dead, and you want to rush off to Hades? Besides you need to build your strength remember? I'll be nice, I promise." Dean crosses his heart.

"I don't know he's more afraid of you than death now, though honestly that makes me more confident as I can't even shoot a gun and he doesn't exactly have a weapon any...ow, shit." There's a low screeching noise like a malfunctioning speaker, which is probably an angelic equivalent of a whisper as it doesn't break anything.

"Are you sure?" Hara's meek voice comes from Saul's body and he blinks into the veil briefly before returning with an angle blade. "Zuri gave me his blade." He gives a touched smile. "I have no idea how use this though. The next to last time I held a blade I almost killed...someone."

"That is kind of the general idea." Dean comments.

"Not when you're training with your brothers." Hara looks at it anxiously.

"Christ." Dean sighs, "C'mon. There's got to be some one here who can give you enough instruction not to be a danger to yourself." He takes the angel by the arm and leads him out of the room. "I have to figure out how to infiltrate Hades without bringing every god and dead person down on our heads anyways."

"That was nice of you to say about Hara." Miti comments to Sam.

"It's the truth. Even the weakest angel is stronger and less vulnerable than the average human. He'll never get any better at anything if everyone keeps trying to shelter him all the time." Sam shrugs and sits down beside her on the bench. "Are you alright?"

"I don't know. If Krissy gets me my grace back, that will make me an angel again, right?" She looks at him anxiously.

"Yes."

"With everything I heard Castiel tell Rye, I don't think I want to be an angel again." She hugs her arms to her chest. "It all just seems to be pain and betrayal and anger, confusion and loss."
"It's not, though." Sam reassures her. "Your brothers are just... suffering and lost right now. Everyone lashes out when they're hurt, but that doesn't mean that's all there is. Look at Zuriel and Harahel."

"They are very sweet and kind, especially Zuri." She admits. "But what if I wasn't that kind of angel though? What if I did some of those terrible things I heard about. I could have. I have no way of knowing. Or what if it's worse? What if all those things were happening to angels and humans I did nothing?"

"It can be scary regaining pieces of yourself you've lost. Trust me, I know how hard it can be accepting things you've done, things done to you that you'd rather not remember. But if you've done wrong, how can you correct your mistakes if you can't remember them? How can you grow and learn as a person without them?"

"And you have at least two brothers who love and care for you, who will be there for you and that makes all the difference. I never could have made it through all I've gone through if it weren't for Dean and Cas, Babe and the girls. But having them and being able spend time with them and even be there for them in return, makes it worth all the pain." Sam takes her hand. "Whatever you find you've done, whatever mistakes you remember, it's okay. Angel or human, Amitiel, I know you're good person, and I have faith that whatever happens, you still will be."

"Thank you, Sam."

"Now, come on, let's get something to eat and go cheer on Harahel for a bit while he practices. Do you remember how fight?"

"I don't know." Miti muses. "I hope I do, they said I was pretty good."

Chapter End Notes

So was I the only one who noticed the differences between Castiel's possession of Jimmy, Lucifers possession of Sam and Castiel, Gadreels possession of Sam and Raphael's possession of his Donny? It can't be just about power levels. I'm pretty sure in Castiel's case he just didn't really know what he was doing. Being chained to a comet doesn't sound like an even slightly pleasant experience.

As callous as he was at the time, I really don't think he'd make it so terrible on purpose, he probably just wasn't given proper instruction. Ans why would he be? Cooperation is difficult. It was probably more efficient to have their angels have full control of the vessels. Especially with so much at stake.

As for the question of why Sam and Castiel would be treated so much more considerately by Lucifer, than the other angels do their vessels. Some people viewed it as a sign that Lucifer actually cared about them, but I think it's entirely because he needed their cooperation. He's the devil, while people would put up with pain and discomfort for a holy mission, and doing what's right, That sort of thing would make them constantly question their decision and make them far more likely to change their minds and cast Luci out so, making sure they're as comfortable and happy (or too clinically depressed to care about anything enough to resist) as possible is pretty vital for him in being able to use them. Narcissists can be very charming and manipulative when they need to be to get what they want.
But as you saw in regards to how he treated Sam in 'The Vessel' once he no longer needs you his true colors show.
Psychopomp Appreciation Day

Chapter Summary

Invitations go out
Amitiel is a good fighter
Krissy is sick of Greco-roman gods

"Alright. Charleston chew shoved in a twinkie dipped in chocolate, frozen, wrapped in bacon, dipped in funnel cake batter, deep fried. That way we can eat the batter drippings too." Claire suggests, the ingredients appear on the table, are quickly assembled onto a wooden skewer, flash frozen, dipped in the batter and. then held in the oil until golden brown. She quickly manages to place it down on a mass of paper plates before it can slide off.

"It should be maple smoked bacon." Death comments, taking the first bite as Claire's still blowing on her forkful.

"You're right. Oh, and maybe a banana instead of a charleston chew."

"Its too big. It wont fit."

"Ha! That's what she said." Claire laughs then remembers she's not taking to Krissy and gives the mildly amused Death a sheepish grin. "I mean, what if we quarter it lengthwise and freeze it before trying to get it in."

"I dont think warm banana has the same appeal as fried banana." Death comments.

"No, but twinkies were originally made with banana creme filling. So it'll be ultra retro. And we can dip it in carmel and roll it in peanuts and raisins then freeze, dip, fry."

"That would go better with apples."

"Oh! Instead of the twinkie, core an apple, shove a banana in there, make a bigger core thingy. You kniwblike a ring of apple. Then the caramel, peanuts, raisins."

"The caramel wont stick if there's no peel. What about simply a small apple?"

"Yeah..." Claire agrees, "like a stuffed caramel apple. And thats why you're the boss." She puts it together. He could just snap it up fully assembled but Putting it together is half the fun. Its the difference between fondue and veggies with cheese sauce.

"Good afternoon." Someone clears their throat, making them both look up from the deep fryer. Claire's eye darken as she sees who it is.

"Approaching me while I have access to sharp objects and boiling oil may not be the wisest decision." Claire says coolly to the greek god on the other side of the table.

"I'm Thanatos, not Hypnos." He informs her.

"I know." She smiles. "What do you want?" He hands her and Death each a scroll.
"I will collect your responses in four hours. If you decline to attend, do not show up regardless." He dissappears. Claire raises an eyebrow and opens the scroll. There's glitter everywhere inside it and now glitter all over everything else, all over the damn table and food and even in the fryer.

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First Annual

PSYCHOPOMP APPRECIATION DAY!

PIZZA! MUSIC! SILLY STRING! CHIPS! GLOW IN THE DARK PAINT BOMBS! MORE GLITTER!!!!!

You think you're a mess NOW?

Come turn the banks of the Acheron into a DAYGLOW NIGHTMARE!

So as not to interrupt your deathly duties arrive at 11pm EST leave at 11pm EST

(Time loop courtesy of Kali, goddess of time, creation, and destruction. You Rock, Kali!!)

Disclaimer: No devouring human flesh, will provide nonsentient substitute dubbed 'short man' instead as well as a fuck load of mountain dew and doritos.

PARTY HEARTY!! YOU DESERVE IT!!

Ps. Please confine all Licentious activity to the Orgy Tent out of respect for others.

One guest* per person

*no gods

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Claire tries valiantly not to laugh, scrunching up her face in the effort.

"Interesting." Death comments. "You do have my permission to attend, as do the other reapers. Deliver it to Samael and instruct him to inform the others."He nods to hers, pocketing his invitation.

"Right." Claire snaps a picture of it and sends out to Samamel who of course calls her because he doesn't understand what a text alert is. "Hey. Semi... no, I didn't call you Sammy, I said, semi, like the truck...because Sammael is a mouthful... Well, you could try but I don't know how you could shorten Claire without sounding like you're choking on an olive.... why not an olive?... no.... I sent you a text.. no I know it says mms, not text... I sent a picture.. .press the top where the mms is. That right pull it down. Tap the one from me. Yes, with the crappy drawing in the speech bubble... I know that's not what a bubble looks like, but that's what it's called. Just.. open it... I know it's ... zoom out.. zoom... use your fingers pinch together and spr..." The phone goes dead. Claire sighs and takes a deep breath.

"I broke my phone." He holds it out. Sure enough he pinched the damn screen, nipping it from the damn phone. "What did you need me to see and why couldn't you just pray for me to come?"
"The reapers have been invited to a party. Psychopomp appreciation day. We need everyone to send back a yes or a no in two hours, and if they're bringing a guest. They don't have to specify who the guest is, just if they want to bring one."

"What?" He looks over to Death, who nods.

"you have my permission."

"But just so you know, there will be pagans there. Do not smite them. If you think you or anyone cannot abide by that, don't go. You'll need vessels, if you wish to partake in the orgy make sure the vessel agrees to that a head of time. Understand?" Claire holds the invitation up as he reaches for it. His response is a stare thats not only incredulous but disturbed, offended, and appalled at the same time. Maybe a little shocked in the bargain. "And yes. You have to tell them and let them decide on their own."

"Understood." He snatches the invitation and dissappears.

"How the hell do we get cell service in here anyways? And why did I get an invitation. I'm not a reaper."

"You are doing Azrael's job. You are technically, and temporarily, a psychopomp."

"Cool. I'm dying to see Krissy and maybe if I invite Hel as my plus one she'll... aww." She sighs as Death taps the 'no gods as guests' asterick she missed on his invitation. "I know, I'll invite Al.. no, no, she's still pagan bait and if she loses her v-card at an orgy of the dead pretty much everyone we know will murder me repeatedly. Man, I don't know anybody and I definitely can't ask anyone out on an actual date. I mean, we're not exactly official or anything, and Hela is kind of an over protective overbearing twat at times, but still.. Hmm." She puts her hands on her hips. "Want to be my plus one? You're not a god. They have an ice cream bar." She wheedles Death who gives an amused smile at the invite.

"No. I believe my reapers would gain more enjoyment were their 'father' not present. Perhaps one of Hela's siblings? It could be a good way to gain their approval of your relationship, or at least make an effort."

"Good idea. I'm pretty sure they're considered monsters not god's too. But Yuri's a bitch so I'm not asking him." she sends Hel an email as she doenst exactly have Rhys'.

"No, that's not right." Amitiel comments with another frown as Gudrun adjusts Harahel's grip on the hilt. "That's too far up."

"Alright, little miss amnesiac. I've seen you over there making faces this whole time. Why don't you come over here and demonstrate since you seem to think you know more about the use of blades than me." The valkyrie motions her to the floor.

"I don't know, I just know you're doing it wrong." She walks over and takes the blade from Harahel, wrapping her fingers around the hilt. "You hold it here. So you can do this." She flips it from an under hand grip to overhand grip with just a flick of the wrist. "It's easier than switching hands." She pauses. "Why am I thinking it should change size when I do this?"

"You're thinking of weilding it in the either or heaven. It only stays one shape and size on the material plain. And it's really dense they all end up looking like this, for the most part." Hara replies.
"Huh," Miti considers. "Would you fight me?" She asks Gudrun who shrugs and pulls out her own long dagger. Harahel quickly retreats to the benches. Amitiel is surprisingly fast and what's more doesn't fall for a single feint or misdirection.

"Maybe she can still tell." Hara muses, as Dean watches, a little impressed.

"Tell?" Sam is the one to ask though.

"Amitiel is the angel of truth. You can't even lie to her physically. Maybe she can still tell, even without her grace." Hara watches in amazement. "She's not the best, but she usually did the best against a lot of the more clever angels. We have a tourney in the first days and she made it all the way to the top ten. Most of it was just luck as it was random pairings and she ended up facing opponents who used or tried using a lot of deceptive tactics. She went farther than anyone else in our batch. It was wonderful. We were all so proud. Rye was bragging about her to everybody he saw."

"For coming in tenth?" Dean makes a face.

"Cool runnings." Sam says pointedly. Dean just tilts his head in acquiescence.

"Gudrun, a word, if you please?" Hjorprimul call from the door. Gudrun nods, pausing slightly. Amitiel takes the opportunity to disarm her and place the edge of her blade to the valkyrie's throat. "I didn't realize angels fought dirty." Hjorprimul comments.

"I didn't." Miti protests.

"The match was halted." Hjorprimul frowns at her. "You don't continue fighting once the match is over. Not in a friendly sparring."

"It wasn't over. She was about to attack me." The angel sounds annoyed.

"I was." Gudrun confesses, looking a bit embarrassed and hands her opponent her blade.

"And the other?" Amitiel gently kicks her ankle.

"That's my brother's blade. I don't part with it. But I won't attack you again." Gudrun's cheeks redden. Amitiel withdraws her blade.

"Where did Cas place?" Dean turns to Harahel.

"Seventy third. He didn't have as much guile as he does now. And was very reluctant to risk injury to his siblings. Not nearly to my disgraceful extreme, though, but well." Hara looks a little embarrassed at the thought. "I couldn't participate because I threw my blade in the ocean. Not that I would have."

"Winchester. Queen Hela would like a word." Hjorprimul beckons.

"She knows where I am." Dean replies. Hjorprimul gives him a dark look.

"Nobody is in the mood to have our beloved Queen made even more irritable than she already is. Stop being a stubborn drittsekk american hunter and go speak to her." She half pleads. Sam just gives Dean a meaningful look, reminding him they are her guests and owe them enough not to be a little bitch and actually go see her. Dean sighs and gets up, following her out.
"This is getting ridiculous." Krissy frowns in the mirror at her pastel flowered sundress. "Do you swear you're trying to get me something decent to wear?" She looks back to Thanatos, who nods.

"I'm buying jeans and shirts as you request but as soon as they pass the Acheron." He gestures to her dress. She just gives him a skeptical look. "I swear. You should really put your hair up. With your neck and shoulders, the classic style would really suit you. Especially as your hair naturally curls." Krissy just continues to look at him, even more annoyed. "You want to look your best for the bacchanalia do you not?"

"Why the hell not?" She relents and sits at the vanity, letting him style her hair in that grecian bun with a few loose ringlets up front. "Did everyone respond?"

"With the exception of the reapers, ever single person who was invited is attending, with guests."

"Great. But none of the reapers are going? I'd have thought at least a few would want to."

"Actually I think a good amount are, but as another psychopomps guests. Sammael does not approve." He grins. "Many are curious as to what 'short man' is and look forwards to tasting it. Obtaining quality human flesh has become troublesome with a lethal side effect of making them targeted by hunters. That reminds me, I have a gift for you." He holds out a jewelry box.

"No, thank you." She says flatly, not touching it. Not that she would take it, but with a segue like that she can't even consider it.

"It's special. Something you should probably give to one of your friends as soon as you find them." He says significantly and opens it to reveal a large glowing glass heart wrapped in silver wire that form two wings on either side. "They need it for a friend of theirs and unfortunately this is the best way to get it to them."

"It's glowing." Krissy looks at it. "Is this the grace thing they were talking about? How did you get it?"

"You hid it from Hypnos when you kept it from vanishing into the ether and I kept it safe unfortunately I couldn't do the same for her memories. Hypnos refuses to return them."

"Oh, Does this have to do with that 'grace' thing they were asking about?" Krissy traces the silver wire.

"You just asked me that." Thanatos reminds her gently.

"Oh," She looks a bit troubled, "but is it?"

"Yes it is."

"Kristiana," Thanatos finds the chagrin on Krissy's face as Pluto knocks on the door almost comforting as the memory lapses are worrisome."

"Yes, Dis Pater?" She replies sweetly with the old name he resents just as much as she hates her given one.

"We must greet our guests."
"Alright. Wait... 'our guests'? " Krissy frowns at him.

"While you did end up taking over most of the arrangements, I hope I'm still allowed some credit." He gives a smile, he probably doesn't think is as patronizing as it is.

"Yeah, No, I'm just more concerned about the 'us' as in you possibly presenting me as your new queen of the underworld." Krissy gives him a skeptical look.

"Would that be so bad a thing?" As if she'd believe him for a moment, even if the thought held any appeal at all. Her only hope of any degree of safety rests in his belief that she holds him in such low regard that she's willing to suffer untold agony to deny him what he wants on the strength of pure spite alone. Its true, but any sign of weakness will make him test it and then they're both screwed. As if she doesn't know that the second he gets what he wants from her he's totally screwed.

"Proserpine would think so." Krissy vomments and walks out of the roof. Hopefully Claire caught the post sceipt and manages bring her some under things. Either Thanatos keeps 'forgetting' or it dissappear with the rest of it.

"Why are you provoking him?" Thanatos catches up with her. "Painting the skeleton warriors with dayglow flowers and glitter and sequins and such was and enough."

"If I don't he'll think I'm willing." Krissy explains. "You people have this thing with altering reality to suit your interpretation."

"Now he'll just think you're a challenge. Don't you understand? You are in trouble,"

"I'm always in trouble. I can't get excited about this." Krissy waves him off. "I'm actually kind of having fun. there's much less blood and gore than my usual jobs. I'm surprised how much I miss the actual killing. But taunting Pluto provides a similar adrenaline rush, so I'm good."

"I don't want anything to happen to you." Thanatos pleads almost romantically.

"Thats nice, but there are more important things at stake than well being. Has he taken care of the other girls yet?"

"Yes, you demanded that first thing and already took and purged those memories." Thanatos sounds a bit more concerned.

"Oh, right."

"I think you should stop purging proserpine's memories." Thanatos says gently.

"No." Krissy shakes her head. "I took notes on the contents remember? And repeatedly reminded myself not to keep them. If I took the trouble to tell myself that, I may as well listen."

"I know. It was a burden on you. But using lethe so frequently may be damaging you."

"I'm just tired. Thats all." She snaps. He's quiet the rest of the way to the ferry and offers her a hand up. As usual. Krissy just ignores it.

"No, sit down. Its your day today," Krissy waves Charon to the bench and takes his pole. "Eh, hold on." She points the pole at Pluto as he gors to step aboard. "You want on this one. You're taking a turn with a pole." She warns him. His eyes narrow at her, promising unspeakable torture in the future, so the usual expression. Is he even aware of it? Or is it like reflex. Thanatos and Charan
just keep their faces suspiciously devoid of expression.

"Thanatos, do you intend to let your mistress exert herself in this manner?" Pluto takes the pole and steps aboard. Gallantly geaturing her to take a seat.

"It is not my place to command my mistress, it is hers to command me." Is the serene reply. The three greeks remain extremely composed and dignified as they cross the Acheron, even when Krissy sings an off color sea chanty on her turn.

As she'd requested, the first to arrive is Claire, who's waiting on the docks with who must be Death.

"Hey there stranger!" She bounds off the ferry and greets Claire with a hug. "Please tell me you brought them." She whispers.

"Brought what?" Claire asks. Thw gentleman beside her clears his throat. "This is my boss. Death, Krissy, Krissy, Death. Krissy's my hunting partner, you know when I'm not tempting as the angel of death."

"A pleasure to meet you again." Death says cryptically, as she doesn't remember meeting him before, and hands her a couple small packages. "I will not be attending, but thank you for including my reapers in the festivities. Even those that refrained from attending appreciate the acknowledgement. They and their function are greatly underappreciated."

"It's a dirty job but someone has to do it. I'll just give this to Charon." Krissy gestures back.

"I don't think they're his size." Death says dryly.

"What do... Oh dear god!" Krissy's face goes pale. "I didn't I mean, that was supposed to be for Claire!"

"I assumed as much." Death give a a small grin. "I'm not usually referred to as C-dog. I hope they are suitable." He nods and disappears as Krissy wishes she could do right now. She turns to Thantos, annoyed.

"You gave them the wrong invitations," She says coolly.

"I gave them the invitations specified for them, if you mislabeled them, that is not my fault." He replies just as coolly.

"What did I miss?" Claire looks at the boxes.

"I'm not... just come with me to the orgy tent." Krissy grabs her arm, "We'll be right back."
Chapter Notes

This always bothered me, but someone has to care about the vessels angels use and who they are and what they want especially in regards to what's done with their bodies.

Angels having relations with humans is considered bad but no one ever thought about why it's bad. It's bad because they are using another person's body in a sexual way without their consent. Because if they fall in love and stay in the vessel they are stealing that human being's life from them. It's abusing a precious gift, a loan, betraying a trust and no one has the right to do that.

Plus I just think it's more interesting watching a human and an angel share a vessel like Saul or Krissy and Harahel, don't you? With the examples provided by lucifer and gadreels possessions they just opened up so much more narrative possibilities for angels in vessels and they don't even know it. Like what if an angel fell in love with their vessel. What if an angel and their vessel fell in love with the same person? What if one fell in love with the others most hated enemy? So much scope for the imagination that they just totally ignore.

"I can't believe you actually have an orgy tent." Claire picks up a string of novelty condoms from the table by the entrance just inside the enormous silk tent. Do psychopomps even need condoms? The thought of the reapers of the dead accidentally creating life on their day off seems somewhat hilarious yet grim. Like policemen shoplifting or firemen relaxing by setting fires.

"Well, apparently if you don't the entire party ends up as one so, when in Greece." Krissy shrugs.

"Don't you mean when in Rome?"

"No. Making it all into Greek references really pisses off Pluto." Krissy sits on a swing and opens the top box. It has a black bra and panty set with hello kitty skulls complete with little red bows. "Okay, I am officially in Death's fan club now."

"He is a surprisingly chill dude." Claire shrugs and looks over;"Wait, you asked him for underwear?"

"No. I asked you for underwear because somehow Thanatos can never manage to get me any and I really dislike going around without underwear with a guy who isn't interested in and is
interested in me and knows I'm not wearing any. Its really creeping me out." She removes the tags and slips the panties on. "So I am going to wear Deaths underwear and make it very clear to my manservant that if they dissappear I will do something very unpleasant to him. Its bad enough they stick me in this pastel nightmare in that pastel room. I am so damn sick of pastels. If I ever get out of here I am going to hide in a dark room the entire easter season for as long as I live."

"You look very goddess of spring." Claire comments, rather unnesscessarily in Krissy's opinion, and picks up the other box. "I don't think this is underwear." She shakes it a little, hearing it clunk in the box. "At least I hope not."

"Hah, no. Thats probably my other request. I've been feeling naked in more ways than one." Krissy grins at the sound, adjuating herself in the bra which fortunately is covered by the plunging neckline. "You can open it." She offers. Claire does so, revealing a black leather thigh sheath and a small curved dagger.

"Oh, nice!" Claire looks it over.

"I love your boss."

"I know, he's awesome. No wonder the reapers were all so pissed when Dean killed him. You know I still have to eat in the abyss, apparently, and made my elvis special for the first one and that just started a whole what can we deep fry kick for meal times. I'm not sure, but I think I might actually be dead from a clogged artery after the first meal alone." She smiles at the memory.

"Thats not all you do, is it?"

"No, there was trouble with the angels and Gadreel and Abner, predictably. For some reason they listened when I yelled out the rules from that manual Hara gave me before they left and explained that Gadreel and Abner were doing community service by safe guarding the eggs and souls. That an angel can only take out one other at a time, and if they attempted to forcibly break one open before it was ready they would be terminated with extreme prejudice and they seemed to settle down. It was weird as hell."

"So you're like the angel whisperer." Krissy grins.

"Well, I wasnt whispering. More like the angel Gordon Ramsey-er. What's even weirder is that it only has any effect inside the abyss and I have no idea why." Claire sighs. "Then there were the reaper emergencies. There was a reluctant warlock who'd kidnapped a dozen reapers and demanded to be ressurrected and made immortal. They expected me to talk him down, but I just found and burned his corpse instead."

"A reapers crisis was solved by a simple salt and burn?" Krissy raises an eyebrow.

"They cant really interact with the physical world like that. Not without vessels. And its harder for reapers to get permission. Rules and stuff. But, you know, I'm a live hunter, so.." Claire shrugs.

"Cool. Alright," Krissy grabs grabs the box and fastens it around the top of her thigh. "I could kiss that man, but I'd probably die, so I won't. But if I die again, I'm totally planting one." Krissy adjusts the folds of her dess. "Does it show?"

"No. It'll be hell to reach though.

"I know, but it at least makes me feel better. Lets go, I have to greet guests." She checks her bra straps again and heads out.
"Has Hypnos been behaving himself?" Claire asks following her back out. Krissy just laughs.

"He won't even come near me anymore."

Harahel nervously rubs his arms, looking around the cavern as he trails behind Dean and the two Valkyrie. She doesn't remember him. Maybe it's for the best. He wasn't the best angel. Maybe he can be a better one this time around. Stronger, decisive.

"Chill, Hara. She liked you before, so she'll still like you this time." Saul reassures him, noticing the fidgeting. "Just be yourself. It worked the last time, right."

"She's nice. She likes everybody." Hara replies. Saul just snorts at this and puts the 2008 world series back on, reducing the outside view to the smaller screen.

"Just remember, use protection. And don't bring weapons to the orgy."

"I'm not joining the orgy!" The other three look back at Hara at this exclamation. The Valkyrie look vaguely amused.

"Saul, stop teasing the angel before I smack you into the afterlife." Dean snaps. Hara wonders how he'd do that. Maybe by removing his grace? He probably shouldn't argue with Saul out loud anymore.

"We are in the afterlife." Saul takes control to retort because he just refuses to understand that Dean Winchester is the most deadly terrifying thing in all of creation. At least after Michael who's still in the cage.

"A different afterlife. And will one of you just stay in control of the body consistently. I'm getting frickin' whiplash here." Dean glares at them. "Hara. Just ignore him."

"I'm sorry. I don't know why he's being so mean." Hara sighs.

"He's not... he's just teasing you because he likes you."

"He's always getting mad and frustrated with me though."

"Yeah, well, so's Zuriel, right? Look, if he didn't like you, he wouldn't let you use him as a vessel. Trust me on that. Maybe you should just block out communications for a bit if it's bothering you."

"No. Proper cooperation and partnership requires constant assessment of consent, barring emergency." Hara shakes his head.

"Well, given if I have to hear you two arguing with yourself anymore, I'm going to stab you, I'd say this qualifies." Dean snaps. Maybe he should have let Sam go with them.

They near the entrance where everyone steps through a curtain leaking incense. When they pass through, they find themselves in a cavern lined with brightly painted skeletons decorated like something from La Dia de La Muerte. There's an ornate platform with a dark brooding looking gracion man with one of those weird phallic beards they have on Grecian urns and a beautiful young woman with bright brown hair, almost auburn, in the classic style in a pastel floral sundress, that looks almost Grecian, but not quite.
Harahel smiles. Krissy's wearing the dress. She's complained about it too. Maybe she does remember. Her face turns to greet them and she lights up with a bright smile that makes him feel very strange.

"Oh, my god!" She practically throws herself at Dean, wrapping her arms around his neck. "You're alive. Why didn't anyone tell me. They got you back."

"Krissy?" Dean sounds almost astonished. "You're... you're not fourteen anymore." He continues, though it seems an odd thing to be surprised about.

"Nope. I'm all grown up." she grins at him. Dean looks a little uncomfortable and she lets him go. "Who's this?" though Hara knows she doesn't remember him, the way she barely even looks at him, makes him feel like he wants to start crying again.

"This is Harahel, he's an angel."

"You found it!" Hara notices Amitiel's grace in the pendant around her neck. "Miti's grace." How is that not the first thing he noticed?"

"Oh, yeah, here." She takes it off and hands it to Dean, though Hara holds out his hand to take it.

"Thanks." He puts it around his neck, tucking it under his shirts."We'll make sure she gets it. Are you okay?"

"Yeah, look, we'll talk after everyone's arrived okay. Have fun, Don't eat anything not from a container okay?" She indulges in another hug, looking downright blissful. Hara's not quite sure why that bothers him.

"I should really be the one to hold the necklace." He says almost curtly. "Amitiel is my younger sister after all."

"Yes, well, maybe you should have taken better care of her then." Krissy says just as curtly and greets the Valkyries.

"Smooth move, Prince Charming." Saul comments.

"No offense, Hara, But really, it's safer with me." Dean says fairly undeniably. "C'mon. I need to find Claire."

"I'm going to stay with Krissy." Harahel steps back beside the platform, causing a raised eyebrow from the huntress.

"Alright, suit yourself, man." Dean goes into the crowd of Psychopompss.

"I'm sorry, but do we know each other?" Krissy looks at him suspiciously. Hara's courage starts to falter.

"W-we did."

"Well, I'm sorry. I'm kind of full up on supernatural suitors."

"I want just to help you again." He says meekly. "To protect you?"

"Again? Well, given I died and am not imprisoned in Hades, I'm assuming your protection didn't do me much good the first time." She rolls her eyes. "So thanks but no thanks. Now go."
Shoo. Enjoy the party and find someone else to white knight for.” she waves him away. Not knowing what else to do, Harahel just nods and walks off to find Dean again, with an expression that makes Krissy feel kind of like she just kicked a puppy, and not actually another supernatural wolf. But Thanatos clears his throat to remind her to greet more guests.

"Hey, Happy Psychopomp Appreciation Day! As soon as everyone arrives we'll begin the festivities." She smiles at the newly vesseled reaper.

"Aren't you a hunter?" She frowns at her. "Are you pursuing apotheosis?"

"I'm hoping to convince her." Plato says smoothly, putting his arm around her shoulders.

"I'm sure you are." Krissy brushes his hands off, smiling sweetly at the reaper. "Enjoy the party, remember affirmative consent standards apply to the vessel you're inhabiting as well. If it's not a Hell Yes! It's as good as a Fuck No!" She calls after her. The Valkyrie accompanying him laughs.

"What kind of nonsense is that?" Pluto scoffs.

"The kind that doesn't end in you getting castrated by hunters." She cheerfully replies. "Hey, bitch! S'up?" She holds out a fist to Brunhildr who's dragging Alex along side her.

"Hey there, curly." Brunhildr bumps her fist. "This is me, and I believe you know my guest."

"Hey, Krissy." Alex smiles. "Glad to see you're alright."

"Have fun, girls." Krissy winks at Alex. "Don't eat anything not from a package."

"Love what you did with the skeletons." Alex remarks, waving as they head further in. After a few minutes of brushing past various psychopomps, Alex can see Dean and Claire arguing by the docks next to an amused looking ferryman eating a caramel cheesecake ice cream cone.

"I am twenty years old, Dean." Claire puts her hands on her hips. "Legally an adult for two whole years now. I can make my own decisions."

"You really should listen to your father." The ferryman speaks up for some reason. "Death is no fit companion for such a lively young thing as yourself."

"Lover?" the ferryman frowns.

"Brother?"

"He is absolutely nothing to me what so ever." Claire says pointedly to the both of them.

"That's kind of harsh." Dean can't help but object, even managing to look a little hurt.

"Oh? What are you exactly? The lover of the angel wearing my dead father's corpse? Because I fail to see how that implies any sort of authority over me."

"What? No! Don't...What... I'm... I'm just Dean. I'm your... Dean,” He sputters trying to erase that phrasing from his mind. wearing her dead father's corpse.
"Funny, I don't recall enrolling in Hunter University, Dean." She looks him in the eye, much to the fascination of the surrounding psychopomps. Alex has to laugh at this one, though. Unfortunately this makes them both look over at her, the guides of the dead clear a circle isolating her in plain view, even Brunhildr is gone from sight that brat.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Both Claire and Dean exclaim almost as one.

"Excuse me, Charon." Claire pats the ferry man's shoulder. "I need to go have a word with my sister." But Dean is already next to Alex, grabbing her arm, ushering her back towards the exit.

"You are going home right now, young lady. How did you get in here? Who brought you here? Where's your guard? Hey! You! Coppertop! Get your norse ass over here!" He points to Brunhildr who has a slice of pizza in one hand and a fudge chocolate chip cookie dough cone with sprinkles in the other.

"I don't answer to you, Winchester." She replies with false bravado, feeling the weight of a thousand eyes on her.

"No? Do you answer to your queen? Because I'm fairly sure she ordered you to stand guard over Alex." Claire frowns at the Valkyrie.

"I am, she's right here, being guarded." Brunhildr replies. "I got this. Go have fun. Let her have some fun. She reads too much, it's not healthy."

"She's seventeen. She's not allowed to have fun." Dean snaps.

"Eighteen. Almost nineteen, depending on if you count the year existence forgot." Alex protests.

"I don't, and I don't care. I thought you wanted to be a therapist, be normal. You can't opt out of the life if you keep involving yourself in things like this." He reminds her.

"I can't get out of the life if I have a Valkyrie shadowing my every steps shouting my sexual history to the campus either. I'm just going to get some ice cream, dance a little and spend some time with Krissy and Claire, that's all. no drugs, no alcohol, not cigarettes, no orgies, no human sacrifices, I swear." She crosses her heart. "Besides, you're not exactly my father, either."

"Does Jody know you're here?" Dean asks. Alex looks blank for a moment, meaning no. Dean just crosses his arms and looks at her.

"She's not my mother. I'm legally an adult..."

"No, she's just the woman who took you in, took care of you and is helping put you through college. Why should you treat her with any respect?" Dean looks steadily at her. "Now, however you got here, you can go home the same way."

"It's just a party." Alex tries one last time.

"No it's not just a damn party and you know it. I can't believe you even tries to say that. Now, go on. You two pigtails, before I tell Hela about this." He waves to the curtains out.

"C'mon Alex. I don't know why you wanted to come anyways." Claire leads her to her exit. Alex doesn't say anything. In truth, she didn't, but Brunhildr was going stir crazy with guard duty, and this way she wouldn't be disobeying orders. But skeletons block the way when they reach the exit.
"My apologies, but no one is allowed to leave until the ceremony at least." Thanatos informs them. "But rest assured it will be 11:00 when you return home."

"You mean we're trapped?" Claire demands clarification.

"No. It's simply that if you leave no one else can gain entry. Once everyone arrives we will have the ceremony and then you can return home." The god explains. "Its part of the mechanics of the time loop."

"Great." Claire sighs, though Brunhildr looks a bit hopeful.

"I don't give a shit if people can't gain entry." Dean steps forwards, "She should never have been allowed entry in the first place."

"Chuff." Dean turns around to see Rhys behind him in wolf form.

"Did you just chuff at me?"

"It's about time. Where were you? And why are you a wolf?" Claire shakes her head. He just raises an eyebrow and looks towards Alex. Right. The massive threats from his sister. "Okay, well, look, I know you're here for the orgy, but since your stuck like this until my sister leaves, do you mind keeping an eye on her until after the presentation ceremony?" She asks, petting his head, scratching behind his ear a little. He licks her face. "Uch. A simple bark once for yes and twice for no is good enough." She wipes her face on her jacket.

"Bark." He teases.

"Thanks, Rhys."

Dean watches as the giant wolf makes his way over to the corner and curls up on the ground, nodding his head at her to use him as a bean bag chair. Alex looks over at Dean who just looks straight back at her, and sighs, plopping down as Bree used to do. Rhys moves his tail around her waist like a seat belt and settles in.

"Hey, its the virgin." Dean hears one person comment. Before he can reapon, Rhys is snarling at the being full fang. It thinks better of approaching, quickly turning to walk away.

"I know you're not talking about me, papi." Dean hears behind him.

"Just so we're clear, anything happens to her, your hide will be decorating the bunker floor. Rhys just gives him an amazingly smartass wolfy grin. Dean manages to find a small ledge on the cavern wall where by just turning hisbehead S, he can see Claire talking to Charon, Krissy greeting people with Pluto like an unhappy divorced couple faking it for the cameras, and Alex looking at something on her phone and sharing the image with Fenrisulfir who seems to find it amusing. What the fuck is happening with his life? Not a year ago he'd be trying to kill several of these things. And where the hell is the librarian? Oh, he's at the ice cream bar helping the servers for some reason. Which is good because pagans cant be pleasant customers, but he's not sure how it really helps Krissy.

Finally, everyone's arrived, pluto males a little speech about how valuable each and every one of them is to the afterworlds and humanity as a whole, blah blah blah, and presents Caran some sort of bright bird that looks like a pheonix but can't be because pheonixes are extinct and were people and wouldn't be given as pets. Firebird maybe? He seems to like it.
Everyone cheers politely some actually meaning it, but most just eager to get on with the party. Its not hard to find Brunhildr again and get her take Alex home. Rhys stretches out as soon as they're gone, simultaneously shrinking into a naked young man with almost salt and pepper grey hair, devoid of any clothing.

"That was a smooth transition." Dean can't help but comment. "Doesn't include clothes?"

"I'm not a shifter. And what's the point they're going right back off again." He smacks him a kiss, "oh, its about time. Love that girl, but I am not a tame wolf, no matter what my siblings want." He gets to his feet and Dusts himself off. "Alright! LADIES! GENTLEMEN! Who wants to break in the tent? Or just plain break it." He strides confidently into the crowd, expecting it to part for him, which it does, with his arms spread wide, as if expecting girls to flock to him, which they do. Not entirely surprising given the body on display. Of course there's a commotion near the tent almost as soon as they pass from view. When Dean catches up to the tent, Harahel's there, blocking the entrance with his blade drawn. He looks shakey and nervous and a little hard to take seriously.

"What's going on?" Dean demands as Krissy and Claire get there from either side.

"I do not beleive he has the consent of his vessel to do this." Harahel nods to the woman on Rhys' left arm. "She is wearing a wedding ring."

"Are you really drawing a weapon against me?" The woman steps forwards, almost amused. "Harahel, you are weak, you are wingless and you have not held a blade since you threw yours into the ocean on the third day. And who are you to lecture me about vessels? You got yours killed."

"You can't use this body for whatever you like, Ezra. It's not yours. It is being loaned to you and unless she herself tells me that she is willing you should use her as such, I will not let you through." It's kind of sad how you can see him trembling.

"You want to say that again?" She swats the blade from his hands. Harahel takes deep breath and says something under his breath, fists clenched. "What was that?" She steps forwards trying to intimidate him as Dean and the girls try unsuccessfully to push through all the way. Harahel says something in enochian and suddenly reaches out, grabbing her by the temples. There's a bright flash that makes people shield their eyes and the woman collapses into Harahel's arms.

"Holy fuck! Dean finally makes it through when the crowd steps back. Did... did you just smite your brother?"

"What?" Harahel looks shocked. "No. I... um, grounded him, sort of. He's been confined to the garden until an archangel releases him. Only the top seraphs are allowed to use it really, but well, there really aren't anymore, and I kind of think this rule is more important than that one. It only works on angels younger than you though. Everyone always forgets I'm the oldest in our batch." He touches the girl's forehead, reviving her. "Are you okay?" He asks when she opens her eyes. "I'm sorry about my brothers behavior. It was inexcusable. I'll find a way to get you safely home and make this up to you."

"I thought I was dreaming." He clutches his shirt and looks around terrified. "I don't... I just got married."

"Any one who wants to use a human body for sexual pleasure will have obtain that bodies free and willing consent beforehand, explicit and uncoerced. To that effect you must allow your vessel control of their body to inform me that is the case. there are only three of you here
older than me so I will send each and every one of you back to the garden if I have to. A vessel is your partner, not your possession."

"You have no authority over reapers, Wingless one." Someone predictably pipes up in the crowd.

"No, but I do." Claire stands beside Harahel sword drawn as Krissy hands him his blade back. "And If you don't comply with Harahel's request, I will do one of three things, banish every single one of you, tell Sammael about your conduct and give him free reign, or kill you. Which one is entirely up to you." Claire gives the crowd a fierce look. "I might just talk to Semi anyways, because I know I had him tell you to get your vessels consent for this in the first place. Goddamn it I came here for some fun, not to babysit a bunch of damn angels who should know better!"

"Claire." Dean walks over to her and holds out his hand. "Give me the sword and go have some fun. I got this."

"Thanks, Dean." She sighs and walks over the frightened vessel. "C'mon lets get you home."

"And a handy bonus to communicating with your vessel, is they can tell you exactly how your borrowed body works so you can get more bang for your buck." Krissy who nudges Harahel. "Right, angel?"

"What? No! I mean yes, I mean Theoretically." While Harahel's mortified look is pure shock and innocent denial to Dean, some of the others in the crowd choose to take it different way. It does ease the tension a great deal though, and they start to move away.

"Who did you come with?" Claire asks the girl, leading her away.

"I don't remember."

"It's alright. We'll figure something out." Claire sighs. "You want some pizza?" She puts an arm around her.

"It won't trap me in the underworld will it?" She gives Claire a distressed look, clinging to her like a wet dress.

"No, it's pepperroni."
"Okay, so, maybe I was a little harsh." Krissy approaches the paint covered angel as the guests start to trail out. He looks almost like a dayglow patchwork wax statue.

"No. Not really." He peels some of the dried paint off his blade.

"I was. I'm sorry. I've just been dealing with greek gods for like an eternity and thought you were just one more overbearing mysogynistic supernatural being trying to get into my pants."

"You're not wearing pants." he points out. "You're wearing my dress."

"Your... you're really a girl?"

"No, I'm an angel."

"Okay, not really what I asked." Krissy rolls her eyes.

"Angels aren't boys or girls. We're asexual nonreproductive beings. Asking me if I'm a boy or a girl is like if I asked you whether you're a lizard or a fish."

"Oh." She leans back against the tent wall, forgetting its not a solid structure and almost falls down. Harahel tries to catch her but overcompensates and starts to fall himself. Dean grabs him by the shirt and krissy why the waist to steady them.

"Why don't you kids go sit down for a minute? I'm going to go snag the last piece of pizza," Dean ushers them over to a bench no less sticky and paint spattered than they are. A reaper snaps something in enochian to Harahel that makes him look away.

"What did he say?"

"Something not polite." Harahel replies. "I won't translate it. Are you alright? Really?"

"I'm mostly bored and annoyed and yes there's a sense of everpresent danger, but I'm used to that by now, why do they keep calling you wingless."
"I don't want to talk about it." Hara can't look at her. Talking about those last moments, when she doesn't even remember them or him just feels too painful. "I would like to stay with you and help you. Is there anything I can do?"

"I don't know. I think I've got it pretty well in hand on my end. What are you good at?"

"I'm a librarian, so, research, forgery, falling down, I'm especially good at that now that my counter balance is gone. I used to be good at being ignored but that's being replaced by being a disgrace to my family." Hara pauses. "Saul says I make a kick ass memory palace with a bitching entertainment system. He said to say that specifically." Krissy gives a grin at this. "But that's all just stuff from his own head I collected. I'm really good at organizing things."

"Who's Saul?"

"My vessel. He's using picture in picture to monitor the outside. Saul says hi and nice... I'm not saying that Saul. That's innappropriate."

"Hi, Saul. Well, maybe you can help Sam with his research. I can't really do much with a librarian in Hades. I don't even think they have a library. Thank you though. And just so you know, I'm pretty sure the angels trying to use their vessels to join a pagan orgy are the ones who should be considered a disgrace or have I forgotten several key tenents of the abrahamic religions?"

"No. Though I wasn't saying they couldn't do it, just that they needed permission." Hara clarifies. "Which isn't usually allowed, either."

"Oh. Well, I think that was kind of great of you, standing up to them for the sake of their vessels. So, well done, Neville. Ten points for gryffendor." She nudges him.

"My names Hara." He almost reluctantly corrects her, smiling bashfully at the odd but obvious compliment.

"Right. So, Hara, are you like my guardian angel or something? If so where the hell have you been all my life?"

"No, not really, but... I'd like to be." He looks shyly at her.

"Maybe when I get out of here, we can talk. Claire and I both suck at research. We end up calling Sam or Garth or something so you know when we're on the hunt that might actually be a big help."

"Okay." Hara smiles at her, "if you need me, just pray and I'll get here eventually. Or send one of my brothers." Harahel says it so seriously, krissy tries not to laugh at him again.

"Alright," Dean walks back over to them, "I've got to go. Are you staying, Hara?" Though he doesn't really look like its an idea he recommends.

"No, I'll be of more use helping Sam with research." Hara stands up. "Plus, Zuri will need his sword back."

"You sure?"

"Yes. Krissy's better at taking care of herself than I am."

"I do suck at research though so maybe some other time." Krissy stretches a bit and stands up. "I'll be fine for now. You know I've got Pluto by the balls." She winks at them.
"You're gonna have to let go eventually." Dean cautions her.

"I know." She looks briefly worried. "It's okay, I have faith in you guys," she gives them a tired thumbs up.

"Krissy," Claire walks over, giving her a hug. "I have to go, my boss is here. I'll check the abyss for that thing you mentioned."

"Thanks."

Dean looks back to see Death waiting by Charon, patiently waiting for Claire. The personification pointedly ignores Dean as soon as he notices him looking his way. Dean walks over to him, a bit uncomfortably.

"So, um, I guess I sort of owe you an apology." Dean rubs the back of his neck, "For killing you and stuff."

"You did not kill me. You simply removed me from this plane of existence, presumably inexorably." Death cooly informs him.

"But... that's kind of the same thing. Isn't it?" Death gives a small smile and taps his nose with one finger. "Anyway, it was a dick move and I'm sorry. You're a cool guy and you were just trying to help... i asked you to help... and I.. well, come on, I mean, you asked me to reap Sam. Dean looks away uncomfortably.

"I underestimated the strength of your affections." Death admits. "And I did need the vacation."

"So.... are we cool?" Dean asks hopefully.

"That remains to be seen, but I accept your apology. Do not do it again." Death gives him a stern look.

"I won't." Dean promises. "So, um, how's Claire doing? You know, as your adjutant?"

"Surprisingly well, actually. If she is still willing when Azrael rejuvenates, I may use her to allow my angel the occasional vacation herself. She was clearly overworked."

"No, she was pissed. She loved you and I killed you. She did what I would have done and fucked up the mother who hurt my baby. Though in a much more orderly and patient way."

"She generally does both respect and appreciate the natural order." Death nods proudly. "I'm impressed at her forbearance."

"So, about Claire... she's young, she has a life, a family, a girlfriend, she was going to take a few courses in the spring. If, you know, I could take her place or something... she's just had so much taken away from her already, its not fair to make her do this."

"Life generally isn't."

"No, but Death's supposed to be, right? Sinner and saints alike and all that?" Dean smiles hopefully. Death gives a wry grin.

"You should have approached me earlier." He informs the hunter. "Unfortunatley until your current predicament is resolved, that won't be possible. When you've taken care of this, we
"Take care of her, okay?" Dean steps aside as Clare and Krissy walk over. Death just raises an eyebrow at the request.

"Hey, Death, thank for the dagger." Krissy waves to him.

"I should be universally effective, but it has limited uses, so be sparing." He informs her.

"Got it, thanks again."

"Take care okay?" Claire pats her shoulder. "Tell Thanatos if he touches you I'll feed him his own testicles."

"Claire!" Dean exclaims, briefly looking like an offended maiden aunt witnessing a flash of unseemly ankle. She just gives him a steady look. "You don't say things like that, you just imply it with dark looks and a menacing air."

"I'm a baby faced blonde woman, Dean. I have to say it or they'll think I'm flirting." She says bluntly.

"An even then." Krissy sighs shaking her head.

"Oh."

"We're too cute to be menacing." Krissy and Claire link arms, resting their heads against each other's and give him their sweetest, most innocent and adorable smiles.

"That's not true, Dean is the scariest thing I've seen after Michael and he's very cute." Hara pipes up as he joins them.

"Who, Me or Michael." Dean protests.

"You are. Michael is scary but she's really more handsome than cute." He explains.

"She?" Dean's eyes widen. "Michael's a girl?"

"More of a fish than a lizard, huh?" Krissy winks.

"What?" Hara looks confused, "why would... nevermind. I was not aware of those associations when I chose those particular animals."

"Excuse me do you mean to tell me I'm vessel to a girl?"

"No, she's an angel, they just think female fits better than male because females being scarlet in nature and stuff," Claire shrugs.

"I have to go. Hara, come on." Dean snaps at the now cowering angel who follows the angry hunter to the entrance where their valkyrie guards are waiting.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you angry." Hara says, with a clear 'please don't smite me' tenor to his voice. "Though I'm not sure how I did."

"Nevermind."

"That can't be it." Hara says suddenly. "Saul says you're mad because we sort of called
you a girl. I don't see how, but even if you thought we did why would you be mad? Is it because I said you were scary?"

"No. Scary is fine. I'm a hunter I'm supposed to be scary. I definitely don't appreciate being called a girl ir having it implied."

"Why? What's wrong with girls?" Apparently he's not scary enough because Harahel is still talking.

"Nothing. They're just, you know, feminine." He shrugs.

"What's wrong with feminine?" Dean looks over to him to see if Hara's trolling him, but the angel's face is pure innocence.

"Nothing its just... not... look, calling a man girly or effeminize us a way of saying he's weak and not as good as they are, you know, inferior."

"You think girls are weak and inferior?"

"What? No! Though, men are bigger and stronger than women usually. So I mean, technically."

"That's true on average, I suppose. But why does being stronger make men superior?" He of course has to ask that as they approach the valkyries.

"It doesn't." Dean feels oddly uncomfortable at the annoyed stares being directed his way by the valkyrie. "Look, Its not saying women are bad or anything like that, just that I'm not what I should be."

"Oh," Harahel's silent for a moment. "But why aren't you supposed to be like a girl if there's nothing wrong with being a girl and they aren't less in any way? What does being like a girl mean anyways? What are boy things and what are girl things and what are just plain human things? And who decided what was what? Does liking girl things make you a girl or are they girl things because only girls like them? What if boys like girl things does that mean they're really girls or that girl things are really just human things?"

"What? I don't know! Why are you asking so many damn questions?"

"I'm sorry." Hara shrinks back.

"Jesus..." Dean rubs his eyes. "You said your male right? How did you decided that if angels don't have genders."

"Well, my siblings all said I was male back when our father first split things into genders, because I'm small, weak, and generally useless except for making copies."

"The fuck did you just say?" Dean turns on him as the valkyries burst out laughing.

"This was before people. With the things in the ocean." He hides behind Hjorprimul.

"Don't pick on the sweet little angel." Gudrun gives Hara a friendly squeeze. "He's asking very good questions."

"No, he's..."Dean starts to reply and turns back only to find himself inexplicably unable to move forwards. "What the hell?"
"Are you okay?" Gudrun asks. Dean steps back, then forwards again, unable to move at the same point. There's no barrier or pulling, he just stops. Gudrun puts her hand out and steps past the area fine. Hara and Hjorprimul do as well.

"You didn't eat anything you weren't supposed to did you?" Gudrun asks cautiously.

"Just a slice of olive pizza with way too many olives." He shakes his head. "Who's idea was it to call bbq pork roast 'short man', though? That's fairly disturbing." Dean grimaces as Krissy runs up to them, thanatos and a contingent of skeletons close behind.

"Mine. You know because human flesh is called long pig?" Krissy grins at her own joke. "Apparently if you season it right, they taste almost the same."

"Please tell me you don't know this from personal experience."

"No, alot of the pagan gods actually use pork as filler. Its harder to get away with eating a large amount of people. So, if people and pigs are missing." Krisy winks at him. "What's wrong?"

"Winchester ate olive pizza."

"There wasn't any olive pizza. I hate olives. Just cheese and pepperoni." Krissy frowns, and face palms. "Oh for God's sake."

"That son of a bitch." Dean turns to look at Thanatos and Pluto in turn. "Alright. Hara, get this back to your sister and let Sam know I fucked up. Fel free to use those exact words too. And tell Hel that it was a wash." He takes off the grace necklace and places it over Harahel's head.

"Take care of Krissy. I don't think she's getting enough sleep. And she might be dehydrated." Hara holds onto the pendant.

"I will now get out of here."

"Yes, sir," Hara nods and follows the Valkyrie out.

"Why would you think I'd order olive pizza?" Krissy whacks Dean's arm, "Who the hell eats olive pizza?"

"They're greek; they do olive everything." Dean protests.

"Soldier's take our new guest to his room." Pluto gives a sly smile ushering the skeletons forward.

"That was really dumb. His brother's going to seriously fuck you up, and thats if he doesn't. You know that right? Like big time." Krissy sakes her head at the greek god, following them as far as he'll let her. Pluto just smiles that smarmy smile, not concerned in the least.

Harahel's not sure why he's so reluctant to enter Helheim and tell Sam about Dean bring trapped in Hades. Sam is nice and maybe he's currently very big but he wouldn't do anything right? Like yell at him? Its not Hara's fault, is it?

"You, painted angel." He tenses as Queen Hela beckons to him. "Where's Winchester?"

"He's still in Hades." Hara replies quietly.
"What? Why? Is Claire with you then?"

"No. He ate something he shouldn't have and he's stuck, I think." Hara replies even quieter than before. She looks at him as if he thinks she's lying because Dean Winchester could not possibly be that stupid even if he is a bottomless noshing pit almost as and as her brother. "Really. He said to tell you 'it was a wash'? He didn't say anything else."

"I assumed as much when Claire wasn't here. Is she alright?" The question makes her look much softer and much less terrifying, though Hara gets the feeling that if the answer was no it would go the other way entirely.

"She seemed okay. I don't know if she had much fun though. The angels and reapers weren't behaving properly." He relates the events of the evening, including the fact that pretty much only the three humans and two Greek gods were spared from the paint bombing. His siblings seemed to go especially heavy on him.

"Of course." Hel sighs and shakes her head. "Come with me." she waves him forwards and leads him down to the hall to the library. "Sam, your brother is an idiot."

"What did he do?" Sam looks up from his book.

"He ate food of the underworld and is now trapped in Hades."

"Of course he did." Sam sighs. Why is it he can never keep his hand off food? Whatever, wherever, he always has to go to it. "Hara?" He notices the angel standing behind Hel. "What happened to you?"

"My brothers didn't appreciate my ensuring they had the full consent of their vessels in regards to certain activities. Krissy found Amitiel's grace." He holds the necklace up. "Where is she?" He looks around the library. Sam gives Hel a reproachful look for leaving him like that. She just smiles and shrugs, before snapping him free of the thick layer of acrylic paint. "Oh, thank you. Saul was a little upset about his members only jacket." He looks it over.

"Miti's still sleeping in the chair in the corner." Sam nods back to a chair by the fireplace. That's right, he'd been reading her old Babylonian tales. He couldn't let her hold the scroll herself because it was just an illusion from the library and she fell asleep. "You only left a few minutes ago. Do you have her memories?"

"No. Oh, and Krissy told me to help you research because she doesn't have any use for my skill set there."

"She remembered you?" Sam looks so happy for him. It makes it harder to shake his head than it was already.

"No but she decided to be nice to me after being mean to me so we got to talk a little at the end." Hara looks over at the chair, wondering if he should wake her or let her sleep.

"I already have a formal complaint lodged against Pluto for the theft of Krissy's body from my vault in Jotunheim and the trespass Thanatos committed when he took Krissy's soul. If I win the case I can demand compensation. Help me win it, and I'll include Krissy and your brother both in it. I was going to ask for cerberus, but..." Hel walks over to one of the book shelves and takes out several large volumes.

"You want me to be your lawyer?" Sam looks at the books.
"More like my paralegal." Hel places them on the desk. "I do have to plead my case personally. Is that a problem? You did go to law school."

"Over ten years ago." Sam opens the volume, its written in norse. "When's the hearing?"

"In a month."

"There's got to be a quicker way to get them back." Sam looks at them.

"I can push it up to two weeks but I thought you could use the extra time to familiarize yourself with the treaties and regulations I'm invoking and former meetings of the tribunal." Hel goes to get a few other books as well. "I know you don't read norse or sanskrit but you do have the angel. Ordinarily I'd be doing most of the research myself as well, but with rebuilding neiflheim and supplementing the reapers, I just really don't have the time. I'll make sure Hjorprimul will get you everything you need."

"Alright." Sam sighs, he can mix in exercise and research both. Why not? "Harahel, are you okay with being a paralegal with me?"

"Of course, let me double check with Saul. If he says no I may have to find another vessel." Hara nods and walks over to Amitiel. "Miti," he touches her arm. She straightens up and looks at him. "Krissy got your grace back." He takes off the necklace and hands it to her.

"She did?" Miti rubs her eyes. What about my memories? And this body's soul?"

"Not yet." Hara looks down, "but with your grace you can at least be an angel again, and you won't have to eat or sleep or have cramps and you can fly, and heal people and go see heaven. It's beautiful, even if it is a little damage right now. There's the garden and the library and the heavens. People make the most wonderful heavens. Especially those who love books. There's one of a librarian who did restorations at the library at Alexandria. I just love watching him work."

"But I like eating. And sleeping is fun. Dreams can be so strange. I don't like too much else, but being human is all I know. I don't know how to be an angel or how to fly, or any of that. Can't it wait? Until I get those memories back and find the owner of this body so I can give it back to her?" Miti pleads with her brother.

"Yes. I suppose. But you're so much more vulnerable like this. You can die so easily and then you'll be an egg."

"Well, at least I know I'll be something." Miti takes the necklace and puts it on.

"Alright. Whatever you want I'm here." Hara stands up. "I'm going to talk with Saul for a minute and let our brothers know what's going on. I should probably let Castiel know too."

"Let me do it." Sam says quickly, much to Hara's relief, and bows his head in prayer.
Chapter Summary

Cas breaks out
Dean and Cas have their first official lovers spat
Sam plays marriage counselor

Chapter Notes

At this point most of Castiel's brothers have just given up on trying to keep him away from a Winchester in need. Especially Dean. Oh Dean's in trouble? So much for Castiel. I wouldn't be surprised if they start keeping like an understudy in the wings any time they need Castiel to do something just in case. Not even neccesarily as acceptance of their relationship but just as a kind of pragmatic fatalism.

"Do you think Ezekiel could come back?" Hamuel asks Nathan as they stand guard in front of the jail. "If Zachariah came back, I'm sure Ezekiel could, right?"

"Probably. Rachel too I bet." Nathan muses, leaning against his spear.

"Who was that little pretty one always hanging around the library. had a name like yours. Nathaniel, right. Do you think Harahel will try and bring him back?" Hamuel looks over to Nathan.

"I hope not. Nathaniel was a condescending little shit. And maybe he was Harahel's favorite song but Harahel sure wasnt his. I'm really not surprised that one went with Lucifer. He was always an arrogant little brat." The angels give a rather undignified start as there's a crash in the jail cell. They turn to see Castiel lean the cell door against the wall. "Bet you a tertial Dean Winchester's in trouble." Nathan says quietly.

"No way he could get in trouble again that badly that soon after being resurrected. You're on." Hamuel grips his spear with one hand, shaking Nathans hand with another. Hopefully they'll both live to collect.

"Change your mind about waiting for trial?" Nathan asks as the angel walls up the hall. Its incredibly disconcerting seeing him without his trenchcoat.

"Dean is in difficulty. I will return when he is secure." Castiel informs them, pissing off Hamuel for more reasons than one. "If you would open the gate, I hate to destroy more of heaven than I must."

"You know what, fine, but don't come back. When you leave heaven stay the hell out until you're ready to stand trial immediately agreed?" Hamuel takes out his keys.

"You can't release and exile him, Ham, you dont have the authority." Nathan puts a hand on his freinds.
"I'm not, I'm making deal."

"Agreed." Castiel nods.

"And who the hell has that authority now? Apart from the lessons its just a big commune here. Who has the authority to release him? Who had the authority to imprison him in the first place?" Hamuel unlocks the gate. "I don't know. Do you? Does anybody? Why are we even standing guard duty? Because we were assigned last before Lucifer knocked everyone for a loop? The sad truth of the matter is Castiel is probably the most legitimate authority we have. So screw this, screw all of this. I'm going to the abyss and I'm going to find Ezekiel and maybe Hannah. I miss Hannah, she got things working."

"Thank you, Hamuel." Castiel nods as the angel opens the gate.

"Oh, fuck you, Castiel. Go wreck havoc on earth for a while. We've had enough chaos up here." He steps back.

"Oh for a light in the darkness." Nathan sighs and blocks Castiel's way. "Castiel, you know I can't ..." but Castiel just touches his forehead, making the angel collapse. Hamuel just manages to catch him.

"He's fine." Castiel informs the guard and walks off.

"Don't come back!"

On the plus side, they didn't take any of his weapons. On the other hand how do you kill a skeleton? The room is small and bare with just a bench. No windows, no toilet, but also no cuffs and chains, so small blessings. Hopefully Krissy has better quarters than this.

"Winchester." Dean looks up from the cell bench. That grey haired bastard with the douche beard who was shadowing Krissy at the party is at the door. "I am here to bring you to Kristiana."

"Who?"

"Krissy." Thanatos says flatly. Why do none of her friends know her name?

"Huh, I thought Krissy was short for Kristen or something." Dean shrugs apparently unaware that phonetically its not shorter at all.

"No. Come with me, my mistress has purchased your freedom within the realm of Hades with two tasks worth of memories and a pomegranate." There's no disguising his irritation, "You will demonstrate the proper respect and appreciation for this, even if she does not demand it herself."

"She what?"

"She consumed and purged a sixth of Proserpine's memories and condemned herself to an eternity in Hades for your sake. Do not drag your heels. I don't like to leave her too long afterwards."

"Goddamn it, Krissy." Dean curses and hurries after him. Thanatos brings him to a very girly pastel and pearly room. Krissy is lying on the bed, her eyes wet with tears, staring blankly at the
wall. She doesn't acknowledge anyone's presence.

"Krissy?" He kneels beside her, placing a hand on her shoulder, there's no response. "What's wrong with her? What did you do?" the question irritates Thanatos to no end. As if he hadn't been trying to protect her this entire time.

"I don't know what's wrong with her. Each time she uses Lethe to purge Proserpine's memories, she goes blank. Just a fog of emptiness that takes longer and longer to settle each time."

"Why was she crying?" Dean takes the kerchief from her hands and wipes the tears from her cheeks. Her eyes blink at the movement but that's it.

"Proserpine's memories are not happy ones. Pluto and Proserpine's relationship was a dark mockery of the happy wholesome love of Hades and Persephone. No one wanted them. Not even Proserpine." Thanatos sits down at the desk looking at the chess board.

"Krissy." Dean calls gently, putting a hand to her face. "Its Dean, can you hear me?" Her only response is to close her eyes and go to sleep. She did look pretty tired. "Has she been getting enough sleep?"

"I doubt it. I won't let my brother near but she doesn't seem to trust even me to behave myself. Generally she sleeps with a heavy object in her hands."

"Yeah, I'd keep your brother away from me too, if he hopes to keep his head on his shoulders." Dean comments. Thanatos just tightens his lips and looks away.

"As both of you have already eaten food of the underworld there's no reason for me to continue bringing in meals from above. Look after her while I have your dinner prepared." Thanatos gets to his feet and walks to the door. It is getting a little tiresome playing servant, especially as Krissy hasn't seemed to warm up to him much more than just tolerance, but at least he has something to do and he has his voice back and he can likely help engineer the end of Pluto's reign in one way or another.

When he opens the door a wave of power ripples through the hall. He quickly closes the door behind him and motions to the skeletons to guard it before running to the throne room. Skeletons are dismembered and scattered about the room. Not unexpected they fall apart fairly easily. But they aren't pulling themselves together either. When he looks at the brilliant source of the power he sees why.

"Where is Dean Winchester?" A shining being with the shadows of six wings and a trenchcoat has slammed Pluto against the wall. So this kind of light is what had burned his brother all those weeks ago. Perhaps not as big. Winchester's angel seems to be stronger. "Return him to me at once."

"The Winchester belongs to me." Pluto says remarkably maintaining his composure. "He is now part of my underworld and should anything happen to me, it will collapse and drag him with it. If Heaven wished me to accept their claims, they should have signed the treaty. Besides, he is still living." Pluto can't possibly be so stupid as to have not heard of this terrestrial-celestial romance. They finally consummated it in Greece after all. Eros was delighted. He had a few things to say about Athens being the true city of romance that no one wanted to hear.

"The claim is not Heaven's." Castiel growls.

"Kristiana has bought his safety. You need not be concerned for your lover." Thanatos speaks
up. The angel looks at him, his eyes glowing. Fortunately for his sanity, the angel does not ask who he's referring to. "You may see for yourself, he has not been mistreated."

"Please." Pluto gestures to Thantos. "When you are satisfied come speak to me, and perhaps we can come to some sort of satisfactory arrangement." Castiel gives him a hard look, but releases him, dropping him to the ground. His power pulls back inside him and he looks like nothing more than a man.

"This way." Thanatos beckons him towards Krissy's room. "You may speak in private. But quietly please, so as to let my mistress rest."

"Dean." Castiel goes in to him as soon as the door opens and he sees Dean pulling a cover over the sleeping woman and tucking her in.

"Cas?" He looks up, surprised.

"Are you alright?" Castiel walks over to him, taking hold of his arms and examining him. When he sees that Dean is uninjured he gives a sigh of relief and kisses him.

"Glad to see you, too, baby. But I thought you were waiting it out in heaven's hoosegow."

"Has Ms. Chambers been injured?" Cas looks to the sleeping woman.

"I don't know. The whole memories thing seems to be really fucking with her. She was just staring at the wall when I came in. I don't even think she knew I was here. Can you heal things again yet? Could you check her out?" Dean turns back to her.

"Unfortunately I've only remastered the most basic healing, without swelling or exploding. I can try to see what's affected, but if it's damage due to Lethe itself, there may be little I can do." Castiel gently examines her. "There is something infused with her mind. Most likely remnants of Lethe. It seems to be settling but I am unsure if it will fade on its own or is a permanent fixture."

"Great. Poor kid, she should have stayed with her friends. Gone to college or something. Instead she mixed up in this mess." Dean rubs the back of his neck. "So, how'd you get out? Did you get time off for good behavior or just change your mind about letting those dicks judge you."

"Those 'dicks' are my brothers Dean." Castiel reminds him.

"Do they know that? Because I gotta tell you, I have had it up to here with those assholes. I thought they were starting to come around and then they pull this shit. When are you going to give up on them, Cas? How long are you going to let them treat you this way? Everything you try to do for them and they just turn around and tell you to go screw yourself, over and over again."

"Not all of them. I thought you understood. They're my family, Dean. They need me and I will not forsake them." Castiel asserts.

"What about us? What about Sam and me? I thought we were your family."

"You are."

"Then act like it. You left us right before the war with the reapers, Cas. You keep flitting back and forth, heaven and earth, heaven and earth. It feels like the only time your here is when there's some crisis or when they kick you to the curb."

"We just spent months on a road trip across America last year, Dean." Castiel protests. "And
a week in Greece. If you don't want our time together taken up by emergencies then maybe you should stop creating them."

"Excuse me?" Dean steps back. "Creating them?"

"You ate food from the Greek underworld. This current crisis is entirely of your own making! I further damaged relations with my siblings because you couldn't control your appetite." Castiel snaps. He can feel his feathers bristling even the veil. Nothing is ever enough for him is it? "And here I am trying to help save you from your own folly. Just like with the mark."

"You're one to talk, Mr. I ate purgatory so I'm god now. And who's the one here who released the darkness? Not me. You said yes to Lucifer. And your acting all high and mighty now because I accidently ate some bad olives? Fuck that!"

"I am here to help you, Dean. Or am I misinformed and you are not inextricably bound to Hades for all eternity from a mistake only an absolute simpleton would make?" Castiel retorts, his cheeks red. Dean had to bring that up. Of course it was too much to hope for that he'd ever truly let any of that go.

"Screw you, Cas. I'm getting into and out of shit like this all the damn time without you or have you somehow forgotten that I keep hunting when you're not around. I neither need nor want your damn help. So why don't you go back to heaven so you can be treated like shit as that's clearly what you'd rather be doing."

"I have not forgotten that you are a hunter, Dean. Have you forgotten that I'm an angel? An archangel now. I have responsibilities on a far greater scale than one or two human lives. Beyond even just my siblings welfare, the souls of the dead depend on the continued running of a functional heaven. You cannot ask me to abandon that just to please you."

"Then go." Dean opens the door. "Don't waste your time and awesome new powers that you can't even manage to fucking use yet on one or two measly little humans. Go. Sit in a jail cell and wait for your brothers to take their heads out of their asses. That's just worked so well so far." He gestures to the exit dramatically.

"I will go as it seems I have to wait for someone to take their head from their ass." Castiel retorts. "I will inform your brother you are well." Instead of walking out he just disappears, so Dean slams the door shut or tries but Thanatos catches it before it can slam and wake Krissy. Dean ignores the gods reproachful look and sits down to wait for Krissy to wake up. Stupid useless masochistic angel. Oh sorry archangel. The extra wings must come with a side of douche. What was he thinking starting a relationship with him? How could it ever possibly work?

Castiel returns to Helheim still seething and quickly finds Sam doing research in the library with Harahel

"Cas?" Sam looks up.

"Your brother is an stubborn opinionated fool!" Hara takes that as a cue to leave and go check on Miti, edging out around the furious angel.

"You saw Dean? Is he alright?" Sam resists the urge to ask if he broke out of heaven as he obviously did.

"He refused my assistance and told me to go screw myself because I refused to forsake my
siblings. What more he responded to my attempts to help by reminding me of every mistake I ever made. Sam can't recall seeing Castiel this angry with his brother, not since Dean considered saying yes to Michael.

"Alright, hold on just what did he say exactly and what did you say?" Sam holds out his hand gesturing his friend to sit down. Castiel does so and relates the conversation as best he can. "You do know how worried he was though, right? Its not like you were off on a mission, you were imprisoned by your brothers. Whatever reason they had he may never have seen you again. And you choosing to stay there had to kind of hurt."

"They can't do me real harm now. He knows that. And I know he would rather I be here. I would rather be with you both as well. I thought it was working well the way we had arranged things. Spending half the day here and half in heaven barring emergencies for either. I thought he understood." Cas' shoulders slump down.

"He does, Cas. But its hard seeing the people you care about being mistreated. Maybe you can excuse what your brothers did because they were worried or hurt or whatever reason but the truth is they were wrong to imprison you that way. And you deserve better than the way they've been treating you." Sam leans forwards arms resting on his knees. "I'm not saying he wasn't kind of a jackass, but he loves you and wants you around and it's harder being okay with your absence when he knows how badly you're being treated by the people you're trying to help. And knowing how quickly and easily they can turn on you... how would you feel if we were in that position?"

"You are." Castiel says simply. "Your relationship with the rest of humanity is every bit as volatile as my relationship with my siblings. They neither know or understand what you are trying to do either."

"That's true I guess. But that doesn't mean we should just sit back and accept their judgements when we know better. Everything Dean and I have done, by all rights we should be in jail, too, for life. For several lives, If you look at it from a legal standpoint. But we can't we have to look at the bigger picture. Sitting in a cell won't help anyone.

"Now, this may just be my own admittedly strong bias, but I really think we need Gabriel back if we're going to get anywhere with your siblings. And I can't really work on that until we get Dean and Krissy back." Sam looks back to his notes. "Hara and I are helping Hel with the legal route, making a grievance in the tribunal for the underworld alliance. But that might just cause him to withdraw from the alliance. With all the souls trapped in the veil unable to get to heaven, the alliance is the only thing keeping him from just grabbing as many as he can."

"He offered to treat with me for Dean, but I doubt he will want anything I should give him, however innocuous it may seem. I doubt he would be willing to leave Krissy behind given how vulnerable she's become. She is having adverse reactions to the continued consumption of lethe."

"And Pluto definitely won't let her go until he gets the recipe for ambrosia." Sam considers, tapping the pad with his pen. They can't kill Pluto without loosing Dean and Krissy as well as the rest of the gods and souls to the abyss or Hell. Either he or Hades has to be on the throne or it will collapse. "Cas, how do you feel about going back into the abyss."

"For what purpose?"

"Finding and bringing back Hades."
Fleeting

Chapter Summary

Gadreel tells Claire a story
Fledgelings meet a human for the first time
Cas and Claire have a heart to heart and ponder the nature of existence.

Chapter Notes

okay. is done now. sorry about that. again. Will work on the typos but this touch
screen is killing me. seriously.

for those of you that forgot or didn't read life of virtue, Lucifers name was originally
Helel Ben Sahar. Its not supposed to be spoken anymore but the babies are blissfully
unaware of that whole mess. so Helel is pre fall Lucifer.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Are they behaving themselves?" Claire asks Gadreel as Death drops her off for his daily visit
to Azraels egg.

"Yes," He nods looking over the other angels speaking to various eggs trying to coax out their
siblings. "Relatively. How was the party?"

"Not great. Dean and Hara ended up having to check consents at the orgy tent. So I wasn't
able to completely relax."

"The what?" Gadreel looks over at her.

"A few angels and reapers were going to use their vessels sexually without obtaining their
consent first. I swear, I just wanted to banish every last one of them and sort it out later. Speaking
of which, where's your fellow offender?"

"Sitting among the fledgelings."

"The fledgelings?" Claire raises an eyebrow. "You mean as in angels but like babies?"

"Essentially." Gadreel smile. "But without the gas or incontinence."

"Oh, I wouldn't mind one of those." She tilts her head whistfully.

"They are very troublesome. But still eggs at the moment. He's singing to them but they still
won't emerge." Gadreel says regretfully. "Its just as well, none of us know how to train them or
teach them to fly anymore. The seraphs helped watch the last three batches but they're all gone and
the archangels all raised the first three themselves. Mostly Michael and Raphael. Lucifer was
usually in the throne room. Gabriel would just play around and take messages back and forth. I
remember a few memorable occasions when Lucifer and Gabriel were both watching my batch
while Michael and Raphael trained the first two. We wanted to fly like our brothers but our wings were too small. I'm not exactly sure how it came about but Lucifer started picking us up and hurling us across heaven for Gabriel to catch. We loved it, of course."

"Of course." Claire smiles a fond memory of playing rocketship with her father coming to mind.

"Even when she missed, he made sure we didn't fall. We were laughing and yelling so loudly, Michael sent Raphael to see what was going on. Uthiel ended up getting tossed back and forth in a game of keep away when Raphael tried to make them stop. He finally made the grasses in the garden grow high enough to snatch him from the air but that just made the other two start hurling fledgelings at him as fast as they could. It was wonderful though just pissed off Raphael more and more."

"Then, of course, Michael came and put a stop to things. 'What in the name of all that is going on here? Gabriel, Helel, put those fledgelings down. Raphael, have you lost your mind? These children are our responsibilities not our playthings! What is wrong with you?' Which was a little unfair to Raphael, but I'm fairly sure he got to explain later." Gadreel grins as Claire is just laughing her head off.

"I suppose that was an exact quote?" she snickers

"Of course, when Michael speaks we listen." Gadreel gives a nod. "Even if we were just little giggling balls of feathers and light, more light than feathers. Our wings start out so tiny They barely covered our backs."

"Gadreel!" They look up to see Abner fly down to them. "One opened. He has a small pink angel with orange hair and little lime green wings in his arms.

"Awww. He looks like a little rainbow sherbert." Claire coos at the child who gives her a confused look.

"You're not Michael. Why do you have his voice?" he frowns at her.

"Ah, he can talk! He's such a cute little thing. I have to hold him. Gimmie gimmie gimmie!" she holds out her hands. Abner ignores her.

"I think more are opening. dozens of them." He looks panicked. "I really didn't think this through."

"It's alright. We'll be right there. Are you coming?" Gadreel asks Claire.

"Hell yes!"

"So this is a morbid question but why are there so many fledgelings in the abyss?" Claire asks as Gadreel carries her to the center. the eggs and nests grow smaller and smaller until they're the size of large ostrich eggs.

"Well, learning to fly is difficult and hazardous and four angels, even archangels can't keep perfect track of a hundred and forty four thousand angels at a time. They often fell, usually into the sea where they got eaten by leviathan or right into the abyss. The last two batches are the only ones that didn't loose any. We maybe lost five percent, most from the first batch, but that's still thousands of angels."
"That's so sad. You don't think about angels having infant mortality rates. You don't think of angels being infants." She looks over to Abner and Rainbow sherbert as they light down among a group of small frightened fledgelings.

"Who are you? Where's Miqa?" are the two most frequently asked questions.

"Who's Miqa." Claire asks.

"Michael. A lot of them have trouble saying her name."

"Awww," she looks at the gathering of tiny angels, several hugging each other tightly.

"What's that kind of angel?" one points up at her.

"She's not an angel. This is a human." Gadreel informs them.

"What's a human?"

"Our fathers best and final creation." Gadreel puts her down. Claire kneels down in the grass to get to eye level as they come closer.

"Where are its wings?" a blue one looks behind her.

"Humans don't have wings." Claire smiles as they all gather to poke and prod her and look at her hair.

"It's squishy." a green one squeezes her arm.

"But it has hard points too." one taps her finger nails.

"If you don't have wings how do you fly?" Midnight blue leans over her shoulder to ask.

"We build our own wings." Claire informs them. "But we don't fly very much." Their touch has a slightly buzzy feeling to it. She can almost feel her hair getting all static-y and frizzy.

"Why are you so fuzzy?" an olive green and heather one touches her face.

"Why are things moving at different speeds inside you?" A fawn brown one frowns at her.

"What?" Claire feels slightly alarmed at this.

"Your respiratory, circular and digestive systems." Gadreel explains.

"How are you moving air with your mouth?" The one examining her lips asks. She responds by blowing in his face he pauses astonished and laughs. "Do that again!"

"Me! Me!" When she blows into as many as she can reach they all start laughing.

"What are these?" a sky blue and charcoal one pushes at her breasts open palmed.

"Hey! Hands off!" she covers her chest with her arms.

"Is it armor?"

"No they're breasts. I'm a girl."

"What's a girl?"
"I thought you were a human."

"Um, a girl is a kind of human. We make babies. You know fledgling humans. Boys help I mean but girls carry the babies in their tummies until they're grown."

"You can make other humans?" Rainbow Sherbert exclaims. There's an odd hush among them when she nods, almost reverent.

"We had the same reaction when the first ameoba split." Gadreel comments. Claire just shoots him a look. He just shrugs. "It was interesting."

"Well not me anymore but other humans can, yes."

"How do they get out of there?"

"Ha. Okay. I'm really not prepared for these kind of questions. Who wants to fly?" she gets to her feet and picks up the nearest little angel. "Gadreel catch!" It proves to be distracting enough to stop the questions and when her arms get tired Abner takes over.

"What are you doing?" One that looks like a toasted marshmallow goes down on his hands and knees to look at her face to face as she lies down on the grass.

"Lying down. My arms tired, and I'm tired. I might take a nap and sleep for a while."

"What's nap? and sleep?"

"It's what I do to not feel tired anymore. Here, I'll show you." Claire yawns and closes her eyes.

"Human. Girl human." toasted marshmallow shakes her shoulder. "Are you okay?"

"Shh. I'm sleeping." She whispers. After a moment of silence she feels a little head and body resting on her back.

"Oh its thumping. Woosh woosh." soon Claire is covered in fledgelings listening to her body's noises and feeling her move with each breath. They start mimicking the sounds they hear to each other and switching places. Amazingly Claire manages to doze off in the middle of this, a tribute to how tired she is.

"Gadreel. Abner. What on earth are you doing?" she opens her eyes to see Castiel intercept a joyfully squealing fledgeling mid air, Six beautiful incandescent black wings stretched out behind him.

"Playing with the fledgelings?" Is the reply. He just frowns at them and looks over to Claire as she sits up making a dozen or so tiny angels tumble of her like scattered balls of yarn.

"Claire? Where's Death?"

"With Azrael's egg still I guess." she stretches and runs her fingers through her hair. "It's my break. I still need to eat and sleep and stuff. I usually come to say Hi to Gadreel and nap in the grass or an empty nest."

"Oh let me." a dozen iny hands start to grab and untangle various knots of hair with just a touch. Much to her surprise she doesn't lose any hair. Other fledgelings just look at Castiel and his
wings in confusion.

"I thought humans didn't have wings."

"No he's an archangel wearing a human." But Claire's explanation doesnt explain anything but at the word Archangel many little faces start to pout.

Where's Miqa! I want Miqa!" the cry starts to go up and they all end up calling calling for Miqa, Rafi, Gabbi and Helel. But mostly Miqa. Castiel is at a loss, The expression on his face heartbreaking.

"Children." Claire raises her voice. "Everybody sit down and listen." They all do so, facing her with such speed its a little eerie. Even the grown angels almost sit down. "I'm afraid that Rafi, Helel and Miqa were naughty and can't come play anymore. They fought and broke things so they're being punished right now."

"What about Gabbi?"

"Gabbi worked very hard and saved you from your fall putting you into eggs and she's very tired now and has to rest for a while. But she'll be okay and hopefully will be up soon. Do you understand?" they all nof almost in unison. "Right now you have other brothers who are all grown up now just like Miq and they're going to take care of you and teach you how to be angels and fly and everything just like Miqa did."

"Miqa's not angry?" Cinnamon toast crunch pipes up. "Because we left the garden when we weren't supposed to and did fly right?"

"No. I think Miqa will be very happy to find out you're okay now. But because you didn't listen you missed alot of great stuff. Your father finished making everything and made so many awesome things like dinosaurs and Sabertooth tigers and mammoths that are all gone now and you won't get to see." They all look so disappointed. "So if you die again who knows what else you'll miss, so be careful and listen to your big brothers and sisters when they tell you what to do. Understand?"

"Yes, Girl Human." They say in unison.

"It's Claire."

"Yes, Claire Girl Human." of course that's too cute to correct further so she doesn't. Probably why they call Michael, Miqa."

"Big brother?" one like an unripened plum tugs on Castiel's coat. "How do you wear a human?"

"That is a lesson for later. But its a very special gift and a privilege to be earned not a right. So be good angels and maybe one day a special human will say yes to you." Castiel pats his head. "Claire, can I speak to you?"

"They are so cute." She squeals quietly as they walk off unto the still filled nests. "Were all angels as curious as these fledgelings?"

"No, though the majority of those who died were." Castiel looks back. "This is a problem. Heaven is not prepared for fledgelings. It's still being repaired from when the darkness struck. There are barely enough angels to properly maintain it as things are."
"Well, we'll just work on getting back Bree. She's great with kids." Claire shrugs.

"Yes well at the moment there is an additional difficulty. Dean is trapped in Hades," Castiel explains. "Hela is attempting to sue for him in a tribunal of Underworld dieties but I am here to search for and retrieve the original Hades to supplant Pluto in hopes of convincing him to release Krissy and Dean."

"Let me gueas, Mr. Munchies ate something he shouldn't have." Claire rolls her eyes. Castiel nods, his annoyance clear. "So is that why you're out of prison? Or did you get time off for good behavior?" his wry look gives her the answer. "I've actually been working on that too. We haven't gotten to where the Greek and Roman gods are yet. I did have a blast with the orisha, though. They're not dead buy they heard about the abyss and decided to come christen it with a party. That Elega's a trip. I only had to threaten to castrate him once before he backed off, too." She sighs, shaking her head. "I've found so many memories too. its ridiculous."

"Are you well? You are eating properly? Sleeping well?"

"Yes, probably not, and better than I have in a long time honestly. I mean, I kind of muss Alex and Jody and everybody, but it can't last forever right?" she shrugs, looking slightly down cast at the prospect.

"I am very grateful to you for doing this for my siblings." Castiel touches her arm. "I will see what I can do to free you from this obligation."

"No, I'm fine. Death's great. Besides you've got your hands full with heaven and Dean and Bree and stuff. Besides I'm an adult. You don't have to feel obligated to look after me anymore." she shrugs.

"Its not just because of obligation. though in regards to that, when I promised to look after you I don't remember a caveat of until you become an adult."

"Yeah, well its kind of a standard rider for non biogical parents and caretakers." Claire informs him, though she can't help but smile. "I'm fine, really. I don't think it would have worked out with Hel anyways." she shrugs with pretend indifference and runs her fingers back though her hair. "She's too... aware of my mortality I guess."

"The more precious something is to you, the more painful the thought of losing it is." Castiel says gently. "It can be difficult loving a mortal."

"Well, I need my freedom. I have one supernatural being looking protectively over my shoulder. I don't need two." Claire crosses her arms unsympathetically. "It doesn't matter. It's not like I generally get enough time off to coordinate dates or even hook ups or anything. And she's a goddess. I couldn't exactly ask her to wait for me for god only knows how long."

"I could see about being your substitute a day or two a week so you can spend time with your freinds and family and maybe take that college course you wanted to."

"I don't actually want to go to college. I just wanted to keep an eye on Alex in case anymore vamps came looking for her." Claire confesses "But you'd really do that for me?"

"If Death is amenable of course." Castiel nods.

"Of course. It's kind of funny though. With everything being so impermanent even Death, its kind of hard feeling really mortal. You know? I mean if nothings lost, just misplaced or shuffled aside temporarily, does death even really mean anything anymore?" Claire sits down on the edge
of the bearest nest. "And without the prospect of a real end what does that mean for living? How do you cope with the prospect of existence without end?"

"Those are interesting questions." Castiel sits down beside her. "Heavy ones. My siblings and I don't age or get ill so death while always possible was never the certainty it is for you humans. We mostly just focused on our mission as we were told to, our jobs. Especially when it became hard to think of anything else without pain. in our darkest moments eternity can seem a terrifying thing. But I think that was where we went wrong. our focus was too narrow. The mission was important but we forgot why it was important, why we were doing what we were doing. And so little missteps snowballed into big ones and we veered so far off course from where we should be.

"When I first saw Dean, his soul so broken stained and yet still so luminous despite it all, I slowly began to remember. How beautiful how brilliant how full of promise and potential humanity is. How precious a thing it is to have a soul within these fragile impermanent bodies of yours. Its a piece of the divine that should be tended protected and nurtured. Being here seeing that my siblings could come back and have a second chance to do this wonderful thing we somehow stopped doing makes me feel so hopeful. And with the fledgelings we have angels that were never broken by all we went through still full of unlimited potential for good... It makes me feel that maybe my father knew what he was doing after all. That maybe we just didn't understand still don't. Maybe even that while humanity was his favorite creation we still mattered to him more than we thought. I haven't felt that way in a long time."

"You met him, right?" Claire asks looking over at him. "He showed up to face the darkness, didn't he?"

"He did. Of course I was stuck in Lucifer for what I can remember. And had to face that despite my efforts and faith and everything I had tried to do, Lucifer was still the one he loved best out of all the angels in heaven. We didn't speak. I didn't want to speak. I didn't want to hear anything he had to say. I tried to convince myself I didn't care. That so long as he saved humanity that was good enough. It wasn't. If I'd known what could be..." Castiel looks down the ground and closes his eyes briefly. Claire just puts her arm around him giving him a comforting hug.

"Well maybe if you'd known it couldn't have been? You know like the good magician humphry." she suggests.

"The magician of information from the xanth novels by peirs anthony correct?" Castiel looks at her. "I don't follow."

"Well a lot of times in the books he sends people on quests and stuff as payment for the answers to their questions or even refuses to answer because that's the only way they'll get the answers to their questions. What if its like that? I mean he's God right? If anyone knows how to play the long game it'd be him, right? Maybe thats a bit optimistic though. And would kind of paint him as a deceptive manipulative liar greater in skill than the devil himself. I'm not sure but that might be considered sacrilegious." This just makes Castiel laugh.

"Maybe. I wonder if those souls will be offered the same chance my brethren have been. I don't know how they could be. Earths population is approaching critical mass."

"If they did would it be resurrection, reincarnation a reboot what?" Claire kicks at the grass at her feet. "Is death going to be just like restarting the game station now? or what?"

"No." They look up to see Death standing before them. "Games are always the same. Life never is. Every second kills the last and it will never come again. You are not the same as you were a moment ago nor will you ever be. Did you forget so quickly the same lesson you gave to the
fledgelings, Claire? Because of their deaths they missed countless moments and experiences that they will never be able to have now.

"Perhaps my hold over the future is fleeting and temporary as everything else but my grip on the past is absolute. Resurrection, reincarnation, immortality none of it negates oblivion just pushes it firmly behind us. Everthing that ever was is gone and everything that ever will be will end one day as well but if that day is yesterday and not some future date set in stone I think I can live with that." Death gives a small smile. Claire just rolls her eyes at the horrible joke. "I doubt that relegates me to being nothing more than an inconvenience however."

"Well, I mean its not a minor inconvenience." Claire gives him a winning smile. He just looks at her until she turns her head away, and turns his attention to Castiel.

"You wished to speak to me."

Chapter End Notes

so this was a heavy and light chapter. I went from hurling baby angels across heaven in a celestial game of catch to 'the day all existence meets its final end is yesterday' hope I didnt give anyone whiplash :D
"Psst." Alex hears as someone gently shakes her shoulder. Probably Brunhildr asking about the bathroom again.

"Just jiggle the handle." she mutters and pulls the covers over her head

"Hey, virgin, wake up." she's shaken harder.

"Damn it Hildr. I told you to stop calling... me..." Alex turns over to see a grinning Claire leaning over her. "oh, its you. And don't call me that."

"Thanks for the enthusiastic greeting." Claire kicks off her shoes.

"It'd be more enthusiastic if it weren't two am." Alex grumbles.

"Scoot over. There's a valkyrie in my bed and I don't feel like dealing with that right now."
Claire yawns bundling her jacket up into a pillow as Alex selfishly keeps hers when she moves over.

"Oh god what is that smell?"

"Oh right, the swamp." Claire sighs and tosses her coat to the hamper. "I'll be right back." She grabs one of Alex's towels and nightgowns and goes to take a quick shower. Alex is asleep again when she gets back. Unfortunately though it's Jody's day off and they're both woken at eight by a pot banging outside the bedroom door.

"Wakey wakey eggs and bakey!" When both girls let out pained groans of protest and cover their heads with the comforter, Jody opens the door, immediately ripping the covers off them. "Oh, Claire. I thought you were a boy."

"Sure, Jody, because I'd sneak a boy over when you're working and let him stay the night on your day off. She woke me at two in the morning. Can we skip the family breakfast?" Alex pleads trying to grab the covers back without getting up.

"I got in at two am." Claire says groggily and buries her face in the side of Alex's pillow.
"Alright," Jody puts down the pot and waves the blankets back over them, "But when you wake, we are going to have to talk about your absence young lady."

"I'm not a fucking child." Claire growls.

"What was that?"

"I said you cook like Julia child. I'm just too tired for breakfast." Claire hastily corrects herself.

"That's what I thought." Jody picks up the pot and ladle again. "Alright. Rest up, girls and Alex don't forget you have class today."

"I won't." Alex yawns and both girls immediately fail to fall asleep again. "So are you done temping as the angel of death?"

"No. Castiel negotiated me a five day work week, which makes it officially a better job than hunting." Claire yawns.

"And you came here instead of to your girlfreinds?"

She's not my girlfreind and yes. I wanted some sleep new clean clothes and a shower before I went a courtin."

"Good plan," Alex sighs and debates getting up. If she doesn't get to the table before Brunhildr, there won't be any bacon left.

"How have you been?"

"Fine. Just, you know, going to class, studying, fending off all the dudebros in the 'deflower the virgin' fraternity contest." she scowls as Claire laughs .

"Wait you're serious?" Claire stops as Alex doesn't even crack a grin.

"Yes. Brunhildr loudly and constantly referring to me as 'the virgin' spread around campus so the local Delta Iota Kappas..."

"That's not actually a real fraternity is it?"

"No but it is a real contest. They put out flyers offering the man who takes my virginity a special float at homecoming. I am this close to joining a convent I swear to god." she seethes.

"You know there is one simple solution." Claire grins. "Hire the hottest damn gigolo you can find."

"If I had that kind of money I'd hire a hit man to take out whoever tries to sit on that float."

"You could auction it off to the highest bidder. Ow!" Claire laughs when Alex punches her arm. "Or you know, Hel does have two brothers."

"Yuri is gay, Claire, and I'm not into bestiality."

"He's not a wolf all the time. That's just the only way his sister will let him walk around Helheim naked." Claire protests. Alex just gives her a look. "No, he's cute. Really and kind of packing C'mon who wouldn't want to lose their virginity to a god?"
"Almost every woman who ever has?"

"Well, I guess we could always ask Sam t-Ahh!" Claire doesn't even get to finish before Alex has tackled her off the bed.

"I was just trying to make a helpful suggestion." Claire holds the frozen peas to her eye. Alex just glares at her "Did you know about the frat thing Jody? How the person who takes Alex's virginity gets a special float at homecoming?"

"No I did not." Jody looks to Alex who just crosses her arms and looks away.

"Oh yeah they put out posters." Brunhildr snickers and pulls one out of her jacket pocket.

"Why didn't you tell me about this? Is this why you don't go out anymore?" Jody demands opening the flyer. "I'm going to talk to the dean about this."

"Oh please don't, He'll kill just like everybody " Alex groans.

"Not Dean Winchester The dean of your college."

"And she can't anyways. He ate his way into Hades and got stuck." Claire adds helpfully

"What you mean like Winnie the pooh at rabbits house?" Alex rubs her eyes. Claire and Brunhildr start to laugh as even Jody cracks a smile. "Shut up. I'm tired." she lays her head down on the table. "I hate everyone and every thing. Do you have any of that peppet spray I can borrow? I need to go to the library and Brunhildr's banned for being too loud."

"No. Look. Stay here for now. I'll take care of this." Jody puts the flyer in her pocket and goes to get her car keys.

"That's not going to solve anything." Claire shakes her head. "The whole things already out there. Alex is fuked no matter what happens. God, I miss Bree."

"What would she do? Pay for the gigolo?" Alex snaps, "Please just lea it alone. They'll forget about it eventually."

"Maybe if you got someone to be your fake boyfreind. Someone intimidating, whos aura says 'I don't mind going back to prison','" Brunhildr muses.

"You shut up, this whole thing is your fault you big mouth. I told you to stop calling me 'the virgin' all the damn time." Alex turns on her bodyguard.

"I'm sorry. I'll figure something out okay?" Brunhildr promises.

"She shouldnt need a man to stake a claim on her for other men to leave her alone." Claire protests the idea earning a look of gratitude from her sister.

"You could beat up the next guy who makes a pass at you." Brunhildr suggests. "Injure him badly enough and they'll think it's not worth it."

"She can't do that." Claire sighs.

"That's righy. Physical assault is much easier to prove than harrassment. A sad truth of our legal system." Jody walks back out, wearing her official sherrif's jacket.
"I was thinking more along the lines of Alex can't beat anyone up that badly. You'd arrest her?" Claire looks at Jody incredulously.

"I might not be the one called. And I can't always make or prevent people from pressing charges so don't you go beating up anyone either, you hear me? We will go through the proper channels." Jody pats Claire's head as she passes.

"See when you're dealing with the supernatural you can just kill things to solve your problems." Claire reaches for the bacon. Alex licks her hand and smacks it down on the plate. "Alex, I've had another woman's tongue in my mouth among other things. Do you really think that's going to stop me?" Claire just takes a handful anyways.

"Claire," Jody frowns "That is not appropriate dinner conversation."

"It's breakfast. Oh, by the way I'm sorry I went off and became the angel of death without telling you first. It won't happen again." Claire looks back at her.

"Right, well, just try to keep me updated, okay? I worry about you, kid." Jody grabs her hat. "Be good. I'll be back soon."

"So how is the death business?" Alex asks, filling her plate.

"Eh, same old, same old." Claire shrugs.

"You're not going to tell Hel about the party are you?" Brunhildr asks nervously tugging on her braids.

"Probably not, but seriously girl, you've got to shape the fuck up. That's my sister you're guarding."

"What about an impotence spell or hex or something? That makes every man a limp noodle while near you?" Brunhildr suggests. "Someone's got to have made a spell like that."

"Claire, Hildr, just let it go okay? You're all just going to make it worse."

"Okay, okay "Brunhildr throws her hands up in the air. "This is so boring. You're a hunter, right Claire? Why don't the three of us go hunt something?"

"It's my day off. I just want to eat, go back to bed and call Hel and maybe set up a date or something." Claire takes the peas from her eye a second, looks at it and puts it back on.

"C'mon. There must be something you want to take care of." Brunhildr picks up the paper. "Oh look See the world is ending again."

"It can't be. The Winchesters aren't even here." Claire rolls her eyes.

"It's called click bait, Hildr." Alex takes it from her anyway and looks over the article titled 'The End of Humanity'? "No, There's no way this is true."

"What?"

"This says that over two thirds of all pregnant women have miscarried since Bree went into the abyss. And it looks like no one's gotten pregnant since then either." Alex stares at the paper. "And the autopsies have shown almost all miscarried babies and mothers to be perfectly healthy. There's no explanation. Claire, have you been reaping all of babies?"
"No. But there's a difference between a fetus and a baby. And how do they know no one's gotten pregnant yet. It's been maybe a month." Claire protests.

"I'm going online." Alex dumps the remaining bacon onto her plate and takes it into her room.

"I saw baby angels." Claire remembers suddenly. They're adorable and not dicks at all. I took pictures want to see?" Claire balances the bag of peas on her eye as she takes out her phone and brings up the gallery. Unfortunately the pictures consist of bright white light with colored tints to some of the edges. "Dammit."

"Oh my god." They hear Alex exclaim. "Claire, Hildr? You're going to the fertility clinic to talk to a doctor about artificial insemination and maybe get some answers from the source about this."

"Alex, no. I burnt my reproductive system out with Angrboda's brew after that whole Hypnos fiasco. Remember? I don't want that examined. You go. Offer to sell your pristine virgin eggs or something."

"You want another black eye, Claire?" comes the empty threat from behind closed doors.

"Lucky shot."

"You want to bet that I can't get lucky again?" Alex challenges.

"No. Though getting lucky would solve all of your current problems. Just saying." But Alex decides to try ignoring her.

"Hildr, would you take me to Helheim? I need to talk to Sam." Alex comes out scribbling a note to Jody on the white board.

"Yes. Yes you do." Claire purrs. Alex continues to ignore her.

"Sure. Claire are you coming too?" Brunhildr turns to her.

"Why not? I do want to talk to Hel. I might as well do it in person. Hold on let me get dressed." Claire tosses the frozen peas back in the freezer and goes to her room.

"Don't bother dressing up just strip down oil up and wait for her in her room."

"We just had a talk about boundaries, Brun. So bad idea." Claire shakes her head.

"Doesn't apply to naked horny girlfreinds, Claire. Trust me."

"I'll pass, thanks."

"You should, Claire. Seize the day. After all I will be killing you in your sleep tonight." Claire's no entirely sure Alex is joking with this. Maybe she should lay off the sex jokes.

"Maybe we could soread a rumor that you have gonorrhea or syphilis or something. What's that one you get from screwing sheep?" Brunhildr ponders aloud much to Alex's chagrin.

"I hate you both just so much."
"It could just be a statistical anomaly." Sam looks at the articles. "or environmental."

"You know you don't believe that for a second." Alex frowns at him.

"No, I don't," Sam gives a defeated sigh. "But I have no idea where to even begin with this."

"What do we do? How do we find out things?" Alex leans forwards expectantly

"Alex," Sam takes a breath,"I have to get Dean and Krissy out of Hades and Gabriel back from the abyss. My plate is full."

"This is kind of a big deal, Sam. We can't just let this go. It could mean the end of the human race."

"I know. But the human race won't go extinct in the next few months. Once we get everyone back we can see about tackling this. Clsire's working with the reapers, isn't she? She can ask them if they know anything about what's going on. If there's an uptick in infant mortality they're bound to notice."

"It's not infant mortality; It's fetal deaths. All over, miscarriages and stillbirths. They're still pulling data but it looks like everyone every where." Alex just sound increasingly distressed.

"It has to wait Alex. At least on my end. I'm sorry," Sam hands her back the papers. "Why don't you contact Garth. See about getting other hunters looking into this."

"Okay." Alex sighs slumping back in the easy chair. "Okay,maybe I can contact some fertility gods. See if they know anything."

"I wouldn't. You're they're favorite sacrifice. A pristine presumably fertile young woman if marriageable age?" He's kind enough not to say virgin. "See if Hel can ask around."

"If you can't be bothered, why would you think she's not too busy?" Alex sounds a bit too petulant for her own liking but this is important. How can he just ignore this?

"Whatever is going on, Alex. I can't fix it without Dean." Sam apologizes.

"Really? Or do you just think you can't?" She crosses her arms. "What's so damn special about Dean? You're smart, and strong, compassionate, resourceful, trust worthy... What does he have that you don't?"

"My back?" Sam replies wryly. "You need opposing view points, Alex, a second opinion, someone you can depend on. You can't do things like this alone and having a partner you can trust, who knows you, can make all the difference in the world. It's not about thinking he's better than I am, though thanks you for the compliments." Alex just blushes a little and shrugs. "It's that no one's good enough to do it alone."

"Oh." Alex looks away. "You are starting to look a lot better, though."

"Thanks. I'm tryin to alternate research and physical activity. Jogging, push ups, light weight lifting. Its actually working out fairly well."

"That's good."

"Plus I got a solid rubber ollama ball to practice handling. I just need to find a decent tachtli replica." Sam rubs his eyes.
"You need to rest." Amitiel announces from the desk in the corner startling Alex.

"Oh, hey, Miti. I didn't notice you there." Alex smiles at her.

"That's Harahel." Sam corrects her.

"It's both of us. Saul opted out of paralegal work, he has bills to pay, but he assured Miti that I was an excellent guest."

"Which he is." Amitiel interjects. Its amazing how the tenor and personality of the voice makes it obvious who's talking. "It's really kind of amazing. I don't have my own memories to really occupy me so he's letting me play around in his. When we take a break he's even using the illusions to give us proper angelic bodies so he can teach me to fly. I'm a little excited to try it actually."

"Any word on your memories yet?" Alex asks.

"No, not yet We haven't heard anything from Krissy since the party. But she has Dean with her so I'm sure she'll be alright." Miti says gently, clearly for her brothers sake.

"But you still need to take a break and rest your mind and body, Sam." Harahel pushes forwards again. "You know you have to redo more than half of what you take notes on after this point anyways."

"Right," He sighs. "I should. I should probably eat, too. Alex, are you hungry? Have you had lunch?"

"I could eat." she lies.

"Oh, Alex." Harahel calls as they goes to leave. "You could have Hel contact Asase Ya. She's an Ashanti fertility goddess as well as a psychopomp and party to the underworld treaty."

"Great. Thank you." Alex smiles at him and walks out of the library with Sam.

"Hey there." Claire smiles at Hel as the goddess notices her arrival. Hel gives her a cool glance and turns back to Hjorprimul without a word. Claire feels her cheeks burn at the snub. What did she expect? That Hel would drop everything and rush to her arms? She's a goddess and a queen. She has important things to do. Besides their last meeting wasn't overly pleasant. Maybe she doesn't want to see her.

"Hela, your girlfriend's here." Claire almost doesn't recognize Rhys as he's both human and fully clothed. Though the fact he's at the table munching away is a big hint. "You might as well say hi. You know you won't be able to concentrate on anything else as long as she's here."

"Don't you ever do anything besides eat sleep screw and harrass your sister?" Claire asks the man who juss waggles his eyebrows in a familiar manner and smiles, despite the glare of death being sent his way by his elder sister.

"What do you want, Claire?" Hel's tone is absolutely frosty.

"I wanted to ask you out on a date." Claire asks, the chill sapping enough of her courage not to look her in the eye. This surprises Hel who just stands there for a moment not sure what to say. "Not today of course but maybe next week?"
"You have something better to do today?" Hel crosses her arms.

"No. But I know you probably do. I'm trying to be considerate. I know you can't just drop everything to spend time with me just because I'm suddenly available, no matter how much I'd like it." She shrugs shoving her hands into her jacket pockets.

"No, I can't. I am a goddess and a queen and a diplomat and my plate is always full. With everything that needs doing I shouldn't even eat or sleep much less break away for some ungrateful little hunter."

"I understand." Claire looks down at the floor. "My schedule isn't exactly ideal either."

"So what are you doing here if you know I'm so busy and can't bothered?"

"I got some free time and hoped to maybe spend some of it with you if I could at some point, that's all. Maybe take you to a movie or something. Sometime?" Claire looks up hopefully with her big blue eyes.

"Alright," Hel says softly. "Arrange it with Hjorprimul. She knows my schedule better than I do at the moment."

"You're free for the next four hours." Hjorprimul says quickly. Hel just looks over at her but her attendi Valkyrie's face is pure innocence. "I'll have wine and strawberries sent to your room with extra whipped cream." She walks quickly from the room.

"You know your subjects desperate desire to get you laid is kind of starting to concern me." Claire makes a face at the retreating woman. Rhys snorts and half chokes in a chicken leg mid laugh.

"Lets talk about this in the hot springs."
The Unborn

Chapter Summary

Alex’s appeal to Asase Ya does not go as planned
Castiel's encounter in the abyss
Anansi is a little shit. His brothers aren't much better.

Chapter Notes

Trump won. God help us all.

Alex carefully paints the Asase Ye Puru onto the calcite slab and arranges the eight offerings in a circle around it. Pumpkin seeds, sapphire, wild yam root, lapis lazuli, walnuts, amethyst, a small tin sickle, and a bunch of yellow fufu flowers. She kneels and kisses the ground before reciting the prayer poem, all twelve stanzas of it, only pausing briefly to remove a spider from the pumpkin seeds and place it gently aside.

"Asase Yaa, Aberewa, Asase Efua, Names without end do we call you, blessed be, Asase Yaa. To be cherished forever, we adore you." When she looks up a swarm of spiders covers the rock and offering eating all the food.

"Who are you?" And why do you call my mother?" She hears behind her. Alex turns to see a dark man in a bright yellow suit and purple tie.

"My name is Alex. I wanted to ask her about all the children dying in the womb." She says respectfully.

"None of your European gods would answer you, eh?" He walks over to the mound of spiders and reaches in to take the walnuts.

"I didn't ask them."

"No? With the valkyrie standing over you, you didn't ask the northern gods?" He tosses a walnut into his mouth with one hand gesturing to Brunhildr with the other.'

"Shit." The valkyrie notices him and starts forwards, a wave of his hand makes a large circle of briars grow up and around her.

"Tell me, why should we do anything for you when your own gods won't, hmmm?" He pinches her cheek.

"Because I'm trying to help fix things." She replies. "Or at least I'm trying to help the people who can."

"Do you even know who I am?" He steps back looking at her thoughtfully.
"Anansi, of course." Alex shrugs. "May I please speak to your mother, sir? It's very important."

"Of course." He smiles suddenly. "You asked so very nicely." He grabs her by the waist and just as Brunhildr cuts through the branches, they disappear.

The abyss is almost impossible to navigate. Where you want to go and where it wants you to go seem to be at odds. Right now it seems to want Castiel to be in an old forest on the edge of a large barren land where a large house made of bones rests on chicken legs behind a similarly disturbing fence. He flies up to the stoop and knocks on the door. There's no answer. So he knocks again.

"I told you, Czernobog, there is no more..." An old misshapen woman with a hook nose opens the door. "Hah, what is this? An angel wearing a russian? You have too many wings." She reaches out with an impossibly long arm to fluff some of his feathers.

"I've been promoted." He says bluntly.

"Pssht." she turns and walks back inside. "Come in then. Not that I could keep you out." She walks over to the stove. "Are you hungry?"

"No." he replies as she seems to expect an answer.

"I don't suppose you could spare some of that meat suit for a poor old woman's meal, then, eh?" She looks back hungrily. Castiel just stares at her until she scowls at him. "What do you want here, angel. I have nothing that would interest the likes of you. Much to my dismay." She mutters the last part.

"I want Hades, but somehow I just keep ending up here." He replies. This makes the woman start to laugh, a dry cackle that grates at his hearing.

"Hades! Oh, Hades. I haven't heard that name in a while. Not for centuries. You want Hades, go find Pluto." She snickers, stirring her pot. "Hades. He's proof that I'm not the worst mother in law a person could have. Many believe their inlaws to be monsters but few go out of their way to garuntee it."

"What do you mean?"

"Why should I tell the likes of you? Knowledge is worth something. What will you give me for mine?" she hungrily eyes him left arm.

"Nothing."

"Don't insult me." She narrows her eyes at him.

"What do you want?"

"Man flesh."

"No."

"My horses could use tending." She points to the door opposite the entry way. "Should be fairly easy for you, enough to answer a question at least."
"I will do no tasks for you."

"No food, no work. How do you expect to get it without payment? You can't steal this, angel." She taps her skill with a bony finger. "Sp how do you intend to pay for it? With the pleasure of your company?" She gives him a bawdy wink and smooths out her blouse.

"Do you know where you are?" Castiel ignores her suggestion.

"The land of the dead, obviously. Some puny little mortal girl killed me for eating her horrible brother." She sips the broth. "Children these days have no respect for their elders."

"So you don't know." Castiel waits for her to look back at him.

"Knowledge for knowledge, eh?" She grins. "Alright. I'll bite. Tell me this information and I'll tell you what I meant."

"Your death sent you to oblivion. My sister sacrificed herself to gather together every thing ever consigned to the empty and pulling it into this place, the abyss." He informs her. The woman's eyes narrow.

"What sister?"

"Gabriel. You perhaps know her as Loki." This statement makes the old woman start laughing so hard she almost falls down and is quickly reduced to wheezing, red faced, bent over the table by the stove.

"Loki! Loki is Gabrielle?" She makes her way to a chair and sits down, wiping the tears from her eyes with her apron, attempting to reign herself in. "I knew I liked that child. Very well, angel, I will tell you what you need to know. Demeter is a vicious bitch, her heart cold as winter and her temper as the feircest storm in spring. When she finally learned to truth of her daughter's elopement with Hades she was determined to punish them both. Of course no one in the pantheon wished to piss off the God of the Dead. Too many had mortals in his care by then. So she came to me."

"What did you do?"

"I will tell you, brother of Loki. In thanks for that piece of information about your dear sister." She chuckles. "I told her to go to Anansi. She wanted the story changed after all. And all stories belong to Anansi."

Alex sits anxiously beneath the mango tree, regretting all the layers she has on under her wrap. Sweat trickles down the small of her back, but it's impossible to remove anything too hot without exposing herself in some way and she really doesn't want to start removing clothing in front of three male pagan gods. The two taller ones are arguing in some other language, while Anansi eats all the mangos.

"Are you hungry?" He offers her one. She shakes her head not sure what the rules are for food and Ashanti gods. "Mother should be here soon. She is supervising my lovely Shi Maria in the kitchen." He takes a bite of the last ripe mango since she declined it. "So, tell me about yourself."

"Um, my name is Anne Jones, but I go by Alex."
"Transgender?"

"Nanzi!" The taller of the other two grabs the mango from his hand and shakes it at him pointing to the pile of pits on the plate and to Alex, scolding him in Akan all the while.

"She said she didn't want any. And speak English for our guest." Anansi scolds him right back. His brother snaps something else. "She didn't come here. I abducted her. There's a difference. He said you shouldn't come to another land to treat with another god without first even bothering to learn at least some of their language." he informs Alex. "So.. are you getting the surgery? Or are there insurance issues?"

"No. Alex is short for Alexis. I was kidnapped by vampires when I was little and they renamed me Alex and it's just what I'm used to now."

"Really." Anansi leans forwards, resting his head on his hand. "That is so much more interesting. Tell me your story while we wait."

"There's not much to tell. I didn't like the killing and ran away. Jody and the Winchesters found and saved me from my family. So now I live with Jody and am going to college to become a therapist so I can treat the supernaturally traumatized."

"Oh, good!" Anansi beams. "Bia and Tano need a good therapist." he nods to his brothers who shoot him an unappreciative look.

"I'm really more geared towards helping people traumatized by supernaturals." Alex demures as politely as she can.

"And who, may I ask, could possibly be more traumatized by supernaturals than other supernaturals. We have to deal with each other for centuries!" Anansi winks at her.

"I suppose you have a point." Alex has to admit.

"Yes, and it is at the top of his head." The one holding the half eaten mango throws it at him.

"Tano, your bickering with Bia is ruining all our family dinners."

"Your stealing all the food is ruining our dinner, you bottomless pit." the other who must be Bia adds.

"You dare talk about anyone stealing anything!" Tano turns back to him and the argument begins anew. Anansi giving Alex a pleading look.

"I couldn't possibly presume to intrude on a private dispute." Alex tries again. "I'm here to ask your mother about a very important issue."

"Ah yes, your barren womb." he pats her hands consolingly, irritating her to no small degree. He must be doing this on purpose. She knows he must.

"No. Not my barren womb. Everyone's barren womb. Everyone's starting to miscarry or not conceive at all and if it continues like this it means the end of humanity."

"What are you talking about?" Bia pauses his fight with his brother to turn his attention to her. "Thousands of babies were born just yesterday in Ghana alone."
"Yes, but none are being made and almost every pregnancy in the first and second trimester had spontaneously aborted. Not to mention all the still births. No one can figure out why."

"Nanzi, go find out what those American rifles have been doing." Tano orders imperiously waving a finger at his brother who just raises an eyebrow at the attempt to command him. "This is getting ridiculous. How many apocalypses have they caused now?"

"They don't know either." Alex snaps, irritated at the accusation. "Sam and Dean haven't done anything this time. They were both dead when this started."

"What again?" Anansi exclaims and shakes his head. "They die so often I can't decide if that means Death likes them or hates them... Wait..." He snaps his fingers. "Is your sister lovers with Hela or Neiflheim?" From the tenuous connection being made, he has to have known ahead of time, so she doesn't bother answering. And if he doesn't really know, his mischievous grin makes her afraid to confirm or deny anything. "Bia, Tano," He makes a comment to his brothers who stop arguing with suspicious speed and look at Alex with new interest.

"Little Alex, you look warm. Please, allow me to make you more comfortable." Bia claps his hands and she finds herself several garments lighter, including at least one layer she wouldn't have removed herself no matter how hot it was.

"I find it very enlightened of you to come to the cradle of life itself to seek the answers to such important questions." Tano says with condescending approval and pours a drink for her. "Please, drink. It will do you no harm, I promise. You must be thirsty in this heat."

"What is it?" She looks at the liquid.

"Aloe juice of course. Have you ever tried it before?"

"No, I haven't." Alex looks at it closer. "I'm sorry to be rude but I really couldn't." She shakes her head.

"Nanzi, I asked you to assess the source of the supplication, not invite it to dinner." A beautiful woman with skin the color of the darkest most fertile soil carries a tray of food to the low table between them. She's followed by a younger lighter skinned woman who gives Anansi a harsh look.

"Mother, this is Alex. She is an associate of Hela of Neiflheim." Tano takes the tray from her, much to his mother's amusement. "She has come seeking your wisdom."

"Indeed." She looks to Alex. "You should have no trouble conceiving. The issue may be on your husband's end. Though given the latest developments it may be a moot issue."

"I'm afraid there's a misunderstanding, Ma'am. I'm not married or trying to get pregnant. I actually wanted to ask you if you knew what was happening. Why no one's getting pregnant or keeping the pregnancies they have." Alex uncomfortably adjusts her wrap dress.

"I see." Asase Ya sits opposite Alex ad lets her daughter in law continue serving. "Nanzi was her offering satisfactory?"

"Highly." He hands her the stones, flowers and the tin scykle. She seems to enjoy the scykle. "She also left nuts seeds and yam but sadly they did not survive the journey." He mournfully shakes his head. Asase Ya gives him a knowing look, pursing her lips at her youngest son and sets his plate before Alex instead.
"I'm sorry, child, but I cannot help you." Asase Ya shakes her head. "So many fatherless and I cannot even begin to fathom why such at thing should be."

"Fatherless?"

"Yes. In truth, we are lucky the children did not come to term. The devastation they would have caused would have been immeasurable." She says gravely.

"What do you mean by fatherless? Don't all children have fathers? At least biologically speaking."

"Most do, but not all." Tano pats her head. "You are undoubtedly unaware, given your poor western education, but while the mother is responsible for providing the flesh of a child, it is the father who provides the soul. That is why women who conceive with a god are so blessed. A child with the soul of a god is as close to godhood was any mortal could come. But it takes a special woman to draw the attention of a god. one of unparalleled beauty and virtue." He takes and kisses her hand.

"Goddammit." Alex mutters to herself. She can hear Anansi snicker behind his hand. "Wait. Are you saying that all of these pregnancies and miscarriages are of children without souls?"

"So it appears." She replies. "It's just as well, the veil is so crowded. At the end of this generation, there will be no more room, even given the slow work of the remaining reapers. It's ridiculous. Will you be seeing Hela soon? I believe I will allow a small portion of souls to wait in Jupiter for Heaven to reopen. Do you know what's being done about that?"

"Well, the angels are looking up blueprints but no luck so far. They're still repairing the damage from the darkness."

"It's disgraceful. A diety has no right having more followers than he can care for. It's not fair to those of us cleaning up this mess. You see, this is what happens with a religion that has no mother." The goddess clucks, shaking her head.

"Motherhood is the most divine aspect a woman can obtain." Tano places food on Alex's plate. "Have you given thought to motherhood, little Alex?"

"No." Her shoulders tense as he moves closer. Bia bursts out laughing and the two start to bicker again until their mother snaps at them.

"Please forgive my children. They have forgotten how to behave themselves." Asase Ya glares at the two young men.

"Why are you singling us out and not the little trickster?" Bia protests.

"Because I never knew how to behave." Anansi gives a bright big smile and leans over to take his brother's plate. Alex has to smile at this despite herself. "You like tricksters Alex Anne virgin daughter of vampires?"

"Sometimes. It depends on who the butt of the joke is."

"Isn't that the honest truth." Anansi muses. "Mother, ms. Alex is a therapist. She counsels those with grievances against others to make peace."

"That's kind of more of a mediator than..." Alex is interrupted as she protests the
definition.

"Would you speak with my children? If you could get my precious Bia and Tano to stop their squabbling, I would be beyond appreciative." Asase looks at her kindly, ignoring the irritated looks of her eldest sons.

"I'm still in school..." Alex protests weakly, but the look on Asase Ya's face becomes insistant. "No therapist can counsel unwilling participants. Especially since honesty is so important to the process."

"Bia, Tano will be willing and honest if I command them to. I do appreciate your modesty, but I am a desperate woman." She states firmly.

"I suppose I could try," Alex shrugs, "But I really don't think I can effectively counsel people actively trying to seduce me. With the attentions of two such handsome men how could I concentrate?" She tries for flattery, hopefully it doesn't fall as flat to the goddesses ears as it does her own.

"A fair point." Asase Ya sighs.

"You'll just have to sleep with them both." Anansi proclaims. Alex vows to herself to squish every spider she encounters from here on out as the three brothers start arguing all over again.

"You may as well eat." Asase Ya motions to Alex's plate. "This will not end quickly." Alex nods and gives in, eating the spinach stew and rice.

"Mmm. What is this?" Alex asks after taking a bite of a chunk of meat, instantly regretting not asking before eating it.

"Goat. You have never eaten goat before?"

"No, but its delicious." Alex feels relieved.

"Shi Maria is sufficiently good at preparing goat meat." Asase Ya sniffs making her daughter in law beam as if it were the highest praise.

"Very well, then." Anansi announces. "If Tano seduces Alex, he forfeits all greivance against Bia. And if Bia seduces Alex he switches lands with Tano."

"That is acceptable." Asase Ya nods much to her sons dismay.

"And as for the vulnerable young fatherless brotherless virgin, I shall take it upon myself to resovve the issue that is causing so much dissention in her life." Alex doesn't likeyebsound of that and apparently neither does Shi Maria. "I shall hold a competition for all gods and demi gods to vie for the rights to her virginity."

"Excuse me?" Alex turns to him.

"Nanzi," Asase Yas eyes him sharply. "I will not permit you to treat this young woman so shamefully. She has preserved herself at a time when so few have the moral fortitude. Such virtue should be rewarded. They will compete for her hand in marriage instead."

"As you wish mother." he nods. Alex just gapes at them unsure what to say or do.
You're welcome my child." Asase Ya smiles benevolently at her and takes a bite of her food.
Anansesem

Chapter Summary

Brunhildr reports Alex's abduction.
Sam and Castiel confront Anansi
Claire has an idea

Chapter Notes

so I mixed up Bia and Tano. Bia is the elder brother and Tano the younger but who stole who's inheritance depends on which country is telling it. Bia got the Ivory coast and Tano got Ghana. so obviously Ghana thinks their land is the prize and The Ivory Coast thinks theirs is. So I'll go with the Ivory Coast version.

anansesem means spider tales because Anansi owns all the stories Kind of like we call things fairy tails

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Sam! Claire!" Brunhildr runs down the hallway her arms covered in scratches and leather coats torn. "There's an Emergency!"

"Is everything alright?" Sam gets to the library door just as a disheveled Hel opens hers.

"Brunhildr. Where is your charge?" She demands instantly.

"I lost her. He took her."Brunhildr confesses catching her breath. "She did a summons for Asase Ya but Anansi showed up in stead buried me with brambles and took her."

"He what?" Hel exclaims.

“I told her to wait for me.” Sam sighs covering his eyes.

“Shes didn't want to bother you again.” Brunhildr explains. “And you know, I was there.” though her awkward shrug shows she's aware how little that mattered. But clearly she doesn't think anyone could have really done better which just pisses Claire off.

“You are the worst body guard ever!” Claire exclaims, pulling her shirt back on. “First you take her to that pyschomopom party when you know she's pagan bait and Rhys has to watch her until they open the gates again and now this?”

“Wait, who in Hades decided to have Rhys guard a virgin?” Hel looks over to Claire, who's cheeks turn red at the derisive tone of the question.

“I did. He was a wolf until she left anyways.” Claire protests.
“Oh, Claire. My sweet innocent Claire. No. No, no, no.” Hel cups her lover's face with her hands and kisses her nose. “No.”

“When was this?” Sam demands shifting the focus back to Alex's abduction.

“Possibly two hours ago. It took a while to get back we had to go to an untilled field...” Brunhildr shrinks under Claire's glare. “I was trapped in wall of brambles.”

“Queen Hela!” Hjorprimul runs up the hall, a scroll in hand. “There's a message for you from Anansi.”

“What is it?” she holds out her hand. Hjorprimul looks to Claire a bit hesitantly and hands it to her. Hel unrolls it and looks at the sheets. She gives a heavy sigh and briefly closes her eyes.

“I will go speak to Asase Ya. This is beyond the pale.” Hel scowls. Claire takes the pages from her.

“Oh for god's sake!” She resists the urge to tear up the sheets. “Dammit! Sam look at this bullshit.”

“They're having a competition with Alex's hands in marriage as the prize. Open to Gods and Demi god's only. No goddesses. Next saturday. That's less than a week.” Hel vents. “That little drittsekk.”

“Time to go kill a fucking spider.” Claire goes back into the room.

“Claire! Wait!” Sam calls after her. Hel just waves him away and goes after her.

“Kjaerlighet, it takes more than a day to find and kill a being like Anansi and you have work tomorrow.” They hear as the door closes, “Besides his mother is part of the treaty and I cannot have you killing my allies.”

“You needn't worry.” Bia sits next to Alex as she stares out the window onto the grassy plains. “Tano will be a good husband.”

“I don't want to marry Tano.”

“Your standards are too high little girl.” He teases. Alex just glares at him. Bia laughs and shakes his head. “No, really, there are worse endings to one of Nanzi's little jokes than being wed to a god.”

“I regret never killing any spiders.” Alex comments darkly.

“Maybe that's why he's being nice.” Bia considers. “I hope you can cook. Tano loves to eat.”

“I can't. And I'm not that great at cleaning though I am fairly decent at removing human blood stains from fabric though. My brothers were messy eaters.” Alex shrugs.

“You see, you can't cook, you can't clean, you're american. This is the best thing that could ever have happened to you.” Bia pats her head. “When Nanzi comes back, you should thank him, and mother as well.”
“So I take it you're not interested in competing?” Alex ignores the suggestion. He shrugs noncommittally.

“Not really. I have to, of course, but I'm really tired of the ceaseless competition. When will it end?” He gives a wear sigh and sits down beside her. “I miss my brother. Maybe if he has something I do not, he'll finally be satisfied.”

“Well, what started this whole thing?” She asks desperate to change the subject from her being offered up as a prize.

“I stole his inheritance.” Bia grins and nudges her leg with his. “Nanzi's not the only tricky one in the family.”

“That would do it. What was the inheritance?”

“The good fertile Akan lands of what you now call the Ivory Coast. I was supposed to get Ghana but who wants that mess?” He scrunches his nose disdainfully. “It was really for the best. I love my brother but he's not the sharpest tool in the shed. He never could have taken care of this land properly. He takes after our father. Knows all, understands nothing.”

“And you take after your mother then, I take it?”

“Of course. Ah, I know, what kind of man compares himself to a woman?” He waves away an imagined objection. “But you may not be aware that we respect our women a great deal, more than your do yours.”

“I'm being offered as a prize in a supernatural pissing contest. That isn't exactly respectful. And hardly any different than the frat boys at my college awarding a float to the person who seduces me.” She informs him. “Was it worth it? Stealing your brother's lands?”

“Impossible to say. I can't imagine we would have gotten along much better either way. I am the eldest but he never respected me. He always thinks he knows best regardless of the fact that I should hold sway should anything happen to father aside from wandering the lands. Though, mother always rules supreme. And he's still be just as unable to bend his dignity to deal with Nanzi as he always is. Look, he is a good man. When he wins you be good to him.”

“How do you know he'll win?” Alex challenges.

“He will be the most determined.” Bia turns to her. “Forgive the impertinence.” he places his arms around her and kisses her before she can object.

“Bia!” The door bursts open almost as quickly. “Remove yourself at once.” The ensuing argument quickly degrades into violence and Alex slips out the door as soon as she can.

“Ah, there you are.” Anansi is beside her instantly. “Come. I must prove to your friends you are well.” he leads her into a room where Sam and Castiel are waiting.

“Alex, are you alright?” Sam asks as soon as she arrives.

“Yes.” She grudgingly admits. “Sorry I didn't wait for you.”

“Don't be. He couldn't have protected you either.” Anansi slaps her back. “I am sorry to say
gentlemen, that the competition is open to gods and demi gods only.”


“Interesting question.” Anansi taps his chin. “Why not? Once a king in narnia, always a
king in narnia, after all. I doubt any being who had managed to attain and surrender godhood stands
much of a chance, though. Unless... Oh, yes, that'll make it much more sporting. ” He smiles. “And
entertaining.
Very well, I'll allow it.”

“Can we take Alex back to her home until the competition? She does have school.” Sam
requests.

“Hmmm, no. I can't in good conscience allow her to go off unchaperoned. What if she
should sully herself before hand? That would never do. No, no, the virgin stays with mother.” Anansi
shakes his head.

“Does that mean you'll keep your brothers away from me?” Alex asks coolly. “If you want
me unsullied.”

“No. If you are seduced by one, it solves a problem far greater than your deflowering would
cause.” Ananasi shakes his head. “But worry not, you will be gotten a good husband, I garuntee it.
If he is not good to you, I shall destroy him myself.”

“Odd thing to say as one of your brothers might win.”

“Ha!” Anansi blurts out. “They would never give me the satisfaction! Shi Maria, take this
young lady and teach her to be a proper bride, would you?” he waves his wife over. “Now, my
good men, I believe you wished to address a more important matter.”

“We wished to address the matter of Hades.” Castiel says as Shi Maria grabs Alex's arm and
leads her to the kitchen. “I was informed you were responsible for his disappearance.”

“Were you?” Anansi grins. “This wouldn't have anything to do with your young man
trapped in the underworld, now would it?” His eyes twinkle. “My, my, what an unfortunate
accident that was.”

“Did you have something to do with that?” Sam asks cautiously.

“Psssh, please. Just because I find the joke funny does not mean it is my own.” He waves
off the accusation without concern. “So, do I take it from your earlier questions on the competition
that you intend your angel to enter to win the young lady?”

“We were discussing Hades.” Castiel frowns. “And I am an angel, not a god.”

“Not anymore.” Sam says, looking over at his friend.

“No. That... disgraceful event...” Cas shakes his head.

“Happened. It happened Cas, and can't unhappen. Maybe some good can come out of it.”
Sam says quietly.

“To even make that claim again... I couldn't...”
“I’ll tell you what, God-stiel,” Anansi grins at the distressed angel. “Enter the competition, participate in every event and I will tell you anything you want to know.”

“You look upset.” Gadreel comments as Claire walks over to the gate.

“I am pissed off.” She corrects him. “Damn pagans took my sister. Made her the prize of a contest and my girlfriend says she can't do a thing about it. Can you believe this bullshit?” She punches the wall.

“Surely Castiel will assist you.”

“Yeah, he and Sam are working on it while I'm stuck here, but still. I hate just waiting here, doing nothing. She was willing to give her self to be some vampire's bait again to save my life, you know. We barely even tolerated each other then and look at me, not doing anything at all.”

"What can you do? You have obligations. Besides you must admit that Castiel is far more powerful than you are and more than capable of rescuing your sister.” Gadreel attempts to reassure her.

“I know, but he hasn't exactly had the best track record in protecting members of my family. I know he'll do his best, but it hasn't been good enough so far.” She rubs the back of her neck and ignores the throbbing in her injured hand.

“What do you wish to do?” Gadreel touches her hands, healing the bruises and broken bones.

“I wish to murder the hell out of every god that goes near her but that's not realistic and Hel would be pissed because of treaties and things. She can't enter because they said no goddesses or she would. Just gods or demi gods.”

“That's too bad. You could have entered yourself then.” Gadreel comments regretfully. Claire just looks at him confused. “You did say you were the demi god of karaoke, did you not?” he grins at her. Claire laughs.

“Yes, I did. I came in second to Bree in the God of Karaoke contest at Louix's V and the owner liked my demi-god of karaoke joke so much he made it the official second place title. So now I have a laminated business card for my shitty second place prize. Want to see?” She takes out her wallet and shows him the laminated card.

“That is adorable. And coming in second to Gabriel is no small achievement. They should have put demi-goddess though, since you are a woman.” he hands it back to her.

“Maybe…” Claire looks at it. “It does say demi-god and not demi-goddess doesn't it?” she taps it on her hand. “I have no idea what the competition will be though. If they even let me participate I'd need some sort of edge to even begin to compete.” She sighs and starts to pace.

“You do lack the strength of a demi-god. And the immortality but I feel strength would likely be the most important factor at play. As I assume it will involve combat would you care to spar? I can teach you how to better wield that sword of yours. It is possible for skill to overcome strength after all.” He offers.
“Cool, yeah. Not that I can really learn that much in a week but every little bit helps I guess.” Claire shrugs. “Of course a week of lessons from you is probably worth a year from someone else. You were one of the best weren't you?”

“I was.” he gives a sad smile. “Come let's move to a more open space. I want to see how you handle yourself.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay. Insecure needy writer begging for feedback. How does it rate so far compared to Life of Virtue? anything you want more of or you think I'm overdoing? It is less Sam and Dean centric of course, but you'll get more of them shortly.
Apotheosis

Chapter Summary

Alex counsels Tano
Claire searches for an edge
Alex suffers from overgold and gentle negging
Claire convinces them to let her compete

Chapter Notes

The only strength giving mythological edibles I could find was Ninhursag's milk. Which led me to the Sumerian gods. The tale of Enki and Ninhursag is actually pretty awesome. Enki is a philanderer of course not ready to settle down but Ninhursag doesn't force him into a relationship or blame or punish the women he seduces. She also helps a broken hearted girl have an abortion when she doesn't want the child of a man who doesn't love her. In truth she only gets nasty with Enki when he messes with her domain of the earth but ends up saving him anyways. Its an awesome story you should look it up.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“How could he have been fooled?” Tano rages as Alex listens patiently. “He is omnipotent, omniscient! How could he not have known it was my brother and not me.”

“So you think he knew?” She asks "I don't know." Tano leans against the wall. “I don't like to think of it.”

“Because either your father lied to you or he's not as all powerful and all knowing as you believed?” She asks gently. The river god is silent.

“Either is unthinkable.”

“Have you tried talking to him? Or asking him about this? Or is all your energy going towards being angry with your brother?”

“It takes no energy. My brother is an infuriating, arrogant, manipulative brat. He was always our father's favorite.” Tano snorts.

“I bet you're your mother's though.” Alex smiles. Tano gives a conceding nod.

"She did help me turn Ghana into such a beautiful land they started to claim I'm the one who stole it from him." He boasts proudly.

“Though I find it hard to believe that Bia can be more infuriating than Anansi.” Alex continues. This comment gets a little laugh from him.
“Eh, Nanzi's Nanzi. What can you do? You expect such things from him. Not from your elder, one you looked up to and trusted to treat you fairly.”

“You and Bia were close then.”

“Yes. Once. You can only be betrayed by those you trust, after all.” Tano turns to Alex. “What's worse is that he is not even ashamed of what he has done to me. He is not sorry at all for his wrong doing even slightly.”

“If he were? Would you forgive him?” Alex takes a drink of aloe, it's warm and disgusting but probably safer than the water.

“Should I ever believe him, perhaps. Though it would not fix anything. How could I ever trust him again? Tell me that?”

“I guess you can't.” Alex looks up at him. “It's too bad you can't at least stop fighting in front of everyone, though.”

“Yes, he insists on provoking me at every turn. It is very distressing and unbecoming in an elder son.” Tano places his hands on his hips and shakes his head.

“You don't have to rise to the bait, though. I know that's easier said than done, but he'd look pretty assinine trying to make you loose your temper and not having you respond at all.”

“You think it's so easy?”

“No. I think it's absurdly hard. I had four older brothers, I know how hard it is not to react to someone pushing your buttons, even if you fear for your safety. But you're a god, right? Of rivers and war. You don't react to every little bit of provocation the enemy gives you, do you? No, you know better.”

“This is not war and he is not my enemy.” Tano snaps, contradicting his entire previous attitude in what's obviously just a need to be contrary.

“You wouldn't know that to look at the two of you. You'd think he was your bitterest most hated rival.”

“Well, that is how he behaves certainly. To do this to a brother.” he shakes his head. “I was cheated of what was rightfully mine. I earned that land. I did everything my father asked of me and more and he stole it from me.”

“That's true. You were cheated.” Alex says bluntly. “It's not fair and it's not right, but it is what it is. Gods aren't exactly known for moving past things like this, though. Personally I think it's hopeless for your mother to expect you two to make up or even just have a cease fire at meal times. You obviously hate each other more than you care about anyone else in your family or you'd both be at least trying to be coldly polite when you're all together.”

“Polite. Bearing insults is polite?” Tano scoffs.

“Putting the need to address them aside temporarily so as not to distress or disturb those around you is polite. You can at least discuss your grievances privately at another time and place. Why don't we try at dinner tonight? When he angers you, simply make note of it to discuss later when the two of you are alone, instead of in the middle of the meal?”
“Why are you telling me to change my behavior and not him? Hmm? If you are really in agreement that he is at fault.” Tano demands looking imperiously down at her.

“Because you're here and you can only change your own behavior, not his. So I'm trying to help you do that. Just because he caused the problem doesn't mean you're helpless to resolve it. It will be difficult and ask a lot from you, but being the bigger, better man is never the easiest path. It takes a special kind of man to even try it.” Alex sighs. “I suppose the question is do you want to repair your relationship with your brother? And if not do you want to at least try to give your mother, who has done so much for you, civil meals?”

“I will think on what you have said, little Alex. And I shall try what you say tonight, and put my greivances aside until later in the evening.” Tano looks less than thrilled with the idea. “But it is useless. Bia, when determined to fight, will fight.”

“Just remember, by refusing to fight, you're not surrendering, you're just refusing to let him define the terms of engagement.” Alex reminds him. Tano rolls his eyes and walks out without another word like the imperious little shit he is. 'Little Alex' indeed.

“What is this place?” Claire looks up at the mountain as she and Death step back into the abyss.

“These are the Zagros mountains of Sumer. I believe this one is Kur. That temple up there is Esagila devoted to many Sumerian gods such as Marduk or Babylonia and his parents Enki and Ninhursag. They're a very loving couple. One who actually resolved the problems in their relationship through patience and respect. Very rare among dieties.”

“Huh. You reaped them, I take it?” Claire looks at him. He just gives her a patronizing look. “Of course you did. Why are we here?”

“I don't know. I was intending to bring you back to your angel friend in the garden, but it seems the realm has other ideas today. It is rather unmanageable. Since I doubt I am needed here, I shall leave you to explore and go see to Azrael.”

“Oh. Alright.” Claire looks up at the mountain. He couldn't have brought her a little closer? Well, there seems to be a path leading up to the temple. So much for some training and a nap. She has no idea how long it takes to climb as there's no sun, no moon, and the clock on her phone doesn't seem to work in the abyss or even the timer or stop watch function for that matter.

The mountainside is beautiful but devoid of animal life. It seems almost empty with out bird songs or even the buzzing of insects. It's probably a bad idea but she fills the silence with hiking songs. It's funny how she knows that 'On Top of Spaghetti' is a parody of 'On Top of Old Smokey' but aside from the obvious first line she has not idea how the original song actually goes. She should look it up some time.

“What on the earth are you?” A surprised dark skinned young man meets her on the path as she nears the bend close to the temple.

“I'm Claire. I'm a hunter.”

“A hunter, not a singer. I'm disappointed.” he gives her a charming grin she doesn't quite understand.

“Well, I am the demi-god of karaoke too.” She smiles back.
"What is karaoke? What pantheon are you from? Why do you appear as a washed out human woman in odd clothing?" he demands, frowning in confusion. "What brings you to this place?"

"Serendipity mostly. I may be being guided by the spirit of a lost comrade, but I'm not sure. Who are you?" Claire shrugs.

"Who..." he looks startled. "I am Enki." he sounds so surprised that she doesn't know that he doesn't even find time to be offended by it.

"Oh, Ninhursag's husband. It's a pleasure to meet you." She extends her hand. He looks at it before grasping her forearm briefly.

"Who am I.." he mutters. 'Is there no water where you come from? Come, I will let my Ninny deal with you." he turns and walks back up the path, turning occaisionally to give her odd looks, her hands in her pockets getting a lot of his attention for some reason. When they reach the large elaborate temple a lioness is reclining on the railing near the top where a beautiful brown woman with shoulder length thick black hair and an ornate leafy gold headdress waits beside it. She pets it gently, a leash in her hand. Claire find the thought of leashing a lion even more impressive than just petting it. She's tried leashing a cat. It did not go well.

"Beloved, I have found what appears to be a woman."

"Don't be rude, Enki." She gives him a kiss. "Welcome to Esagila, woman. You have traveled far I assume."

"Relatively. My name is Claire. You must be Ninhursag." She offers her hand. Ninhursag looks amused and glances to her husband briefly before clasping it in a similar gesture. "I'm sorry to intrude, but the abyss seems to have a mind of it's own."

"The abyss?"

"Ah, it's a long story." Claire shrugs a bit sheepishly.

"By the looks of you it seems it will be an interesting one. Come, sit. Tell me your tale." She waves her hand causing a few large mushrooms to sprout off to the side.

"Alright. I'm not sure how much time I have left before my boss returns though." Claire takes a seat on one and tells her about the creation of the abyss. They're unfamiliar with Loki or pretty much any of the gods she names but do know the god of Abraham.

"He's in charge now?" Ninhursag asks incredulously.

"According to the angels he always has been." Claire replies.

"They would say that. And this is your nominal religion? Well, if he is the father of all he is a very negligent one I'm afraid." Ninhursag shakes her head. "So, you say this place was created by one of his eldest children. Why would she bring us back as well? We are her father's rivals."

"Well, according to her, you're actually his children's security blankets. A bad habit he kept trying to break us of." Claire gives a sheepish smile. "She says the pagan gods were accidentally created by humanity, or even are often nephilim, part angel part human."

"Hmmph." Ninhursag purses her lips. "I suppose that is an answer then."
"I honestly don't know. It's hard to take her seriously about much. She screws with everyone so much just on a general basis. Or she did. Honestly, I usually go train with Gadreel in the garden of dead angels about now. I guess this place thinks I need to be here. It took Castiel to Baba Yaga and Sam to Eden so I can only assume there's something I need here.” Claire confesses.

"Are you on a quest then?"

"No, not really. Well, my sister had been kidnapped by Anansi, he's a spider god in africa, plays a lot of tricks. Anyways, she's a nineteen year old virgin so he decided to give her hand in marriage to any god or demi-god who wins a competition tommorrow. I'm going to enter as I'm the demi-god of karaoke in Souix Falls. I came in second to that contest.” She explains. Oddly enough, Ninhursag seems to get it. “Hopefully he'll find it amusing and allow me to enter, but I'm at a bit of a disadvantage since I am kind of really mortal and human.”

"Your sister does not wish to marry a god?” Enki asks incredulously.

"No. She wants to learn to be a therapist and doesn't want to be involved with gods or angels or supernatural things at all if she can help it. I don't want her married against her will. I suppose that's my quest.” Claire looks at the goddess, hoping she hasn't offended her too much already. But the goddess looks thoughtful.

"I see. You need the strength of a god.” Ninhursag nods gravely. “I could give you this. At least temporarily. But not for free will I part with a piece of myself. What have you to offer for this boon?"

"My sword?” Claire hesitantly holds out the gregori sword. Ninhursag raises an eyebrow and looks it over a bit unimpressed. “It's the best thing I own. It belonged to the fallen angel that killed my mother. I killed him with it. What sort of thing would you like?” She puts it away as it's obviously not what the goddess had in mind.

“It must be beautiful, precious, and cost much to replace in either effort or time. If it were to aid in the cultivation of these lands it would be an added bonus.” Ninhursag considers. “I shall know what is acceptable when you offer it.” Of course, one of those kinds of offering.

Claire sits and tries to think. She doesn't have anything like that if the sword doesn't count. And aiding in cultivating the earth? Her hair falls into her face again, and she reaches into her pocket to get an elastic to tie it back up in a pony tail. Alex keeps telling her to cut it if it bothers her so much but it took forever to grow it out this much. It's half down to her back now, honestly. She has to learn how to make a decent bun. Crap. Claire winces when she realizes what does indeed have all those requirements pretty much covered. She sighs and pulls the elastic down a little, before reaching back with her sword and slicing the pony tail off.

"Human hair is actually a great fertilizer and a decent mulch thingy to keep weeds from growing.” she holds out the pony tail to the goddess who looks incredibly amused.

“That'll do.” she accepts it graciously. “Though I wonder what you would have done had I not accepted it.”

“Felt like an impulsive idiot?” Claire gives a sheepish smile. Ninhursag laughs and adjusts her robes to reveal a full pert breast which swells slightly at her touch.

“Um...” Claire feels herself start to blush.
“The kings of Sumer all suckled at my teat. It gave them strength and presumably immortality, though none lived long enough to test that.” Claire's briefly confused before she remembers there are all sorts of kinds of immortality that don't necessarily mean invincibility. “Drink, young demi-god, and grow strong for at least a fortnight.”

“Hel is going to kill me.” Claire takes a breath and kneels before the goddess, drinking until the milk runs dry.

“You've got to be kidding me.” Alex looks at the program. Twenty one different events with twenty one different scores per ranking. “What on earth is gurning?”

“Each event has it's own page.” Anansi informs her. “It'll take all weekend depending on who participates in what. Each event gets an hour, though the hour may be a little longer than sixty minutes in practical experience.” he takes a bite from the bowl of sweet peas before him. “Mmm. These are my favorite. There's a funny story that goes along with sweet peas. Would you like to hear it?”

“I know the tar baby story.” Alex looks to the arena. “You fake your death, eat all the sweet peas in your family's farm and they set a tar baby to catch who's doing it so they don't starve. You get in a fight with it and end up dying when you try to head butt it. You kind of deserved it for being such a selfish ass.”

“You're not happy with me.” he tsks.
“You're not stupid enough to ever believe that I would be.” She replies tersely.

“Cheer up. This will be fun. You'll have gods fighting for your hand. Enjoy the spectacle and the flattery. Gurning is making ugly faces by the way. And cricket spitting is exactly what it sounds like.”

“Gods and demi-gods are willing to make ugly faces and spit live insects to marry a virgin american who can't cook, can't clean and will trying to murder them in their sleep every chance she gets?” Alex looks over the list.

“No. Most of them will compete in archery, track, wrestling, spear throwing, and skin kicking. Less so chess boxing, as a lot of them are meat heads. Only those disadvantaged in terms of strength will participate in the others most likely. It's a point system you see. The god with the most points wins. A god could theoretically not win a single contest and still win you. Hopefully you'll not be stuck with a strong idiot. Though several of them are rather kind.” he gulps the last few bites, almost drinking it down. There's so much butter on them he probably is, honestly.

“Alright, let's see who's taken the bait.” Anansi rubs his hands together and walks out of the room.

“Come, we must make you presentable.” Shi Maria enters, taking Alex by the hand.

“Gods and demi-gods only. No goddesses. No humans.” The large warrior narrows his eyes at the blonde woman before him.

“I am a demi-god.” Claire takes out her business card. “The demi-god of karaoke as appointed by the patrons of Louix's V in Souix falls South Dakota US of A.” though she clearly didn't need to specify that she was american. Anyone being that obnoxious is generally just assumed to be.

“No goddesses.” he repeats crossing his burly arms.


“You are a woman.” He leans forwards.

“Good eyes there, sport, but still Demi-god not demi-goddess.” Claire points to the card. Mongo over there looks as if he wants to pound her into the ground.

“Is there a problem?” A very dark man in a ridiculously bright yellow suit saunters up to the table.

“Anansi, This human woman is attempting to enter the competition. I have explained to her several times there are no humans or goddesses allowed but she refuses to accept that.” He glares at Claire.

“I'm not a goddess. I am a demi-god.” She hands Anansi the card. Anansi snickers and hands it back to her.

“That is true. She is a demi-god. Allow her to sign up.” he pats the burly man's massive biceps that could swallow his head whole and still have room for a protein shake.

“But she is a woman!”
“Half the gods here have been women at one point. We can't disqualify her on that point. She is a demi-god, it says so quite explicitly.” Anansi winks at Claire who swallows her desire to pluck all this legs and leave him for the birds. The large man gives a low displeased growl and grabs a packet.

“Your name.” Jumbo is not a gracious loser.

“Claire Novak. Demi-god of Karaoke,” She accepts it. He makes a face as he writes it down, either at her femininity or the absurdity of her claim to godhood. Possibly both. But he just gives her the packet.

“Return your registration for events before noon. You may enter as many or few as you desire. The god or demi god with the most points wins the virgin in marriage. But all who participate will receive a prize.” he says flatly. “Next!”

“Claire?” She looks up to see Thor and Rhys standing among others with packets like hers. “You cut your hair.”

“I traded it for Ninhursag's milk.” she reaches up to feel the odd cut. “Rhys, you're not a god. How did you get in?”

“Apparently there was this cult of werewolves who worshipped me and my role in Ragnarok so I qualify.” he shrugs. “Hel said I could compete as a man, since Asase Ya was being difficult, but I'm not allowed to actually marry her. As if I would.”

“I'm here to help as well. Don't worry, little hunter, I will not lay a hand on your sister.” Thor crosses his heart. “Where did you get the packet?”


“I have the vodka drinking and bobbing for pigs feet on a lock. And the headstand beer drinking of course.” Rhys comments.

“That's what you think.” Thor retorts.

“What's battle of the oranges. Oh, you need teams. So, team?” Claire grins at them. They shrug and fill our their forms.

“Ms. Novak.” Claire turns around to see Thanatos with a packet.

“Oh, fuck no. you can turn right the fuck around right now.” She points to him threateningly. “Or your brother won't be the only one with bronzed wedding tackle.”

“Krissy bid me to enter to attempt to rescue Ms. Jones for you. Believe me I have no personal interest in your sister.”

“Claire!” Sam jogs over, no packet in sight. “What are you doing here?”

“Trying to rescue Alex, duh.” she finishes filling out the form, signing up for everything. Even Belly flopping in mud. “Don't tell me you managed to finagle godhood too.”

“No, I'm here with Cas. You became a god?” he looks almost as impressed at this as he is alarmed
“Remember the karaoke contest last year?” She grins at him.

“Claire, this is incredibly dangerous. You could get seriously hurt going up against gods like this. And I thought you had to work for Death.”

“It's saturday. Isn't Castiel subbing for me? Are you two trying to steal Alex or something? Because if you need a distraction, I'm sure we can manage one.”

“No. Unfortunately you can't hide from Anansi if he wants to find you. Where can you go where spiders can't? But due to... an unfortunate incident seven years ago Castiel technically qualifies to enter. If he participates in every event Anansi will give us information we need to save Krissy and Dean regardless of victory. Obviously we'll be trying to save Alex, too, but in case you're wondering why he's in the events he's in.” Sam gives a slight grin. Castiel gurning. Claire has to laugh a little.

“Good lord. Well, he can join our team for underwater hockey and the battle of the oranges. He'll definitely win the world sauna championship, temperature means nothing to him.” She signs up for pea shooting and bog snorkling. The bog snorkling comes after the bellyfoping in mud so she'll be able to do both without being too big of a filthy mess afterwards. Hopefully her undies won't get too see through when wet. “Alright. Good. One of us should win it. But that's no excuse for slacking off in any event. Castiel!” She waves to him as he walks over. The other gods just raise an eyebrow at her commanding tone. “How'd you get Death to let you out of subbing for me?”

“Harahel returned for the length of the competition. What are you doing here?”

“What are you doing here?” She retorts, a little sick of the question.

“You are not a god, Claire.” He scolds her gently.

“Right, I'm a demi-god. Bam. Read em and weep.” She holds out the card.

“This cannot count.” he takes and examines it closely.

“Anansi says yes. So lets work on this together okay?” She takes it back. “Or you know, you could explain to me why you're being counted as a god. I am a bit curious as to that one.” Castiel turns red at the question.

“What is gurning?” Castiel just opens his program, wincing as he reads some of the event descriptions and doesn't bother Claire about her godhood again.

“I think Tano may actually be actively competing for your hand.” Shi Maria comments, finishing Alex's eye makeup. “If so, you must learn to be a proper wife.”

“I will kill him first.” Alex says calmly.

“Don't be like that, you entitled brat. There. I know going egyptian was the proper look for you.” She straightens Alex's large heavy gold collar. “A little pale perhaps, but at the sight of you their efforts will be redoubled. You needn't smile, either, not that you would. The wife of a god should have some pride to her. Now come, we must present you.”
“I can't move. There's too much gold.” Even the fabric of the dress is gold. They'll redouble their efforts alright, but for the massive wealth covering her body.

“No such thing. You are such a weak thing. You need a god to take care of you.” She tsks, shaking her head. “Hold on.” She exits returning with a few men who pick up Alex's stool and carry her to the outcropping of a large arena, where Anansi waits above a crowd of a few dozen gods and demi gods.

“I present your prize. Alexis, a few words for your future husband?” He holds the microphone to her lips.

“I don't want to marry any of you and vow to violently murder any man who touches me without my consent. Leave now, it's not worth it, I promise you.”

“Yeah! That's my girl!” She hears faintly from the crowd. Is that Claire? How did she get in here? What did she do to her hair? Who's that cute laughing guy with the oddly shaded shaggy grey hair next to her? No. Not important. Hot does not mean marriage material and definitely not if he tries to win her as a prize in a contest. Now if it was just her virginity on the other hand.

“For our first event. Baby Jumping!” Anansi claps his hand and a large mattress full of babies appears. They look far too disturbing to be real babies which makes Alex feel a little better. “As an added difficulty, attempting to jump and failing will result in loss of points. If you harm a baby you are automatically disqualified! MAY THE BEST GOD WIN!”

Chapter End Notes

In Sumer, a singer was a special kind of priestess who also did sexual religious ceremonies kind of a temple prostitute. Enki was flirting a little and making kind of a dirty joke.
“Are they gone?” Dean peers out of the room as Krissy checks the throne room.

“Yes.” she gives a sigh of relief. “Here. Help me take this ham up to Cerberus.” She grabs the heavy platter from the table.

“I got that.” Dean grabs it as she staggers back slightly under the weight. “You sure it'll work?”
“Of course, he's my baby.” She grins and grabs a lantern, walking up the tunnel. “Berry! Time to play...” She whistles. Dean can hear the excited barking of three heads at the end of the tunnel. He does sound like an over excited puppy. “Who's my good boy.” Krissy starts patting the heads in turn only getting two at once. The third gives Dean a low growl.

“Krissy?” He clears his throat. She puts the lamp down and takes the ham.

“Wait until we're at the shore.” She tosses the ham across the cavern and goes to get the well chewed soccer ball. “Come on, Berry.” Krissy bounces it a couple times and walks out the opposite tunnel. Cerberus runs after her, tail wagging. Alright, the one on the far right she said. He picks up the discarded lantern and takes the tunnel to Hypnos cavern.

With Pluto determined to win Alex himself and thus piss off Hel even more, Hypnos is in charge of Tartarus. It's the perfect opportunity to try and find Amitiel's memories and maybe even Krissy's as well. Thanatos said Krissy's memories of angels were pastel colored pearls and hard to mistake. The cavern is relatively ornate with a large inviting bed and carvings on the walls. The murmur of the river lethe flowing through one side is amazingly relaxing.

“Can I help you?” A frosty voice says as he looks through the drawers and cabinets. Dean pulls out his gun as the lantern blows out, plunging the cave into darkness.

“I'm here for the girls' memories.” he tries to listen for the god's movement but the gentle noises of the river lethe block everything out.

“Of course you are.” he hears. “You can't have them.”

“I can if I kill you and take them.” Dean replies undoing the safety.

“You can't shoot sleep.” Is the derisive comment. Dean fires, causing a brief flash that makes Hypnos wince and ricochet's off the walls into the river. “Put that thing away before you hurt yourself.” The gun is snatched from his hands. “You think you can conquer everything, don't you? How would you like to sleep for all of eternity? You're a pretty fellow, not as lovely as my Endymion but the dreams I could give you.”

“The nightmares I could give you.” Dean snaps.

“You don't even try bargaining. You just go straight to violence. With all you have to offer. That pretty face, those soft plump cheeks.” the hand caressing his behind is gone as quickly as it appears.

“If I recall, you don't have anything to play with.” Dean retorts. “Or are you offering to be my bitch.”

“Does this look like nothing to you?” The room illuminates into a nude hypnos with bronze genitals that are fairly unimpressive.

“More of a grower than a shower, huh?” Dean comments. Hypnos glares at him and grabs a small box from under his pillow.

“Do you see these?” he opens the lid, revealing a bunch of small pastel pearls. “Kristiana's memories. One of these is of her angel burning me with it's light. Do you know what happens to memories when they enter the river lethe?” he picks one up and tosses it in. The pearl dissolves like foam on the sea. “It joins the lost memories of every one who has ever entered Hades.” He tosses another one in and another. “I could do this all day. Plop. The question you have to ask yourself is
how precious are these memories to you? To her? How precious is she? The little girl who looks to you with such adoration in her eyes. Can you really let her down?” Dean doesn't reply. “Well?”

“What about Amitiel's? The angel's memories.” He stalls.

“Oh, her. Do you have any idea who many memories an angel has of angels? No, that whole fog got sucked completely into the river as it came out. I'm surprised Thanatos didn't tell you. He was there. The few that remained I had no use for so I tossed them as well. I never intended her to have them back. The only reason these are still here are because Thanatos wanted to keep them safe for his darling. Then you came along. Hopefully him giving me these finally means he's given up on her.” Hypnos looks at the pearls and shrugs tossing them into the river. “Why should I bargain? I can visit your dreams any time I like. Now go back to your room.” He smacks Dean a kiss and everything goes dark again.

“Oh I am so going to gank that son of a bitch.” Dean growls, and makes it way slowly back up to Cerberus' cave.

Claire stands on the field, spear in hand. They run and let go, right? Please the strength be enough. She steps back, runs forwards and stops, chucking the spear as far as she can. It lands in seventh place. Not too bad. Not really. She hasn't placed lower than the top ten in any event which is good. Granted a lot of them are because less than ten people actually entered, but the points are starting to accumulate.

“Who are you?” a tall african man demands.

“Who are you?” she retorts.

“I am Tano, god of the river and war. The lands of Ghana belong to me.”

“Well, la di da. I'm Claire, demi-god of karaoke and I don't give a fuck.”

“You do not belong here. You are a human girl and you have no right to compete.” He grabs her arm as she turns to leave. Claire turns back into him and flips him over her shoulder, much to his surprise.

“You're competing over my sister. I'm the only one who has any right to be here at all.” She replies and walks away to where Sam is waiting with the score sheets. “How am I doing?” She asks. Anansi has chosen not to keep a running tally of points visible, only the rankings in each event.

“You're tied with them one place ahead of Fenris and Thanatos and behind Castiel by two but it's a narrow margin. Cas is in the lead so far but the last two have most of the points and nothing is guaranteed. I don't think you'll place at wrestling, so you'd have to place first at track and archery both to win.”

“Did you take pictures of the gurning competition?” She asks.

“Of course I did,” Rhys grins before Sam can reply. “Your sister is looking incredible. I might have to marry her after all.” He looks up to where Alex is sitting. She passed out from the heat earlier but they brought her back in the last hour in lighter robes and plenty to drink.

“Don't even think about it.”
“Too late.” He whistles, smacking Alex a kiss as she scans the crowd for Claire. Her narrowed eyes, shows she noticed, though she is clearly trying not to smile, which just makes his smile wider.

“If you touch her, I will turn your foreskin into a bookmark.” Claire coolly informs him.

“Men have survived circumcision.”

“It won't be removed first.” she slams Sam's notebook shut for dramatic emphasis.

“Claire, I really wish you'd stop threatening to mutilate people's genitals.” Sam looks slightly disturbed.

“As soon as they stop using them as weapons, I will stop threatening to disarm them.” Claire smiles sweetly and stalks off to the refreshments table.

“Scary woman.” Rhys frowns. “I didn't say I was going to rape her sister though.” he sounds more appalled by the accusation than by the threat to his manhood.

“She's being given against her will. Your words kind of implied you would.” Sam informs him.

“Shit. No, I didn't mean... Claire! I was joking!” Rhys runs after her. “That's not what I meant. Please don't tell my sister I said that.”

“How'd it go?” Krissy asks when she returns to her room. But Dean's dejected face gives her the answer.

“Hypnos caught me, tossed your memories into the river Lethe, or at least that's what it looked like and told me Amitiel's memories were gone as well.”

“Oh.” She sits next to him. “Well, we can make new ones.” She looks up at him hopefully.

“He might have been lying. At the very least there's nothing in his room. He said Thanatos gave him your memories. Do you really trust that guy, Krissy?”

“I don't know. I've kind of had to.” She shrugs. “He likes me, you know.”

“Doesn't mean he's trustworthy.”

“I know that. Especially since he's not the one I have feelings for.” Krissy admits.

“Oh, you have a crush, huh?” Dean looks down at her. “Who...” she kisses him. “Shit.” he breaks away. “I, uh, thought you outgrew that.”

“No. I just grew into it.” She gives him a flirty smile.

“I'm old enough to be your father, Krissy.”

“You are not.” She protests. “I know I'm young, but you of all people should know what it's like to have to grow up faster than most people. I.. I know I'm not the hunter you are, but
nobody is. And I do okay.” She protests standing up. “I'm a grown woman, Dean.”

“I just don't think of you that way, Krissy. I'm sorry, but... it's not going to happen. I'm kind of involved with someone anyway.” He adds, almost as an afterthought. Who knows how things are going to be now with Cas? He hasn't heard from him since they argued. But still...

“Oh.” Her cheeks turn red. “I didn't know.”

“It's okay. Look, I'm... going to go eat and try to think what to do next.” Dean points to the door. Krissy just nods and sits back down again. It was always kind of a pipe dream. After all. He's Dean Winchester, and she's just little Krissy Chambers. Hopefully this girlfriend of his isn't some bitch. Or at least is the right kind of bitch. You can't be too sweet and be a hunter. Well, not unless you're Garth anyways.

“I do not understand my husband at all.” Shi Maria shakes her head as the gods wrestle on the mats below. “To allow the angel and that young woman...”

“Obviously it's because he thinks it's funny.” Alex leans forwards. “Maybe he's not as big an asshole as he seems.”

“Why must you be so disrespectful?” Shi Maria hits her arm with her fan. “And yes, of course, he is, don't be foolish.”

“The young woman is my sister, Claire.” Alex informs her.

“You don't look at all alike.”

“Foster sister.”

“She cannot give you children, Alex.” Shi Maria scolds her.

“Neither can Pluto but you let him compete.” She retorts. “Who's winning?”

“Impossible to say. Why do you object to this so much? You have very little to recommend you. Do you think you are such a prize you could do better on your own? Or is it because you know you are not?”

“It's because I value my freedom and the ability to make my own choices. I don't want to get married. I want to go to college, help people recover from all the terrible heartless things you gods and supernatural beings put them through, if they're lucky to survive it, and maybe one day meet and fall in love with someone and then marry them. Maybe.”

“That is foolish, spoiled american thinking. How can a strange human who seduces you make a better husband then a god who fought other gods for you?”

“Gods are terrible husbands and you know it. If I have the wrong husband or the wrong life it should be my own doing not someone else's. I want the right to make my own mistakes, that's all.” though this appeal just makes Shi Maria gives a frustrated exhalation.

“And fighting this is one of those mistakes. Excuse me.” She gets to her feet and storms off. Much to Alex's amazement, Claire doesn't place last. Though she does lose before she has to wrestle Castiel which would have been awkward. As it is the one who defeats her, Bia, gets his hand bitten for something he said most likely, in regards to the notable erection he's sprouting
afterwards. How did Claire get so strong? Not that he was the only one of Claire's opponents to do so, or of many wrestlers for that matter.

“Are you alright?” Alex jumps a little as Castiel appears beside her.

“I'm fine. Good job winning the sauna and vodka contests.” She says encouragingly, though his rankings have started slipping.

“Advantages of being an angel. As an archangel my tolerance of temperature and alcohol is even greater. I was assisted by having one right after the other, though.” He nods. “There are five of us vying for your freedom. Hopefully one of us will be victorious.”

“If you're not?”

“I will not let you be harmed in any way.” Castiel swears. The fierceness in his eyes is actually fairly comforting.

“Thank you.” Alex gives a relieved sigh and crosses her arms. “I never should have tried to get involved in this. I should have just left it to the professionals.”

“Never be ashamed of trying to help, Alex. Even if it doesn't turn out as you hoped.” He pats her head and leaves as the guards are starting to take notice.

“Not what I meant, but okay.” Alex sighs and looks out over the field again. Only archery and track seem to be left. None of the people she knows place first in any of them expect Bia was wins at Archery and Tano who places first in track. Though Claire comes second in that somehow.

“Are you excited?” Anansi rejoins her, tossing the microphone in the air and catching it, ignoring the screeching protests from the speakers.

“Estatic.” Alex says flatly.

“I think you will be pleasantly surprised.” he clears his throat. “It is time to announce our winner.” A paper appears in his hand. “The third runner up, Castiel, the lovely little upstart who let fly his godly wrath in such a hilarious manner seven years ago before retiring. Congradulations Castiel. You win a story and a song. Our second runner up my eldest brother Bia. For your prize, Shi Maria and I shall leave the Ivory coast for ten years and go to the country of your choosing. Except Ghana which we shall avoid for twenty as my other dear brother Tano is first runner up. He shall choose the country we visit in the second half of those twenty years.” he winks to his siblings. “And the winner of the lovely virgin's hand in marriage, Claire Novak, demi-god of Karaoke by a margin of one whole point!”

There's an uproar of protest at this, especially from his brothers. Alex gives a sigh of releif and closes her eyes as some sort of cloud starts to come over the arena. Everyone quiets for some reason and she opens her eyes to see the cloud is actually an enormous dome made entirely of spiders.

“Oh my god.” She feels like she's going to faint. If it falls on her she's going to die, just instantly. Heart attack maybe, or pure terror.

“The rules were quite clear. As was the point system. For those of you who chose to bet on your strength and preserve your dignity, let me remind you, faint heart never won fair maiden. There is more than one kind of cowardice and if you fear being made foolish you do not deserve either love or happiness. Now, as a consolation prize, all participants will receive one year, spider free, Unless of course you do not attend the festivities to their completion or choose to interfere
with Ms. Novak and her lovely bride in any way, for which I will end up making you wish you were never born. That is my gift to you both. None shall interfere with you this next year, Ms. Jones or they will suffer my wrath.” he kisses Alex's cheek. “Are there any objections?” Flat unadulterated silence, except of course for several wet and irritated spat crickets voicing their melodious displeasure in the arena. “Good. Ms. Novak, come. Claim your prize.”

The dome of spiders slowly retracts and disappears without losing a single one on the people below, much to everyone's relief. Claire pushes her way forward through the crowd and climbs the stairs to where Alex is standing, hugging her as soon as they're together.

“Thank you.” Alex whispers.

“Any time, Sis.” She replies.

“Claire Novak, do you accept your prize? Or shall I pass it to the runner up?” Anansi asks.

“What? No. I mean, yes, I'll take her.”

“And you're fine with this as well Ms. Jones?” he asks her.

“Of course.”

“It's done then.” He claps his hands and gold rings appear on their hands. “By the power vested in me, by me I now pronounce you wife and wife. What I have put together let no man tear asunder. Let the wedding feast begin!” The arena changes into an open aired banquet with lush decorations, flowers and tables of various foods.

“Wait, what?” Claire blanches.

“What?”

“If you'll excuse me, I must see an angel about a story.” Anansi disappears.

“Jesus fucking christ.” Claire covers her eyes. “Hel's going to kill me. She's going to kill me.”

“It doesn't count. It can't possibly count.” Alex reassured her and tries to take her ring off. It won't come off. Neither will Claire's. “Fuck!”

Chapter End Notes

Hypnos put Endymion to sleep for eternity for the moon goddess Selene who was in love with the mortal as a form of immortality. He found him so lovely he had him sleep with his eyes open so Hypnos could see them.
You cannot marry Alex to Claire.” Castiel snaps as Anansi pulls him aside into a nearby room to speak.

“Can and did. Now, you had questions for me?” he sits down on a nearby chair crossing his legs and clasping his knee, an attentive look on his face. “Tell me exactly what you need to know and why so I may craft my tale accordingly.”

“Pluto has Dean and Krissy Chambers. He will not release them. Hel is suing for them but in case the suit fails or he simple leaves the union to avoid compliance, I wish to retrieve Hades and supplant Pluto on the throne of the underworld. I searched for him in the abyss but an old Russian woman in a chicken house said Demeter went to you and if I wished to retrieve Hades I should do the same.”

“I see.” The spider god nods sagely. “Yes, Demeter wanted the story changed. So I changed the story. Hades and Persephone fell in love, eloped and were happy in a way few were. But Demeter refuse to believe this and when she was finally convinced of it, she grew angry. So I erased them and took their story from their minds and those of their friends and loved ones. Demeter became Ceres, Persephone became Proserpine and Hades who had in face defeated Dis Pater in his attempt of a hostile take over, became Pluto. But stories are powerful things, especially for gods. In absence of their true stories, the false ones Demeter herself had believed and spread into legend took over. Persephone was no longer the strong confident woman determined to keep the man she loved at all costs, but a frightened child abducted from her mother at a tender age unable to cope with the darkness around her. Hades was no longer a man who risked all to have the woman he loved and cherished beyond reason, but a vile kidnapper and rapist, driven to drink and rage not only at his failures but at the loneliness an isolation of a sole invader governing those he conquered, alienated and wharped into violence and ruthless despair.

“I helped things along of course, but if you wish Hades to return you must give him back his memories. Unfortunately they are lost to the river lethe. If you wish to return memories without the actual memories, there is only one way. You must get water from the pool of Mnemosyne, but it must be blessed by the goddess herself and I do not know if she is even still alive.”
“Thank you.” Seems the most consequence free response to this tale, though Castiel's eyes reflect a million annoyances and recriminations that the spider god is only too familiar with.

“Of course, whether Hades is any more likely to release your friends is impossible to say. It was always Persephone that made him bend on such issues and she is no more. The wedding feast will take a long time. And no one can leave without forfeiting their prize, including our poor god of the underworld so I believe this gives you an opportunity.” Anansi winks at the angel who nods and exits the room to go find Sam.

“Anansi.” Asase Ya storms in. “What is this foolishness? Weding that girl to another girl. What is wrong with you?” She smacks him upside the back of his head. “Undo this at once.”

“Mother, I am simply teasing Lokisdottir. That is all. Novak is her lover.”

“Oh.” Asase Ya gives a twitch of a smile. That little upstart goddess of the dead could use a bit of a humiliation. Spurning all suitors the way she has. Obviously she is just too weak to take charge of a husband or bear him children. Perhaps she can't. Interesting to see how she will respond to this. “Carry on then.” she kisses his head and goes out to congratulate the new wives.

“What are you thinking about so intently?” Claire nudges Alex as they sit at the head of the main table.

“Just something Asase Ya said. About the abrahamic religions having no mother.”

“There's the virgin Mary.”

“If I hear the word virgin one more time I swear I am going to scream.” Alex snaps. “Besides she's a stepmother at best.”

“Sorry, pookie. Here have some wine. Calm your tits.” She hands Alex a glass. Her sister just glares at her. “No, I'm sorry.”

“The angels didn't really have a mother, did they? Or much of a father in truth. Only Metatron and the archangels ever saw him.” Alex takes a sip of the wine.

“Actually, from talking to Gadreel it seems that Michael and Raphael were largely mother and father to them. Lucifer and Gabriel were the cool and crazy aunt and uncle, you know. God, it's so sad. Hearing the little fledgelings calling for momma Miqa and Rafi. I couldn't bring myself to tell them everyone dead. I just said they were in time out, kind of. For fighting and breaking things.” Claire covers her face.

“Well, Michael is, kind of. They call him Miqa?” Alex smiles. “That's so cute.”

“I know it's adorable. They're adorable, just a big old bunch of winged jelly beans. I want one but if I took it out of the abyss, it'd kill me.” Claire sighs. “It's just as well. I really couldn't handle that kind of responsibility. It's funny. Gabrielle, Mi-kai-el, Raphael. Raphael's the only name we haven't fucked up. I wonder why.”

“That's right. Michael is supposed to be pronounced Mi-kai-el.”

“I wish we could get him out, give the babies back their mommy at least. But he'd probably kill everyone.” Claire sighs. “That's even if he hasn't lost it being in solitary for so long. I'm pretty sure Bree said he wasn't doing too well, or Sam said it.”
“Well, solitary confinement and such can’t be easy. And why did God just leave him in there? Even if he couldn't fight, that didn't mean he had to just leave him locked in there. He was trying to do what he thought his father wanted him to do.” Alex frowns.

“Yeah. God, that has to have fucked him up so bad. I don't think there's enough therapy in the world to deal with issues that big.” Claire shakes her head. “At least not yet.” She glances over to Alex who ignores the statement. She is beyond done with supernatural beings with family problems. She's learning these things to help humans who no one else will. “I just feel bad for the fledgelings, though, you know?”

“I know.” Alex sighs, looking at the plate. She had to bring up the image of crying babies missing their mommy. “Still though.”

“Look at you, getting all sensitive.” Claire pinches her cheek, like the little deflecting hypocrite she is. “You wittle cutie.”

“What does Hel see in you, you brat? Seriously.”

“God, I don't know. Oh, she's going to kill me.” Claire rests her forehead against Alex's shoulder. “I didn't tell her I was going to do this and now we're married and I cut off my hair to suck on some other goddesses breast and how the hell am I going to explain all this?” She groans. Alex decides to ignore the troublesome statements and just pats her back.

“Well, thank you. I really did not want to be married to any of them. Especially his brothers. Could you imagine being Anansi's sister in law?”

“No, but now you're your own sister in law, which is arguable stranger.” Claire grins.

“Oh, you asshole.” Alex shoves her away. “I'm telling.. ohh, Jody's going to kill us both. Do you have your cell phone? O you have international calls?” Alex asks rifling through her jacket pockets. “Screw it, I'll call collect or something.”

“Hey,” Dean knocks on Krissy's door. “You okay?”

“Of course. Why woulnd't I be?” She asks, brushing out her hair. “So, are we ready to go look for Miti's and my memories?” She turns, pausing at his look of dismay. “Oh, crap, don't tell me they're back already.”

“No. Krissy. We already did.” He gives her a sad smile. “Your memory is getting worse.”

“Oh.” she sighs. “That's right.” She covers her eyes. “I'm sorry.”

“Not your fault.” He says gently. “Are you hungry?”

“No. Just tired.” She shakes her head. “I guess I can take that nap then.” She walks back over to the bed. “Keep an eye on me? Make sure no rapey greek gods molest me in my sleep?”

“Of course.” Dean smiles, though it's not as much of a joke as she's making it out to be, and pulls over a chair. As soon as he does so, there's a knock on the door. “Oh, great. I guess the gods are back.”
“You don't need to knock.” Thanatos opens the door, entering the room with Castiel behind him. “When she's changing, she bars the door.” He explains.

“Because you don't knock.” Krissy retorts, getting back out of the bed. “Who is this? A consolation prize?”

“No. This is Cas. Castiel, one of Harahel's brothers and a friend of mine.” Dean stands back up as well.

“I'm sorry to say I did not win your friend. But your partner did so she is in safe hands.” Thanatos informs Krissy. “Pluto will be gone until the end of the wedding feast as he undoubtedly wishes to take advantage of the real consolation prize of an Anansi free year.”

“Who wouldn't?” Dean shrugs.

“Anansi has told me how to retrieve Hades. We must seek Mnemosyne an obtain water from her pool, blessed by the goddess as well. Apparently Pluto is Hades with memory erase an altered. Blessed waters of Mnemosyne is the only way to restore all memories lost, even without their physical manifestations.” Castiel informs them.

“We can use that for Miti, too.” Dean adds. “And Krissy, Thanatos, as your asshole brother dumped her memories into the river. He said you gave them to him.”

“I did no such thing!” he exclaims angrily. “Excuse me, I need to have a word with my brother.” Thanatos strides back out. “Hypnos! I would have a word with you. And don't think you can escape me! Mother's not here to hide behind anymore.”

“We may also be able to use it to help retrieve Gabriel.” Castiel points out. Dean gives a reluctant nod of acknowledgement at this. “Sam is still at the feast with the girls and shall alert me when Pluto departs. Dean, I trust you are well?”

“Yeah, I'm fine. Let's go get this water.” Dean brushes the question off. “Krissy?”

“Well, I don't exactly have anything better to do. How do we find Mnemosyne?”

“Thanatos gave me directions on the way.” Castiel informs them. “We simply follow the river Lethe until it ends. The pool of Mnemosyne springs up nearby. If the goddess is still alive, she will be there.”

“Alright. Let's grab some canteens and head out.” Dean goes to the closet and fishes out a few water skins and belts for each of them. Thanatos rejoins them as they make their way along the river. He has a black eye and bruised knuckles that Castiel takes care of for him.

“Thank you. We don't have to worry about Hypnos for a good while,” he replies darkly. “I don't know what's wrong with him. He'll not take things from my room again in a hurry, I'll tell you that much. And I am sorry, but Krissy, your memories are gone, as are the ones remaining from the angel.”

“It's alright. We'll both get them back with some blessed water.” Krissy shrugs, but notices his uncertain, distressed look at the statement. “What?”

“When you took Proserpine's memories, they became yours as well. When you regain everything, those will also return to you. And purging them again… you may never recover from it. Lethe was not meant to be used this way. Those few memories, they can't be worth hundreds of years of torment that weren't even your burden to bear.” Thanatos pleads.
“He kind of has a point.” Dean says after a minute. “You didn't know about angels that long, and you can relearn what you knew really easily. I don't think you should take any more lethe. You're really affected. It's like you have alzheimers or something.”

“It can't be that bad.” Krissy rolls her eyes. “I've always had a great memory.”

“You forgot an entire conversation where I told you I was seeing someone.” Dean reminds her. Krissy looks confused for a minute.

“I guess so. How did that come up?” She asks. Dean's uncomfortable, half pitying look tells her more than she wante to know. “Oh god.” She covers her face. “I think I'm okay with not remembering that conversation. So, um, where are we going again?” Krissy looks around the river bank.

“To the pool of Mnemosyne.” Thanatos says gently. Dean just gives Cas a meaningful look.

Soon they come to a bend where the river lethe turns sharply around a corner of wall. There's a small narrow path around the corner but half of it seems to have been eaten away by the river over time. Fortunately they all manage to turn the corner to a small alcove where two identical women are sitting next to a pool playing cards.

“Lethe, Mnemosyne.” Thanatos walks up to them. “I'm glad to see you're still alive.” They just raise their eyebrows at the statement. None of the gods care much for Thanatos save his immediate family and the sentiment is largely returned. Obviously he wants something.

“Hello, Thanatos.” They both reply at once, “I see you have company.”

“I do. I'm afraid there's a bit of a situation.” he starts speaking in greek, gesturing to Krissy a few times. The twins grin and make a comment that makes him blush slightly but he continues.

“My waters were not meant to be used that way.” One of them, he can't remember who, says.

“You are right she should not take any more of it.” One gets up and dips a small cup into the pool beside them. “Here. Drink this. It will undo the damage though not replace anything.” She hands the cup to Krissy, who looks at it hesitently. “It is alright. We are not stingy with our favors.” The woman grins and pats Krissy's head. Krissy takes a breath and rinks the cool crisp water. Everything seems so bright and clear. She can see the small differences between women. One has small earrings, the other none. One has a silk sash, the other cotton. One wears one ring, the other two.

“Give little Natos a chance, will you? He is a good diety, kind an fair, if a little too fond of his brother.” The woman pats Krissy's cheek. Thanatos makes an irritated comment. “Hypnos is a spoiled child and you know it. Don't compare either of us to him.”

“Ms... Memo... nemo.. Ms. Goddess?” Dean fumbles over Mnemosyne's name. “We have three other problems besides, Ms. Chamber's.”

“You're finally doing something about Pluto.” One nods. “Take what you will. I shall bless it for you.”

“But be warned. The angel who's memories entered my stream has things that were buried inside her so deeply, and for good reason. Blessed waters will restore them all and she may not thank you for it.”
“I will keep that in mind.” Castiel nods gravely.

“Wait, so that's it?” Dean frowns. “You're just going to give it to us like that?”

“Of course.” They both nod. Dean gives them a hard suspicious look and kneels down to fill the water skins. There's no interruptions or monster attacks or even a splash.

“Alright. So...which of you do I give these to for the blessing?” he holds them up.

“That is the question isn't it?” They look amused, but don't move to tell him, or give any indication which one of them it is.

“Of course.” Dean says flatly and turns to Thanatos. The god just shrugs.

“No one ever remembers what Lethe looks like. Or who she is. I only know they're twins because I'm looking directly at them both.” He explains. Dean sighs and covers his eyes in exasperation.

“I don't suppose there are any circumstances you'll tell us which if you is which, are there?”

“No.” They both reply

“Great. Oh, I got it.” Dean snaps his fingers, and points to one of the sisters. “You, if I asked your sister who you were, what would she say?”

“That you're thinking of the wrong logic puzzle.” The woman replies with a grin, both of them laughing silently at him. Thanatos just mutters something clearly derogatory in greek. “The heart wants what it wants, Natos.”

“Krissy?” Castiel looks at her as she closes her eyes covering them with her hands.

“Give it to a woman with no earrings and one ring.” She says after a moment.

“Are you sure?”

“There's only one woman isn't there?” She says a bit confused for a moment. “Wait, no, yes... Alright, Mnemosyne has no earrings, one rings and a cotton sash.”

“And Lethe?” Dean asks.

“The river?” Krissy frowns.

Thanatos sighs and snatches the water skins from Dean taking them to the one with no earrings. She smiles an blesses the waters. Krissy uncovers her eyes.

“Oh, right. Lethe. I figured, if everyone forgot Lethe, then the one I could remember had to be Mnemosyne. Of course, then I forgot why I was describing her. You poor thing, it must be so lonely being forgotten all the time.”

“Mnemo remembers me.” Lethe gives her sister a kiss on the cheek. “Mnemo remembers everything but her jewelry.”

“Because you keep borrowing and loosing them.” Her sister gives a wry grin. “Good luck with your ventures, mortals”

“Thank you.”
In Greek mythology no one can remember what Lethe looks like and while she and Mnemosyne are sisters it didn’t say they were identical twins, though since everyone forgets Lethe they could be. Plus it gives an added degree of difficulty to things. So I figured, why not?

plus they speak in unison because its the only way anyone will remember anything Lethe says.
Regrets

Chapter Summary

Dean and Cas make up
The girls can't get a divorce but do get a honeymoon
Pluto is feeling chatty
Miti needs help coping with her memories

“I'll bring these two to Hela for safe keeping and return.” Castiel takes two of the water skins.

“No, go with Sam and the girls and make sure they get home alright.” Dean shakes his head, reaching over to adjust Castiel's tie. “Then try and see if there isn't anything you can do to fix things with your family, short of going back to prison or letting them put you on trial.”

“Dean, I don't...” But Dean just tugs him forward and gives him a kiss, much to Krissy's astonishment.

“I'm sorry. I don't like how they treat you, but you're right, it's not all of them and if it's important to you, it's important to me, so... you know... Miti and Hara probably need you anyways.” He shrugs. “If we need you, I'll let you know.”

“Thank you.”

“So, I feel kind of dumb.” Krissy comments under her breath as Cas kisses Dean again, and heads back towards her room with the water skin.

“Why?” Thanatos asks, as of course he heard that. She just nods to the affectionate couple.

“The angel cannot bear him children, Krissy.” She just laughs at this half hearted attempt at consolation. “Why is that funny?”

“I wouldn't exactly be bearing him children either. I mean, I'm a hunter. The life is much too dangerous and I don't want to bring a kid up in that kind of life. I hate it. No, I won't do that to him or her. And he wouldn't either.”

“It seems such a waste. One so strong, and beautiful should have a dozen babies strapping boys and beautiful girls all taking the supernatural world by storm.” Thanatos shakes his head.

“How about I just sell some of my eggs? How about that?” She rolls her eyes. He looks at her quizzically. “They can take a woman's eggs and store them and put them in other women who can't make their own or something.”

“Women do not lay eggs, Kristiana.”

“First, don't call me that. And secondly that's not what I meant.” Krissy sighs, though she can't help an amused smile at the thought. “Just... never mind.”

“No, tell me, I'm confused.”
“Oh, yeah, sure let me just tell the greek god of death the facts of life.” Krissy rolls her eyes.

“I know the facts of life.” He smiles back a bit saucily. “Perhaps the young woman unsure whether or not she's a virgin needs to hear them. Especially as she seems to think women lay eggs.” Krissy just starts laughing and punches his arm.

“That's not what I mean for either of those and you know it.” Thanatos' smiling face gets a bit soft at the sight of hers, making her feel a bit bashful.

“Any man who would prefer anything to you is too stupid to be worth your notice in the first place.” He takes her hand.

“Thanks.” She gives his hand a squeeze. “And thank you for helping me. Even if you did drag me into this in the first place. You were kind of looking out for your brother and there are worse reasons to be an asshole.”

“Thank you for your forgiveness. I truly am sorry.”

“It's okay. I mean, it's not 'okay' but you know, it's okay.” Krissy nudges him.

“Okay.” He nods solemnly. “I'll miss you when you're gone.”

“Yeah, you do play a good game of chess.” She shrugs and, after a moments consideration, hugs him an kisses his cheek. “You do look awesome in that bear, Real, genius billionaire playboy philanthropist.” Krissy taps his nose.

“I'm none of those things. Unless you count the precipitating countless inheritances as philanthropy.”

“That depends entirely on the deceased and who inherited.” Krissy winks, and looks at his odd pale eyes. It's funny how she's gotten used to them. Especially as they tend to be lightly colored by the candle light. Why the hell not? He's been wonderful. He deserves a chance at least. Hopefully he's a decent kisser.

After a moment of initial surprise, he does very well. “This doesn't mean I'm going to sleep with you.” She kisses him again. “And it definitely doesn't mean I'm marrying you.”

“Understood.” He smiles and kisses her back. Of course, Dean would choose this moment to pry himself away from his boyfriend, and clear his throat in a meaningful manner.

“Dean, I am a grown woman and a hunter. If I want to flirt with death, that's my business.” She replies. “Or should I follow your example and start corrupting angels instead?” Krissy teases. It's kind of cute how he blushes.

“We need to figure out how to get Pluto to drink that water.” Dean informs her sternly. “And you need to remove your hands from the girl, greek boy.” He points to Thanatos, who ignores him.

“We could try telling him the truth.” Thanatos suggests to Krissy. “If Pluto is truly Hades, he would want to know and might just drink willingly. Of course, Anansi might be lying. He is a trickster. I could also water down some of his grape juice. He hasn't had any wine or alcohol since Proserpine died.” Thanatos explains.

“Alright. Let's do that. Krissy, you hungry?” Dean points to the table.

“No, actually I have a few things I need to discuss with thanatos, so...” Krissy gives him a
brilliant smile and nudes Thanatos towards her room.

“Krissy.” Dean starts to walk over, but they're in her room with the door closed and barred before he can get there. He reminds himself that she's an adult and not a fourteen year old girl and that if Thanatos hurts her he can just kill him. Which in itself will make killing Hypnos a lot easier.

“What about Gloves?” Alex suggests. “We could just wear gloves all the time. The little fingerless ones.”

“Sure, Alex, and matching scarves and fedoras with black rimmed glasses and indie band t-shirts under horrible sweaters.” Clear gives her a look. “We'll just... say they're promise rings or something.”

“Nobody's going to buy that Claire.” She twists the ring. It'll turn and is decently loose but it just won't come off. “That asshole spider bastard.”

“I don't see why not. You're not going to sleep with anyone and my bar hopping days are over either because Hel forgives me or kills me.”

“Girls!” Sam calls to them as the guards are blocking him from their table.


“Are you two alright?”

“Please tell me this isn't a legal marriage.” Claire hastily asks

“Well, nothing like is could be in most African countries, but the real question is how strongly Anansi intends to enforce it.” Sam's attempt to reassure them is less than reassuring.

“It's as binding as I can make it.” Anansi appears with a couple envelopes. “Your room key to the Lake Bosomtwe Paradise Resort. The honeymoon suite. I'd keep up the pretense of being sisters on holiday. Ghana does not appreciate the love that dare not speak its name.” The girls just glare at him.

“I just want to go home.” Alex says firmly.

“I just want to go home.” Alex says firmly.

“It's Claire. We're fine. It's a nice hotel and everything is covered so we're going to just relax a little bit until Hel comes to kill me or I have to go back to work. We couldn't get ahold of Jody so could you let her know we're okay?”

“Sure. Be careful Claire. Take care of Alex, okay?”
“Of course. I'll see you soon, I guess.”

“See you soon.” He hands up and gives a sigh. It could have been worse. Much worse.

“Sam.” Castiel appears before him. “Where are the girls?”

“On their honeymoon. Did everything go alright?”

“Yes. We have the waters. It should help Gabriel regain her memories as well even without all the pieces and also Amitiel. Unfortunately Krissy's are lost and their return would be at too high a price.”

“Poor Hara.” Sam reflects. While Krissy is the one who lost the memories, it's Harahel who lost a dear friend with it. Hopefully they can rekindle their friendship once she returns.

“I was given a similar warning in regards to Amitiel. Apparently many had been surprised that might be traumatic for her to remember all at once. I would very much appreciate it if you would be with her, should she choose to regain her memories. You are very compassionate and better at offering comfort than I am.” Castiel confesses.

“Alright. And Dean and Krissy?”

“They are well, an shall take care of things on their end. Dean apologized but wishes me to remain out here with you and the girls and my siblings.” He smiles slightly at this last mention. Apparently Dean was able to get his head out of his ass without Sam's help after all. Will wonders never cease. “He promised to pray if he needs me.”

“Alright then.” Sam nods. “If you could drop me off at Helheim first so I can talk to Hel and let her know what's going on. Maybe keep her from loosing her temper with Claire.”

“Of course.” Castiel places a hand on his shoulder and returns him to Helheim.

“Do you ever stop eating?” Pluto asks, annoys as he enters the hall to find Dean stuffing his face at the refreshment table.

“I have to sleep some time. So, no virgin, huh?”

“No, but I did ensure a year free of Anansi which is worth any trouble. However it irks me that promise from a deity to do nothing should be such a valuable prize.”

“Trickster's, huh?” Dean smiles despite himself. “So, uh, I can't help but notice you don't have any opened wines.”

“I don't drink them any longer.” Plato says flatly. “You are welcome to, though I fear many have long since turned to vinegar which I do find more useful now. Where is Kristiana?”

“Having a 'conversation' with Thanatos.” Dean tightens his lips and takes an apple from the bowl. “If you're hoping to make her your wife, I'd sleep with one eye open.”

“No. I don't know.” He shakes his head, wearily and slumps down in his throne.

“So, tell me.” Dean sits down. “How did you defeat Hades? From all accounts he was a popular guy.”
"That's an interesting question." Pluto frowns at him. "I don't even remember the answer. It was so long ago. Before I took my Proserpine."

"That's an odd thing not to remember." Dean comments. "Someone suggested, that you were actually Hades, but just don't remember."

"That's absurd."

"Yeah, I thought so too. I mean Demeter wouldn't go that far to get her daughter back, right? Cursing you making you forget you were even married to her."

"That depends on how much like Ceres she was." Pluto scoffs. "Bring me that pear."

"According to that someone, she was Ceres, an Persephone was turned into Proserpine."

"Proserpine was nothing like Persephone. Persephone was strong, confident, faithful, loving. Proserpine was a disloyal fool more under her mother's thumb than Persephone ever was." Pluto frowns at the memory. "Persephone would never have done to me the things Proserpine did."

"Yeah? Would Hades have done to Persephone what you did to Proserpine?" Dean hands him the pear, Pluto, oddly enough, doesn't look angry at the question. "Hades was weak, foolish, twisted around his wife's little finger, but she was a wife worth deferring to. He was beloved somehow. I don't know how I won the war between after lives and deities while still losing so much of my allies. I don't comprehend it at all in truth. But it's impossible that I should be that god."

"That would kind of be the point, though, wouldn't it?" Dean leans against the side of Pluto's throne. "I mean, if Demeter found out that her daughter willingly left her, for Hades, what do you think she would have done. I mean the woman was willing to starve humanity just to get her back, right? Why wouldn't she erase the son in law she hated with you, and the rebellious willful daughter with a weak and compliant child?"

"If Demeter, or Ceres had done this. Proserpine and I would never have been together again." Pluto insists. "If Demeter didn't want her daughter with a loving husband as kind as he knew how to be, who she loved in return, she would not want her with an abusive drunkard."

"Oh, so Ceres wanted you together? I hear she pulled the same shit Demeter did but managed to get her for eight months of the year instead of six." Dean asks. Pluto gives him a withering look. "Or was I misinformed?"

"No," he gives a curt smile.

"It's easy to find out. Just drink blessed waters of Nem. The memory goddess. I mean, what do you have to lose?"

"What do I have to lose?" Pluto looks incredulous, "It's what I have to gain that's the problem. Whether it's true or not, I would get back the memories of everything I ever did while drunk. Everything I never wanted to know I was capable of, but saw the evidence for day after day. Persephone and Proserpine are both dead and gone. Even if it is true, what would be the point?"

"The point? The point would be knowing who the fuck you are. Conquering your own personal demons. Maybe you're not drinking anymore but you're still hiding behind it. Unless you want to spend the rest of your life alone or in a disaster like your last marriage, you need to face that shit. Things have changed, people have changed, society has changed. There are hunters who
won't give a shit about all the souls you have in your care, who don't care if they end up in oblivion or hell so long as they keep you from pulling crap like what you did to those poor girls. Besides if you are Hades, wouldn't you rather be Hades? Wouldn't you rather be the man who loved and was loved by his wife so much they both defied all of olympus to be together, and largely won. Isn't that a man worth being? And if you aren't, isn't it worth knowing? You can't fix the parts of yourself you don't like if you can't acknowledge them."

Pluto just stays silent for a very long time.

“Alex!” Zuriel pulls back the shower curtain an throws a towel at her. “Come out here. This is an emergency!”

“Zuri! You can't barge in on me when I'm in the shower! That is rude an inappropriate and you damn well know it!” Alex takes the robe on an hurries out after him. Amitiel is on the bed, curled in the fetal position, shaking slightly, her face buried in a pillow. Zachariah is back as well, gently rubbing her back. Odd that their vessels both took them back. Hopefully they're being better guests this time. “Miti, are you okay?” Miti just says something in muffled enochian.

“You are not a monster. You are the sweetest dearest thing I know.” Zachariah puts his arms around her, cuddling her tightly.

“She won't stop crying. She took her memories back and just broke down. She kicked out Hara when he tried to calm her down and she won't talk to anybody.”Zuriel looks to Alex pleadingly.

“Why on earth did you bring her to me?” Alex exclaims though she knows full well what they want.

“That's what I wanted to know.” Rye snaps.

“Because I didn't know who else to go to. Zachariah wouldn't let Sam talk to her.”

"I am not lettin satan's vessel near my favorite song while she's in such a vulnerable state." Zachariah states firmly.

"And," Zuriel continues in irritation, "Talking to you made me feel better. And the music helps. Even in heaven. She won't take back her grace and I won't force her. I just don't know what to do."

“Um, alright?” Alex rubs the back of her neck. “Why does she think she's a monster?”

“I don't know. All she ever did was let the seraphim know if someone was telling the truth or not.” Zachariah protests.

“What?” Zuriel looks a bit alarmed.

“What do you mean what? She's an angel of truth. What do you think they'd use her for?”

“She was in the choir and in drills but I didn't really see her outside that. And she didn't really talk about it. Was... was she working with Corrections?” The hushed tones he used to ask makes it sound like asking if she worked for 'the kgb'
“She wasn't allowed to get specific.” Zuriel admits.

“Alright. I think I get it. Both of you get lost. And don't eaves drop or I'll banish your angelic
behinds so fast your heads will spin. Do you understand me?” And they seem to as they disappear
before she's even finished the last word. “Miti?” Alex walks over to her. “It's okay, Amitiel. This is
a safe space. Your brothers are worried sick about you. So, if you could talk to me, maybe I can
help you work through this.” Amitiel just repeats the same phrase. “English, please. I can't speak
enochian yet.” Alex says apologetically.

“I'm a monster. A vile excuse for an angel. I gave my siblings over to torture and even
death.” She sobs. “Just leave me be.”

“Okay.” Alex gently rubs her back. “Are you hungry? I'm going to order room service.”

“Okay?” Miti looks up, a bit surprised. “I tell you I betrayed my brothers and sisters and
that's all you have to say?”

“Miti, for years I led unsuspecting humans to a violent death to feed the vampire family
that had abducted me. Generally sexual predators, sure, but not all of them, and even so it didn't
warrant a death sentence, so it's no excuse. I have neither the right nor the desire to judge you for
whatever it was you did. You are a good, kind angel, just as Zachariah said. Whatever reason you
had for doing what you did, I know you either felt it was right or that you had no other choice.
Now, I'm ordering lunch. You can think for a while if you like and we can talk when you're ready,
but Miti, it's going to be okay. I really is. You can get past this.”

“I don't deserve to get past this.” Miti buries her face back in the pillow.
“Well, regardless, being an incoherent, non-functioning wreck isn't going to do anyone any good.
Not you, not your siblings, not the people you hurt.” Alex reminds her. “Not that I'm trying to add
more guilt. These are devastating things to learn about yourself, and only a monster wouldn't
crumble under the weight of remorse in some way.”

“How could I ever make up for what I've done? How?”

“I don't know. But I know that whatever it is you find you have to do, you can't do it until
you piece yourself back together and fix whatever led this to happen in the first place. It won't be
easy, but Miti, I have faith in you, and your brothers do as well.”

“You think you can fix me?” Miti asks quietly,

“No, but I can hold your hand and hand you the tools while you fix yourself.”
Freinds and lovers

Chapter Summary

Pure fluff before Sam's quest begins.
Claire and Hel
Krissy and Thanatos
Krissy and Harahel

Chapter Notes

So, I'm going to be slowing down on writing for a bit. I'm cross stitching a stocking for each of my older two boys and hope to get them done before Christmas. So, it's unlikely I'll have time to write as post as often as I have been.

oskilgetinn- (norse) born out of wedlock
vifill- (norse) beetle

Claire paces on the shores of the lake, trying to figure out what to say to Hel, what to tell her, how to tell her. Man if she got bent out of shape from Claire going in the hot springs with Miti, how on earth will she react to this. But no, she was just trying to save Alex, that's all. She shouldn't get in trouble for this. Should she? And she can't just not tell her. That's a recipe for disaster right there. But...

"Claire," When she turns around, Hel is there, her expression wary. "Is there something you need to tell me?" That little shit Rhys ratted her out didn't he? He just seems like a little suck up tattle tale.

"Yes. I'm kind of trying to figure out how." She gives a sheepish grin. "First, let me just say I love you and really none of this was the least bit sexual... in intent so it shouldn't count as infidelity. Which you know, we haven't actually said anything about whether we were exclusive yet or not even so, so..." she looses her nerve as Hel's expression falls and looks almost heartbroken as she looks at her.

"What have you done?" Hel exclaims, coming forwards and puts her hands to Claire's head. "Your hair. You're beautiful hair... how could you?"

"I, um, traded it for Ninhursag's milk."

"Ninhursag? That's... that's the Sumerian goddess, the earth mother. They haven't been around since long before I was even born. How did you find her milk and who has your hair? Do you have any idea what can be done to you using your hair? How could you be so foolish? Tell me, who has it and I will get it back for you, you reckless, impulsive thing." Hel scolds.

"Ninhursag." Claire confesses. "I got it directly from the source. The abyss took me to their mountain temple on my last break before the contest. Did you know she has a lion? On a leash? As
"If it's not hard enough leashing a house cat. I mean, seriously."

"Claire." Hel snaps to stop her nervous babbling. "Why did you do this? And what do you mean directly from the source?"

"I... got it from Ninhursag. See, I wanted to enter the contest for Alex, you know to save her but Gods and Demi's are so strong and well, I explained the situation and she made the trade. A piece of my body for a piece of her body. It won't last very long but you know it was enough to make me competitive."

"Claire, how exactly did you intend to enter the contest. You are a human woman." Hel scolds her, thankfully missing the hint Claire slipped in on the source of the milk.

"And the Demigod of karaoke at Louix' V at Sioux Falls South Dakota." Claire smiles broadly, taking out her wallet. Hel's face goes completely blank. Either she's fighting the urge to throttle her or the urge to laugh. Possibly both. "The card says Demi-god, specifically. Not goddess."

"Card?" Hel asks softly. Claire hands it to her. "I see."

"And, I kind of won, too. It was a close shave. I only placed first in Air guitar with 'Highway to Hell' and in belly flopping in the mud due to the body mass to splash ratio. It wasn't the biggest splash, but it was far the biggest splash proportionately. So Alex was not forcibly married to some strange pagan god. She was just forcibly married to me, instead." Claire says hastily. "Which is good since Bia and Tano, Anansi's brother's were second and third place. So, yay..." Claire gives a half-hearted cheer as this detail doesn't slip by Hel this time.

"What?" her tone is downright terrifying.

"It's not exactly a legal marriage but I mean Anansi will be enforcing it... it won't come off." Claire holds up the hand with the ring on it. Hel just disappears. Well, that went slightly better than she expected. Her phone rings. "Alex? Why are you calling me? Is everything okay?"

"I have a very distressed angel here and I'm going to need you not to come back to the room until I tell you it's okay, okay? They got Miti her memories back and she's kind of having a bit of a breakdown."

"Okay? Oh, the two of you should go get like a full spa treatment and charge it to the room, okay?"

"Maybe not yet. She's really kind of a wreck. Will you be okay?"

"I don't know. I'm kind of telling Hel about all of this. And don't worry. She won't blame you. I promise."

"Right. Well, good luck. Sorry. I have to go." Alex hands up. Great. Awesome room and she can't go hide in it. Not that Hel couldn't find her. In a few more minutes, Hel returns, a little disheveled and slightly shaking. She shudders briefly and smooths her hair back into place.

"No man may part what he has put together. It's a riddle or a joke, but I'm sure there is a way to undo this." Hel says calmly. Claire reaches over to take a spider from her shoulder, causing Hel to simultaneously jerk back and smack the spider from Claire's hand before cursing elaborately in some Nordic language too quickly for her to even make out this time. "I hate spiders! I hate them!" She shakes her self like a dog coming out of water, trying to dislodge any remaining arachnids.
"Hel, I'm sorry." Claire apologizes.

"You should have told me what you were doing."

"I should have." She looks down at her feet.

"I am very angry but only partly at you. That... oskilgetinn vifill... And your hair..." She touches the shorn edges. "Your beautiful hair."

"It'll grow back." Claire reassures her. "I'm surprised you're more upset about that then at my suckling at Ninhursag's teat, though to be honest." Oh shit! Claire instantly realizes her mistake.

"Excuse me?" Hel's grip on Claire's hair tightens automatically before she realizes it and lets go.

"Um, Ninhursag's milk is more accurately Ninhursag's breast milk?"

"That ancient hussy!" Hel exclaims. "She had you... she couldn't have just expressed some into a goblet? That whore..."

"I.. wow, that didn't even occur to me." Claire blushes.

"You must stop consorting with pagan gods, aiskling." Hel commands. Claire just raises an eyebrow. "Other pagan gods. Come with me, we must discuss and define the parameters of our relationship."

"Fine, but none of it will involve you telling me who I can and can't associate with." Claire snaps.

"Of course not." Hel says scornfully, conveniently forgetting she just did exactly that.

"S'agapo." Thanatos whispers as he holds Krissy in his arms. "I love you, Kristiana."

"That's nice." She replies sleepily, much to his annoyance.

"That's nice?"

"Well, um, I mean, I like you a lot, but I mean we only just slept together. I'm really not there yet." Krissy explains a bit guiltily. "I'm not saying get lost or anything, but you know, I like you as far as it gets right now. It's just too soon for that, that's all."

"Not for me."

"I'm not you. I'm me. I'm sorry," she gives his pouty face a kiss. "I really am." Thanatos doesn't say anything, he just gets up and gets dressed again.

"No, you're right. It was foolish of me to expect it so soon." He leaves the room before she can get her dress back on. She knew this was a mistake. what was she thinking? Well it was a fairly pleasant experience, but still. It was so impulsive.

"Ahh, I can't believe Dean has a boyfriend. And I came on to him? He must think I'm so stupid." She buries her face in the pillow. There's a knock on the door. "What?"

"It's Dean. I need the water, He's agreed to drink it."
"Hold on." Krissy puts her dress back on and gets him the water.

“Everything okay? Your boytoy looks a little upset.” Dean asks, not quietly enough.

“Um, yeah. He just pulled out the L-word a little early that's all.” Krissy rubs the back of her neck. Of course given he proposed upon their first meeting, that's kind of progress in a way. But still, way too fast.

“You mean love?” Did he seriously have to ask that?

“No, Dean, lesbians, he asked for a threesome.” She replies dryly, rolling her eyes just in case he doesn't get that she was being sarcastic from tone alone.

“You never know. You sure you're okay?”

“Great. Now go away and get us the fuck out of here.” Krissy closes the door. God, what is she doing? You know what? It doesn't matter. If Claire can date a norse goddess she can date a greek god. Well, screw around with a greek god. It doesn't matter. When she's done bathing and fixing her hair because what else is there to do in this pasel coffin, there's another knock on the door. “Hey.” she nods to Thanatos who does look incredibly depressed.

“I'm to escort you an your friend back to Helheim.” He informs her.

“What, just like that?”

“Just like that.” he forces a smile.

“So... um, what do we do about us?” For some reason her question makes his smile a bit more genuine.

“Well, I have the advantage over my brother in that I can go in the light, but not generally unless something's dead or dying in the area.”

“Well, I am a hunter, killing things is generally what I do. Weird way to page my boyfreind, but, hey.” She shrugs.

“Wrong sibling.”

“Oh, right, nonviolent deaths. That'd be a little harder to come by. Well, get a cell phone, when I'm near a hospice or something let me know and we can hook up.” She winks at him.

“You won't find that a bit morbid?” He asks hopefully. Krissy just shrugs.

“People are dying around me all the time. So long as it's no one I know it shouln't wreck the mood too much. We... we wouldn't have to stay in the room would we?” She frowns at the thought. Thanatos just smiles and kisses her, much to the annoyance of the overprotective hunter behind him.

“Hey, can we just get the fuck out of here? I have to go kill a spider god.”

“I really wouldn't recommend that.” Thanatos says dryly.

“Did I ask you?”

“Alright. I'm ready. More than ready. I am absolutely desperate to wear something else. You have no idea.” Krissy pulls disgustedly at the shoulder of her dress. “If I ever see anything
“It suits you.” Thanatos compliments her. Dean doesn't comment. Thanatos places a hand on each of their shoulders and brings them back to Hel's throne room where Rhys, oddly enough, still clothed and in human form is munching on a ham hock, reminding Krissy very much of Cerebus. The fact that he's lounging across his sister's throne as he does so is equally interesting.

“Shit!” He scrambles to his feet, before seeing them. “Oh, it's you two. Good. Does this mean you got Hades back?” He sits back down and takes another bite. “You know this throne is surprisingly comfortable at times.”

“Planning a coup?” Krissy teases. He just looks horrified. “Playing regent?”

“No. It's bad enough just wearing clothes.” he wrinkles his nose at the question.

“So, why are you?” Dean nods to his seat.

“Well, you kind of have to for dates and courting and for being a respectable boyfriend and such. Though if I could find a woman who'd be fine with me going without all the time that'd be ideal, but you know women.” he shrugs, rolling his eyes at the unreasonableness of their objecting to public nudity.

“Why are you on your sister's throne.” Dean clarifies as Krissy snickers.

“I'm going to go raid the valkyrie barracks for something decent to wear.” Krissy smacks Dean's arm and blows Thanatos a kiss. “Later babe.”

“Just keeping it warm while she's off canoodling with her sweetie pie. Or killing her. I mean, Claire is married to her own sister now so some body's getting their ass beat or is it kicked?”

“Either.” Krissy informs him and heads down the hall. A very unhappy redheaded valkyrie is scrubbing the floors. “Hey, Brunhilda, right?”

“Brunhildr.” She corrects looking up. “Hey it's you. They did it? You're out?”

“No, I'm still there.” Krissy shakes her head. Brunhilr gives her a confuse look.

“Astral projetion?”

“What? Geez, no. I was making a joke. I'm here. Hey, I am desperate to not be wearing this pastel monstrosity anymore. Do you think I could I borrow some clothes?”

“Help me clean this floor and you got it.” Brunhildr stands up.

“Alright, but only if they're earth tones.” Krissy follows her over to her chest. “So, why are you on maid duty?”

“Because Alex got kidnapped by Anansi on my watch but mostly because she's pagan bait and I took her to that psychopomp party instead of staying in midgard to guard her like my orders implied but did not specifically say.” The valkyrie defends herself, indignantly.

“And now Alex is married to your queens girlfreind? You are so lucky this is all your getting.”

“Yeah, I know.” Brunhildr catches the pastel dress as krissy rips it off the second the other outfit appears.”Oh, I like those. Where did you get those adorable hello kitty skull panties? I want
“They, um, they were a gift.” Krissy feels a bit embarrassed still and pulls on the leather pants and cotton blouse.

“What should I do with this?” Brunhildr looks over the dress.

“Wear it, burn it, use it as a cleaning rag, I don't care. If I ever see another pastel thing again I will rip out my damn eyes.” Krissy scrunches up her face. Brunhildr just shrugs and tosses it in her chest. “Alright. Let's get these floors.”

“Krissy?” She looks up as she hears a meek and timid voice calling her name.

“Hey. Harahel, right?” She brushes her hair back. “And Saul? Hi, Saul.”

“Saul says hi back and he misses the dress.” Harahel smiles at her. “I'm glad to see you free again. Will... will you go back to hunting now?”

“As soon as I find another partner I guess. Mine is currently being the angel of death.” She sighs.

“We could be your partner.” Hara offers.

“No!” Saul takes over. “No. No, no, no we can't. I am not hunting monsters. No. You hear me?” He holds out his hand towards Krissy while looking at nothing. “You said you just wanted to come see your girlfriend. That's all I agreed to. Now if you need to win a game of poker, I'm your guy. But no, no hunting, Harahel. I'm sorry. No.”

“I... I'm your girlfriend?” Krissy's horrified tone makes Saul wince.

“No! No.” Harahel quickly takes over, blushing slightly at the suggestion. “We were not romantically involved. We just... we just liked each other.”

“Liked each other? Or 'like' liked each other?” Krissy tries to clarify.

“I don't know what you're asking. Does saying it twice change the meaning?” Hara frowns.

“Were we in love? Romantically.”

“Oh. No. I mean, you were my vessel. I don't even know how that would work.” Hara shakes his head. From the sudden stop and mortified look he gets, apparently Saul is making some helpful suggestions. “Saul, stop it.”

“Oh. Good.” Krissy sighs, putting a relieved hand to her chest. “No offense or anything. I'm just glad I didn't accidentally cheat on somebody, that's all. So, you just popped into say hi?”

“And see if you needed anything. If I could do anything for you.” Harahel awkwarly shrugs his shoulders.

“No. I'm good. Thanks. Do you need anything?”

“Me? No. Not.. not really. Remember, if you need some research done or something, just pray for me, okay?” He offers.

“Okay. I will, thanks.” Krissy smiles and bends over to work on the floor some more. Being a librarian in heaven must be boring.
“Um,” Hara starts again after a moment passes. “My transportation won't be back to take me back to heaven for a while. Zuri wants to check on Miti for a bit first and will get me when he's done. I could... I could help you clean the floor while I wait?”

“Sure. Knock yourself out.” Brunhilr hands him a rag and a bucket and leaves the hall.

“So what are you going to do? How are you going to find another partner?” He asks, scrubbing the floor.

“Hell if I know. So many crusty old men and horny young ones. I don't know anyone who'd be okay with me sleeping with a pagan god, that's for damn sure.” Krissy sighs. “Maybe I'll see about getting in shape with Sam or something instead. I haven't exactly been very active lately. I'm sure I put on weight.” She pats her stomach.

“Yes, you have.” Harahel confirms. “But it's nothing that should inconvenience you or damage your health or joints. What... what god are you involved with?”

“Thanatos.”

“Wasn't he the one that kidnapped you? Are you sure you're not traumatized with stockholm syndrome?” Harahel asks worridly.

“What? No. He's been a big help and it was kind of a misunder... you know, how do you even know about stockholm syndrome anyways?”

“I do read things in my library occasionally.”

“Well, anyways, if he's going to have to play ollama at some point, he'll need a team, right? It's not a one person game. I figured I can learn to play it with him. I mean, I'm a decent hand at soccer.” She shrugs.

“Ollama? I love that game. It took me so long to get copies of aztec writing, and they always had a game going. Though they called it just tlachtli. Obviously I didn't exactly approve of the religious ones with human sacrifices but the skill you need? It's incredible. You can't use your hands or your feet and almost no one ever got the ball through the hoops. Not like basket ball where they get dozens. If course some people were kind of forced to play. Prisoners of war and such. If they lost, they'd be killed but if they won they'd be sacrificed which was an honor and also meant a life of pampering and luxury before hand, however long it may be. If they got a ball through the hoop they got to choose what god they were sacrificed to as well. So they were all decently enthusiastic about it. Oh! I know! I can make you a copy of the rules and translate it and plans for the tlachtli too because you can't really practice without a proper field.”

Krissy can't help but smile as he chatters on about the game and his favorite matches even going so far as to pause and create an elaborate little paper re-enactment of one on the barrack floor. What is it with men and sports anyway.
The Price of Love

Chapter Summary

Amitiel goes home
Team Winchester places a bet.

Chapter Notes

Nahuatl is what the Aztecs spoke. still spoken in some parts of meso america. Hard to find alot online but enough for Hara to fangirl all over their opponents.

Miltze- (Nahuatl) hello.  
Quentinema- (nahuatl) How are you? 
Notoca- (Nahuatl) my name is 
Mechapaetianimitzlazohtla- (nahuatl) Pleased to meet you 
Nimitzlazohtla-(nahuatl) I love you 
ма xinechtlapohplhui- (nahuatl) I'm sorry. 

cantlahtolli aocumo moahcic- (nahuatl) one language is never enough. 

“Good morning, Miti.” Jody puts a plate down in front of the angel. “So today's the big day, huh? Finally taking back your grace.”

“Yes. Than you for making me stuffed french toast.” she looks at the plot.

“Aw, anytime.” Jody pats her shoulder, “Alex. Breakfast.”

“Coming.” She emerges from her room, rubbing her eyes. “French toast again?” She frowns at the table. “How come you never make what I like anymore?”

“Because you didn't invite me to your wedding.” Jody bops her head with the pot holder. Alex just glares at her. “No, it's Miti's last week. You are, as always, free to make your own breakfast if you don't want this.” Jody looks over to Amitiel. “I know you need your grace back but that's such a lovely necklace.

“I can probably get it fixed after wards. Put something else glowy inside.” She examines it.

“Nothing radioactive though.” Jody says cautiously.

“No, of course not. Thank you for having me here. I'm sorry I took so long to recover.” Miti drinks her orange juice.

“Don't worry about it, I think I'm pretty much come to terms with my house being a hostel for wayward daughters.” Jody sits down with her coffee.

“Jody?” Miti looks at her mug. “Since it's my last day, could I maybe try your coffee?”
“Sure. It might be a bit bitter for you though.” Jody pushes it over Amitiel takes a tiny sip, making a face that indicates she doesn't regret not trying it before now and won't regret never tasting it again. “Angels don't get tired anyways.”

“No. We don't. I will miss feeling fuzzy, sleepy warm and cuddly in front of the fire with Zuri in the cold, though. And your brown sugar and apple juice marinated pork chops.” Miti sighs. “It will be nice to fly again, though.”

“I bet. Alex, how were finals yesterday?”

“Good. I think.” she takes a bite of french toast. “I actually got to take them this semester so that's a big improvement. I can't believe I actually got through a whole semester without some significant supernatural interruption.” She grins at the thought.

Not only that but every time some frat boy refused to go away, he inexplicably found himself with a large spider climbing up his shoulder. No one was hurt or bitten, though now there's a rumor that she's some sort of freak who throws spiders at people who flirt with her and there were those hunters who were alerted somehow that came to investigate. Of course Jody took care of that, with Zuri and Rye standing menacingly over her shoulder, determined that nothing should interrupt their sister's intensive therapy.


“No. I'm trying to fit in as many other human experiences as I can first. I still don't understand why people like alcohol, or marijuana. And Alex promised to help me shoplift.”

“I'm just going to pretend I didn't hear that.” Jody, the sheriff of Souix Falls leaves the room.

“We were going to put it back or pay for it afterwards.” Miti reassures her.

“Why do you want to indulge in petty theft?” Zuri exclaims.

“Well, I couldn't bring myself to commit a major theft. I don't have the time or the skill and I imagine the experience is something but just a matter of scale.” Miti explains. Zuri just stares at her, then turns to Alex.

“What have you done to my sister?”

“She wants to understand why a person would do it absent severe need, but doesn't believe me about the rush. She was also curious about sex, would you prefer I take her out to a club for a quick hook up?” Alex retorts.

“Alex...” Miti blushes. “I told you that in confidence.”

“Shit. Sorry.” Alex winces, definitely something to work on before real therapy.

“If I have sex with you, will you forgo the drug use, and criminal activities?” Fortunately for everyone, Miti is spared having to respond as they're occupied in trying to dislodge the french toast from Alex's throat so she doesn't choke to death.

“So,” Alex clears her throat after coughing up the toast. “Instead of having a beer, getting a little high, and stealing a bag of chips you're suggesting she have an incestuous threesome that violates the laws of heaven?” She looks up at Zuri as Miti hands her a glass of water. “Thanks.”
“What are you talking about?”

“She's your sister an you are in a vessel with the original owner still inside somewhere, Zuriel. That's three people involved in that act. Brother and sister- incest, Three people-threesome.” she can't believe she has to clarify that.

“Oh. Right. Please don't drink smoke and steal.” Zuri pleads to the blushing Amitiel.

“I won’t.”

“And, Zuri. Just so you know, if you start giving Cas a hard time about his relationship with Dean. I'm going to tell everybody about your little offer just now.” Alex smiles up at him.

“What happened to confidentiality?” Zuriel exclaims.

“This is not a therapy session.” Alex reminds him.

“Alright, we're here.” Zachariah appears with Harahel. “Sorry about the delay. Harahel's vessel is an undisciplined reprobate.”

“Hey. I am a professional poker player. And it is a hell of a lot of work.” Saul protests.

“And the prostitute? Is that part of your profession as well?” Rye snaps.

“I don't have time for relationships.” he protest. “Especially since the little librarian keeps coming to me for help... no, Hara, it's fine. But really, you just need to ask her. Look, I'll ask her for you... I know... you know you like her. I do know what happens to my body when you're using it, you know.... Well, I can't deny that, she is kind of cute. So you wouldn't mind if I made a pa... whoah! Easy I'm kidding! Jesus, I wouldn't do that to you, you're my boy.” He raises his hands.

“Hara will you take control of your vessel before I am force to injure him?” Rye demands.

“This is ridiculous. You can't keep letting him behave this way.”

“He has rights to his own body, Rye. An his own opinions. Are you ready, Miti? I kind of have to meet up with Krissy and the Winchesters in Mexico.”

“Yes, I suppose.” She sighs pushing her plate away. “Thank you, Alex.” And thank you again, Jody, for letting me stay.”

“Any time sweetie.” Jody comes back in as Miti gives Alex a hug and gives her a good bye hug as well. “Take care now, alright?”

“Alright. Come on we're going somewhere isolated so we don't draw too much attention.” Rye holds out his hand.

“I got her.” Zuri takes her hand first. “Thank you, Alex.”

“Yes, thank you.” Rye nods and vanishes with Harahel.

“Aren't we going?” Miti turns to Zuriel who nods then leans over and gives her a deep kiss.

“Just... you know. Something.” he blushes and takes her away.

“Angels.” Alex sighs. “I'm going back to bed. Remember, if you see a spider just politely ask it to leave. No squishing.” she reminds her guardian.
“I will give it a wide birth.” Jody promises.

“I can't believe I have to take those damn classes all over again next semester.” Alex groans, not for the first time. Half the teachers wouldn't let her take the finals late after she missed them thanks to Anansi's nonsense. Though that's not fair. She only misses the reviews for that. She missed the finals because of Miti's crises. She should have come up with some decent lie but there was nothing believable that would have actually excused her.

There's a beeping text on her phone, well a picture form Claire of Sam, shirtless in the mack up ollama field they made. Holy crap does he look good. Well, she has her phone's new wallpaper. And his hair's starting to come back and wave just slightly. He's so damn hot. Bree I so lucky. Or, she will be when they get them back. Please let them get her heart back.

Claire: Off to retrieve Bree's heart form the winged serpent. Wish us luck!

Alex: Good luck! See if you can film the game.

Claire: I'll have Hara do it. Tiajuana here I come!

Alex: So you're playing too?

Claire: No, I suck, plus I have to go back to work after the ceremony. Bree won an award for the choreography in Casa Erotica 3000 Man vs Machine, and as apparently she left her will with the damn producer of the movie and named me executor of her estate, Hel and I get to go collect it for her. She also left Sam everything so I get to present it to him afterwards.

Alex: Dear god...

Alex; Wait, you're taking Hel to a porn award ceremony?

Claire: I have to. She's my girlfreind and she wants to make sure I don't sneak off to try and help Sam and Hara an Krissy. Who kicks ass by the way. She's the only one who actually made a hoop. It's just too bad Hara's so uncoordinated without his wings. He really wanted to play, but even he knows how terrible he is. He's so disappointed, but well, we have to win, right?

Alex:Right. Good luck.

Claire: You already said that.

Alex: Yeah, well, my brains still stuck on Shirtless Sam. Drool... Holy Fuck how he did he do that in three months?

Claire: Constant ball practice. GTG TTYL

“Do you have to kill the butterflies?” Hara asks, distressed as Sam prepares the summons.

“Would you prefer he slice his hand open instead?” Krissy asks.

“Well, he'd survive that, the butterflies won't survive this.” Hara says meekly. Krissy pats his head. The Chichen Itza ball court is Maya but it's the only one still decently intact. Sam places the thorns in the cage and recites the summons.

“This is a poor sacrifice.” Quetzalcoatl appears, tsking the sacrifice.

“It's a summons.” Dean corrects him.
“It's an invitation to treat with us.” Sam corrects him. “I've come for Gabriel's heart.”

“Have you.” The Aztec looks him over. “So soon? You don't look particularly hale and hearty to me. I'm holding this in trust, you know. A sacred trust for my dear Coyotl. Come back when you put on some muscle, little boy.” He smirks, though calling him little, given he's more than a foot taller than the god is a bit of a stretch.

“We'll play you for it.” Sam offers.

“You'll play me for it.”

“That's right.” Dean takes the rubber ball from the ground. “A llama.”

“Ollama.” Hara corrects him. “Tlachtli or Pokatok here in this court.”

“That's what I said.” Dean gives him an irritated glance. Hara steps behind Krissy at his annoyance. Quetzalcoatl just starts laughing at this, far longer than necessary.

“You wish to wager for my lover's heart over a game of ollama. You do. Three americans and a wingless angel.”

“Just them. I'm just the... coach.” Hara explains. "I'm really terri.."

“Shush.” Krissy reaches back to cover his mouth.

“What do you say?”

“I say, what do I win if you lose?” The winged serpent crosses his arms oppressing them.

“We won't kill you.” Dean says dryly.

“What do you want?” Sam asks, kicking his brother's ankles.

“Well, it has to be something of equal value.” Quetzalcoatl looks them over in turn. “This is the heart of an archangel and I don't care for human sacrifice. A little blood letting, sure, but there's not enough from any of you to be worth this prize. Something rare, valuable. An angel blade would be useful.” he looks to Hara who blushes.

“I don't have one.” He says quietly. “I threw it in the ocean at the dawn of time.”

“We're not giving you a weapon.”

“I guess it'll have to be a human sacrifice then. A virgin blood preferably. You.” He points to Krissy.

“Sorry man, you're a few months too late for that.” She shakes her head. Quetzalcoatl just grins.

“Actually you're perfect.” He nods. “I'll take her.”

“No you won't!” Hara hugs krissy tightly from behind as if he thinks she might agree.

“Abso-fucking-lutely not.” Dean shakes his head.

“Yeah, fuck that.” Krissy replies, gently moving Hara's hands down slightly as he's not quite paying attention to where he's grabbing.
“Demanding a death for a chance to return someone to life isn’t exactly an equal wager. Especially since Gabriel's your friend.” Sam shakes his head.

“You suggested the ball game. Ollama is a betting sport.” Quetzalcoatl shrugs and examines his nails. “What else could you possibly have that I want and would mean as much to you as my beloved Coyotl's heart does to me.” Sam looks over briefly to Dean who nods.

“The library.” Harahel says softly before either brother can speak.

“The what?” Quetzalcoatl looks sharply at him, intrigues beyond any attempts to conceal.

“Heaven's library?”

“Not all of it, of course, but I... I'll make copies of a hundred works of your choosing, but not spellbooks or magic books or anything angelic in nature.”

“What do you have in this library?”

“A copy of everything ever written. I'm a little behind on modern literature because there's so much now, but … I have even everything that was in the library of Alexandria. We have it. And I found a lot of things on the ocean floor when we were cast out.” Dean an Sam look at Quetzalcoatl who appears to be drooling at the prospect.

“By everything you mean everything in western civilization.” He looks suspiciously at Harahel, who just shakes his head.

“Everything, even from when the tlachtli wasn't played with the hoops.”

“A thousand books.”

“Two hundred.”

“A thousand.”

“No. No one outside of heaven is allowed access to everything in that library and not many people in it. Three hundred if but only if you tell me the subject and the civilization you desire and let me choose the individual works to fill your needs. I may not be much but I am a very good librarian.”

“Agreed.” Quetzalcoatl smiles. “Four on four tomorrow. We start at noon. Rest well.”


“I hope you have another player in the wings then.” The Aztec disappears.

“I can't play. I'm terrible.” Hara pleads to Krissy. “Anyone is better than me.”

“I'll call Claire, see if she can ask Rhys to help. He was pretty good.” she reassures him.

“No. You'll call Hel directly. I don't want Claire to try and get involved in this.” Dean instructs her handing her his phone. “What. What's that face?”

“Hel's... been a little... testy since the whole Alex and Claire being married thing. It's really better if I don't talk to her directly about anything, really.” Krissy explains an looks own at Hara's arms, still wrapped tightly around her body. “Hara? You can let go now, hon.”
“Oh, sorry.”

“I'll ask. Rhys and Yuri were fairly skilled at it.” Sam nods and takes his phone out.

“Plus it is for their father.” Krissy points out.

“It's... better not to bring that up.” Sam informs her and dials. “Hello, Hela? It's Sam.. no, not yet. Tomorrow, but we need a fourth... He's... he tries.” Sam says loyally. “No! No. Not Claire. Maybe one of your brother's would be willing? Sure. Thanks.”
Hara fangirls over half the opposing team,
They play for the heart
The other team are surprisingly decent people
Alls well that ends well. sort of.

“How’s your sister?” Krissy asks as Harahel helps her put on the padding.

“She’s doing well. Alex really helped her a lot. And Zuri and Rye aren't fighting as much either. I hope it lasts.” Hara looks to the feild as a couple of people on the other team nudge each other and look at Krissy.

“Oh no, Krissy. That's Kabil Santiago.” He grabs her arm.

“Who?”

“The best ulama de antebraco player in Mexico the last two decades! He made it through the hoop four times. FOUR TIMES!”

“Okay?”

“And that's Chel Orizo, Captain of the highest scoring Ulama Cadera team. Women don't usually play that, which makes no sense as women in general have bigger hips than men. But she is fantastic. Do... do you think it would be okay if I went over and said hello?” He asks uncertainly.

“Or would it be inappropriate.”

“Not at all. You should ask them for their autograph.” She grins. This little fan boy stuff is so adorable. And honestly his whole attitude towards ollama is probably the only truly stereotypically masculine thing she's seen from him so far.

“Should I? No. I couldn't...” he turns away. Krissy rolls her eyes and grabs his wrist, leading him over to the other players.

“Excuse me. Escuza me!” She waves. “This is Harahel. Te llama Harahel? He's a huge fan of yours. Hara, say hi.”

“What did you tell them?”

“That I’m an idiot.” This just makes them all laugh.

“It's alright, bebe.” Chel pats his head. “So you are a fan, si?”

“Si.”

“You speak english?” Krissy looks surprised.

“Of course. Cantlahtolli aocumo moahcic.” She shrugs.

“Oh, I know. I'm a librarian. It's always so much better to be able to get the original. Translations lose so much. I'm so excited to meet you. I've been following your games since... well, since you started. I missed the season in 2013 because I was at the bottom of the ocean, but I'm sure it was as wonderful as your others. I can't believe they get to play against you. That is... is... is...” His face falls suddenly. “Excuse me.” He runs back to where Sam and Dean are arguing with Yuri about something.

“So, how long have you been playing?” Kabil asks.

“About three months. But I did soccer in high school so...” the amused looks they give her are only slightly patronizing. “Did you really get the ball through the hoop four times this decade.”

“Six. Twice in 2013. Did he say he was on the bottom of the ocean?” Kabil raises an eyebrow.

“Krissy! What the hell are you doing? Will you get back here?” Dean waves her back to their side.

“Keep your pants on!” Krissy shouts back at him. “So, Hara's too shy to ask for autographs?”

“We'll send it over after the game.” Kabil nods. Chel just gives him a look and pulls him back over to their side. “There are professional ollama players?”

“Not exactly. It's all local, but if it wasn't so hard to make the balls, I know it would just take off. But it has to be rubber or it just doesn't...” Hara shakes his head. “If they're all professionals... But it could maybe be to our advantage. We're playing by Aztec rules. And learned by them. They're used to either only being able to hit with the hip or the forearms, so they'll be favoring those and try to use them instinctively.”

“They're sending over autographs.” Krissy informs the worried angel who's face lights up rather adorably at the news.

“Really?” He looks back at them. Chel waves at him and he waves back.

“Coach? Can we focus?” Dean snaps his fingers in front of his face. Hara blushes and nods.

“Also we're used to playing togethery, they aren't. Teamwork will be our strength. Individually, though, keep Kabil away from the hoops. Getting a ball in wins the game and he's good at it. Ridiculously so. Understand? Krissy, you're the only one who's gotten a ball in, but if you try to go for it, it has to be a hail mary, understand?”
“You bet.” Krissy gives him two encouraging thumbs up.

“You know what a hail mary is?” Dean asks astonished.

“Yes.” Hara gives him a surprisingly sassy look. “Playbooks are books, too.”

“Play...Do.. do you have Tom Landry's...”

“Dean. Focus.” Sam smacks his arm. But Harahels expression just crumbles.

“I'm so sorry. We're going to lose and it'll be all my fault because I wasn't harsh enough coach and didn't torture you mercilessly and throw heavy objects at you like at the good Aztec ones...” He covers his face. “But you're all just so cute and tiny and easily breakable.”

“Jesus Christ.” Dean turns away. “Thanks for the vote of confidence, Marian.”

“They're too good, you can't win.”

“Why don't you go sit down and shut up until you have something useful to say.” Dean points to the bench.

“Dean..” Sam gives him a reproachful look. Krissy just punches him in the arm.

“Oh come on.”

“You shouldn't pick on the poor little thing.” Yuri shakes his head at Dean. “He's a frightened baby bird who lost his wings.”

“And he's the one taking all the risk if we lose.” Sam reminds him.

“But he didn't ha...” Dean start

“Just give him a break, okay.” Sam glares at him.

“Give him a break? Give me a break.” Dean mutters and follows everyone to the center line. The first half of the game goes great. Sure enough, the professionals favor their usual body parts and aren't as coordinated as a team giving them a slight advantage, enough to score six points. But then the pros get into the groove and start racking up points, one across the line, one hit the ground, the other hit by a calf instead of a knee, one close save by Dean where he knocked the ball away from the hoop with his hand as it was almost certainly going to go through giving them a point well worth sacrificing. The last one, causing a need for a break, involved Chel smashing against Krissy onto the steps breaking both her wrist and her arm which she'd lifted to protect her head and neck from the steps on the side of the main run, deeply bruising her ankle and foot. Unfortunately the fracture is clearly piercing the skin and healing during the game is not allowed, in exchange for allowing the world snake to sub for Harahel.

“Shit. Alright. Hara, you're up.” Dean waves him onto the field.

“What? No. You know I can't...” Hara protests. Dean just walks over to him and puts an arm around his shoulders.

“Don't you watch sports movies, Harahel?”

“No. I watch sports. When I can.” He looks at him, partly confused, partly frightened at the close proximity of the man who killed death that he keeps irritating repeatedly and unintentionally.
“Well, sports movies are all about the underdog. People no one thought had a chance with little skill but a lot of heart who rally together and come through at the end of the day snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. That's us. That's you, Harahel. You know why? Because you're doing this for your friends, for you family, and for you library. Nobody wants a victory more than you and that means something.”

“But I...”

“Doesn't matter.” Dean cuts him off. “We're the underdogs. You especially.”

“They always win?” Harahel looks at him hopefully.

“Always.” Dean pats his shoulder. “Now suit up and let's get out there and win this thing!”

The sound of the ball hitting the ground is the most horrible sound he's ever heard. All Harahel can do is lie there and watch it bounce before burying his head in his outstretched arms. One point. They lost by one point.

“Ey, chico, it's okay.” Chel hobbles over and squats down by him gently patting his head. “You played really well.”

“No. I didn't.”

“You tried really hard.” She corrects herself. “And I've never seen anyone your size take a hit nearly as well as you. With just a little more practice, if you could find a way to... to stop falling over... I think you could be really good. Have you thought about getting your inner ear checked?”

“You don't understand. We're trying for my sister's heart.”

“Her what?” Chel exclaims as Sam limps over to him.

“My fiance, Gabrielle needs a heart transplant.” He quickly explains to cover for Haras lapse. “Our host can make a match available.”

“Dios mio! You played a ball game for it?”

“He wouldn't agree otherwise.” Hara says quietly.

“Why didn't you say something earlier?!” She storms back to her teammates, who looks more like they've narrowly escaped embarrassment than won a stunning victory.

“It's okay, Hara.” Sam pats his back.

“It really isn't. I have to violate my library. My most sacred trust.” Hara sniffs and raises his head suddenly. “Oh, no. They're calling Quetzalcoatl a donkey licking asshole, among other things. We have to help them!” He scrambles to his feet and runs over to where the professional players are admonishing the astonished god, just as one spits on him.

“Dean!” Sam is close behind him, but Hara manages to move in front of the spitter, taking the obsidian blade drawn fast as lightening.

“Damn it.” Dean runs as fast as he can.

“Don't hurt them.” Hara pleads, holding onto the wrist with the blade. “I'll... I'll add
another fifty books."

"Get out of my way you pathetic wingless angel!" Quetzalcoatl throws him across the court.

"You dare spit on a god?" He transforms himself into a large winged serpent the size of a man and goes to strike at the fleeing athlete's knocking both Sam and Dean to the ground in the process with a swipe of his tail.

"That's enough!" Yuri exclaims and lunges at him, ripping out of his body into a snake the size of the court, enveloping the aztec with his jaws.

"No, no, no..." Sam and Dean quickly stop Kirdal from trying to attack Jormungandr with a machete. "He ate my god!"

"Your 'god' was about to fucking kill all of you." Dean reminds him tossing the machete, and checks his phone. "Sam." He calls to his brother and shakes his head.

"Jormungandr. We needed him alive." Sam says apologetically. Yuri the snake rolls his eyes and rests his head on the ground, briefly opening his mouth long enough to show the god is still there but not long enough for him to escape. "Okay, Quetzalcoatl, if you can hear me. Give us the heart and forgo vengeance on your team for their disrespect and I'll... go get Baldur from the abyss for Yuri. Which means he'll let you go?" Yuri nods. "And probably if you back out, then he'll hunt you down and kill you." Yuri nods again. "Agreed?" There's a muffled response. "I want a proper oath on this, made to Jormungandr."

"You know you're going to regret leaving him alive." Dean comments as Yuri resists the urge to spit out the winged snake and just opens his maw to let the god walk back out, looking totally unconcerned and not the least inconvenienced or discomfited.

"Well, I can't deny you've met the conditions for it's return now." Quetzalcoatl dusts himself off. "Allies are are much an asset as personal strength, and clearly you and yours are more than capable of keeping my beloved Coyotl's heart safe. So as I promised her, I shall return it to you." He vanishes.

"That arrogant little shit." Dean exclaims as Sam just tightens his jaw, restraining his jealous irritation.

"You do know that Loki has always had a wandering eye. His wife, my mother, it was always the same," Yuri informs him as he returns to human form. "Surely you didn't expect fidelity." Sam just gives him a look that makes the world snake stop talking.

"You're wearing clothes?" The question gets Dean an incredulous look.

"I'm not Rhys."

"No, I mean, how can you..." Dean waves at him. "From that to this, and be clothed."

"Really, Winchester? That's the part that gives you pause? My clothing? Not the fact that I can shove the mass of a snake that can circle the world to the form of a man and anything in between without being so dense and heavy that I just sink to the center of the earth like an anvil
falling through the clouds?”

“I actually wondered that.” Sam admits. “It didn't seem polite to ask though.”

“Of course you did, because you're intelligent and not an asshole.” Yuri nods to him. “I convert the extra mass to energy and shove it into the veil. Rhys too, that's why we eat so much. It's getting so crowded there I'm not sure how long we'll be able to do it. So what do we do about the mortals?”

“I'll talk to them.” Sam looks over as Harahel is currently healing Krissy's injuries, or attempting to. He doesn't seem to be having much luck for some reason. “Go comfort Harahel, would you?”

“Seriously? Me?”

“Yes, you. He's scared of you so he needs to know you're not mad at him. Now be nice.” Sam waves him off. “And you know, tell him the truth.”

“Fuck. Okay.” Dean sighs wiping the sweat from around his mouth and walks over to the angel.

“I'm sorry. I gave the game everything I had.” Hara apologizes as the bruises are gone but the bone is still broken.

“You did really well, Hara. So much better than in practice.” Krissy reassures him. “And I'm fine. Chel gave me some of these great pills so I'm just awesome. No pain at all.”

“I use most of my grace just... just being here now. I have so much less without my wings...I'll call Rye or Zuri or someone. They'll put you back together. I'm sorry. I'm so useless.” Krissy just puts her arms around him as he starts to cry.

“Harahel?” Dean goes to pat his back, but doesn't. “It's okay, man. We were never going to win.”

“What?” Harahel looks up, dismayed. “But... but you said...”

“Are you kidding me? We've been playing for three months. There's no way we had a chance over anyone he choose to play us.” Dean shakes his head. “Seriously...”

“What... but... but I bet copies of the library books...”

“Yeah, you kind of did before we could make our counter offer.” Dean winces of the memory.

“Look, we couldn't tell you. You're a horrible liar and Krissy I'm sorry, you would have insisted on letting him know.” He apologizes to Krissy who's glaring at him.

“Do you see my damn arm, you asshole? Do you? I thought we had to win!” She snaps.

“We almost did win... “ Hara points out.

“That was unexpected. But still... it's okay. It was just a stalling tactic while Cas raided Coacoa's temple with Rhys for the heart or clues to it's location.”

“And... and he found it?” Harahel looks almost hopeful.
“No. It wasn't there. But it's okay. We worked it out with Yuri and Coacoa.”

“Dean,” Castiel appears beside them. “I believe I may have a clue as to it's location.” he holds up a small carving. “It's incan. The only incan object there.”

“Um, no, it's okay. We got it.”

“You won?” Castiel looks shocked.

“No... um, I'll explain later. Could you heal Krissy and take Hara back to heaven to recharge? Maybe help him find a way to get copies of three hundred books to Quetzalcoatl without getting in trouble?”

“You bet books? But what about the...” Cas starts. Dean hushes him. “Very well.” Castiel goes over to Krissy and taps her forehead. “Harahel you should remove the knife from your vessel before leaving it.” He reminds the angel who looks down at this chest and pulls it out, handing it to Krissy.


“Oh. Yeah, i'm great. C'mere, you.” She pulls him down into a kiss. “Wait, what athlete...” Dean turns as Kirdal falls against Sam. “Shit!”

“Later boys!” Krissy blows them a kiss. “C'mon, Nat, let's go play.”

“Are you sure? You seem like you're in the middle of something?”

“Nah, it's over. We lost. Thank god I didn't agree to the whole sacrifice thing, huh? Hey, how are you virgin enough for sacrificing still be sexually active? Because I think we must be doing something wrong if my blood is still virgin.” She points back and forth from him to her.

“Virgin blood. As in blood not used for a ritual yet. I think we can take care of that.” Thanatos nods and takes her back to his cave.
The Abyss takes Sam straight back to the crossroads. Dean and Cas, who attempted to go with him didn't appear. The bricks turn to flowers again and he just tries to tread lightly so as not to crush them too badly.

"Don't worry about them." The memory of Raphael appears beside him. "It's sweet of you but unnecessary. See?" he crushes a flower with his staff only to have it spring back up with unnatural resilience as soon as he removes it.

"Oh." Sam looks over at him. "I wasn't able to get all of her memories, but I do have Water blessed by Mnemosyne. Since they were removed with Lethe, it should return them all."

"True, but you shouldn't leave her memories lying free for anyone to access. Do you have one of them with you?" Raphael asks. Sam takes the handful of memories out of his pack. "When you find her, and her vessel, take a prick of blood from it and touch it to the memory, then drop the memory in the water, saying TOL DE OL. This will gather them all into the water."

"Tol de ol. Thank you." Sam nods, putting it back.

"And her heart?"

"I'm fairly sure I have it. The only way to tell is to return it to her." Sam confesses. "I'm not entirely sure I trust Quetzalcoatl."

"I don't think he'll accept fairly sure. Helel is a bit of an asshole. Especially when it comes to his favorite song." The memory of Raphael says gravely.

"Who is Helel? You mentioned him before but I can't find his name anywhere in the lore."

"Helel Ben Sahar? Heaven's special snowflake." Raphael rolls his eyes then gives a laugh. "That's wonderful. You don't know who he is. You." he laughs some more.

"You know, you laugh a little like your sister." Sam can't help but comment. "And that particular laugh is kind of a mean one. Care to explain?"
"Helel and I have never gotten along, not from the first moment. He's an uncompromising arrogant douche. Always thinks he's right. Always thinks he knows better than absolutely everybody. If it weren't for Michael constantly kicking his ass, he's probably think he was the best fighter too. Puffed up spoiled brat." The memory of Raphael mutters this last one.

"Brothers can be that way sometime." Sam shrugs.

"It's just so fitting that the one person made extra specially for him has no idea who he is. The name Helel ben Sahar is lost to the wind. It seems he wasn't as great as he thought he was."

"The.. the what?" Sam stops walking. "I'm what?"

"His vessel. I recognize the pattern. I can't say I'm especially surprised Gabriel fell in love with you for that reason alone. Well, no more surprised than about her loving a human. Though you're hardly the first. I don't have any of Raphael's personal memories of the prophet Daniel, but from her description of him, and seeing you, she certainly has a type." It's quite possible Raphael is the most sarcastic of all the archangels.

"I've been told she likes 'em big." Sam forces a smile.

"Compared to her, who isn't?"

"Big things, come in small packages."

"Big trouble. Did you know she once shellacked my wings? It wasn't supposed to harden, she said, but either way it would have been incredibly inconvenient. Of course, I was finally able to manipulate my element to properly strike at her. I forcibly ionized her with a form of ground to cloud lightening, which actually came in quite handy. It used to cause massive earthquakes when I manifested on earth, but I learned how to switch it into massive lightening storms instead, which are actually far less damaging. It took almost an entire day to make the change."

"That was thoughtful." Sam tries not to sound surprised. Is this was Raphael was like before? Thoughtful, caring, helpful.

"Well, maybe Helel is in charge of the long term development of the earth, but it's health and growth are my charge. That and creating Heaven's additions."

"What was Michael in charge of?"

"Positioning the stars and solar system. He's the one who made it so Venus was in the right spot to look like the biggest brightest star, breaking the darkness in the morning. For Helel, of course, not that he appreciated it. He made a moon for Gabriel and I to retreat to when we needed a break. We kept falling off the ring as we often ended up laughing so hard, so he took all this left over dust and debris and made a small icy moon, you call it Callisto. There are so few places he could walk the earth before vessels without damaging it after all, but the heavens..." Raphael's voice is filled with pride. "Maybe Heel got earth, but everything else was entrusted to her. Planets, stars, Heaven itself. Maybe Heel held the throne some times, but Michael did the work all the time. I know you're afraid of Helel, Sam." Raphael looks up at the taller man. "But you don't have to be. He's just a memory, the same as I am. The same as all three of us. And if you truly want what's best for our little tornado, if you love each other, Helel, could never hurt you."

"Lucifer's tried to kill me. he's tortured me, for centuries. He killed Gabriel." Sam looks at the entry way.

"I don't know Lucifer. It doesn't matter, because it's Helel you'll be facing. Good luck." The
memory of Raphel prods Sam forwards letting him take the final steps himself.

Sam looks out over the ocean as the spray splashes up from the edge of the jetty. Though it seems to be more of a pathway all the way across. He definitely won't want to leave this one. Now that he's here, he can't seem to make himself go forwards. Why is he pausing? It's like the memory of Raphael said, it's not Lucifer waiting for him, it's Helel. Not that he knows the difference. Or if there is any. No, that's not true. He knows the difference. He was just told the difference. It's likely the same difference between the Raphael who tried to spur on the apocalypse and the helpful if mildly irritable memory of him.

She had told him all about Helel, though with a different name. Teaching her everything. He probably taught her to fly. Standing up for her when their siblings took exception to her little pranks. The one who let her hang out with him in his 'office' and play music. The one not yet consumed by his own flaws. The kind, affectionate loving brother he kind of liked, which made him all the angrier when he found out the truth.

He's not going to face Lucifer. He's going to face Helel. Sam reminds himself at that over and over and starts to walk forwards. When he loses sight of the wall a large wave crashes up onto the jetty away from him and stays there, spreading wings made of clear shimmering drops of water refracting the light glowing within into sparkling gem like colors. It's the most beautiful thing he's ever seen. The being stretches out his wings and arms just as pure and crystalline as the rest of him, with hair of flowing water. His robes are like seafoam. But his eyes are the most striking ice blue, piercing him into his very depths.

"You." Helel's wings freeze the droplets expanding into feathers like daggers of ice, somehow even more breathtakingly beautiful than before but more terrifying. Sam doesn't say anything. He just forces himself to stay still as the angel flies over to him, Helel rips the pack from his shoulders, taking out the glass encased heart. "What is this? Why is it singing my favorite song?" Though his voice is enchanting, the air starts to chill around him.

"I'm trying to bring it back to her." Sam replies as calmly as he can. "It's... her heart. The essence of who she is outside of memory."

"And why is she without it?" His voice becomes soft, almost soothing, frighteningly so, as Helel holds the heart protectively to his own chest folding his wings around himself.

"She sacrificed herself to the abyss to save my brother and hers and me and every being lost to it since the dawn of time." Sam informs him. Hopefully it's a good enough reason.

"For you." Helel narrows his eyes, cutting to the heart of it with surprising speed. "You. With the darkness wrapped around your soul, the stairs, the scars dulling your light. She sacrificed herself for you? Look at you, a broken imperfect thing and you dared to hold her heart in your hands. You don't deserve to have this. You don't deserve any part of Gabriel."

"I know. But this isn't about me. This is about saving her life, bringing her back."

"And why should you have this honor? She's my sister, my favorite song, my responsibility. Why should I let you do what it my job?" Helel reaches out to touch his chest but Sam steps back the second the angel makes a move. "Tell me, Sam. Where am I? With my sister dead and in pieces." He gives Sam an odd look, almost worried.

"You're dead."
“How did I die?”

“The darkness was released and she killed you. Your father was there. I don't know much more than that.”

“There's something you're not telling me.” Helel says casually, tossing the heart up and catching it. “Something important. Why you're so afraid of me, perhaps.” He turns and walks down the path, tossing and catching Gabriel's heart as he does so. “No creature of the light need fear me, though it's hard to believe you are. Were you originally one of my fathers? You look like it. You have that signature style he slips in all the time. Though the darkness has her grubby little hands all over you. Or one of her creatures.”

“Since almost the day I was born, creatures of darkness have been trying to take me away from the light. That much is true.” Sam says quietly, not really sure how much to say to him. More than anything he doesn't want to mention Lucifer in any way, not to Helel. “I was supposed to belong to their king. I didn't cooperate. I... am tainted, but I belong to the light. And nothing you can or say will ever change that.” Sam clenches his fists. When Helel stops walking, he realizes what he just said.

The angel of pure sparkling beauty, places the heart back into the pack and lifts an arm letting the sleeve of his sea foam robe fall down to reveal the mark, staining black on his flesh. The area surrounding it is pure white ice with frost licking out over his forearm.

“How long?” he asks softly, turning to face Sam again when the hunter doesn't answer. “How long did it take? How long did I hold out? How many Days?”

“Biblically? I... I think you fell on the eight day.” Sam's a little surprise at the cocky grin that spreads over Helel's face.

“Eight. Eight Days. I was surprised when I lasted one. And even after that I still fought alongside my father to safeguard existence?” Helel looks so proud of himself it's confusing, and oddly enough doesn't seem arrogant or make him look punchable either. But still becoming Lucifer is nothing anyone should be proud of. Neither is trying to keep yourself alive.

“Yes, but why wouldn't you? I mean, if only for self preservation.” Sam can't help but point out.

“Self preservation?” Helel gives a bitter laugh, covering the stain on his arm with his other hand, looking slightly distressed when the frost extends so far past it. “All I've wanted too since this mark seared upon my flesh was to cease to exist. Auntie must still have had some feelings for me to show me such mercy, putting me out of my misery that way. I was sure she'd have hated me enough to just take and lock me away, alone, forever, like we did to her. Anything would have been better than that.” A brief chill fills the air again.

“I think she killed you more to hurt your father than out of any regard for you.” Sam says quietly. “Hmm. Makes sense.” Helel tilts his head and splits in two. “You know the rules, right? The useless one informed you I assume.”

“Don't leave the path.”

“Right. Now, one of two things is going to happen.” Each of the two Helel's looks to be
speaking, though there's only one voice. It's impossible to tell which one is, and both remove the satchel from around their necks. “Either I am going to take this satchel and meet you at the exit with it. Or, I am going to throw it in the sea and you'll have to break the rules to save your darling and go in after it. Choose wrong and you lose your chance to save her. Someone I consider worthy will have to do it instead of you.” Both Helel's make sure the bag is sealed. The one on the right tosses it far into the sea while the one on the left slips it around his neck. “Good luck.” They both vanish into this air.

Sam looks at the rippling ocean. Lucifer would want him to leave the path. He'd love manipulating him into breaking rules. Lucifer would likely have one neither of the two or both. He would never let Sam bring back Gabriel at all. But this isn't Lucifer. Not even the memory of Lucifer. This is Helel ben Sahar, loving brother, and creature of the light. Guarding and protecting what's left of his little sister. He would only do the best and brightest, but what does that mean? Following the rule or breaking it? How much Lucifer is in Helel? How much of Helel was left in Lucifer? Enough to still love his father, to fight to save him, when it was hopeless. Sam looks at the water and smiles. Neither Lucifer or Helel would ever let something like Gabriel's heart out of their hands for a second, much less toss it aside, whatever their end game. So he walks and walks until he can't walk anymore, getting closer and closer to the wall and open doorway. There's no one there. His heart stops in his chest as no one continues to be there.

“You didn't leave the path.” He hears behind him. His blood freezes in his veins. Has Lucif... has Helel been behind him the entire time?

“I didn't think you'd let go of her heart.”

“I see.” Helel flies past him to stand before the door, there's no pack around his shoulder.

“And I was told not to leave the path.”

“So you'd stay on the path as told, even if it means losing her?” the charged question is deceptively soft. Even if he thought he could lie about it, he knows better than to think anything but his truth would be the right answer.

“If you can see the stains upon my soul, I think it's more than obvious that I wouldn't.”

“The ends justify the means?”

“Some ends, some means.” Sam forces himself to look the memory in the eye.

“Well, good luck. Mitcha's going to eat you alive.” Helel disappears. He doesn't leave anything behind, though. Sam moves his hand to adjust his pack, an automatic movement he doesn't notice for a moment. It's around his neck, and there was no added weight to signal it's return, or a loss of weight when Helel took... he never took it in the first place. It was always around his neck. The sense of relief is almost as great at his annoyance. Apparently Helel was a devious little shit. Sam checks to make sure everything is inside regardless. They're both still there, the water skin and the heart.

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Sam walks through the door into a barren landscape, hot and dry and black, a smoking crater possibly volcanic, and the path winds own and around, right to the very center. After that it just stops turning into a large circular platform of gold brick. As he walks nothing and no one appears. He just gets warmer and warmer, thirstier. So thirsty he's tempted to take a drink from the skins, but any of
the memories he can no longer remember, he knows that he doesn't want back again.

As he draws closer, he sees a lantern sitting in the center, closed off of course, but there's obviously something inside it. When he sets foot on the center, a ring of bars around the perimeter shoot up from the ground, reaching up to the sky, to the clouds. There's a large expanse of clouds above him, not blocking out the light at all, or even moving or changing, just staying there. As he looks, a source of brightness appears in their midst, dropping down, a being of bright white flame, six wings like the points of a star, landing between him and the lantern.

“State your purpose.” Her voice is low and striking, almost like Claire's but not quite. But the feminine voice gives a different cast to it's features. Handsome, as Audrey Hepburn was handsome, just striking in her strong features. Beautiful is just the wrong word, though they'd call her beautiful now.

“I'm here for Gabrielle's grace.” Sam draws himself straighter.

“No.” She states firmly, making it clear in tone an tenor that there is no room for argument. The look on her face doesn't invite it either.

“I need it to save her.”

“No.”

“What do I have to do to convince you?” Sam holds out his hands. Michael raises an eyebrow and draws her sword. Fuck.

Chapter End Notes

Sam understands Lucifer but not Helel. Helel's job on the throne was all about maintaining order. He's a little shit to be sure, and twisty no question, but still, with Helel you'd only win by following the rules. Granted you generally win that way with Lucifer as well, as his goal is to make you break them, but Lucifer is your opponent. Helel was your judge. He did admittedly make the right decision but using the wrong reasoning, which is why Helel said Michael (who he nicknames Mitcha and not Miqa because Helel just has to be different from everyone else) would eat him alive.
"I don't have a sword." Sam says carefully, checking his pockets. It seems even the knives and gun he brought with him have vanished. Michael turns the handle outward, handing the weapon to Sam, though it's the only one he has as well. "I don't want to fight you, Michael."

"It's pronounced Mi-kai-el. And I wouldn't want to fight me either." She keeps holding it out. "You don't think you'll win, then." She almost seems amused with even the barest suggestion that he might.

"I doubt there's even the faintest possibility that I could. Can't we talk about this? I'm trying to save Gabriel. Unless you want her to stay dead..." The suggestion clearly annoys the angel.

"Words are meaningless. What are you willing to do? What are you willing to risk? What price are you willing to pay for what you want?" There's not really any sufficient way to reply to this except mentioning the events of the apocalypse, which Sam is fairly sure won't go over well, so he just takes the handle of the offered sword. When his hand wraps around it, the blade bursts into flames. "Just do your best." She removes the sash from around her waist and starts tying knots in it, winding some of it around her hand. Sam's fairly curious about how she intents to use it, but he still doesn't want to fight her. He went through hell to avoid that very thing and it just feels incredibly wrong even now.

"Are you sure there isn't another way?" Sam holds it up. Michael looks at his hands and his stance and gives an exasperated glance to the heavens.

"You don't even know how to use a sword, do you?" She shakes her head.

"Stab people with the pointy end?" Sam has no idea why he had the urge to crack a joke but
Michael does not seem amused. She just sighs and puts a hand to her face.

"How are you at hand to hand?" She asks after a moment, her flames going from white to a softer orange, except for her wings which remain white and her short hair, which is a bright red. He's not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

"Compared to the strongest most powerful archangel alive while she's in the form of a living flame? About as good as I am with a sword." Sam hands the aforementioned weapon back to her.

"It's not necessarily about strength. Not always," she puts her sword away and snaps the sash back in place. "Physics can be used to your advantage. Come here." A duplicate image of Sam, also made of orange flame though not hot in the least, appears before him. Michael takes the pack from around his neck and places it next to the lantern. The following hours consist of nothing but the longest, strangest most intense training he's ever had. Wrestling his own doppleganger, while being instructed, and even physically adjusted with surprising gentility when necessary. At the end of this, he's exhausted, overheated and unbelievably thirsty. Almost thirsty enough to drink the water he knows is in his pack.

"You have potential." the angel says kindly, standing before Sam as he sits against the bars to rest. "How old are you?"

"Thirty four."

"Thirty four what? Days,"

"Years? Rotations of the earth around the sun." Sam clarifies just in case this memory doesn't have use the same measurements of time.

"That's all?" She looks almost appalled. "You're an infant. Why are you here trying to save my little sister? Is there no one older and more skilled left to do it?"

"I'm not an infant." He side steps the question. "I'm human. We age quickly. And I'm trying to save her because she deserves to be saved. She sacrificed everything for me, for everyone." He rests his head back against the bars. "I have her heart and mind, all I need is her grace." Sam looks up at the clouds. "And to get up there I assume."

"She's a reckless, impulsive, irresponsible, irritating child. Are you sure you want that back?" Michael asks dryly.

"More than anything."

"Very well." Michael walks over and puts the lantern into Sam's satchel and holds the pack out for him to come take it "You're not much of a fighter, but the greatest danger to Gabriel has always been herself. Bring our little nightingale back to us." The ground starts to shake as soon as he gets up and takes it. "Take care of her, Sam." She vanishes. When the yellow brick ring starts to move upwards, Sam stumbles and falls onto the floor. The cool breeze caused by the motion feels so good. he just stays there, closing his eyes to feel the wind in his hair. As he nears the clouds, the wind picks up and starts blowing in every direction in turn. He has to hug the ground to keep from being knocked every which way by it, closing his eyes to protect them. It stops as a mist washes over him, that he can only assume to be the clouds, which quickly solidifies into a pool of water.

Sam pushes himself up, easily breaking the surface, to find himself standing in the a knee
deep pool at the bottom of a large fountain. After he makes sure everything is still in place, Sam puts the satchel on the edge of the fountain and allows himself a moment to just soak in the cool waters, even drinking some of the cool crisp liquid. Even the blisters on his hand from where he held Michael's sword are washed away.

The fountain is in a courtyard of an ornate castle, surrounded by howling winds. On the far side is an entry way to a large hall. There are paintings and sculptures all over the walls, starting with a large collection of sea shells and horseshoe crabs and various corals. There are a few teeth that look like shark teeth but so much larger than any shark he's ever seen. How much time did she spend in the ocean? And why? The paintings and sculptures become more ornate, and complex, like seeing an artists collection of works starting from infancy and on.

One has a woman with a gold leaf headdress, nursing an infant in gold leaf decorations and jewelry himself. Another is a painting of a tall presumably handsome man speaking to an equally handsome king. Or at least he was an equally handsome king before someone drew a frowny face over his head with donkey ears and put little hearts around the speaker. There's a young babylonian woman in the corner of the picture in plain dress and three pairs of ethereal golden wings. There are a few more including one of the tall man sifting in a pit of sleeping lions talking with the same woman, a look of complete adoration on her face.

Finally there are pictures of people he recognizes. Thor and Odin, Baldur, Hel's mother. Thor beating the crap out of Loki while an angry bald woman is holding a bundle of hair in her fists yelling at both of them. Loki of course is laughing his head off. That's right, there was a myth of Loki cutting all of Thor's wife Sif's hair off. There's one of a beautiful golden mare enticing a harnessed back stallion building a large wall. Is that... Did she really give birth to a horse? He thinks he asked her about that once but he forgets what she said exactly, or whether he believes her. In the next painting is a picture of the same mare looking very confused at a small black foal with eight legs.

"She tried to make a copy as a joke because of something she overheard Thor and Odin say and some how it went very wrong." Sam hears in a fake innocent tone that from Gabriel would imply she caused it to go very wrong. He looks over to see Chuck, standing beside him. "She still hasn't figured out how it resulted in pregnancy." The prophet grins. But Chuck isn't just a prophet. Sam just stares at him as memories of drowning in a fog of darkness come back. When it clears, the amulet is glowing, as in the presence of god. In the presence of Chuck. "I thought it would be funny." he confesses with a shrug.

"W-was it?" Is all Sam can say.

"Of course." He grins. "It's was hillarious. It completely made up for when the little brat stole the ark of the covenant."

"She... stole the ark of the covenant?" Sam still can't think of anything better to say.

"It's complicated. She had this breif stint as this sumerian fish god Dagan that started as a joke but kind of spiralled out of control and took on a life of it's own as the main god of the philistines, Dagon. To her credit she was trying to take him down, so she tricked my people into taking the ark into battle, and then got the philistines to steal it and place it in Dagon's temple which obviously did not go well for anybody involved, though did end up eliminating the actual pagan god. But still I was not happy. Sometimes her little pranks go a bit too far, and even if she doesn't intend it to."

"So pregnancy was punishment?"
"No, no," Chuck shakes his head. "Just... a lesson in unintended consequences. Maybe a little retaliation. After all, vengeance is mine, sayeth me." He grins Gabriel's mischievous smile. It's a little disconcerting to think that she's her father's child to that degree.

"Is it you, here, now? Or just... a memory of you?" Sam's voice cracks a little as he asks. Chuck just gives him a comforting pat on the arm, but doesn't answer. "She knew who you were?"

"That's something you should ask her, isn't it? Given how many other questions she'd have to answer if she did. Or are you more worried about speaking with me given the fact that you and my daughter are lovers?" Sam freezes a look of utter panic on his face as the thought that he had successfully been avoiding thinking is not completely and utterly inescapable. He has been fooling around with the daughter of God, out of wedlock and probably breaking a few laws in the process as well, both corporal and theological. Sam decides that as he's not been obliterated in a feat of holy wrath, that this is probably just a memory. He sincerely doubts God would look as amused as he does right at this moment. "It's alright, Sam. You're a good man. She could do worse. Has done worse. So, so much worse. Honestly, she's probably the one person to truly benefit from her brother setting the bar so incredibly low. " Chuck sighs, rubbing the bridge of his nose as he tries not to wince. "Omnience is not always as wonderful as one might assume it to be."

"Yes, sir... no, sir... um... W-why are you here? If I may ask. And... where have you been? What happened?" Sam holds tightly onto the strap of his bag. If it is Him, really Him, which he's not sure whether or not to hope for.

"I came to check in on my favorite messenger. I can't stay long as It takes almost everything I have to keep my sister away from creation. And as for what happened, in the simplest terms, Amara and I killed each other, and are now inexorably bound to each other. It was the best I could do to keep her from destroying everything. I'm trying to make sure that until she comes around, somehow, that we stay dead. Fortunately our brother is giving me some small assistance, not that I'm completely unaware that since keeping her out of things means keeping me out of things it also means he doesn't have to clean up the mess again and I can't expand things any further than I have already. Not that it'll really stop mind you, but I can't create more souls. Has the back up supply run out already?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'll all figure it out. She already has things all set up. And to answer the question you were trying not to ask yourself... no, not that one, the other one." Chuck nods back to the picture of the man angel conversing among lions. "That is her, and the man she's speaking to is the prophet Daniel. One of my favorites, and definitely hers. The poor thing, she barely even understood what humanity was and got her first vessel in that visit, and her first crush. It was absolutely adorable. They grow up so fast." He gives a regretful sigh. "You'll see. Maybe. I forget which thread this is, I've stretched myself so thin, I think they're all at their apex about now, but I'm not completely sure. Dealing with family can be so exhausting." Chuck shakes his head. "This way." he heads to a corridor, waving Sam to follow him.

They soon reach a room with a beautiful golden statue that looks almost glazed, and a little dirty. It has some black spots, not soot or dirt and it almost looks just under the surface, but there isn't much so it's hard to tell. A pretty little angel with six wings, spread wide, standing on tiptoe, reaching up towards something. Sam follows her gaze and outstretched arms up to an open roof and a tower standing high above it. Her features are familiar, and her white robes and golden armor are almost like clouds illuminate by rays of sunlight. In truth, she looks like a warm summer breeze, even her light short mane of honey gold curls. Suddenly he sees it, this is the angel painted in every religious fresco ever done, often badly, with poor coloring, and never with the golden
brown sunkissed skin too dark to be European and too perfect in tone and depth to be human at all. She doesn't look like a person who once had a frat boy abducted by aliens, probed and forced to slow dance. Or once had Dean mauled to death by squirrels. At least not until he sees her eyes, while wide and yearning, there's still that hint of mischief sparkling in the corners. Like the kiss on the corner of Mrs. Darling's lips that no one could seem to get in JM Barrie's Peter Pan, everything she is and ever was and will be in there, somewhere. Just eternally, inescapably Gabriel.

"I'm glad you got to see her this way. It's the closest you can ever come to gazing upon her true glory. And it's a poor imitation. All of them are, in truth." Chuck's voice wavers slightly, reminding Sam that Gabriel is not the only one of his children who's been lost to death.

"I'm sorry. About... Helel." he forces himself to say it, and what's more to mean it. A father's grief for a lost child, now forever beyond redemption. "I know what he meant to you."

"Thank you," The sad smile makes it clear to Sam that he knows exactly how much it cost Sam to say that, to make himself sympathise with his loss. Chuck walks up to the statue and gives it a kiss on the cheek, making it disappear. "If you'll excuse me, I have to go make sure her brother is ready to be revived as well. Unfortunately, humanity won't last long enough for them to heal like they'd need to on their own. Please, take care of my children, Sam." He vanishes before Sam can form a reply.

"Wait..." Sam reaches out to the empty pedestal, but there's no response and all the doors close around him. Their slams punctuate the faint tinkling of bells. The doors are locked and won't open but the open ceiling above him has some fairly easy handholds and ridges up to it. Sam easily climbs up and walks over to the tower. There's absolutely no way back down or up except to climb that as well, so he does. It has just as many badly placed bricks and stones that make it just as easy to climb. In theory. In practice the wind slamming him against the wall and trying to tear him off it makes it much more difficult. Fortunately it smashes neither the heart or the lantern against the bricks in the process. His face is not so lucky.

"Dammit Babe! I'm trying to save you, not stop it!" He snaps as one blast smashes his face into the wall, blooeying his nose. Not that he knows why he's yelling at a dead woman or what that would accomplish, but it seems to the trick. The wind dies down and he finishes the climb in peace. When he reaches the window and pulls himself in, he sees directly opposite himself an elevator door to an elevator that absolutely is not visible on the outside and better not actually lead outside anywhere at the bottom of the tower or he's going to murder her the second he brings her back.

There is absolutely nothing in the room except a spinning wheel with a broken spindle, an apple and a small wooden cup that looks a lot like the holy grail from Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. As he still has no actual weapons or items with sharp objects on him, Sam takes the broken spindle to prick her finger with so he can get the drop of blood for the waters of mnemosyne. When he does so, the elevator door opens behind him and the window disappears. He turns quickly around but no one is inside. Having no other choice if he wants to leave the room, Sam cautiously enters the elevator. There are no buttons, not thing to indicate floors and when the doors close, they're mirrors.

Sam cringes at his reflection. His hair is ridiculously messy, and not in a artfully disheveled way, either. He looks more like he stuck his finger in an electric socket. His bruised and bloody nose and darkened eyes are downright pitiful. His clothes are wrinkled, torn, and stained, and his facial hair has gone from attractively scruffy to 'fifth day trapped in an avalanche buried log cabin with no razors, but a growing hunger for human flesh'. While he's aware it's pure vanity that makes him try to sort himself out even a little, he can't help himself. At least he's no
longer a walking stick. The elevator stops and opens the door revealing a beauty salon staffed entirely by small woodland creatures. At the other end of the room is an ornate doorway leading to stairs.

"You have got to be kidding me." He comments as they all turn to look at him in a rather eerie symmetry, and silently vows to tell everyone he had to fight a dragon. Two dragons maybe. And a horde of demons. At the very least, he is never, ever going to mention this to Dean. As he takes a breath, readying himself to try and sprint past to the stairwell, the fuzzy critters leap as one, swarming the elevators.

Sam keeps touching his hand to his face as he walks down the stairs. Who would have thought that otters could give such a smooth shave or that chinchillas made such good makeup applicators. The bunnies were of course the hair specialists and neatly styled his hair into a short wavy bob, held out of his hair by a blue headband. It's even more amazing how you can be consumed by the twin desires to laugh and murder. Especially since the lipstick will not come off or the eye shadow or the blush or the dress. If he could get rid of the puffy sleeves and skirt, the thick tights wouldn't be quite as bad. At least the shoes are ballet flats, though they won't come off either, and all they did to his satchel was put a couple little bows on the opposite ends of the strap.

At the bottom of the stair well are golden silk curtains. The blue birds fly from his shoulder to draw them back at his approach to reveal Babe in her angelic robe and breastplate, altered slightly to fit around her breasts, now that she has secondary sex characteristics again. Her eyes are closed and she's resting on a bed of lillies surrounded by a ring of fire that also parts at his approach. Her prosthetic leg is gone. Just an empty form. The fact that there's not even a hint of a laugh or smile anywhere about her makes it seem emptier than he could have ever imagined. The fire flares up behind him as he sits on the bier next to her and opens the pack.

A prick of her finger with the spindle, gets the drop of blood needed for the spell, and as soon as he drops the gem of her memory into the water, a fog rushes into the room, enveloping everything. When Sam can't help but breathe, the world fades into the face of Lucifer looking almost heart broken, holding a hand to his face, comforting him as there's a piercing deep inside him, so close to the end of everything. The pain moves and explodes, fading into black then light, bright lights above him. Something is in his throat, his every muscle aches and he tries to run, just get away from it all, though there's something missing. Among those trying to hold him down, keep him in place, he hears a familiar voice and looks to it. Through the orderlies and nurses, he sees his own face, though more handsome than he's ever seen it in a mirror, with a soft distressed kindness in his own eyes that he can't believe could ever really be there. He's enveloped by the feeling that he's looking at the most wonderful thing in all of creation and there's calm, confusion and a sense that everything will be alright, though nothing is.

The memory is ripped away as the last of the fog is sucked into the water skin. Sam is forced to take a moment. Is that how he looks to her? Is that how she feels? It's one thing to believe you're loved, to know you're loved but to feel exactly what another person feels for you is almost overwhelming. He composes himself and gently lifts her head, holding the water skin to her lips so she can drink, but she doesn't. Of course not, she can't yet, this is just an empty shell. You can live without memories, but not without your heart. He takes it out, cracking the protective glass casing, and just holds the ethereal organ that he can barely feel in his hands, just for a second before pressing it down into her chest through the breastplate. She takes a breath for the first time since he's entered.

This time, when he puts the skin to her lips, she drinks, but still doesn't wake. All
that's left is her grace. Part of him wishes she could just wake up without it. That he could just have Babe back and not have to worry about not being enough for Gabriel. It's probably the most unworthy and selfish thought he's had in a while and makes no sense as he just felt what she felt. But it was what the human felt, not the archangel. Obviously what the human saw was far more wonderful than what was actually there. The archangel wouldn't be fooled. She'd see the stains and flaws and ugliness that riddles him through no matter how much he tries to be good and do what's right. It doesn't matter, though. Not even slightly, she deserves to be whole, no matter what.

Sam takes out the lantern and turns away, closing his eyes as he points it behind him and opens it. Even though his eyes are closed, the brightness and glory of her escaping grace blinds him thoroughly. Fortunately it doesn't physically damage or disfigure him, he can feel that much.

"Sam?" he hears her laugh as he tries to open his eyes, but it doesn't make much of a difference. "Really? You stayed at ground zero?" She taps his forehead, clearing up his vision. "You're lucky I'm no where near as powerful as..."But as soon as he can see her, he interrupts her with a kiss.

"Please get me out of this dress." He whispers.

"But you look so pretty." She pats the puffy blue sleeves. "My sweet Sampaquita. What's going on? Where are we?"

"Babe..." He takes hold of her face. "If you don't take this off of me right now, I will stab you with a wooden stake."

"Don't have ask me twice." she snaps her fingers and pulls him back down.
"So, this place kind of has a mind of it's own, huh?" Babe stretches and reaches up to run her fingers through Sam's hair, smiling at it's growth.

"Well, a mind of your own." He kisses her, running his fingers up her spine.

"Crap. Let's get the hell out of here before things get really weird." She snaps her fingers, taking them both to a small cabin in the mountains, positioned exactly as they were on the beir, only on a large round bed with dozens of pillows scattered around. "Oh, you have no idea how long I've wanted to do this."

"We don't exactly have a lot of time to..." Sam's interrupted by a kiss.

"Relax," She shoves him down. "I'm looping the hour." After a few loops he's exhausted and she's looks disappointed, much to his chagrin.

"I'm not quite at my peak yet, and it has been a little while. There's been no one but you, since... you." Sam apologizes. Babe just gives him semi amused, disbelieving look.

"We just had a freaky four hour marathon and multiple orgasms. I think your holding yourself to unreasonable standards there, Samshine." She tweaks his nose. "No It's not you. It's having my grace back again. Sense of taste and touch are so ridiculously dull compare to just being straight human. I guess that's a good thing as, to be honest, if it wasn't we would never leave this cabin."

"Oh," Sam doesn't feel too much better about it. "We would have to, though. I told you what was going on."

"Yeah, the veil, the sterility, heaven etc." Babe heaves a sigh and rests her chin on his chest. "We can take a bit of a break though, right? Just for the hour."

"Yes, but I will have to go back to the abyss at some point. In order to get your heart back from Quetzalcoatl I had to promise to bring Yuri's father back. And since it was clearly the genuine article, as here you are, on top of me, I have to fulfil my vow." Sam explains.

"Oh, that stupid little social climber." She exclaims in frustration. "I love my son, but Yuri... he just... wants to belong so badly." It's adorable how quickly she starts pulling her punches
after that initial outburst. "Maybe it is my fault. Maybe... I don't know, maybe it was as obvious to Odin as it was to me that Yuri was Baldur's. He always looked just like him. And banishing him to Asgard. It took the incursion of Christianity to weaken them enough for Hel to be able to let him in neffheim and jotunheim without being challenged. Maybe they're just dicks. Maybe it's all three, but... this... Alright... look, let me get a few things taken care of and I'll go with you." She pushes herself up and snaps them into a more respectable state.

"Are you sure that's a good idea? You kind of have... history." Sam cautions.

"I'm sure it's a horrible idea. The whole damn thing. Bringing Baldur back is just... he's a decent god, not a man eater though more than willing to stew the white goat for his friends for the sake of diplomacy, so I have to make sure to extract a few oaths before we unleash him. There's nothing I can do to keep Yuri from getting hurt but I can at least delay the inevitable for a while. I'll need to get something from Claire first. Go let your brother know you're back and safe and sound so he doesn't have a stroke. He's in the throne room with Hel." Babe snaps her fingers sending him there before he can explain to her that she can't just snap them out of the abyss. Though apparently that's exactly what she did. Maybe the rules aren't exactly the same for her. It is her world after all.

"No, fuck Hades. If Hades was Pluto he should absolutely pay for Pluto's transgressions." Sam hears Dean say, leaning against the side of the throne as Hel looks over some papers.

"You're still going through with the complaint then?" Sam walks over to them.

"Of course." Hel looks up at him, her face falling at seeing him alone.

"Where the hell did you come from?" Dean's utterance earns him a brief annoyed glance from Hel.

"Babe sent me back here. She went to get something from Claire before we go back into get Baldur back like I promised Yuri." Sam explains. Dean's eyes get a little wide and just stares at his little brother. "What? What's are you looking at?" Sam looks behind him.

"Oh, nothing, just your hair having grown back," Dean walks over and reaches up to muss his brother's hair, which is not appreciated but leaves Sam unprepared for Dean yanking his collar down. "And of course there's the holy hickey of divine freakiness on your neck. Kind of looks like a halo, actually." Sam shoves him away and buttons up the collar of his shirt to try and cover it better. "I see you decide to get reacquainted first." Dean points to it again. Sam bats his hand away, blushing in confirmation.

"We do need to talk about something, though." Sam says quietly. "I need to talk to Cas, too. Is he still subbing for Claire?"

"I think so. It's sunday, right?" Dean frowns. "What do you need to talk about?" he follows Sam back to an empty corner.

"Bringing back Raphael."

"Oh fuck that." Dean steps back. "Gabriel's an archangel, can't she fix heaven? I mean, she does have her grace back, right?"

"The human part of heaven wasn't even finished when she left. Raphael was in charge of it's construction." Sam frowns. "She'll try, of course, but if she can't..."

"He's going to want to murder all of us, too. You know that right? You, me, Cas, there is
"Maybe we don't know as much about Raphael as we think we do. Maybe it's worth giving him another chance." Sam insists. Dean just looks at him a moment.

"Where the hell is this coming from?" He shakes his head. "He killed Cas, Do you remember that? He just... disintegrated him without mercy. And his vessel. He killed Cas and his vessel, Sam. And you want to bring him back? I'm not telling her that, that's for damn sure." Sam understands that he's reluctant to discuss it near Hel as she might decide to just take it to Claire herself.

"Dean, there are so many souls trapped in the veil, no new ones are being born. If we just explain that to her, I'm sure she'll understand."

"Like, hell, she will." Dean scoffs. "Look, if we have to do this, we don't say a damn thing about it."

"Dean..."

"She may not even know. And who's to say it was even really Raphael. I mean Lucifer disintegrated Cas, too. Who's to say it wasn't him?"

"I'm pretty sure Cas would know, which is why we need to talk to him about this." Sam insists. "Well, that and every other thing that happened between the two of them. The whole civil war thing is kind of going to be a hot button issue."

"You think? And don't forget that he was trying to restart the apocalypse," Dean points out.

"He can't exactly restart the apocalypse now, though. Lucifer's dead. There's no one to fight. And all his supporters are dead, so it's not as if heaven would cooperate with any plans to claim victory by default and take over the earth."

"Pretty sure he'll still want Michael out of the cage, though. From what I hear they were close."

"Well, maybe we should think about that, too." Sam looks away fully anticipating Dean's reaction.

"Have you lost your goddamn mind? What did she use your brain cells to grow your hair out?" he raps on his brother's head.

"I just think maybe we don't know as much about Michael as we thought either." Sam off handedly smooths his hair out. "I think that she's worth giving a second chance, too."

"Why? Why the fuck would you think that? He'll kill you most of all. You're the one who pulled him in there. You were trapped with him and Lucifer in the cage. After everything they did to you..."

"She didn't do anything to me." Sam says quietly. "She didn't hurt me or help me. She just... protected Adam. kept him safe and whole, unharmed. That's all."

"He left you at the mercy of Lucifer."

"I was always going to be whether he was there or not. The whole thing was my fault to
begin with."

"No. It wasn't, Sam. It didn't begin with you. It just ended with you. And it's over. Let it stay over. We're not letting him out and that's final." Dean storms back over to Hel.

"It's not your decision, Dean." Sam speaks up. Dean just turns back around at this.

"Excuse me?"

"I said, it's not your decision. You don't get the final word on this."

"Oh, I don't? Do I have any say at all? Or are you going to release yet another devastating supernatural force on the world regardless of any possible consequences?" It's a low blow, and Dean feels a brief twinge of guilt at going there, but Michael is dangerous. "In case you've forgotten, Michael's gone kind of cuckoo from being trapped in there."

"She took care of Adam, Dean. She kept him safe and as soon as she safely could, she got him out. Our brother, Dean. We owe her. Pointing out her suffering in there doesn't make that debt any less. If anything it makes it even greater."

"What the hell is all this 'she' and 'her' business?" Dean changes the subject, unable to argue that particular point. "What happened in the abyss to make you start thinking like this?"

"Babe was guarded by the memory of her siblings. All three of them. Michael had her grace and wanted me to fight her. And when it was obvious I'd had not real training using a sword, do you know what happened?"

"He beat the living daylights out of you?" As irritating an assumption as it is, Sam has to admit to himself that's probably what would have happened if they actually fought.

"She started training me in unarmed combat."

"What?"

"She made a copy of me in fire and had me fight myself, teaching and instructing me how to use my opponents strength against him and leverage and such until I couldn't train any more. Does that sound like a heartless bastard bent on mindless destruction to you? And the memory of Raphael was helpful, he just guided and assisted me, encouraged me. There was kindness there, Dean. They're worth salvaging." Sam looks at him pleadingly.

"Seriously?" Dean crosses his arms. "You're giving me the puppy eyes over Michael and Raphael? They conspired to destroy you and ruin our lives."

"Your brother is an intelligent, compassionate man, Dean." Hel interjects, ignoring the dark look Dean gives her. And a much better judge of character than mine are. But those were versions of them from her memories, Sam. Memory can be deceptive, rose colored. And even if it was accurate, when she last knew them... it was before thousands of years of war and suffering and abandonment. That changes people, and they can't always be changed back."

"I know, but I think it's worth trying." Sam insists.

"Oh, my baby girl." Babe appears suddenly, her arms wrapped around her daughter. "I'm so glad to see you again."

"Likewise." Hel squeezes her. A small blonde ferret squirms out of Babe's sleeve,
wrapping itself around Hel's neck and nibbles on her ear. "Ah, breiddjame!" She jerks back but before she can throw the thing, a second chocolate colored one climbs out of Babe's blouse, and leaps at the other, tackling her down onto the floor. Babe starts to laugh as the two ferrets start to tumble and play and chase each other all over the floor. "Father..." Hel look back at her annoyed as Babe snaps up a small honeybadger who just sits there surprised and slightly bewildered.

"I made a promise, didn't I?" Babe replies innocently. Hel's eyes widen and she starts speaking angrily in old norse, pointing at the animal. Rhys finally uncurls himself from the furs near the table and walks over to the badger, sitting in front of it until it looks up at him.

"What is that some weird kind of skunk?" Dean backs away as the ferrets run around his feet and tumble over to Sam who just covers his face with his hand.

"That's a honey badger." Sam sighs as Rhys just starts laughing at the annoyed little creature. She responds by playfully attacking his hind leg. "Babe, could you please just turn them back?"

"What? No, look at them they're having fun." She protests. The ferrets do seem to be having a great time. The badger especially seems to enjoy mauling Rhys.

"Sam?" Dean turns to him not even attempting to get a straight answer from Babe.

"The girls kind of locked us in a room together after the break up and forced us to talk. She threatened to turn them into ferrets unless they let her out. They didn't, of course."

"Alex asked to be a honey badger." Babe smiles her dimpliest smile.

"You mean these are Claire, Krissy, and Alex?" Dean demands angrily. Hel has a few things to say as well, but Babe just rolls her eyes.

"It won't be forever. Rhys, be gentle." She admonishes him. He just whimpers. "Alex. Be gentle." She corrects herself, so Alex goes after Rhys' tail instead until he grabs the nape of her neck and brings her over to his father. Babe just takes the badger and drapes her over the wolf's back. "Have fun, girls! Sam, let's go get this mess over with. The things I do for my babies." She sighs disgustedly.

"Talk to her about this, okay, Sam?" Hel's pointed tone indicates she's not talking about the girls transformation. He nods.

"Wait what? No. You can't leave them like this. Change them back first." Dean picks up ferret Claire, as she tries to climb up his leg to escape Krissy. Babe just winks and snaps her and Sam back into the abyss. "Gabriel!"

"So, what do you think?" Sam asks as they walk through a thick snowy forest.

"I think Raphael lost his damn mind that's what I think. I have no idea if bringing him back is a good idea or a bad idea or if his innate compassionate healing nature will be stirred enough by the plight of all those souls to over ride his equally strong desire to tell us all to go fuck ourselves. We definitely can't bring him back and not bring back Michael and she will straight up murder you and Cas, maybe Dean too but especially you and especially Cassie because Cas is the one who killed Raphael and you do not fuck with Mamma Miqa's special baby boy. I don't even...." Babe shakes her head.
"Beyond that, do you think it'd be bad for heaven and humanity?"

"I don't know. Maybe, maybe not. I just know I'd rather not die any more an neither of them is going to you unless they go through me first and I doubt absence has made them any fonder of me than it made Lucifer. I'm kind of the weakest archangel. If I have to stand and fight... oh, wait, I'm not the weakest any more. Maybe Cassie and I together could take Raphael but definitely not Michael. If we even tried fighting Michael we'd just end being Luci's stand in for the apocalypse." She scrunches up her nose, though Sam can tell that despite what she's saying, it's not what she wants.

"Is there any way to reopen the gates of Heaven without him?"

"Well, no. Not really. Not for the human part. I have no idea how that whole thing works. I... it's not that I don't want my siblings back, I just don't want to lose you to do it. I mean, it's not too much to ask that you try not to die again for a while, right?"

"Not if it isn't too much to ask of you." He bends down to kiss her. "Think you can manage to stick around for a while?"

"I doubt it. You've been the death of me twice already, and you want to bring my older siblings back, so I'm fairly sure I'll be completely and utterly obliterated from all of existence. This time. So you know, something to consider when we spend what little we have left together." She pouts at him, looking up with her big golden eyes.

"Babe." Sam carresses her cheek. "I'm not having an orgy with you and your old lover."

"Not even just the female ones?"

"No."

"You are an ungrateful brat, you know that?" She tsks, turning away and continues in the direction smoke can be seen in the sky in the distance. "I died for you twice and you won't even do one little thing for me in return." Sam just shoots her a look, not buying it in the least.

"I'm more than willing to try whatever you want so long as it involves just me and you, Babe." Sam says firmly. Babe stops walking and turns, putting a warning hand to his chest.

"Don't say it if you don't mean it, now." She points at him sternly with the other hand. The serious look on her face makes Sam grin. "You are the best. As soon as we're done with this, we're going shopping. If I have the date right there's a expo in Hanover Germany. If not, I can take us there anyways." Her excitement is almost troubling.

"Do we really need to shop? I mean, can't you just snap up everything you need?" Sam's not entirely sure how he feels about going to a trade show for erotic toys.

"Yes, but I'm not omnicient and I want to see all the advances they've made in the industry since my first death." Which is a perfectly reasonable explanation for wanting to go to a trade show. For erotic toys. Dean would never let him hear the end of it.

"How did you make a hickey that looks like a halo?" Sam asks suddenly, putting a hand to his neck as he remembers his brother's comment.

"Trade secret." She winks. "Alright, now," Babe grins, rubbing her hands together, "When we get there don't tell them who I am. None of them know who I am. My wings aren't showing are they? I hid them alright?" She looks back over her shoulder, her eyes widening in
realization. "Oh, shit, that reminds me. The librarian, Hara, is he alright? I mean, I know about the resurrection and stuff but did she get her wings back?"

"No. Rye's been trying but he just can't seem to make it work." Sam shakes his head.

"Wonderful." Gabriel smiles, taking his arm. "Not wonderful as in I'm glad he's been crippled, but we have to bring him when we go to bring back Raphael. Timid little Hara broken beyond repair will bring out the big old softie in him way more easily than a bunch of human souls. And trust me, we want his nurturing side when we talk to him about everything. Especially since we in no way should let Michael out before we bring Raphael back if we want even a prayer of surviving it. You'd have a better chance of survival torturing a grizzly cub in front of it's mother."

"About Michael... Lucifer did say that..."

"Don't even finish that sentence." Babe snaps, probably a bit more harshly than she means to, but she certainly has reason to be a little touchy where her brother is concerned. "Why does everyone always believe what he wants them to believe? he's a liar, the bast liar. He always lies about everything, even when he's... ESPECIALLY when he's telling the truth."

"Your father..."

"Is even worse. Or better. You know shroinger's cat? Dad and what he says is just like that, both true and false at the same time, only more so, like if shrodinger has the power to decide whether the cat was dead or alive in the box even after you guessed, in opposition to what you guessed or to conform to it. Dad is everything that ever is and ever was and what's more he's whatever could have been and everything that ever could have been, is. Do you understand me?"

Sam's not sure whether Babe is just pissed off to the point of incoherency or whether she's just referring to something beyond his comprehension.

"No. Do you?" Sam raises an eyebrow at her. She gives him an annoyed almost patronizing look, opening her mouth to explain further but pauses.

"Ah man, I lost it." She smacks her forehead. "I had it and it just... I wish I'd paid more attention when dad was talking about that time thread crap. Nevermind though it's not important. Alright. Time to go fuck a norse god!"

"You mean fuck with." Sam clarifies sharply.

"Of course. It's Baldur." The look of disgust she makes at the very thought is incredibly reassuring. "Though, Freya's here, if, you know, you're open to a threesome at least. She's venir. Major freak."

"Babe..." Sam sighs in exasperation but stops as he remembers one of the paintings of a gorgeous woman handing Loki a feathered cloak. "I'll think about it."

"Woohoo!"

"That's not a yes!"
Fidelity

Chapter Summary

Babe and Sam retrieve Baldur, and have a series of discussions about their relationship.

Chapter Notes

ludder-(norwegian) slut (Babe is teasing her)
kjaerlighet- (norwegian) love

Luckily Idrunn sees them first, and welcomes him in along with his guest, Bree.

"Did you find what you were looking for?" She asks tactfully leading them into the fortress. "Or have you come for some questing advice?"

"No, I'm here for something else." He replies, equally tactfully.

"I see you got some muscle back." Idrunn places a head on his arm. "Doesn't progress. You look more like a man at least. Lets work on getting you that beard next, hmm?" She strokes his cheek, but suddenly stumbles dropping her basket of apples.

"In order to get Yuri's help, I had to agree to retrieve his father."

"Sam." Babe quickly looks up at him.

"So you have to retrieve his father to retrieve his father?" Idrunn looks confused.

"Sammykins..."

"His biological father. Baldur." Irun's wide eyed expressison shows that she was not aware of this. Babe gives him a dark look.

"That makes the whole murder thing make so much less petty. Are they all his?" Idrunn asks. "I actually wondered about that with Loki really being a woman and everything."

"I'm here to get heimdall." Babe speaks up before the conversation can go much further in that direction. "Where is the god with the gold teeth."

"With his mothers. I wouldn't bother him yet. Would you care to stay for dinner?"

"We'd love to." Babe smiles. "You are so pretty. Can you help me with my hair? I can't get it to do anything I want it to."

"Those precious curls? Of course." Idrunn gives her arm a squeeze. "We'll get you a proper dress, too. Sam, come with me I'll have my husband take care of you."
"Thank you."

"What the hell is he doing here?" Odin exclaims as Bragi escorts Sam into the dining hall. There's a comforting lack of manflesh at the table. Or much meat at all.

"This is my wife's guest, Sam." Bragi introduces him. "I wasn't aware you knew each other."

"His son Baldur, along with Kali, tried to sell my brother and me to Lucifer. To buy peace or something." Sam explains. The Norse god of poetry beside him looks as if he doesn't quite know what to do with that information. "I'm actually here for Baldur, now."

"You think you can kill me?" Baldur looks a bit amused, leaning against his father's chair.

"I don't have to kill you. You're already dead. I'm here to resurrect you." Sam corrects him taking a seat.

"Why?"

"I have a quest and in order to get a part I needed I had to swear an oath to one of your children to bring you back." Sam picks up the glass of mead at the head of his plate and take a drink. "This is fantastic. What kind of mead is this?"

"Idunn's special blend." Bragi speaks up proudly, grateful for a neutral subject, and the chance to praise his wife. "W-where is she?" he looks back. As if on cue Irunn and Babe walk in, carrying the trays of fruit and nuts and baked fish filling out the spread.

"Took you boys long enough." Idrunn smiles at them.

"It was difficult finding clothing that would fit him properly." Bragi apologizes, taking the tray from her and setting it down in the open space on the table.

"And who's this lovely lady?" Odin turns to her.

"A friend of your grandchild's." Babe curtsies demurely. "I'm here to make sure he gets what he desires." Sam fairly impressed how well she curtsies given her false leg. He's also tempted to start laughing at how coquettish she's being. Though given the glances sent Baldur's way, Sam's forced to remind himself that she'd rather wear the gods intestines as a necklace than flirt with him in earnest. The beautiful blonde woman across the table seems to find Sam very interesting as well. Upon learning that this is Freya, he finds it difficult to pay attention to the conversation.

This dinner is infinitely more pleasant than the last especially as Babe takes a lyre and starts serenading the hall. At least until Heimdall enters the hall with his mother, looking both surprised and annoyed.

"Do you mean that all this time you were hitting all those bad notes on purpose?" Is his unexpected exclamation.

"Well, I couldn't really use my voice. It would have given me away to my siblings." She shrugs.

"Oh, Dall, you know this charming woman?"

"We all know this little angel." He says sarcastically. "What are you doing here Loki?"
way Baldur chokes on his mead makes Sam smile. Babe just smiles and snaps her fingers turning the gods into little potbelly piglets with bad wigs and miniature clothing. Sam, excepted.

"Heimdall, I'm here to bring you back to the land of the living. Sam's here for Baldur. But first, I have a few things to discuss with all of you." She puts the lyre down. "Now, Sam made an oath to a certain someone." She walks over to Sam kissing his cheek. "For my sake. But I also made that person my own promise and I intend to ensure that it's fulfilled."

"Loki. Will you please change out of that absurd little form back into your own?" An irritated brunette demands.

"Yes, dear. Anything you say, dear." She snaps her fingers again transforming into the same shining golden form Sam last saw as a statue, complete with six golden wings.

"You're... you are a woman?" the same woman gapes.

"I'm an angel. An archangel. But female is the most accurate gender." She shrugs. "Kind of takes the sting from your little flyte, doesn't it, brother? Given you were pointing out that a woman was acting womanly," She flits over, pinching the man's nose.

"But you fathered children. You had five of them." Freya argues.

"I don't have... Well, I suppose I have one, but I mothered him." She smiles.

"You craven lying deceitful trickster!" The first woman stands up angrily. "Of all the things I ahve put up with.. the tricks, the abandonment, the infidelity. This is the last straw! I'm divorcing you Laufeyson. You absolute asshole!"

"Okay. Bye, honey." Babe waves goodbye to the woman who storms out. "The wife." she shrugs to Sam.

"The what?"

"Nah, it's cool." She attempts to brush off his shock, only making it worse. "It's fine, don't worry about it."

"We can talk about this later." Sam says with worrying calmness, "But it is not cool, and not fine."

"How about I give you a freebie?" She gives a guilty grin that just pisses him up.

"How about I have that orgy with your ex lovers without you?" He snaps. This renders her speechless for a moment and makes the women around the table perk up intrest,

"You know what, have fun." She snaps her fingers again sending him and the ladies to a secluded glade by a lake and waterfall. The goddesses start laughing at the stricken look on Sam's face and just ignore the blushing hunter, stripping to go swim. All except Freya who walks over to him as he turns away to give them privacy,

"So, you and Loki." She grins, leaning back against a tree with a laughing smile.

"Yes. And... all of you?"

"He was funny." She shrugs. "Not possessive either. Knew how to treat a girl when he put his mind to it."So, you have permission." she steps forwards putting her arms loosely around Sam's
"I have to say, I'm curious. Any mortal who can hold Loki's attention must be worthwhile."

"I didn't mean it."

"I know. Come, sit, we'll exchange stories."

"In my defense, till do we part is a pretty standard clause in the marriage contract." Babe insists as Sam walks silently from the halls of valhalla. "And you heard her, she's divorcing me. Honestly it'll probably be an annulment since I kind of revealed to everyone that Nari's not mind and there's no more reason to pretend." She shrugs holding the bags over her shoulder. "He's an adult. I think he can handle it if they decide to tell him. "And it means I retroactively won the flying which is very satisfying." Sam doesn't say anything. "Sam, Sygn been dead for a long time. I'm not married. I'm widowed."

"I am aware of the unexpected complexities of the situation." Sam finally speaks. "An that it's not exactly your fault. I'm not sure how to judge your marital status."

"Divorced to be safe. only she could initiate it." Babe informs him. "But technically I'm a widower, since she is dead. And I died twice."

"I understand." But Sam's face does not imply understanding, or anything except being upset. "But the truth is, it wouldn't have made a difference to you, would it?" Babe doesn't know the right answer for that. "You never have been faithful, have you? To any of them, Ever. You're not capable of monogamy and that's not okay with me."

"That's not true." Babe protests. "It didn't happen often but I have been monogamous for entire relationships. Decades long ones. Look, if you want monogamy I can give you monogamy. But you at least have to let me play around with my own constructs when I'm bored and you're busy at least."

"That's fine."

"And you know maybe if I hop over to another thread and visit you?"

"I... I don't know." Sam frowns at the odd thought. "That's not really something I considered."

"Or if I pay a visit to myself while I'm there?"

"Wouldn't that destroy time itself?"

"No, of course not."

"That is incredibly strange and I have no idea what to consider that, but Babe, you're already trying to figure out how to sleep with other people. And you even told me it's not as good as when you're human."

"I was thinking more along the lines of bringing myself or yourself home to play with you?"

"I don't know. I'm not sure I could handle two of you in any capacity. Do we have to talk about this now? In front of... them?" Sam deflects nodding back to the bags.
"They're asleep. It's fine. Look, Sam, I love you and I want to know your boundaries that's all. What you define as monogamy. And as a master of time I have options you may not have considered."

"I don't want you having children with other people, and falling in love with other people and having sex with other people risks both of those things even if you can guarantee it wouldn't happen that's... you can't make that guarantee."

"I can't guarantee that regardless of what I do sexually. Well, the love part. I can guarantee no children either way." They stop in front of the stone wall and Babe hands Sam one of the sacks. "Nobody can, not really. You can't guarantee it either."

"No, but I can promise not to do the behaviors that would hurt you and increase the risks. Would you really be okay with me sleeping with other people?"

"No. I told you I can give you monogamy if that's what you want. But I can't make you more promises than that, because I can't be certain to keep them. Love is always a gamble, Sam. If you don't think the rewards are worth the risks, then that's that I suppose, but I do. And I've been through so many bad breakups, you don't even know. Breaking up with goddesses? I could tell you some things that didn't make it into the poetic edda."

"Your ex-lovers probably already did." Sam steps through the door.

"Your other father went in for Heimdall and lent me a hand." Sam gives an apologetic smile and hands him the sack. Yuri takes it an looks inside to see a furious piglet with a black wig falling off his head and a small suit. "She was right behind me. I'll have her change him back when I find her."

"He is always doing horrible things like this. Always all the time, that... I should have made you get my father before you resurrected that pain in the ass." Yuri takes the pig out and carries him down the path to the portal. "I'm so sorry." he apologizes to it. Sam follows them back and steps out into the same room. Rhys is lying down in front of the throne with his sister scratching behind his ear while an exhausted honey badger and brown ferret sleep in a heap between his front paws.

Hel lifts her head as Yuri speaks angrily to her, holding out the pig. She manages to keep a straight face, though Rhys does not, laughing so hard his foot snacks into the floor, the motion waking the girls.

"Sorry, I'm late. Heimdall and I had to have a little talk." Babe stretches, appearing in the hall. "Where's Claire?" She looks around, a little blonde ferret pokes her head out of Hel's collar. "Ludder." Babe tsks her with a grin. Hel ignores her giving the animal an affectionate kiss on the forehead.

"Are you finished, kjaerlighet?" the goddess smiles. Ferret Claire nods and yawns as Hel takes her out of her cleavage and places her on the floor. The others stretch and walk over to Babe together. They all look up at her with pouty pathetic eyes.

"Alright, girls." Babe snaps her fingers, returning them to their original states, which unfortunately for Alex are smurfette footie pajamas and pig tails.

"It was my day off." Alex blushes as Rhys continues his wolfy laughter at really rolling on the floor.
"Here you go." Babe changes her into her usual jeans and shirts. "Oh, and I'm sorry to take you away from your darling on your day off, Claire, but I thought you might want to get your marriage annulled?" She brings up a large folder. "The papers, address and money to pay for it are in here. I'll send you all to Georgia with your car, Claire, don't worry."

"What about my father?" Yuri demands. "You can't leave him like this!"

"He knows what he has to do to turn back." Babe glares at the pig. "If he doesn't in a day or two I'll tell you what he refused to swear." She smiles wickedly at the disgruntled swine.

"Don't promise anything. I will find a way to get you back without that asshole's help." Yuri storms out of the hall.

"What does he have to swear?" Sam asks.

"Same as the others, to welcome Yuri into the aesir with open arms and not to comment on his relationship with Thor." Babe sighs. "Not, I'm sure that he'll believe that. Alright, Sampai, lets go find out brothers and get down to brass tacks.

"If you need to talk to Castiel, you'll have to wait. He's my replacement for my days off remember?" Claire cricks her neck a bit.

"Alright, we can talk about other things them, first?" Babe looks to Sam hopefully. He nods. Rhys quickly gives a whine and trots over to Alex who reaches up to pet his head. "No, Rhys. You're already otherwise engaged, in case you've forgotten. They don't like things like that. Now stop asking. I didn't raise you to beg. Bye Hel. And don't worry, your darling will be a free woman soon enough."
Family Meeting

Chapter Summary

Gabriel and Castiel return to heaven to consult with their siblings regarding retrieving Raphael and Michael.
Castiel receives his sentence.

It's been a ridiculously long time since Gabriel's been back in heaven. He barely recognizes it. The place is a wreck, empty, broken, damaged, it's heartbreaking.

“I'm sorry.” Castiel says quietly. “Most of this... I did so much damage.”

“It wasn't you.” Gabriel puts a hand on a crumbling pillar. “There's a lot of neglect. A lot of darkness, a lot of rottenness expose when the shiny veneer was damaged.” She closes her eyes, trying to remember how it all was when it was shiny and new, and pulls on all the souls in heaven, taking just a drop from each one to power the restoration. All her memories are especially sharp at the moment, it might as well be useful for something.

The effort exhausts her, much to her surprise, and she walks over to her room. She wanted to lie down for a moment on the big round fluffy bed, but it's gone. Her father made for her when she was recovering from that disastrous pre-delivery to babylon where she had to guard those prophets in a room of hellfire, and it was big enough that when they were all recovering from herding the leviathan from the oceans into purgatory, all four of them could fit in it, Michael and Lucifer side by side holding Raphael and Gabriel respectively. Did they destroy it? No. She goes into Raphael's room and sees it there. That jerk raided her room when she left.

It doesn't matter. She never had much in her room anyway. Everything interesting she found she brought to Lucifer in the throne room to show him. Well, Raphael stole her bed, she can steal his room. Gabriel tightly folds her wings around her and lays down on it, for a moment just looking at her brother's room. Everything is still very neat, very tidy, very orderly. Scrolls, potions, the lotion bottle from when she was trying to make up with him after accidentally shellacking his wings in a prank that didn't go exactly as planned.

“Are you alright? How did you do that?”

“Please I smashed into so many things in this place learning to fly and just dicking around before the first battle with auntie, that Michael made me start repairing the damage. It's not perfect but it should do. And I'm fine, I'm just tired. The repairs exhausted me.” She confesses and smiles at the flutters of joy and amazement coming from the angels noticing the changes. “Are you sure about this?”

“I am.” Castiel nods, standing respectfully in the door. “Are you?”

“Not even a little.” She closes her eyes, wishing she could sleep. It's amazing how nice the transition from tired to sleeping to wide awake and refreshed is. And dreams. “I miss dreams already.” She confesses. “It's like another little world you play in while you heal what ails you.”

“I don't remember dreaming much when I was human. The few I had weren't good ones
for the most part.” Cas confesses. “How long do you need to recover?”

“I don't. I just don't want to do this.” Babe scrunches her nose. “I'm not... an authority figure, Cassie. I can't do this crap or take charge or fix anything or... or... I can't do this. I mean, I'll try but...” She shakes her head and stares up at the ceiling.

“You don't have to take charge.” Castiel walks over, offering her a hand up. “Not if you don't want to. But we do need to talk to them about this. This could affect or endanger all of them.”

“Right. What if they ask me to... make decisions?” Babe takes it, getting back to her feet.

“Then make them. Or not. It's up to you.”

“You are no help at all, you little brat.” She puts an arm around his waist and walks out of the archangel's wing and into the garden which is oddly empty. “You're a better leader than I am.”

“I keep making the wrong decisions.”

“Well, that's what I'm here for now.” Gabriel reassures him.

“To help me stay on the right path?” Castiel tries not to sound as skeptical as he feels. If he fails, his big sister doesn't mention it.

“Pff, no, to fuck up even worse so you look good by comparison. I will lower that bar as far as you need, baby bro.” She pats his back. He gives her a wry grin.

“Thank you, but please don't.”

“Well,” Gabriel enters the empty garden, and heads towards the large tree in the center of the wide grassy fields. Everyone must be searching for whoever repaired the basic structure of heaven. As if it could have been anyone but an archangel. “How did you get this one back? I thought it was long gone.”

“You need fledgelings. And apparently I count as one.” Castiel sighs at the admission. Gabriel laughs at him in a very unappreciated manner.

“Alright. Time to rally the troops.” She snaps up a bowl and paints a sigil of a horn on the tree trunk. The garden shines so brightly for the briefest moment and fills within minutes. The first angels that come in, mob Gabriel crying out, or just plain crying at her return from the dead once again. After a few dozen, she's blocked from view to the rest of them.

“Can I take it by your presence that you're here to face judgement?” Hamuel asks coolly upon seeing Castiel by the angel heap.

“Yes.” Castiel replies quietly.

“Alright, alright.” Gabriel shoos her siblings away and lifts herself into the air to look around, hovering like a butterfly. “Is everyone here?”

“No. Harahel's locked up for misuse of library property.” Nathan informs her. “He turned himself in.”

“Oh for... go get him...” Gabriel points to the door. “As you can all see, I'm alive again, thanks to certain hunters and angels. But fully functional this time and in one piece.”
"Your vessel's missing a leg." One of her siblings feels the need to point out for some reason.

"It is? Oh, damn, I'm always loosing that thing." She looks down at the stump. Her sibling is not amused. "I know. It came this way and I consider it part of it's homey lived in charm." She informs him primly. "Now, I've apologized to some of you, but not all of you and you all deserve an apology. I'm sorry. I abandoned you and I was wrong to do so. I was selfish and thoughtless and while I can't promise to stay here in heaven, I won't just disappear like that again. I hope you can find it in your hearts to forgive me, but if you can't I understand." There's a murmur of reassurance that is by no means unanimous, but reassuring none the less.

"We need to speak to you about an important issue." Castiel rises beside her. "As you know, the gates of heaven are closed and no new souls are able to enter. The veil is overcrowded and no new children are being born, no new souls are being created. This could spell the end of humanity."

"And?" Someone speaks up in the back.

"And what?"

"And what do you want us to do? Why should we care? They don't want us. They don't care about us. We lost everything because of them and they just keep taking more and more."

"Who is that? Lemuel?" Gabriel looks over to the voice, the angels around the dissenter step away.

"Helel was the first we lost to them. Then Abner, then Gadreel, then you. Our brother may have corrupted them but now they're corrupting us. The librarian violate the sanctity of his library for them. His library. He killed his favorite song for that library but he betrayed it for humanity."

"That's not exactly true." Amitiel speaks up as Rye flies in with the wingless angel.

"I'm not lying to you." Lumiel looks offended.

"No, you aren't lying. You're just wrong." The angel of truth clarifies. "Hara, honey, tell everybody why you gave copies of those books to the pagan god?"

"Because we had to wager for Gabriel's heart so Sam could resurrect her. He wanted human sacrifice but since he was the god of knowledge, I thought copies of rare books would be good enough. I put conditions on it. And nothing's lost, just... shared, really. Welcome home, Gabriel." Harahel smiles at the archangel.

"Oh, you poor thing." Gabriel flies over to him, snatching him up to her, his poor pathetic wingless state rending her heart. "I'm so sorry about your wings. We'll figure something out no matter what. My sweet baby boy. I'm so proud of you. They told me about the party too, That was the bravest thing you've ever done, you darling."

"Am,, am I dying again?" Harahel panics slightly, as the last time he heard anyone coo over anyone like that, it was after Gabriel got back from the future doing a task that nearly killed her.

"No," Gabriel grins and sets him down, patting his head.

"You see, he did it for our sister at least as much as for the humans." Amitiel sighs. "Really, contact with humanity's only made our brother grow into a better angel. He shouldn't have
"We're supposed to protect them and love them and care for them." Rye says firmly. "Have you all forgotten that?"

"What about us? Don't we matter? Why do we have to take responsibility for everything... How can we fix this mess? There's so few of us and we didn't cause it. We're all hurt and suffering and we've lost so much. Who's going to help us? How much more do we have to give? I don't have anything left. I just want to find my friends and bring them back and be happy again. Why aren't we allowed to be happy?"

"I understand, Lemmie." Gabriel sighs. "You've all been through so much. You deserved to be taken care of. I should have been here to help do it."

"It wasn't any fun when you left. We lost so much laughter and song and it didn't seem important, but it was," Zuriel takes Miti's hand. "And humanity's not so bad. They took care of Miti when she was hurt and lost and brought her peace back. One of Hara's vessels traded precious memories for Miti's life, saved her grace, returned it to her. This was the one who died just because she refused to cast Hara out to die alone after Azrael cut off his wings. I think maybe that's something worth loving and protecting, don't you?"

"It is true, that the work is hard and often thankless and lacking in glory." Castiel speaks up. "But not always and there are humans who, if you love them and care for them, will love and take care of you in return. There are humans who will love and care for you just because they see that you need to be loved and cared for."

"And some can help heal the wounds we can't heal ourselves." Zuriel continues, not entirely thrilled about being in agreement with Castiel on much of anything. "What do you want us to do?"

"Nothing, actually." Gabriel gives a smile that some of them, those who remember her the most clearly, find slightly suspicious. "It's more something we may have to do to fix the situation, but we're not the only ones at risk here if we do it."

"We need to reopen the gates of heaven." Castiel announces, this gets him not a few glares as it was largely his fault that the gates were closed in the first place, even if he was just a patsy to Metatron as it seemed, he still should have known better. "But it seems the only person who can do it is the one who helped construct them in the first place. Raphael." This has an almost predictable response, with not a few accusations towards Castiel of being suicidal. Several angels fall over themselves to explain why that's a bad idea. How he's changed from the angel she knew, and that every angel still alive sided against him in civil war with Castiel.

"I know. I... I know." She shushes them. "But things are a little different. There's no war to fight, no apocalypse except you know, this mess."

"And if we bring Raphael, we'll have to break Michael out of the cage as well." This pronouncement is met by pure terrified silence. Gabriel just shoots Castiel an annoyed look as that really could have waited until much much later. Perhaps when they had come to that inevitable conclusion on their own.

"Well, we'd be bringing Raphael back because we needed him for something. I think I know my brother well enough to say that he won't do shit for us as long as Michael is still imprisoned. Or did he become less of a mama's boy when I was away?" Gabriel challenges. They shake their heads. "Please don't tell him I said that by the way." Though by the look on Rye's face
"What about psychotherapy?" Ester raises her hand.

"What about it?"

"Well, Zuri got therapy and he's doing so much better and is much nicer and happier like he used to be and Miti's okay after her breakdown when she got all her memories back including the ones they sealed away when they had her help with interrogations and stuff, because she got therapy. What if Michael and Raphael went into therapy? Maybe it could help them be like they used to be too, before the wars. Or close to it." There's oddly a consensus with this that irritates Zuriel slightly. He was fairly sure he wasn't that cranky.

"You kind of have to be willing participants for therapy to work. I have no idea how to convince either of them to want to do that."

"If you make it a condition for resurrecting Raphael." Another suggests.

"So free Michael but refuse to resurrect Raphael unless she enters therapy when we're only freeing her because we need Raphael and he probably won't help us unless we do?" Gabriel summarizes the suggestion and thinks it over. "No, if we bring back Michael with Raphael dead she will murder everyone. We're going to have to play it straight." Her siblings all look at her askance, like she's grown a second head. "You know, I am capable of learning from my mistakes. Dad knows I've made enough of them, just not usually the same ones repeatedly. We need to get Raphael, convince him to forgive us and not kill us all and use him to convince Michael not to either." There's more silence as they seem to be thinking about this.

"So, are you asking us for permission or just informing us of our impending doom." A more pessimistic brother asks.

"Asking for opinions and advice. We can't promise to follow it, but it's important and your welfare matters to me as well. If we decide to do this, we want to have the best chance of getting everyone through this as possible. You get me?" Gabriel looks around. "Cas and the winchesters are on board with this and they're probably the first ones my sibs will slaughter should they feel so inclined. Even if they do forgive us and spare us, they'll probably still kill those three. They probably won't be too happy with me either." There's more silence as everyone considers this. It's obvious that not a few of her siblings think that last bit of information to be more of a reason to do it than a caution against. "And stop giving Cassie such a hard time about everything. He's the only one doing what Dad told us to do."

"I'm pretty sure that's not what our Father meant when he said to love humanity." Hamuel snaps. This just makes Gabriel start laughing her ass off. Castiel is not so amused.

"Will you stop?" Castiel says quietly after a minute. "It's not that funny." But as plenty of their other siblings are snickering as well, it doesn't help. "You can't tell them to start giving me a hard time if you encourage them."

"It isn't funny." Zuriel snaps. "Castiel has betrayed us all repeatedly, broken more laws than Lucifer himself. We can't just let this go. Gabriel, you're the eldest, you have to do something about this."

"What exactly do you want me to do? Pass judgement on him? Fine. Castiel, come here." Gabriel waves him over. "You are accused of... what exactly are the charges?"
"Betraying is brothers!"

"Killing half of them!"

"Stealing another's grace."

"Defying the edicts of heaven."

"Setting himself up as a god."

"Breaking all divine law."

"Banishing all the angels from heaven and closing the gates with Metatron."

"Freeing the Darkness, then freeing Lucifer from the cage and becoming his vessel!"

"Alright. You're accused of all of that. How do you plead?" Gabriel turns to his current favorite sibling.

"Guilty." Is of course what Castiel replies. His sister just gives him an annoyed look at this. "I did every single thing they said I did and you know that I did."

"I'd have accepted an insanity plea."

"I wasn't insane for all of that. And for the few I regret having been a part of, stupidity is not an accepted legal defense. I will accept any punishment you feel fit to bestow on me."

"Fine, you pain in the ass." Gabriel rubs the bridge of her nose. "I accept your guilty plea. For freeing the darkness, freeing Lucifer from the cage and becoming his vessel. I sentence you to death. But since that has already been carried out, I'll move to the others. Hold out your arm." Castiel does. Gabriel smacks his hand. "Bad angel. Don't do it again." The mixed uproar of approval and outrage is a bit harder to quiet down this time.

"That really didn't help anything Gabriel." Castiel sighs. His sister just gives a pericing whistle that quiets the garden.

"Castiel is heaven's greatest criminal since Lucifer. How do you expect to lead us if you can't even take something like this seriously." Hamuel exclaims.

"I don't WANT to lead you! And certainly in no position to judge any of you. None of you are in the position to judge any of us either. We have all done terrible selfish immoral things. We've all made mistakes. Some in the name of heaven, some in the name of love, some in the name of our father, some out of pure frustration, some just desperate to escape the pain. If I was to properly pass judgement over everyone here, by the book, the way you all want me to only Zachariah would be left. But if you insist, I guess I could try and kill and imprison all of you and myself. OR we can just wipe the slate clean. Pardon everybody and start over. What do you say, Rye? Let he who is without sin and all that." She turns to him. The angel looks taken a back and incredibly uncomfortable.

"I... I'm not..." Rye takes a breath. "I'm the one who let Nathaniel in to see Harahel." He closes his eyes, unable to meet the hurt gaze of his younger brother. "I'm sorry, Hara. He turned himself into me and asked to speak with you privately to apologize before begging forgiveness from Dad in case he was just executed instead. I didn't know he was lying. I didn't...I'm as guilty as anyone."
"Alright." Gabriel claps her hands, "Blanket amnesty it is!"
Parting is such sweet sorrow

Chapter Summary

Alex gets recruited by the angels
Claire and Krissy and Hara stumble upon a hunt
Claire gets laid off.
Krissy runs into an old friend.

"Okay, this is the place." Alex puts the phone down as Claire drives the hideous station wagon to 33 arthur lane Albert, Georgia. they would have been there sooner but they had to get the documentation from their wedding scanned emailed and printed out. Or as Jodie isn't quite that tech saavy, faxed to the local police station. That was fun.

"We need to replace the shocks, I think." Claire comments as the gravel driveway threatens to shake the fillings out of their teeth.

"We need to replace the car." Krissy corrects her. Claire just ignores her as Alex silently agrees.

"You've got to be kidding me." Claire gets out of the car. Alex looks up to see a small house surrounded by a horde of garden gnomes and a sign on the door with a picture of a woman in a suit with a red smurf hat pasted over big beauty queen hair. 'Gnome' Anne Faraday, Attorney at law. specializing in annulments, prenuptual agreements, and divorce proceedings. 'What God has put together let Gnome Anne rend asunder'. Krissy starts laughing her head off and leans against the hood of the car, banging on it with her fist. Alex grabs the envelopes from the two tricksters and walks to the door, knocking on it until the woman from the sign answers. She's much older than her picture.

"Stop beating on my car." Claire leans over the top to smack Krissy's hand away. "You'll dent it."

"How could you tell?" She retorts. Claire just glares at her.

"Will you come on?" Alex shouts back to her. "I need to get rid of this ring."

"Oh, really?" Claire grins. "Someone waiting for you back home?" she hurries over.

"Not exactly." Alex blushes.

"Oh, you little slut." she pushes her sister's shoulder.

"Ms. Faraday, this is my 'wife' Claire." Alex introduces her. "We need your help with an annulment." Alex hands the confused woman a packet.

"Come in." She waves them over.

"This is my partner Krissy here in case we need a witness or something." Claire nods back to Krissy who follows them into a small office.
"Will you be needing a prenup then as well?" Ms. Faraday asks as they take a seat.

"No, I trust my pookie. And she trusts me, don't you, pookie wookie schmoopy boo." Krissy sits in Claire's lap, nuzzling her partner's nose with her own.

"You know, it's perfectly alright with me if you just deny it, Krissy." Claire rolls her eyes. "We're not that kind of partners."

"This says you were married in Ghana, which I wasn't aware made same sex marriage legal, and live in South Dakota. Nothing I can do can help you get an annulment here." Ms. Faraday looks over the marriage paperwork.

"It's a complicated situation." Alex says apologetically. "And in this situation, you're honestly the only one who can."

"I'm a lawyer, not a judge. An this particular annulment form isn't a binding legal document. Half the Latin terms are telling a spider to go fornicate with itself and various objects." She looks up at them. "Is this some kind of joke?"

"Not on you." Claire says darkly.

"We know it's not, but we still need it filled out and by you specifically." Alex continues. "We'll pay you the full fee for a real annulment."

"You girls are pledging a sorority aren't you?" Ms. Faraday smiles at them. Krissy gives her a beaming smile. "Very well, it's your money. And I'm only charging you because while I'm not so rich I can afford to turn away business, I don't want to encourage the trivialization of the sanctity of marriage through hazing. Divorce and Annulments are very solemn proceedings."

"Yes, ma'am." The girls say solemnly and wait quietly as the woman fills out the paper, having them each sign where indicated. As soon as it's done, Alex and Claire rip the rings off their fingers almost frantically and hug each other in relief as Krissy throws a handful of rice on them.

"Finally." Claire sighs. "Alright, Time to go celebrate. Where's the nearest all male strip club?" The lawyer just hands Krissy a mini vac an waits to hand the papers over to them until they clean up the mess. She doesn't offer any suggestions about the strip club.

"Alex!" Zuriel appears by the car, holding Harahel for easy transit, as soon as they leave the cottage. "We need your help."

"I'm going to find Krissy." Hara lets his brother know, heading to the cottage.

"Is Miti alright?" She asks.

"She is, yes, but some of my siblings have questions about psychotherapy." He states this oddly urgently.

"What?"

"Specifically about counseling Michael and Raphael so they don't murder every one of us when we bring them back to fix heaven." He elaborates.

"Oh, um, you know I'm still in school, right?" Alex qualifies. "I'm more than willing to try, but I'm not..."
"Wait, you want Alex to counsel psycho archangels?" Claire moves in between them.

"She helped me and Miti. Everyone's commenting on the difference which is unintentionally insulting and very annoying but you helped me find my way to inner harmony despite the tumult outside. And Miti's no longer a complete and utter wreck. I don't think they'll trust anyone else to do it." Zuri rubs the back of his neck.

"Okay."

"No. Not okay! Alex, you're trying to get out of the life, remember? There are a bazillion actual therapists way more qualified than you are. You don't need to stick yourself in the middle of this."

"Well, I do already have a lot of background and knowledge of the supernatural world, which is just as important. And Michael might already know me, so.." Alex looks away.

"Know you?"

"I've been praying to him. Since the wedding." Alex confesses brushing her hair back behind her ear. "You know, trying to lift his spirits, help him feel he's not quite so alone or forsaken. Like sending letters to a prisoner. If they could send messages from the damaged cage, maybe prayers could get in, right? And I made sure to pronounce his name right, too. I think, so it'd reach him."

"Oh, Alex." Claire groans, covering her eyes.

"And I've been studying the effects of solitary confinement. And how to help people recover from it, maybe. I don't know how much of it applies to an angel, but if you could all tell me more about him, that might help me know how to approach him."

"Of course." Zuriel gives a relieved smile, putting a hand on her shoulder, taking her to the arena they rented for the occasion.

"Where'd they go off to?" Krissy and Hara walk out, arm in arm.

"You know what, I don't care. She can do what she wants. She's a big girl and can make her own damn decisions. Get in the car we're going to a strip club."

"Will your girlfriend be okay with that?" Krissy opens the rear door for Harahel.

"I don't care. And why are you here?" She demands as Hara sits in the back seat, shifting her irritation to the poor angel.

"I need some times away from my siblings, and Saul needs to avoid some people until he can make some money so I'm offering to take your place helping death so you can get back to hunting with Krissy. So I'm going to be here until he comes to get you." Hara says quietly, a depressed look on his face.

"Aww, what happened?" Krissy sits in next to him, giving him a hug.

"I don't want to talk about it."

"If your sure. I'm fine with that." Claire agrees and starts the engine, or tries to but it's broken. Again. she goes to the back, pulls out a spark plug from the box and goes to work.
"It shouldn't be doing this, Claire. You need to get a real Mechanic to look at this thing and figure out why it keeps destroying spark plugs before it explodes and kills us all." Krissy scolds her. This damn car is driving her crazy. Hitch hiking was a more reliable form of transportation than this.

"It's not going to explode! I'll just... call Dean. Have him walk me through it. Maybe we can meet him somewhere and work on fixing it up a bit more." Claire insists stubbornly.

"Claire..." Krissy leans back, looking at the roof. But she knows it's no use. "This is going to take a while, Hara. Are you sure you're okay?"

"He's not even slightly okay." Saul pushes forwards. "But he really doesn't want to talk about it and just got out of jail so you know, go easy on the guy."

"Jail?"

"The idiot turned himself in for the whole wager thing once he paid it off. He's really upset with himself for that, but I think there's something else weighing on him. He won't talk to me about it either." Saul sighs. /

"Are you okay?" Krissy looks him over. "What kind of trouble are you in? Is there anything we can do to help?"

"No, I just... won a game I shouldn't have." He shrugs it off, though his shoulders are as tense as when Hara was in control of the vessel.

"You mean lost a game you shouldn't have."

"Ha! I wish." he laughs. "No, people you lose money to are much easier to deal with than people who think you cheated them. Besides I rarely bet what I don't have." Saul brags, puffing up slightly as he usually does when discussing his poker playing.

"Ah, I see. you can't just give them their money back?"

"I paid off a loan with it before the matter was brought to my attention. The person I played was a good sport, but apparently he lost money he shouldn't have and decided to tell his boss I robbed him or conned him or something. So I'm kind of fucked. I might as well spend some time as Hara's meat suit. The poor thing could use a break. And while I can't get laid while sharing the residence at least I can't get shot this way."

"Alright. Well, if we can help, let us know." She pats his leg. "You know what. Hold on." She googles a few things. "Oh, yes. The Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia in Athens. Hey, Hara, you want to go look at rare books?" It's amazing how clear the transition is from cocky flirtatious professional poker player to angelic librarian woobie is.

"Do... do they have a restoration room?" Hara asks hopefully. "I haven't gotten to see much of the recent techniques."

"We'll go see. Claire! Drop us off in Athens, Hara needs some cheering up." She sits on the window, leaning out to yell at Claire.

"What am I a damn taxi?"

"Who bought that box of spark plugs, Claire?" Krissy gives her a stern look. "Hmm? Who?"
"Fine. I'll just go celebrate by myself."

"You could come with us." Harahel kindly extends the invitation. "I'm sure the erotic renderings in some of the antique manuscripts won't get you in as much trouble with Hel as visiting a strip club would." Claire peeks her head out from under the hood.

"How can you say things like that with such an impenetrable air of utter innocence?" She shakes her head at the angel.

"What do you mean?"

"Uch, never mind." She goes back in the rivers seat and starts it up. "Oh, thank god. Alright. Let's go to Athens."

"Claire." Death appears beside her as she ducks behind the stacks.

"Not a good time, boss. Just give me a second to kill this thing." Claire pulls out her gun and loads the silver bullets. "Eat silver, fu.." She bursts out only to have Hara thrown onto her before she can shoot.

"I simply wanted to inform you, Azrael's awake, so I no longer need your services. Thank you. You were an interesting adjutant." he informs her.

"Oh, your welcome. It was fun. Let me know if she needs a vacation or Bree murders her again." Claire salutes him, he gives her an amused half smile and disappears. "You." She frowns at Hara, as he helps her up. "Go wait in the car."

"I'm sorry." he cringes. Claire just pushes him aside and looks around.

"Oh, shit. Where'd they go." she looks around the tables. "Krissy? Did you get him? Krissy!"

"No, yeah, I got him." Krissy picks herself up off the ground, bloody silver knife in her hand and catches her breath. "Uchh. What the hell are were's doing in a library and changing mid afternoon?"

"They're purebloods. And I assume they wanted a book." this just gets Claire a roll of the eyes.

"I dunno, Claire. I'm fairly sure they were after one of these comfy chairs." Krissy kicks the plush chair at the end of a bookshelf.

"Are you alright?" Hara quickly goes to the librarian and helps the old man to his feet.

"What was that?" He glances around, wide eyed and shaking. "The... the teeth... and claws."

"Werewolf. Did he bite you?" Claire looks over at him.

"He's unharmed." Hara taps his forehead just to be safe, and starts picking books up an putting them back in the locked cabinets.
"No, that's alright. I have a system." the librarian takes a book from him.

"He's heaven's librarian. Let him help." Claire pats the man's shoulder. It figures they'd come into the library to find a were shoving around the librarian. It's almost a relief to have a problem they can solve by just killing something.

"Do you have a book repair room?" Hara asks setting a damaged volume gently aside.

"Go get a tarp from the wagon, Krissy. I'll lock up an take care of the security footage. If you have any appointments to view books, cancel them. Got it?" Claire instructs the librarian, who just nods, a bewildered look on his face. "God, I hate disposing of bodies in the daytime. What the hell was that thing thinking coming here now?"

"Probably that he wouldn't have to deal with a couple hunters and an angel." Krissy walks out. Not that Harahel is really more than a giant angelic punching bag. "Nope. Closed for emergency repairs." She turns a student around as Claire locks the door behind her.

"Krissy?" A man in a ratty jean jacket runs up.

"Ah, crap. I mean, hey, Joe, how's it going?" She gives him a half-hearted wave.

"Have you seen a... you know?" He makes a claw gesture with his hand.

"Yes. We're cleaning up now so I really have to go." She hurries to the car. Unfortunately he doesn't take the hint.

"Let me help." Joe chases after her. "It is, you know, my hunt, after all." He smiles at her.

"Sure. You can dig the hole."

"Want to see me shirtless again, huh?" He winks at her.

"It is possible to dig a hole with your shirt on you know. I do it all the time." Krissy opens the back of the wagon and grabs the tarp.

"So, are you seeing anyone?"

"Yes. I'm screwing Thanatos the greek god of Death." She hands him the duct tape. He just laughs.

"You always did have a great sense of humor. I've missed you. What happened to us?" He asks whistfully, much to Krissy's annoyance.

"You're a controlling overprotective asshole, that's what. And I'm not joking. Nat and I have been together for three months. And I have a new partner now, Claire Novak. I also have a librarian. He's very sweet and helpful but be nice to him or I swear I'll kick your ass." She warns him and heads back to the library.

"You're a hunter. You can't expect me to believe you're sleeping with a greek god and not killing him, like we're supposed to."

"He doesn't hurt humans, he's a psychopomp. He just guides their souls to hades, when there were worshippers to guide. Besides he dies in my arms quite frequently." Krissy
knocks on the door. "Look, we got this. Go um, go make sure there aren't any more and we'll get back to you." Krissy takes the rope back and slips in the door.

"Do you still have my num..." she closes and locks it before he can finish.

"Oh, god, what the hell is he doing here?" Krissy glances back as she heads to Claire. Joe blows her a kiss and waves goodbye.

"Freind of yours?" Claire grins and moves a few tables aside. Krissy just scowls and rolls out the tarp on the cleared space on the floor.

"I don't want to talk about it. I was young. I was lonely. We hunted together for a while after I left home, and you know we had... chemistry."

"You went to school together too?" Hara looks up.

"We found each other attractive. Why would you assume school?"

"Saul's been telling me stories of when he was little. He wasn't a very well behaved boy." Harahel says gravely. Krissy and Claire give a little smirk at this.

"He didn't trust birth control so, technically, I did not lose my virginity to him." Krissy informs Claire. "He was such a jackass. And so damn possessive. I flirt. I make a lot of inappropriate jokes. It's what I do."

"Saul does that, too. It's very difficult having the both of you together. It's almost scary how you both say similar things at almost the same moment." Harahel comments and helps lift the body onto the tarp and wrap it up. Claire looks at him appraisingly. He's not much good in a fight but that strength can come in handy. She wonders how fast he can dig a grave.

"Hara, help Krissy get the body in the back of the wagon while I get the blood out of the carpet. Actually here. Go get rid of the body and come back." Claire hands Krissy the keys.

"I am not driving that thing. I hate that bitch and she hates me. And I'm not carrying a dead body across the quad in the middle of the afternoon. Are you insane? I'll take care of the carpet. You go get your beast and pull up to the loading dock out back and.. there is a loading dock in the back right?" Krissy looks to the librarian, who nods.

"I'll show you." The trembling man motions for them to follow. So much for celebrating.
Chapter Summary

The maw of Fenris rears its ugly head.
Claire insists Rhys does something about his worshippers
Joe insists on helping.

"He looks so happy." Krissy smiles as Hara gently pieces the old book back together augmenting the repairs with the slightest traces of divine power. "Doesn't he look happy? He's just the cutest thing." Claire just raises an eyebrow at this. "No, like a little lost puppy, with a bone. I just want to have him curl up on my lap, pet him until he falls asleep and starts dreaming about chasing book mobiles." Claire just shakes her head. Though the reverent look on his face and the delicate way he handles it is maybe a little cute.

"Would you like some coffee?" The college librarian hands them each a cup. "It's terrible, but it's caffeinated and you look like you could use it."

"Thank you." Claire takes it. Krissy does out of sheer politeness.

"He was looking for our reprint of Skorvald Eriksson's guide to Scandinavian mythology. It's not the rarest of books, but it's a third edition, which is, with runic footnotes that are difficult to translate beyond a few words. He focuses on the myth of Ragnarok a great deal. But of a nihilist, Eriksson." The librarian grins.

"Crap." Krissy mutters, taking a sip of the terrible coffee as Claire downs the lukewarm brew in one drink. "I thought the Winchesters wiped that cult out."

"Well, maybe they weren't the only ones." Claire sighs, pulling out her phone. "Hey, honey, great news. Azrael's back so I don't have to work for Death anymore... uhhuh... well, I'd love to but we stopped in Athens to celebrate the divorce by taking Hara to see rare books and a werewolf was here threatening the librarian... Skorvald Eriksson's guide to Scandinavian Mythology. Third edition... Yup, that's the one.... I'll see what I can do, but we really have to take care of these wolves first. Knowing what it says will come in handy. Actually I was thinking Rhys should probably come down. It's about time he start taking responsibility for his worshippers. I don't care if he didn't go out to be worshipped or acted godly or anything, they're still murdering and planning to dominate humanity in his name. I think a 'dude not cool' from him is the least he can do, don't you think? I'll text you the address of our motel. Love you to, Hel, Bye."

"Hara." Krissy taps on the glass. "C'mere." The angel walks over, leaving the clean room.
"We're going to the hotel to regroup. Are you coming or do you want to stay with the library?"

"A couple books got damage in the fight. I'd like to stay and finish repairing them." he confesses.

"Alright. Do you have a cell phone?" She asks. Hara checks his pockets an pulls out Saul's. "Alright, here. Let me put my number in and text myself so you can get a hold of me if something goes wrong."
"Okay."

"And tell Saul if he sends me a dick pic, I'm posting it on his mother's facebook page."

"Why would he do that?" Hara frowns.

"Because he's a man. And men do stupid shit like that when drunk or awake." She replies.

"I don't... what if she doesn't want to see it? Wouldn't it be polite to ask first?" Hara seems to be in conversation with Saul. "But if it's rude to ask that sort of thing why isn't it rude to just do it without asking? I don't understand, Saul."

"You're not going to, because you're a decent respectful considerate being," Krissy pats his shoulder. "It's okay. Saul, stop corrupting our angel."

"You're one to talk." Claire exclaims.

"Hey. I'm open with my sexuality and not ashamed of my desires or my body or it's needs. I'm not trying to get him to commit felony sexual assault." Krissy responds primly, fluffing her chestnut curls.

"I was not!" Saul pushes forwards. "You're the one who brought up dick pics I was just answering his questions. Maybe if you don't want him knowing about things, you shouldn't talk about things you don't want him to know about."

"Oh? Then how come I had to answer questions about golden gay times?" Krissy challenges.

"It's an ice cream bar in australia! I'm the one who had to correct him. Having an angel is a big responsibility and you have to take this seriously. He's already died and lost his wings on your watch. You don't need to....What, really? Oh, gross." Saul pauses. "Cockle bread. That even sounds disgusting." He makes a face.

"What?" Krissy tilts her head. Saul just shakes his head. So she takes out her phone and googles it. "Eww!"

"Okay. So maybe neither of us is actually corrupting him with carnal knowledge."

"What the hell kind of trash are you letting him read?" Krissy demands. Claire just snickers. "What?"

"You sound like a divorced couple with shared custody. Harahel, don't worry. Just because mommy and daddy are fighting doesn't mean it's your fault. They both still love you very much." Claire mocks them. Krissy and Saul just glare at her. "No please, ust away." She turns and heads out back to the car.

"I'll make sure he calls you as soon as something happens if it happens." Saul reassures Krissy.

"And don't take over if he does. he may not be able to fight, but unless there's an angel blade he can take much more damage than you. If you're in control, you don't get that mojo. Understand?" Krissy cautions him much to his annoyance.

"I've been his vessel longer than you have, Krissy, in case you've forgotten." Saul snaps before realizing she has. "Oh.. right..."
"I was Hara's vessel? But he's a boy. That would be kind of.." Krissy shrugs uncomfortably. Saul opens his mouth to reply but Claire's horn gets their attention. "I'd better go before she honks so hard it vibrates all the screws out. Just be careful, okay?"

"Yes, mom." he salutes and goes back into the workshop.

"There's only one bed." Krissy comments as they open the motel room door. "You're sleeping in the wagon." She informs Claire.

"Excuse me?"

"You kick. It's bad enough when we have to sleep in the back of the car, I'm not sharing a bed with you and getting my shins all bruised up when we'll probably have to be running from werewolves at some point. I'm surprised Hel does. I can only assume you're a phenomenal lover." Krissy tosses her bag on the bed.

"I paid for this room and If you won't share the bed, you can go sleep in the wagon."

"Zelda Gatsby paid for this room and I slept in the wagon last time." Krissy protests as Claire shoves past her into the room.

"Stop being such a baby." Claire kicks her shoes off and tosses her bag on the bed as well.

"And do you have to put a whole arsenal under the pillows? I cut my hand on that sword last time." Krissy groans as Claire puts her sword and guns underneath the pillows.

"Yes, I do, and nobody asked you to try and give it a hand job in your sleep."

"Ha,ha,ha. Give me your guns. You never clean them properly. I bet they're all a mess and I don't want them to jam when we're out there. Bring them all in here and go get some pizza or something while I take care of it, will you?"

"Why don't you teach me how to do this the way you were taught if I don't do it right." Claire suggests, taking the guns out from under the pillow and going to put her shoes back on.

"With or without the inappropriate touching and rape threats?" Krissy goes into the bathroom and takes out some towels.

"Oh, the colonel." Claire makes a face. Krissy told her about him. She thought grandfather figure, he thought sugar daddy. It's weird to think that Dean is one of the more enlightened least dickish hunters out there. Maybe Krissy just had exceptionally bad luck in partners.

"Not my favorite mentor, but he put me through boot camp so to speak and it came in very handy."

"Why do you always gravitate towards that flirty, bossy, macho type? Are you cursed or something?" Claire asks.

"Don't know, don't care. Look I'm going to get some ice and a soda from the machine. Do you want anything?"
"I thought you were going to clean the guns."

"I can do this while you're fetching them from the car." Krissy opens the door just as Joe raises his hand to knock on it. "Nope." She closes it again. What did he follow them there?

"Krissy, I'm sure he's not here just to flirt with and or stalk you. If so, it's easier to kill him and dispose of his body the less chance people have to see him outside our hotel room." Claire opens the door as Krissy heads to the other side of the room. "Sorry about that. Can we help you?"

"We need to talk."

"Sure, come in." Claire waves him in, much to Krissy's disgust. Joe pauses a moment as he sees the single bed and gets a smile that says he's indulging in fantasies. "I assume this is something hunting related."

"Oh, yes. Um, my partner's guarding the library as we speak. Posing as a janitor. This isn't just a werewolf after a book. The entire pack is after this thing. They've already turned and kidnapped a scholar of ancient norse runes, Heinrick Osgard. Eddie and I have been tracking them half way across the country after this book. Each time, they attempt this... ritual... sacrificing livestock, people, pets. Like they're trying to summon something, but it never works. This is the only place left with a copy of that book. It's a big pack and we can use all the help we can get defending it."

"Alright. Krissy, why don't you head back to the library. Joe and I will stock up with silver bullets and stuff and meet you there. Claire tosses her the keys. "Unless you'd rather go with me?" It's a testament to how much she hates the man that she goes out to the car. "Alright, listen up, buddy." Claire pokes his chest. "unless it's directly hunting related, you leave my partner alone. Whatever did or did not happen between you two to piss her off this much, I don't care. she's not interested and neither am I. She's my partner and I'm on her side. We've been through quite enough lately. We don't need a flirty ex boyfriend gumming up the works."

"Understood." He holds up his hands. "So, you and Krissy."

"No. she's straight and we're both seeing other people. Anyways, the silver is in the suitcase." Claire hauls it up into the bed. "Krissy loaded up on the way here. "Some wolf repellent. It'll make it hard for them to come near you, throw them off their game a little bit." She hands him a satchel of monkshood potpourri.

"So, she really has a boyfriend."

"Not discussing her personal life with you, Joe. So they're trying to summon something. Any idea what?" she asks, not sure if she'll need to let them know about Rhys exactly.

"Well, given we keep taking these off the corpses and there's only one wolf god in norse mythology." Joe takes a silver bullet out of his pocket, showing her the inscription on the side, ragnarok. Claire sighs. She knew it. "We think they're trying to summon, Fenris, the wolf that eats the world. So, as a back up plan, in case they succeed we need to look into how to kill it."

"No we aren't. Whatever they think about Fenrisulfr and Ragnarok, they're sorely mistaken. He's not a human slaughtering conquering just a hedonistic, lazy glutton who can't be bothered to put on clothes unless his sister forces him to." She rolls her eyes, drawing her gun as the door opens.

"Would you wear clothes with a body like this?" Rhys smacks her a kiss, rubbing the
flat tummy of his fortunately shirt covered torso. Claire sighs and puts her gun away. Joe reluctantly follows suit.

"It's about time. The Maw of Fenris has reared its ugly head again. I guess it had spread farther than they thought it had. so can I take it you're finally going to do something about this now?" She demands, crossing her arms.

"Well, I kind of have to. Dad's frozen my accounts until I do. Plus I need to steer clear of Yuri for a bit. Uncle Thor and I started tossing the old pigskin around, while it was still on the little potbelly pig. So big brother's a wee bit ticked off at us. Where's Krissy?" Rhys leans against the door as Claire smiles at the image of potbelly Baldur flying through the air squealing in outrage. Those two can probably toss him pretty far.

"Who is this?" Joe eyes the shaggy grey haired man suspiciously.

"I'm Rhys. Claire's dating my sister. Which car is yours?" Rhys looks to the parking lot.

"Krissy took it to the library. Joe? Your car?" Claire turns to him. The hunter just looks suspiciously at Rhys.

"I've never seen hair like that before." He stares at Rhys's salt and pepper head. "Not on someone so young. How old are you?"

"Hell if I know. I'll have to ask Dad. He's not going to stay like... that... is he?" Rhys looks a bit uncomfortable at the thought of his father being a woman.

"I'm pretty sure she is."

"Of all the absurd..." he huffs and shakes his head. "That's fine. It's fine. He'll get bored eventually. But Yuri's never going to forgive him if he keeps doing humiliating assinine crap like this. So, Claire, when are you getting back to neflheim? Sissy's really stressed out lately." He gives her a significant glance.

"You know, I am not her personal sex toy. It's not my job to show up and give her a little strange just because you and your brother don't want to give her any significant assistance." Claire scolds him, preferring not to get into Bree with Joe here.

"Why do you need my car? How did you get here? Where did you come from?" Joe demands, his gun still in his hand. Rhys remains entirely unconcerned.

"My uncle dropped me off from my sister's place while he went off to look for Dad to ask him to turn his brother back. He won't but at least he can tell Yuri he tried. Man, I can't believe he's actually our uncle. And Yuri..." Rhys shakes his head. "Where is dad anyway?"

"I don't know either heaven with Castiel or a different kind of heaven with Sam. They didn't get much private time together when he was dying of cancer." Claire looks back to Joe. "Your car?"

"R-right..." He clicks his keychain making the nearby SUV flash its lights.

"So, how's Alex?" Rhys asks casually as he enters the back seat. Claire just stares at him until he looks away to buckle his seat belt.
Halfway to the library, they come across Krissy trying to fix Claire's broken down wagon.

"What did you do to my car?" Claire exclaims, half leaping out of the SUV before it's even stopped.

"Excuse me?" Krissy puts her hands on her hips. "Who did what to who now? Your car stranded me in the middle of the road." She slams down the hood and tosses Claire her keys back, getting into the back seat of the SUV. "Hey Rhys. You got here fast."

"My uncle has fast goats." The wolf go informs her.

"Cool." she looks in front to see Joe, but doesn't acknowledge his wink and looks back to Rhys. "So how's tricks, tu lobo loco?"

"Dad froze my accounts until I do something about the damn cult, so irritating and parental." He leans back, with a petulant pout not at all appropriate for a wolf of his age. "So, you still seeing Nat? Or will you be available for a post hunt celebration?" Rhys switches to flirtateous and smacks Krissy a kiss.

"Eyes on the road, lover boy." Claire pulls the wheel over as the car starts to drift from Joe looking in the rearview mirror at Krissy instead of in front of him as he should be. "And weren't you just asking about Alex?"

"She's not here and I'm still not allowed to talk to her. I really don't see what the problem is. I can show her a good time, have some fun. I'm a good lover. She would enjoy herself. She could really loose her virginity to worse." Rhys argues.

"She could do worse. What a glowing recommendation. And she doesn't want to be some prize of trophy or used, do you understand me? My sister is not a toy to be played with and you don't do anything else. Is that clear enough?" Claire lectures him. Rhys just sighs and looks out the window. "If she wasn't a virgin would you even be interested?"

"If she wasn't a virgin would you be trying so hard to keep me away from her?" He shoots back. "And what's wrong with playing? And having fun and enjoying another person until you no longer enjoy each other anymore?"

"Nothing." Krissy says before Claire can reply, and pats his arm. "But you have to be in the right place for that and Alex is not. She's really not. It's not just about how you are, it's about how she is, too. If you don't want to pursue an actual serious relationship with anyone, that's fine. and if not it really shouldn't matter that you can't have Alex without hurting her in some way. There are plenty of virgins and plenty who don't want to be."

"Yeah, but none of them are as cool as Alex." Rhys mutters with a wistful smile. Krissy discreetly kicks the back of Claire's seat and gives her a pointed look. when she looks back. Claire just glances back giving her partner a 'don't start' look.

"Hey! Isn't that your angel?" Joe asks as they come up to see Hara running away from the library. he's all bloody with claw marks in his clothing an soot. So much soot.

"Hara! What happened?" Krissy is out almost instantly.

"They set a fire." He hugs her. "I tried to save the janitor but I couldn't..."

"Eddie!" Joe runs into the library.
"Oh, Hara. Did they get the book?"

"No." He says quietly. "I burned it."

"Oh, Hara...."

"I had to." he buries his face in her neck. "It called for virgin sacrifice and would have bound Fenris to their will. I couldn't let them get it. I couldn't."

"Wait, you can read the runes?" Claire exclaims. "Why didn't you say something?"

"I didn't think it was important. You don't have to use a spell to summon Fenris. You can just give his sister a call." Harahel says so innocently, Claire could strangle him.

"It's okay, honey, it's okay." Krissy rubs his back.

"Did they get away?" Claire demands.

"Yes."

"Alright. Time to get tracking." Rhys stretches popping his joints a little. "I should probably keep it domesticated, huh." He sighs.

"Yeah." Claire puts a hand to her head. "An enormous grey wolf the size of a horse would be a little hard to explain. Rhys drops down to his knees changing into a wolfy looking dog of a type she isn't familiar with. Unfortunately, Joe's coming out of the library, carrying his partner's body at that moment and freaks out at the sight. Not the least because there's no goopy crap like with a shifter. It takes a few minutes and some of Krissy's wiles to convince him not to just start shooting and to let Rhys lead them to the weres instead.
Responsibiltiy

Chapter Summary

The girls hunt the weres
Rhys steps up
Hara finally talks to Krissy about what's bothering him

"You know, beating out flames with your bare hands is pretty badass." Krissy attempts to console Hara as they walk through the woods behind the library.

"There was so much blood, and smoke damage." He covers his face. "I don't... I'm so tired. If it wasn't so dangerous, I'd let Saul back up an rest a little. Rye taught me how to... how to do emergency first aid like that now."

"Look, why don't you go back to the hotel and clean up." She hands him the room card. "And rest while we take care of this, okay? Maybe get Zuri to take you back to heaven for a bit to recharge quicker?"

"Yeah, we really can't baby sit you on this right now." Claire adds. Krissy shoots her a look.

"I can... I can still heal you and be a sheild." Hara says haltingly.

"Healing will come in handy." Joe says blankly. "We're tracking weres. Though you didn't seem to be able to help Eddie all that much."

"I'm sorry." Hara hugs his arms to his chest.

"Hara, I like you, but right now you're a liability. You know it's true, Krissy." Claire insists.

"You don't want to drain your grace, hon. You know you're weak without your wings. Tell you what, you go back to the hotel room and try and find if there are any other copies of that edition anywhere. You know, in case we can't catch up with an eliminate them." Krissy rubs his back, throwing him a bone. Hara nods, accepting it. "Thank you." She kisses his forehead. Hara just slips into the veil and heads back.

"So that's an angel." Joe doesn't sound too impressed. "No wonder the worlds this way."

"Oh fuck off, Joe. You don't know a damn thing." Krissy punches his arm and storms after Rhys.

"Look, Harahel's... special." Claire admonishes him. "I know your grieving but running down Krissy's angel isn't going to win you any brownie pointsm I can tell you that much."

"What the hell kind of company are you two keeping?" Joe demands. "I hear you're a decent hunter. What are you doing with a defective angel and a... a shifter.. or whatever he is. And you're dating one? Krissy's really sleeping with a pagan god isn't she?"
"If you have a problem with the company we keep, feel free to go your own way." Claire coolly replies and hurries after her partner. Joe just keeps a tight grip on his gun and keeps close.

"You know we're hunting pure bloods, right?"

"Obviously." Claire rolls her eyes.

"Have you hunted pure blood weres before? They can change at any time."

"Yes. I am aware of that given we killed one this afternoon. Now shush and pay attention to your surroundings. It's hard enough finding them without you jabbering away and revealing our position."

She puts a finger to her lips.

The sounds of the forest seem especially ominous in the dark and Rhys is all but invisible even in the moonlight. He pauses and gives a warning growl just as a cloud passes over the half moon, rendering the forest even darker. Claire hears a movement nearby and draws her sword, turning at the noise to her left. She barely gets it up before a were lunges at her in the dark. A gun shot rings out and another growl but she can't pay too much attention as she's busy trying to kill her attacker. She misses the heart but the wonderful angel blade hurts it almost as much as silver and she manages to pull it out and strike at it's neck, severing the spine in the next blow. It's so sharp it cuts through the were's neck like butter, decapitating it completely.

"I love this thing." She grins and goes after a dark shape nearby.

"It's okay! It's me. I got it!" Krissy pushes the fallen were aside. "Joe, you alive? Joe?"

"I'm okay." he says quietly, getting up from the ground.

"Rhys?" Claire calls, expecting a wolfy noise in return.

"None of them was the father." He says disgustedly.

"Father?" Claire squints at the naked bloody man walking over in the renewed moonlight.

"Please, I prefer 'daddy'." Rhys smacks Krissy a kiss.

"You know what I meant. Where are your clothes?" Claire cleans off her sword on the were's shirt and puts it away.

"It's a pack. Packs are families, mother father, children, not those alpha beta prison rules crap." Rhys ignores the question.

"They're not wolves. They're weres."

"They're pure bloods. Pure bloods are families. They're all brothers or cousins. Smell like coal and cheap moonshine." he wrinkles his nose. "Errand boys. Why would he send them for something so important?"

"Are there anymore?"

"Not here. give me a second. I'll change back and eat the bodies."

"The fuck?" Claire looks over at him.

"Gotcha." He stretches into a giant wolf and starts digging.
"Are you okay, krissy?" Joe goes over to her.

"I'm fine." she pulls out her phone. "Go back to the car and get some matches and lighter fluid, will you? Hara, hey. Are you back at the hotel? .... Oh, good.... Wait, seriously? You rock. Claire, Hara pushed the POS back to the hotel.... No, we were ambushed.... I'm okay.... Claire is too. Could you do me a favor? Draw us a hot bath and order something to eat? There's a twenty in the glove compartment, get us a couple pizzas." Rhys gives a growl at the word pizza. "Chinese?" Another growl. "Indian?" an affirmative sounding yip. "We can't afford indian, Rhys. Just get pizza. The wolf that eats the world can order his own food when we get back."

"Put some damn clothes on." Claire tosses a towel over Rhys' midsection as he reclines on the bed, eating a samosa.

"Or what, you'll tell my sister?" He challenges, using the towel to wipe his mouth.

"Oh I'll start flinging hot peppers there instead. Nobody wants to see your naked self."

She scolds him taking the last slice of pepperoni. Of course he'd eat three fourths of each of the pizzas waiting for his indian food to arrive. Stupid greedy wolf.

"There don't seem to be any more copies of the book." Harahel looks up from the cheap laptop. "I put an ad out to private collectors to request a viewing if they have it. I said I was working on a thesis on Nordic runes."

"Okay." Claire sighs. "Thank you." She takes out the ID's she confiscated from the bodies before she burned them and looks them over. "These are all the same address somewhere in kentucky. Think they're real?" She asks Krissy who shrugs, stealing Rhys’ mango lassi since he drank all the coke.

"They are." Hara informs her. "They're made by the dmv at least. I don't know if the address is real though."

"How the hell do you know?" Claire looks at him skeptically.

"My job is to make copies and store things. I know copies and real things and such practically on instinct." He explains.

"Wait, you mean, copies as in forgeries?" Claire's eyes light up and she takes out a hundred dollar bill, also confiscated from the wallets of the dead weres. "Can you copy this?" She holds it out.

"Of course, but I'm not doing that." he says calmly. "I'll forge things that cost money but I won't forge money."

"Why not?"

"I just won't." Hara apparently is a bit cranky.

"Don't be greedy, Claire." Krissy reaches for the rice pudding.

"We'd have more time for hunting and crap if we didn't have to cheat and rob people and corporations to fund it, you know."

"No. It could potentially devastate the economy if we're not caught."
"Why don't you just ask Hel for some jewels to sell and stuff." Rhys rolls his eyes. "We have a bajillion. You saw the treasury."

"I am not a kept woman." Claire snaps and goes to the bathroom, closing the door behind her.

"Don't mind her." Krissy walks over to Hara and gives him a hug. "How are you feeling? Did you get any rest yet?"

"No. I'm still tired. It's safe now, though, right? I can let Saul up front?" he asks wearily. Krissy nods and pats his arm.

"Finally." Saul pushes away and grabs the lamb biryani and a thing of raita from the end of the bed. "Knowing this was here and real was driving me insane. He makes good illusions but it's just not the same."

"Oh, I know." Krissy hands him a fork.

"You know, you guys hurt his feelings sending him away like that." Saul chides them in a rather hypocritical manner.

"I know, but why are you complaining? If he ran out of energy it's your body that's damaged and if he uses up all of his grace, it's your soul who's getting hurt or pushed out of the body unless you cast him out first, which would probably kill you anyways as he can't fly away."

"Oh." Saul says quietly.

"It's all in that book he gave me about being a vessel. Don't you have one?"

"Well, yes, but I've kind of been busy." he protests. Krissy just shakes her head. "Look, we both know that you'd... that you would be a better vessel for him." Saul says hastily.

"I'm a girl, Saul."

"Angels don't have secondary sex characteristics, Krissy. Hara's really more of a girl honestly. He likes girl things, he acts like a girl. He's all emotional and whiny like a girl." Saul ignores Rhys frantic motion to stop talking.

"Let me explain something to you, mr. Man." Krissy leans over him. There's a knock on the door. "Oh, please not Joe again." she begs to the heavens.

"It's an angel." Rhys downs his third chai, adding the empty cup to the pile of empty take out containers.

"Look at you, you pig, no wonder they call you the wolf that eats the world." Krissy heads to the door and checks the peephole.

"Changing makes me hungry!" he protests.

"Hey, Miti." Krissy opens the door. "You could have just appeared inside."

"I didn't want to intrude. Is Hara still upset?" She asks peering in.

"Yes." Saul replies, his mouth full. "And tired. you need to take him back to heaven to recharge or something."
"Why? He's not... oh, right. Wings. Alright. Um, where's Claire?" Miti steps in and blushes at the nude man on the bed.

"Here." Claire comes back out of the bathroom.

"Hey angel. How did you know I was in the mood for indian?" Rhys winks at her. "Care to come play? I have a much better hotel room we can go to."

"I'm telling your father you're hitting on his little sister." Claire tosses another towel at him. "And will you cover up?"

"Hey, dad's in no position to judge." Rhys snorts.

"Actually, Gabriel's in charge of Heaven, now. She's very much in the position to judge each and every one of us." Miti informs him. Rhys' eyes widen and he starts laughing. "It's not funny. She's the eldest most powerful archangel alive and she's finally taking some responsibility."

"No wonder Dad's being such a hardass about this cult thing. Alright." Rhys snaps his fingers, returning his own, dapper clothing to his body just as Claire knew damn well he could this entire time. "I'm going to go back to my non-crappy hotel, tear it up, and go look for the head of the pack. If I need help, I'll call you." He picks up one of the Id's from the counter.

"Don't leave all this crap on our bed." Claire points to the teeming mass of empty take out containers and cups piled on the middle of the bed. "I'm not your damn maid."

"You're not my damn mother either." Rhys exits the motel room, pausing briefly to hand Miti a room key. "In case you change your mind." he smacks her a kiss. Miti doesn't respond, though she does look it over, as if actually considering it.

"So, what's up? Is everything okay?" Claire and Krissy start tossing the empty containers into a trash bag.

"Yes. For the moment. They've decided to resurrect Raphael and free Michael. Hara, they'd like you to come and wait in the abyss with the fledgelings while they go and try to revive Raphael." Miti looks to Saul.

"He says okay, but I don't think he's ready to come back out yet. He had to burn a rare book and he's taking it kind of hard." Saul explains.

"I'm sorry." Miti apologizes to her brother.

"We don't have to go there now, do we?" Saul asks warily.

"No. Not for a little while. They're still planning and making precautions and such. Hara," Miti steps closer. "Rye is so very sorry. He feels so bad about what he did, he really does." Miti waits for an answer but doesn't get one.

"Sorry, I guess he still doesn't want to talk about it." Saul apologizes after a minute.

"That's fair. Who would you like to come get you when it's time to go?"

"We can get him there." Claire speaks up. "If not, we'll call. I promise."

"Alright." Miti walks over to Saul and gives him a kiss on the cheek. "I'm here if
you need me, brother."

"He knows." Saul replies awkwardly and Miti dissappears.

"Are you okay, sweetie?" Krissy puts a hand on Saul's shoulder.

"You know, I'm here, right? I am in control of my own body right now, not Hara." Saul snaps. "He's withdrawn for a reason that doesn't involve constant conversation with everybody else." Krissy just pats his head and goes to finish cleaning up.

"Krissy?" Hara taps her shoulder, waking her from a deep sleep.

"Huh? wuh?" She turns over, blinking, sleepily. "Is everything alright?"

"Can I talk to you?"

"Now? Um, okay." she crawls out from under the covers, examining her legs. "Huh, no bruises. I guess she hasn't started kicking yet."

"No, I just held her legs down. Claire sleeps very deeply." Hara informs her. Krissy gives a grin at this. "I'm sorry to wake you, but I want to talk to you alone and I don't have the energy to enter your dreams. If that's okay?"

"Yeah, no, of course. C'mon." Krissy grabs her coat and heads outside to the wagon. It's not so bad when it's sitting still. Who know if Claire will be able to fix it this time. The idea gives her hope hitherto unknown and she settles into the seat. "So what's up."

"Have you ever done something you can't forgive yourself for?" Hara asks quietly, looking at his hands in his lap.

"Not yet, but I'm still young." Krissy shrugs, taking hold of his figeting hands. "It's not as if I haven't made mistakes though, or killed innocent people."

"Does that matter so much? That they're innocent." Hara doesn't look up. "Is it wrong to love someone who isn't? To regret doing what was the right thing to do. To hate yourself for it?"

"No. It's not."

"Nathaniel was my only real freind. After I threw my sword away, everyone just sort of shunned or mocked me, but not him. He would always come into the library and tell me about what was going on or all the wonderful things she did and he never pushed me to come out or talk to anybody else and he always said that he didn't care if I was useless. I was pretty an that was good enough for him. If our father just wanted me to be pretty and delicate and sweet like he made me, then who were they to disagree?" Krissy feels endlessly irritated by this, but hara's talking so she holds her peace in regards to this so called 'friend'.

"I wasn't as pretty as he was though." Hara continues. "He had wings like sparkling micah. he was the only angel even close to how beautiful Lucifer was in any part of him. And I killed him. He just wanted me to stay with him and I killed him."

"Now, I know there's more to it than that." Krissy chides him. And the whole story comes out. How Nathaniel tried to convince him to join Lucifer, but he wouldn't leave the library.
How Lucifer had even been the one to get him assigned to the library in the first place. How even those still siding with Michael thought Hara was being ungrateful for not betraying heaven. "Oh, bull shit. They were just jealous that you, who they considered the least of them, sacrificed the person you value most for the sake of what was right."

"I killed him for books. I killed him because he was burning the library and wouldn't let me save anything." Hara confesses, "I wasn't thinking about right or wrong. Just that the library was the only place I belonged and I couldn't leave it, not for anyone or anything. Maybe I did the right thing, but not for the right reason."

"Still, that must have been the hardest thing you ever had to do." She wipes his tears away with her sleeve. "It's okay, though. you feel how you want to feel about it. I'll be right here for you, no matter what. And maybe you did kill him just for the books, I don't believe it. I know there's so much more to you than that. Maybe the library was your anchor, but it was anchoring you where you desperately wanted to be. If you wanted to join Lucifer, and Nathaniel, if you didn't think it was right to stay, I know you'd have left with him. Maybe taken everything with you. But you didn't. Do you know how I know this of you? Because you burned a book today to save lives. Hara, that says so much, don't you think?"

"It's not something I would have done then." Hara refuses to accept the comfort.

"No? Then I guess that means you're growing and changing and becoming a better person than you were. That's good too, you know." Krissy smiles at him. Hara just hugs her for this, not saying another word.
Neccessary conversations

Chapter Summary

Babe and Sam have a long talk while naked and covered in frosting. The Winchesters and their angels decide on a course of action. Babe gives Cas some sisterly advice.

"So," Babe finishes painting the green m'n'm on Sam's bare chest with colored frosting. "You're awfully silent."

"I didn't want to break your concentration." He replies and tries to look down on it.

"Here." Babe snaps the previously rejected mirror back onto the ceiling and sits up out of the way so he can see.

"Looks yummy." He appraises it. "And all for you? I'm jealous."

"Aww." Babe lies down on top of him so her stomach presses against the frosted picture, and gives him a kiss. "Don't worry, I'll share."

"Babe... what are we doing?" Sam brushes a loose curl away from her face.

"Currently? Making a living sandwich cookie." She wiggles slightly, further smearing the image. He just looks her in the eye with that pleadin expression he has to know she can't really resist. "You really want to have that discussion? Now?"

"Why not?" he gives a gentle smile. "I doubt we'll have a better time." she has to concede the point. Nothing ever stays simple or fun or free of strife for long. "So, what are we doing?"

"Whatever you want to do." She shrugs. He just gives her a look at that non answer. "Look, I'm... I'm not exactly great at relationships. Do we really have to think about this so hard?" she pleads. "Why can't we just enjoy each other while we have the chance? Why muddle it up with thinking about stuff like this. Do you really think it'll end well?"

"I think you haven't had to chance to have a completely honest relationship with anyone since you left heaven. You've always had to or felt you had to lie and hide who and what you are. You don't have to do that anymore, not with me. I think that opens up alot of possibilities that maybe you aren't even really that aware of, don't you?" Sam gently caresses her cheek.

"Completely honest. I don't think I know how." she laughs and looks away. " Relationships use to be easier. There was marriage and there was love an if you were lucky you fell in love with the person you married. but that was never the reason you committed. Now it was money, status, alliances, resources. Divorce used to be harder to get too. Now, marriage is just a big wager where you bet another person half your stuff that you'll love them until one of you dies. And even that wouldn't work for us given we seem to die and come back more than Jean Grey. I love you, Sam, I really do, but who knows what that means in the long term, if that's even enough."

"That's true I suppose. So what do we do? Just have fun until it's no longer fun? Is that's all this is? I know, when we started hanging out, you said it was just mutual entertainment, but this is
more than that, isn't it? I know it is for me at least."

"It's more, infinitely more but... I don't... what do you want from me Sam? I would have been happy to just stay by your side, living, loving, dying as human beings, doing human things and I have considered it the greatest thing in all of creation, but I'm not human. I never truly was. I can't... time is always going to be an issue."

"Liar." Sam pinches her cheek.

"This is so limited." Babe wrinkles her nose. "It's good for fun, but not for substance. We can't have lunches together, where we bargain with each other into eating right. You won't remind me to take my insulin, or to go to rehab for my leg. All the stupid little everyday inconveniences that just meant so much for no understandable reason are just... gone now."

"I know. You're not human. I'm not dying of cancer. Now we're back to hunting and saving the world, engaging in wanton hedonism, possibly starting another apocalypse in the process. But we're doing those little things together, too. At least part of the way. You have your siblings to take care of now, I understand. I'm so proud of you for stepping up and doing that, by the way." Sam's praise makes her clearly uncomfortable.

"Ecchh." She makes a face. "I hate it. I was never involved in that aspect of heaven. Ever. I just delivered messages and played pranks and organized the choir. I was never meant to do any of this. Well, aside from the judging. I have a knack for that. I was supposed to do that, actually. Pass judgement and set punishments once my deliveries were complete. The angel of justice and judgement. Funny, huh? One of dad's little jokes, making the screw up in charge of dealing with the ones who screw up."

"Do you really think of yourself as just The Screw Up? Really? I'm pretty sure Lucifer has a better claim to that title."

"Ha!. No, he was deliberately rebellious. That's different." Babe shakes her head. "I was always getting in trouble. You know who the first angel to be ever be outright punitively punished was? Me. Granted it was by Michael for my little personalized lesson plan teaching Cassie to fly, and Dad let me off the hook when he came back as I didn't break any rules, really. They made so many rules because of me, you have no idea." She grins almost proudly, making Sam laugh a little. "And you want a definitive structured relationship with this?"

"I nearly destroyed the world multiple times. I'm in no position to criticize." Sam reminds her.

"You were doing your best. I was dicking around and fighting boredom mostly. Later, punishing humanity for not being better than it was. Blaming the victim for being broken. Everything fell apart when humanity came but that's not fair either. Honestly it was falling apart before that. It would have happened anyway. But I thought, why can't you be better? My family is in pieces because of you, you're supposed to be something wonderful, something worth all this pain and strife. And then I met you and realized that you were. What's more that humanity as a whole probably was all along."

"To be fair, you did pretty much exclusively go after major assholes. Granted death was a little harsh. You didn't kill the frat boy though." Sam muses. "Why?"

"He was just a kid. He could still learn." She shrugs.

"Did he, do you think?"
"I don't know. Probably not," Babe confesses. "I stopped checking up on the survivors centuries ago. Too depressing."

"You know I'm not okay with you killing people, right? Or your pagan friends doing so." Sam clarifies warily. "Murder's kind of a deal breaker."

"Sam, you're a hunter, how could I not be aware of that? I'm going to see what I can do to get them to stop, maybe find other ways to sustain themselves. Though most of those who are still killing will have to be killed. They either can't or won't coexist. I know that. Though your little hunter's school needs to teach the difference between malignant and benign supernatural beings. I'm not okay with innocent gods and benevolent spirits being hunted either. And I will kill to protect them if I have to." Babe looks him firmly in the eye. Sam considers and nods.

"Alright. Care to teach the class?" He offers hopefully. Babe sits crosses her arms and thinks for a moment.

"I could probably carve out an hour a day to help influence the next generation. Think you could add some classes for angels and vessels? Hara's sent me a million letters about that since I got back."

"Vessels and their families need to be protected too, so, sure. I can add that to the curriculum."

"Provided my siblings don't murder us." Babe qualifies.

"You don't really think they will, do you." Sam doesn't ask. She just shrugs. "Tell me about Raphael."

"Tell you about Raphael?" She pushes herself upright, straddling her waist. "Not exactly a sexy topic of conversation."

"And school is?" He challenges. Babe just waggles her eyebrows suggestively. "I just don't really know much about him. Aside from the fact that he killed my best friend, and waged a civil war in heaven trying to restart the apocalypse."

"Uch. Tell me about it. I'm starting to think I don't either. Not anymore anyways. I can tell you who he was." She offers and gives a sigh as Sam nods and traces a smiley face in the frosting on her stomach. "Well, he's a momma's boy. Just completely and utterly Momma Miqa's special little guy. It's been like that since I can remember. Michael always stood up for him when our brother picked on him. She kept him close, encouraged him. I never really understood why exactly Luci was so antagonistic. I can only assume it was because before Raphael, he had Michael all to himself and our shining star doesn't really like to share. Eventually he stopped being overly critical of him and they just mostly tried to pretend the other didn't exist except when forced to. So Raph just adored Miqa. He's do anything for her. And on her end he was her right hand. Steady, dependable, strong, obedient in ways my brother and I never were.

"Man, when Michael was caged, he must have freaked the fuck out. Worse than you loosing Dean, or at least as bad. Seriously." Babe grimaces. "I wish I'd knows he was trying to push the apocalypse along. Honestly, I didn't even think about trying to get him on your side. And you probably could have done it, too. Just convinced him that Michael would have lost if they fought. Not that, you know, it would have been easy either, but, I don't know. I can't imagine why he'd try to accelerate it. How low must he have been to think that was the best option?"

"You don't wonder why he'd try and restart it?" Sam pushes himself up on his elbows.
"Are you kidding? I don't wonder about any of the crap you and Dean do to drag each others asses out of the fire, do I? This isn't my first insanely codependant rodeo." She tries to smooth her hair back. "I know my.. eldest brother tried to say you were like him, but honestly, you were more like him and Raph combined."

"And Dean is you and Michael combined?" he teases.

"You shut your mouth." She places a hand over his lips. "This isn't going to work out if you start comparing me to your brother." He mumbles a response about the hypocrisy of her statement before she removes it again. "Well, okay. I will grant you that point" she tries to smooth her hair back but just gets frosting in it. "Raph, used to be so kind and gentle. He was the healer, you know. He was all about life and growth and nurturing. And he was always just so sensitive. He always knew how I felt, and how to listen. He hated crowds. Nothing makes him crankier than being surrounded by tons of angels or any living being in great enough numbers. I used to drag him off to one of the moons of Jupiter, Callisto, when he was getting too ornery. We'd just stay there for a bit. Just the two of us so he could relax and unwind. Towards the end, I had to actually start causing trouble to tear him away from Michael. But I'd practice my illusions and rearranging matter. He'd teach me about molecular structure or we'd just talk about stuff. He'd vent a little, never about Michael's overly high expectations, just his failure to meet them like our brother would often point out. Or training difficulties. Sometimes we wouldn't do much of anything, you know. We'd just hold each other and relax. Really, he's a big old snuggle bunny." This description of Raphael makes Sam's mouth twitch as he tries not to laugh.

"You sound like you were close."

"Not especially. Not like I... I was closer to Raphael than I was to Michael. Who could live up to a big sister like that? I'd never be Miqa, and didn't want to be. I couldn't be..." She catches herself starting to talk about Lucifer again and stops herself.

"It's okay. You can talk about Helel." Sam reassures her, though he can't bring himself to call the brother of her memory Lucifer. Helel ben Sahar and Lucifer just seemed so very different. "It's funny. Helel ben Sahar. Why did he have three names when all the other angels have one? Or do you have other names as well?"

"Oh, no. Helel was always special. Of course he was always Helel unless he was either being honored or in trouble. You know, how you know you're in trouble when you hear your middle name."

"Then why did you only have one name?" Sam pokes her belly button.

"I never needed to have the distinction made. I was always in trouble. And if I wasn't, I should have been. Half of Michael and Helel's fights were my big brother defending my actions or inactions or misjudgements. He was fairly successful as I didn't usually do things that were against the rules while I was there. Michael got fed up with that and tried to make it a rule that I wasn't allowed to do anything at all without consulting with him first. But that quickly got redacted after, in accordance with the advice of my attourney, I didn't do anything at all without consulting with Michael first.

"But you know, I couldn't be like Michael, I couldn't be like Helel. Raphael would never be like Helel, he wasn't nearly arrogant or self assured enough. Though I guess he learned to fake it eventually. He wanted to be like Michael as much as I wanted to be like Helel. So we had that in common. Both having older siblings we couldn't live up to, greater than we ever could be. Two after thoughts. Which isn't fair to say, except that Helel when the referred to Raph at all was to call him a useless brat. And I know Michael wondered what the hell I was created for. Especially after I
removed the training room floor during a wingless combat exercise. And it's true. I didn't make much sense. Anyone can deliver a message. I think I was probably made to distract Helel so he'd stop picking on Raphael so much and let Michael train him in peace. I probably owe my existence to my older brother being an asshole."

"I doubt that, though, if so, I'd consider your purpose fulfilled." Sam takes hold of her hips. "You are incredibly distracting." She just gives him a lopsided grin at this. "Don't knock distractions. Distractions can be vital, or fun, or engaging. Necessary. And besides, after thoughts can be more valuable and purposeful than first thoughts."

"Not fishing for complements, Samba." She rolls her eyes. "But thanks. I don't know how much of that old Raphael is left, though. I just... I hope I can help bring those pieces of him back the way you and the girls helped bring out parts of me I thought long gone. Can we stop talking about all this stressful depressing stuff and for a bit and work on cleaning up this mess?" She traces a heart into the smooshed frosting on his chest and puts her finger in her mouth.

"Anything you want, Babe."

"I love you, Sam."

"I love you, Gabriel."

"Hey, Sam, Cas wants to.. what the fuck?" Dean knocks on the door to Sam's room in the bunker as he opens it.

"Hey, princess, there's a reason you wait for a reply after knocking before opening the damn door, you know." Babe scolds him as Sam grabs the pillow, holding it to her chest to cover her.

"There's also a reason you lock the fucking door!" He's quickly back out again, closing the door most of the way behind him. "Cas needs to talk to you, Gabriel. He says you're ignoring him."

"Yeah. For a reason. Give us a bit, will you?" She waves the door shut and locked all the way. "Interrupt us again and I'm putting us on loudspeaker."

"No." Sam quickly insists.

"I wasn't really going to put us, I was going to play the sound track of a very loud embarrassing niche porn."

"No."

"Just the instrumental track?"

"No!"

"You are not leaving us behind." Dean insists as Babe and Cas tell them of their plan.

"Dean, It's too dangerous."

"Fuck dangerous. There's strength in numbers, in case you've forgotten." Dean crosses his arms, even more out sorts than Castiel expected he would be for some reason. "Sam, back me up, would you?"
"We'll all need to talk to him eventually, you know that." Sam looks up at Babe, who's taken her usual spot of sitting on the back of the sofa next to Sam with his arm around her waist for balance, though she no longer needs it.

"True." Babe snaps up a twix, offering Sam one of the bars. Much to Dean's surprise, Sam takes it. She is definitely a bad influence. "But at the very least I'm the only one of us he won't want to kill on sight. And I don't need potential hostages to worry about. It's bad enough I can't get rid of this guy." she points her twix bar at Castiel before taking a bite. I don't need him taking you or Dean to use as leverage."

"Didn't realize you cared." Dean comments at his inclusion."

"Only by proxy. Cassie does and Sam does and they'd both proven they'll do majorly dumb shit to save you and I'd rather not have to kill another sibling because of you chuckle heads. I managed to go an entire eight days, civil war and everything, without getting angelic blood on my hands. But of course that distinction is long gone. Raph is not going to be happy that I broke it with his precious Sariel, I can tell you that much." Babe wrinkles her nose at the thought. "Hopefully she'll be embarrassed enough by it not to mention it should he see her. Probably won't be the first thing I tell him, I can tell you that much."

"Wait, Raphael had a thing with the angel of death?" Dean holds out his hand as it sinks in.

"Never got that far. More like an intense crush. They fell out days ago but still..." Babe shrugs.

"I told you this over a year ago, Dean." Castiel chides him.

"I forgot. We have been kind of busy. So I'm sorry if angelic gossip didn't remain in the forefront of my mind." Dean reminds his boyfriend a bit testily. "Where Cas goes I go. You can't keep us away from this."

"Wanna bet?" Babe narrows her eyes at him. "Or have you also forgotten that I have my grace back? A snap of the fingers and you could be sitting this out on the international space station."

"As cool as that sounds, I was thinking more along the lines of maybe trapping him in a ring of holy fire again while you talk to him? And having someone to watch your back while you do so might come in handy, don't you think?"

"Why do you think I haven't turned Cassie into a kitten and kenneled him so I can go alone?" Babe retorts. "Besides, if he helps bring Raphael back, Michael will be less inclined to disintegrate him on sight for killing him in the first place."

"I could use a little of that assurance for Sammy and me, too, you know. Or do you think that your little relationship with him will actually help with that?"

"Huh, yeah, that probably won't be the first thing I mention, either. Anyways, I upgraded the wards on the bunker to keep Miqa and Raph out, so don't worry about that and if we get killed we'll need you two to get us out of the abyss again. Got it?"

"It won't be so easy next time." Sam says quietly, drawing her attention. "It's... possible, I had a little help. From your father. I don't know if it was him or just your memory of him. But if it was him he did something to put your... angel self out of... storage? into the vessel you're in. I'd feel
better being there to keep you from dying again in the first place. Please?” Babe just looks down at him into the big hazel eyes that he knows damn well she can't resist and gives a defeated sigh.

"Oh, fine. That place probably won't let you there with us anyways." She grumbles and bites her twix, looking off in the distance, oddly deep in thought.

"How are you doing that?” Castiel watches her enjoy the candy. "Eating that."

"Open your mouth, insert, use your teeth to break of and mash bits and pieces into an easily swallowable paste.” She starts.

"How can you taste it?” Castiel clarifies." I can't taste anything when I have my grace."

"It's easy, you just have to stop paying so much attention. Human minds are distracted by a bazillion processes at every second. When we're in a vessel those processes every second. When we're in a vessel those processes are halted. You have to achieve a similar level of distraction in order to taste the same thing instead of being aware of every single molecule separately. Right now, your tongue just can't see the forest for the trees.” She shrugs. "For example I'm thinking about a 'converstation' I had with my Sammykins earlier today." She winks at Sam who grins and looks breifly over to Dean who's less than thrilled with the direction of the current conversation. "Speaking of which I can help you with managing other sensations otherwise adversely affected. If you need, baby bro."

"No, thank you."

"It's nothing extroardinary, just multiple points of stimulation. Easier with more than one partner, honestly so I'd start looking for a third."

"I said no thank you!” Castiel's cheeks turn red.

"Wait are you saying that...” Dean starts, but stops talking at a pleading look from Cas. "Fine. But we're discussing this later.” This gets Babe a dark glower from her little brother.

"Just looking out for you, baby bro.” She says innocently and finishes her twix.

"Please don't."

"Alright. Let me make sure Hara's with the babies and get going.” Babe crumples up the wrapper and bounces it off Dean's head.

"With the babies?"

"The fledgelings. I'm going full out emotional manipulation, the babies, our little wounded woobie..." she counts off on her fingers. Dean just rolls his eyes.

"A brother back from the dead?”

"That's right, I should have Rye there too. He loves both of you." Babe nods to Cas. "Hold on.” Babe blips out leaving the three in awkward silence.
Chapter Summary

Claire, Krissy and Hara wait with the fledgelings.
The fab four start the journey to retrieve Raphael.
Babe makes a wager.

"Hey, Gadreel." Claire nods as the angel flies down next to her at the edge of the fledgelings clearing. "How's tricks?"

"Abner has generously forgiven me for killing him, but I'm still resentful about his actions in the garden, so things have remained quite awkward between us." he confesses with his usual overshare.

"There, there." she pats his arm. "The babies giving you trouble?"

"No. How is Harahel?"

"You could ask him." Claire nods to the wingless angel who's fledgeling siblings are hugging and petting and offering some of their feathers to so he can make himself new wings like the adorable little fluff balls they are.

"Claire girl human?" Rainbow Sherbet runs over before Gadreel can reply, but trips on his loose robe. Claire picks him up and looks at his hands as he frowns at them, brushing off some crushed grass.

"Aw, did you hurt your hands?" She takes them as he nods and kisses the palms. "There all better." The angel looks at his hands then up at Claire, a very confused look on his face. Gadreel just shrugs when his little brother looks over to him for an explanation.

"It is all better." He looks down at his hands again, which weren't actually injured, just probably stung a little with the impact. "How did you do that?"

"Love." She puts her hand to her heart. Rainbow Sherbet abandons whatever he came to ask and runs back over to the siblings around Harahel and whispers something to them. They all brighten and start kissing Hara's back where his wings used to be and pretty much anywhere they can reach, much to the angel's surprise. Claire valiantly refrains from laughing and covers her eyes. When nothing happens the tiny things look incredibly disappointed. Of course after a breif awkward conversation with Harahel and Krissy, Rainbow Sherbet looks back at Claire, scowling his adorable head off in tiny indignant fury. Divine wrath has never been so ubby-dubby cute-alicious.

"Care to explain?" Gadreel looks over to the hunter.

"Why did you lie to me?" Rainbow Sherbet demands, hopping up to be face to face with Claire, flapping his little wings hard enough to hover breifly. "That was mean."

"I didn't lie!" Claire protests. "That's what you do when a.. a child falls down and hurts themselves. You kiss it better."
"Kisses don't fix anything!" He crosses his arms.

"They fix your feelings." She points out. he just gives her a penetrating suspicious look.

"Do you even love me at all?" he accuses.

"Oh my god, yes. Of course, I do, you sweet little thing. You're so scrumptious, I just want to eat you up." She grabs him out of the air and pretends to nibble on his neck.

"What is she doing?" He cries out to Gadreel in alarm. But the angel is as confused as he is.

"You're not ticklish, are you, Rainbow Sherbert?" Claire sighs, holding the bewildered fledgeling at arms length.

"You don't tickle angels by biting them you crazy girl human." Rainbow Sherbet scolds her. "And my name is Malachi."

"Sorry, Malachi." Claire, moves him to her hip and kisses his cheek.

"Correct, you do it like this." Gadreel reaches out and brushes the tiny lime green wings gently across the grain. The little angel squeals and shrinks into Claire. Things quickly devolve into a massive tickle fight that draws the attention of every angel currently in the abyss.

"Hunter! What are you doing to the fledgelings?" An angel whose name Claire doesn't know demands as the fledgelings stop and try to hide behind her and Hara.

"We're just playing. Relax."

"Claire Girl Human." Malachi tugs on her jacket. "What I was going to ask you before is if Raphael could come out of time out to come fix Harahel's wings. He could do it even if love and kisses can't."

"What is he talking about?" Gadreel quickly ushers the confused angel aside.

"Actually, that's why we're here." Claire kneels down in front of him. "We're waiting for Gabriel and Castiel and their freinds the Winchester brothers to go and let him out."

"Oh, okay." The fledgeling nods. "You are very strange, Claire girl human. I think you will like Gabriel. She's very strange, too."

"Well, she is my favorite song." Claire pinches his cheek.

"Oh, I'm going to go tell Harahel that Raphael is coming to fix him." Malachi runs back over to Hara who's reaing them stories from a chilren's bible, presumably to help them catch up a little.

"Gadreel!"Abner flies over to them. "Something is approaching the gates. It looks like a swarm or flock of something. You have to come quickly."

"I will be back shortly." Gadreel informs Claire.

"I'll go with you. If there's a swarm you'll need more than the two of you." She catches his robe. He gives a conceding nod. "Krissy, I'm going to go check something out. Stay here with Hara."
"Okay?" Krissy frowns putting a fledgelings on her lap, and turns back to the reading as Gadreel carries Claire to the gates.

"She's his sister, Dean." Sam corrects his brother when Babe is gone as he was clearly not referring to Rye with that statement. "Not his brother."

"Whatever." he brushes off the previously ignored twix wrapper.

"Raphael only has one brother and he, well, two now, I suppose." Sam nods to Casitel who grimaces.

"I don't really think I qualify as that kind brother even with my promotion. With the archangels, the other angels are brothers in the loosest sense of the word and I've hardly endeared myself to him. Thank you both for supporting us in this. I know how much you're risking." The angel thanks them, his hands anxiously in his trench coat pockets.

"Yeah, well, it's important." Dean shrugs awkwardly. "We're not going to let you walk into danger alone, either."

"It's fairly certain that Gabriel and myself combined can handle Raphael. Especially in a world birthed from her own person, but I appreciate the sentiment."

"C'mere, baby." Dean beckons him over and gives the angel a kiss. "In case everything goes wrong."

"As it always does?" Is Castiel's dry reply.

"Exactly." When he kisses his man again, Sam tactfully averting his eyes, they suddenly find themselves in the middle of a crossroads, along with the couch Sam's still sitting on.

"Dammit, I was trying to take us right to him." Babe puts her hands on her hips, her wings twitching in irritation.

"How the hell did you do that? What about the portal and the edge of the abyss and everything?" Dean steps back, looking around before getting distracted by Castiel's gorgeous black wings.

"What about it?" She stretches out her arms above her head and her wings as well, looking almost like an eight started golden star. Sam smiles at her, as she's obviously showing off, and gets up off the couch.

"He means how can you just blip us in and out of this place when everything else seems to need to use the official exits and entrances." Sam clarifies. She just shrugs and snaps the couch back to the bunker.

"It is my house."

"Damn Cas," Dean reaches out to touch the resplendent black feathers, "It's like looking at an oil slick."

"Smooth, Dean." Sam rolls his eyes as Babe gives the hunter an exhasperated look.

"No, you know what I mean, how it's black but so slick and shiny that you can see
swirls of rainbows of colors in places where the light hits it. Like that." Dean clarifies, a bit embarrassed. "It doesn't feel like oil, more soft and downy like..."

"Feathers?" Babe rolls her eyes. How can her brother be in love with this idiot. Seriously, there's no accounting for taste. Maybe if he'd just shut up, he'd be pretty enough. Of course that just elicits her favorite ball gag fantasy, where she just ties him up, gags him and shoves him somewhere out of the way so she can go play with Sam in peace. It'd be easier to do now that she has her powers back. maybe leather chaps and a big old bow, leave him for her baby brother under the christmas tree or something. Sam probably wouldn't be too happy about that. At least not unless he was both in a really good mood and at least slightly pissed of at his big brother. That should happen soon enough. "Alright." She turns to find the brown and green path. "This way, boys."

"Babe, we're really not ready."Sam puts a hand on her arm. "We haven't prepared for this yet."

"What's the point? You plan and prepare for everything and it never goes as it's supposed to anyways. Besides, this is kind of my place, right? Now, scoot a boot, or go wherever you want. Cassie? This way." She starts down the path whistling a jaunty tune. Sam quickly follows her.

"Why brown and green?" he asks.

"Those are his colors." Is the non reply. Dean and Cas quickly catch up to them. The terrain was red and orange and bone and a large flaming wall appears in the distance. Babe is oddly quiet, not saying anything the whole way. Sam's not sure if she's nervous or just thinking very hard about something, which would make him nervous, so he just takes her hand, and lets her be quiet.

"It looks like Michael's the primary guardian this time." Sam comments at the wall.

"I wouldn't be surprised if she was all of them." Babe rolls her eyes. "I doubt we have the same kind of barriers though." She scans the horizon. "I don't see a person or an angel anywhere. Just a wall of flames and a metal door. Cassie, what about you?"

"Nothing but flames. It seems to extend in a dome over whatever's beyond it."

"Of course it does." Dean puts a hand to his eyes, as if he could see even as well as either of the angels. "How do we get past a wall of fire? Even if there is a door, it has to be hot as hell."

"A hell of a lot of water?" Sam jests.

"Well, Samshine, while I know you get me wet enough to pass through a wall of flame unscathed, I don't think you quite do it for the other two." Babe flits up, hovering to give him a kiss.

"Dude!" Dean stops and stares at her. "Really? Doi you have to do that crap right in front of me?"

"Those wings come in handy." Sam ignores him.

"Didn't they?" She nuzzels his nose. "I'd always wanted to see what would happen if I had both my wings and a vessel."

"Seriously, stop it. Can we just go to our deaths now, please?" Dean motions to the
"It's not certain deaths." Babe folds up her wings and hops down from her gigantic lover. "He might not even try to kill any of us."

"It's still a gamble, so feel free to steal all the kisses you want before hand." Sam reaches out and runs his fingers over the golden feathers. She shivers a little and looks back at him with a smile.

"You know, the fact this bothers your brother so much, makes it that much more fun. Every times he complains it gives me tingles." She makes eyes at Sam who grins and looks away so Dean can't see.

"Be nice." Sam tugs gently on a tertial.

"Don't do that. That is really uncomfortable." she squirms, her feathers kind of puffing up as she shakes her wings out. oddly enough her hair seems to frizz up as well. "Dammit." she sighs. Dean can't help but laugh at the fluffy angel in front of him, at least until she reaches back and touches his hand, zapping him with built up static charge.

"Ow!"

"Both of you, stop it." Castiel gives them each a stern look.

"What did I do?" Dean protests. Cas just gives him a look before continuing down the path before them. When they reach the wall of flames, there's nothing else there except a small platform off to the side of the metal door, which has no handles and no locks and no way through. Babe pushes it, summons a gust f wind, blasts it with power, but nothing happens. She even tries knocking, just for the hell of it, but no one answers.

"What about unscrewing the hinges?" Dean asks.

"There are no hinges, einstein."

"What about the platform?" Sam looks it over. It's bare with no markings, indentations or anything, even resemblings instructions. When he reaches down to touch it and see if there are any bumps he can't see, he quickly has to pull his hand away.

"Did you burn yourself?" Babe quickly takes his hand, looking at the reddened tips of his fingers.

"No, it's.. ice cold." He lets her kiss the chilled spots until they're no longer cold.

"Really." Babe touches it. "Oh, wonderful. It needs something of Luci's of course." She snaps her fingers, making a pressed white flower appear, that she places on the platform. Several lines of metal disappear, revealing an expanse of ice and snow behind the flames.

"That's... unexpected." Dean looks at the platform, stepping up to the platform to examine the flower closer. When he picks it up the door solidifies again."You wouldn't think the prince of darkness to be a fan of flowers."

"It's a snow drop. Raphael made it for him before he stopped caring, completely. Luci kept it, though he didn't stop being a prick to him. he did make sure they eventually prospered on earth though." Babe sighs. "Put it back down." he does but he door remains whole. "And get off the platform." When he does the bars reappear again.
"You belong to Michael." Castiel says quietly.

"The hell I do!"

"In Raphael's mind you do." Cas reminds him and looks over at Sam, as Babe winces with the same conclusion. "While, we know you don't belon to anyone but yourselves...."

"Right.": Sam tightens his lips and steps up onto the platform. The metal door dissappears entirely. he steps off and the bars reappear again. Though when he hands the flower back just to check and stands by himself, the door remains open.

"Well, looks like you'll have to stay out of harms way after all, N'samja." Babe smiles at him, not disguising her satisfaction.

"Be careful." Sam cautions her, when she flies up to give him another kiss. "And try not to give my brother a hard time."

"That's up to him." Babe kisses him again and lights down by the door.

"We'll be back soon." Dean reassures him, and passes through into the frozen wilderness.

"Sam." Cas nods a goodbye to him.

"Take care of them, would you?" Sam pleads to Cas. "Don't let them take too many risks?"

"I will do what I can. Though some risks are worth taking." Castiel follows Dean through the doorway.

"Hey, Sam?" Babe pauses in the open door way and turns around, "I bet you half my stuff, I'll love you forever." Sam gives her a full almost laughing smile at the challenge.

"You're on."
"Did... did you just... was that a proposal?" Dean asks as Babe saunters down the path into the snowy wilderness.

"And if it was?" She asks with a dangerously casual air, scooping up some snow from beside the bath.

"You can't marry my brother."

"I can't?"

"No. you're... you.. You can't get married."

"Why not? Because I'm an angel?"

"Yes, no. Because you're you, you don't love him." Dean protests. "Not like that. You can't."

"Why not? Because I'm an angel?" Her tone now has a seriously dangerous edge to it.

"No, because you're you, an irresponsible promiscuous trickster who can't take anything seriously. And aren't you already married?" Dean points out, remembering the little venting session Sam had after retrieving Baldur from the abyss.

"Yes, but my wife's divorcing me because she found out I'm really a woman. Though really that's the most innocuous thing I've done." She shrugs tossing the snow ball up and down a bit.

"You're not a woman. You're an angel. Cas..." Dean turns to his boyfreind who just looks away.

"Don't drag my baby brother into this. This is between you and me, Dean-o. Or really between me and Sam, which I fully understand means you will butt your stupid head into it as if you had the right." Babe turns, planting the snowball on his collar, in just the perfect position to end up half down the inside of his jacket. "Fortunately I don't actually need your damn permission to do anything."

"It's too soon." Dean does his best to just ignore the dripping snow. "You can't possibly have been together long enough to make that kind of commitment. And how would you? Sam Winchester is dead, and the archangel Gabriel might have trouble getting a marriage license even if he wasn't."
"Wow," Babe raises an unimpressed eyebrow and shakes her head. "First of all. Sam Singer is alive and well, and Gabrielle Callisto is perfectly able to get married. And what do you know about how long is long enough. Not everyone moves at the glacial speed you two do. We've been spending much more time together lately than you know, and not just wrecking furniture. We've been talking about a lot of things including you. You don't know everything about our relationship, Winchester. Not by a long shot. That you have the utter arrogance to think you do is hardly surprising. What's more you're still trying to run his damn life. Sam is a grown man, and a rational, intelligent, capable man at that. Even if you can't really see that the way you should I intend to make sure that he has someone around who can make him see it for himself. I don't give a shit if you approve of anything I do, do you get that, chachi?" Babe pokes his chest, her wings puffing slightly behind her. "You will respect his fucking choices, all of them, or else."

"Or else what?" Dean looks down at her. She is much less intimidating that she used to be, not that she often was.

"What indeed?" Babe smiles wickedly and turns back around to continue down the path.

"Some help you were." Dean turns to Cas who's feather's are slightly ruffled.

"You know I approve of their relationship." Castiel replies. "I think they make a good couple. They're good for each other." Dean just gives him an utterly betrayed look. "I love my sister, Dean. And she's grown, even just since meeting him."

"You don't think it's a little fast?"

"Being to eager to commit to any responsibility has never been one of Gabriel's shortcomings. It was a playful proposal, but it wasn't casual."

"I don't like her, Cas. I know she's your sister and I know everything she's done for us, but still." Dean shoves his hands into his pockets.

"You don't?" the angel sounds almost surprised. "I just assumed your constant complaining and bickering was a sign of underlying affection."

"No," Dean shakes his head, then stops and gives his boyfriend a hard look, unsure whether or not he's being sarcastic or not. Cas just looks at the snowy fields. The orange red lights of the fiery dome above them sparkles off the surface and reflects off a smaller dome of pure ridiculously thick ice up ahead. At the end of the path is a similar metal door to the first, and another platform. This one is hot to the touch.

"Alright, you're up." Babe motions Dean to the platform.

"Why me?"

"Ice? Sam was Lucifer's, water to douse Michael's flames; this is ice, so something of Michael's to melt it. It's not rocket science." Babe starts tapping her foot impatiently.

"Fine." Dean steps up on the platform and the door opens as expected. "Cas, be careful."

"I will." Castiel nods and follows his older sister through into a realm of air and clouds. "I wish you'd stop antagonizing him, Gabriel." he admonishes her once they're out of earshot.

"It's just so easy." Babe gives him a dimpled smile. Castiel is not amused. "And he
pisses me off. How can you be in love with that emotionally constipated moron?"

"He's not stupid. He is in fact a mechanical genius, sister."

"Oh, well, then." Babe rolls her eyes and looks away.

"And he's not to be faulted for the emotional difficulties his traumatic life has engendered in him. It's a problem not uncommon in our brothers and sisters in heaven either. You don't see the man I do, Gabriel. And you won't as long as you keep baiting him this way."

"You know you'll never be the most important thing to him, don't you? Sam and Dean are always going to put each other first above all else. They're soul mates. We will never be anything but second in their hearts."

"It's not the same thing." Cas chides her."Why would you make that proposal if you felt that way?"

"Because if I can't be more than second in his heart, I damn well won't be less than it either. Because he's worth it, obviously. Intelligent, handsome, sensitive, in touch with his emotions and other peoples, straight legs. Not an asshole." Babe says pointedly. Her brother just frowns at her. "Fine, fine. You two aren't the most affectionate couple, though. Does he have a thing about PDA's? Public displays of affection." She clarifies at his confused look.

"Neither of us is very comfortable displaying our affection for each other as much as you and Sam do, in quite that way. But that just makes it mean more when it happens."

"Okay, I can see that." She has to admit. "Do you have any pet names for each other? Or is 'Cas' it for nicknames? I can't really see you calling each other pookie with those deep deep voices of yours." She lowers hers in mimicry. "I don't remember his voice being so low, are you having a contest or something or did he take up smoking or what?"

"He calls me 'baby' sometimes. It's sweeter the way he says it." Castiel says quickly when she gives him a look.

"It'd be sweeter still if that wasn't what he also called his car. That gear head. No wonder he compared your lovely wings to motor oil." Babe gives a derisive snort. Castiel doesn't disagree. "So what about you?"

"What about me?"

"Any affectionate nicknames for the Dean-ster?" she elbows him. Cas just shakes his head. "Why not? Short on ideas?"

"No, it's just... what could be sweeter than 'Dean'?' The pure sappiness of the answer elicits a look of pure disgust from the elder, shorter archangel.

"I think you just brought back my diabetes." She wrinkles her nose.

"You weren't that kind of diabetic."

"At least you two are almost the same height though." Babe ignores her little brother's scolding.

"You're bothered by your and Sam's height difference?"
"Not bothered exactly. But he's tall and handsome, kind, responsible, and I'm... not any of that. the physical is just the most obvious." She shrugs. "You and Dean, he's an ass but you're both hot as hell and you look right together at least. Even if you could do a hell of alot better, at least it's not clear at first sight. I mean come on, look at this body. It's tiny, chubby," She pats her soft stomach. "I'm missing pieces, my nose is too big, I'm too short to wear womens clothes without getting them tailored and this hair is impossible."

"I think you're lovely, but why don't you change it then, if you don't like it?" Castiel asks innocently. "You can look like anything you want. If you don't like this body, alter it until you do."

"First, the permanent physical alterations I can make are minor and take a hell of a lot of energy. And secondly, I'd still be me underneath. I don't think anything would be good enough, honestly. And I'm kind of fond of it, even if it's a bit of a step down for Sam."

"I know Sam thinks you're beautiful, just the way you are. He'd love you however you looked, though."

"Would he? It doesn't matter. This is my body and I'm alone in it so I'll stick with it." She pats her disappointingly soft tummy again. "I just wish it wasn't so incredibly obvious he's too good for me, you know. Like you'd never know Dean was such a stupid asshole to look at his pretty self."

"I will ignore the insult to my lover again. for now." Cas tugs on the seam of her jackets shoulder. "And remind you that however inadequate you feel, Sam doesn't feel the same way. He thinks you just as wonderful as you think him. I should think the fact that he just agreed to marry you is proof enough of that. If that was in fact what you were proposing, and you weren't just irritating Dean. Or are you having second thoughts about the commitment already?"

"No. I'm just.. nervous, I guess. I have no idea what the hell I'm doing. For any of this."

"Well, that's what I'm here for." Cas puts a hand on her shoulder.

"Advice or direction?"

"No, to know even less than you do so you look prepared and well organized by comparison." This makes his sister smile at him, and put her arm around his waist, as they walk the airborne path together.

"What's going on?" Hara asks as Krissy looks over towards the gates. There's an odd noise, like the flapping of hundreds or thousands of wings, and a wall of white appears on the horizon.

"I have no idea." Krissy stands up, shading her eyes to get a better look. "What are those things?"

"They look like storks." Hara squints slightly. "Carrying things in cloth bundles in their beaks."

"What the hell?" She puts her hands on her hips, puzzling at them as they come closer. "I though they were only in the cabbage fields. Why are they in the angel garden?"
"They're also in the nursery for ripe souls." Hara adds and steps back in surprise as he notices the focus of their attention. "Krissy?"

"What?"

"They're headed this way."

"They're not here for the fledgelings are they?" She goes to take out the special knife Death gave her, but remembered she couldn't fit it under her jeans or get it out even if she could.

"I don't think so." Harahel turns to her. "They're all looking directly at you."

"At me? Why... wait, what? FUCK!" Krissy turns and starts running. Hopefully she can reach the gate before they catch up with her. She pumps her legs as hard and fast as she can. A doorway is in sight when something slams into her from behind, knocking her forwards into a tuft of grass. When she looks up, she sees a stork looking just as dazed as she is. It slowly gets to it's feet and starts smoothing out it's ruffled feathers. There's a large piece of cloth on the ground beside her and when she looks behind her, she sees hundreds of disappointed storks, carrying pouches with pieces of shiny little babies inside. Or at least she can only see pieces, of them; she assumes the entire soul cabbage baby is in there.

One by one they turn and fly off. The stork that smashed into her struts over proudly like he just won the olympics or something and takes back the pouch with it's beak. It's all puffed up and smug looking, showing the other storks a rather punchable uptilted head before he lazily takes off, unburdened.

"What the fuck?" She frowns putting a hand to her sore back and Hara makes is way to her.

"Congradulations?" He rubs the back of his neck. "I'm sure you'll make a wonderful mother."

"WHAT THE FUCK?!"

"What are you going to say to him?" Castiel asks as they reach a capsule of wind and dust and another metal door. The platform is attached to the walkway, slightly off to the side.

"I don't know. I'm just going to wing it." She nervously flutters her wings. Castiel rolls his eyes at the pun and looks at the wall.

"Is this wind or earth?"

"Wind, but the dust makes it so I can't get through. Do... do you want to give it a try?" She nods to the platform. Castiel nods and steps onto it. When the metal door, opens, they both give a sigh of relief. Inside the wall of wind and dust is a lush meadow, leading to a rocking outcropping. Gabriel takes a breath and looks to her little brother. "Wish me luck." She folds her wings tightly to her.

"Good luck." And Gabriel steps through the door. The path leads to a set of stairs carved into a group of large mossy boulders surrounded by trees. As she climbs them, she feels more and more unsure. How will he react to seeing her again? After she left them so many years ago. After she abandoned him. He's so sensitive. Always knowing everyone else's hurts, physical,
emotional. She didn't think how it would affect him when she left. That maybe he might have
needed her the way Michael needed him. But would it really have made a difference? Or would she
have just fallen even further than she did somehow. She was always irritating him, making things
difficult for them, even when she tried, it just wasn't enough. Only their brother's fall kept her from
being the ultimate screw up of the family. Maybe he'll understand they were better off without her
there. They really were.

On the top of the boulders is a small cave. Inside the cave, amidst gems that sparkle
in her light of her presence, is Raphael. He's dim and huddled on the floor, his hands on his head,
gripping the wiry steel curls so tight perfect and manageable, not like her wild and willful tresses.
His soft mossy green wings with the million tiny feathers are curled around him. He looks utterly
lost and despondent, a second away from tears, maybe. A reflective sheen covers him, like he's
encased in glass, or like he was dipped in the sticky stuff she gathered and dumped on his wings all
those days ago that accidentally hardened into a clear shell. Gabriel walks slowly towards him and
places a hand on the top of his head.

"Hey, big brother." She calls softly. "Time to wake up."

There's no response. But there's a crack running along the ridge of his wings that
she didn't notice before.

"Raphael..." She kneels down in front of him. "Please wake up. I'm so sorry. I'm
sorry I left you without even saying anything. I'm sorry I didn't let you at least know I was alright.
I'm sorry. But you would have gone to Michael and she would have locked me up or something.
She's never have believed I wasn't going to join our brother. I'm sorry. Please wake up." The cracks
spread as she talks but as soon as she stops, they stop.

"I know you've done some things that maybe you shouldn't have, and that I'm
honestly kind of pissed about, but hey, who am I to judge? I just ran away. And broke almost every
rule there was doing so. You don't even want to know. I hid with the pagans, so that should tell you
alot. They're not as bad as you think. Not all of them anyway. No more so than people or angels, at
least.

"I did miss you. There was no one I could talk to the way I could talk to you. Not
until recently anyways. No one as steady and faithful as you, or as willing to put up with me and
not put up with me, I guess. When it's called for. I know I was a pain in the ass. I'm still a pain in
the ass. Ask any body, and yeah, there's trouble. But I'm kind of glad about that because it gives
me a good excuse to come and bring you back, you know.

"I wish.. if you could, when you wake up, be willing to just start over. Let bygones
be bygones and start from scratch. If you could do that for me, not that I have the right to ask you
for anything. I kind of already gave everyone blanket amnesty for everything, and that includes
you, you know. They put me in charge! Me. Oh, it's awful. I don't know what I'm doing. I don't
want to do it and heaven is just so empty especially without you. Which reminds me." She punches
his shoulder. "That's for stealing my bed, you jerk. Just because I left doesn't mean it was okay to
steal my things. I mean, what the hell. It was like, the only thing I really had in there." The cracks
expand rendering the coating completely opaque until it disappears in dissolving flakes.

"It made me think of you." Raphael says quietly, still huddled on the ground. "Of
when we were all together and happy."

"Oh." She looks down at her hands, not sure what to do or say now. "So... hi..
Long time no see." Babe waves when he puts his wings back behind him and lifts his head to look
at her. He doesn't say anything. He just looks at her for an uncomfortably long time, with an intense
look in his eyes. "I'm sorry."

"Will you just be quiet for a moment?" He snaps and embraces his long lost little sister, without another word.

To be continued ....

Chapter End Notes

Okay, this is the last chapter of the 'season'. I was a little unsure about ending it here, as it's not exactly the proper big dramatic devastating season finale of the last fic. but it started extremely heavy and depressing with tons of death, so I thought maybe a lighter, hopeful ending full of life was a nice book end. The next 'season' is already in progress, though I may need a bit. I wasn't expecting to have another one in between this and Devil Pray but well, there's a lot more going on to get us there than I had planned.

In the next fic, we'll get Michael out of the cage and into therapy, the construction of the hunters school, Krissy will deal with the pregnancy, Raphael will reopen heaven, Harahel will finally get his wings back, Miti will recover her vessel's soul, and Rhys will deeply regret not having taken action on the Maw of Fenris sooner. Plus there'll be a wedding, a divorce, a couple break ups and a 'finally gets the girl'.

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