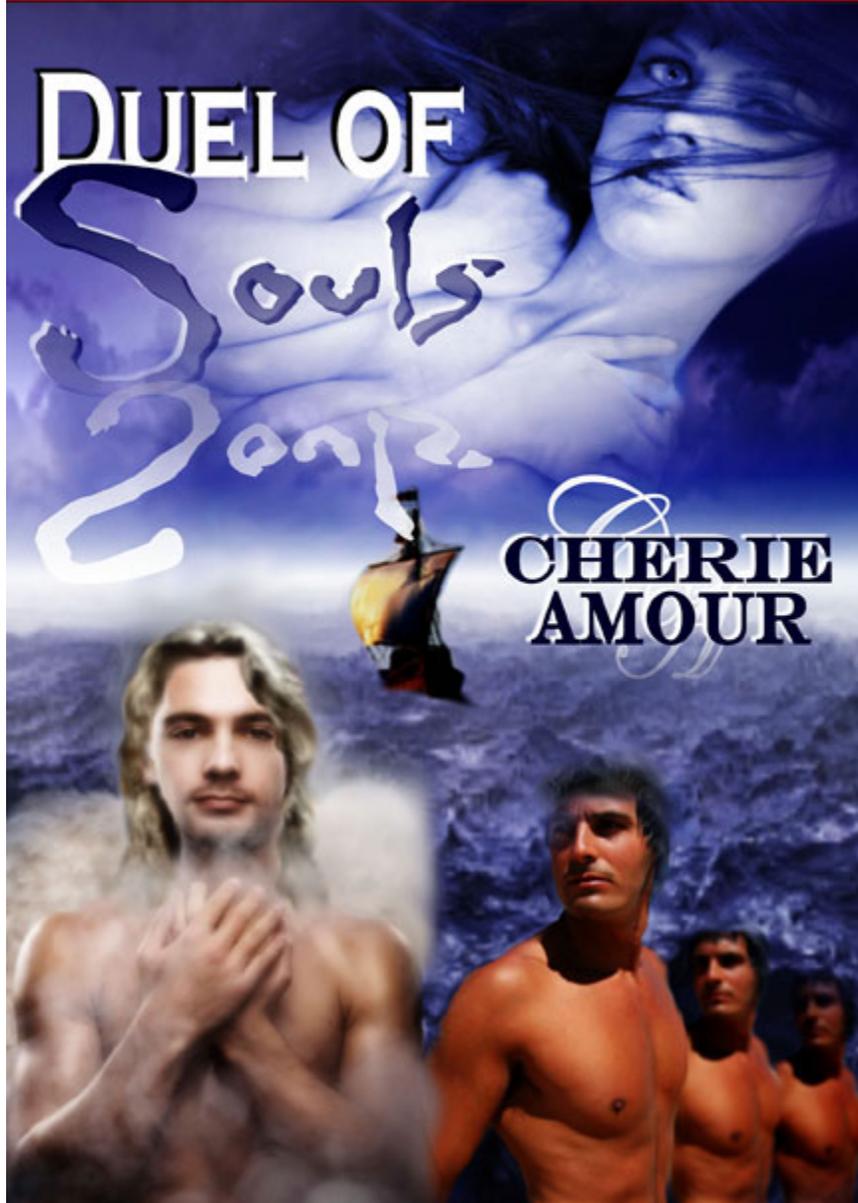


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DUEL OF SOULS

Cherie Amour

MENAGE AMOUR



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DUEL OF SOULS

Cherie Amour
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Chapter 1

Avgar inhaled deep, trying to tame his urges. He stood ready to knock outside Belinda the notorious soul collector's chamber. But he couldn't quite bring himself to do so. The sighing and moaning coming from the other side of the door had captivated his sense of hearing and his imagination.

Oh. The wicked images of her naked body slapping and caressing that of her delicious female demon servant danced in his head. His cock stood erect and waiting. Drool ran down his dry-skinned chin as desire turned his brain to mush.

He had yearned to be with the beautiful vixen Belinda for far too long. All the male demons in Hell did. Yet she rejected each and every one of their advances. She had interests only in her job.

Maybe this was the reason, Avgar surmised, why she became Satan's favorite soul collector. That and because she had been so successful in collecting the souls of the most important and prominent male figures in history. Her reputation was legend.

Whatever the reason, it didn't matter. She would never couple with him and he had to deliver an important message to her.

Trying to shrug off his arousal, he knocked. Sweet giggling from the other side tickled his ear. "Who is it?" came a laughing female voice.

“It is Avgar. I have a message.”

After several minutes, he heard, “Come in.”

Opening the massive door, the heat and delectable female scent of arousal hit him, as did the sexy, lustful vision of a partially nude Belinda covered only in a white sheet on a sofa with her hair undone and spread out above her on the pillow. His eyes would have popped out of his head if it were not for the double lining membrane of his eyelids, serving to protect his eyes from the heated depths of Hell.

Her servant stood with a bath towel around her torso and rubbed a lotion on her shoulders. Turning her gaze to Avgar and seeing his hard-on through his pants, which he knew he still hadn't gotten under control, she smiled and licked her lips.

He let his mouth fall open. By Satan, he wanted to have her lips lick him now. He also wished Belinda would change her mind and ask him to join them in their frolicking. It had been a week since he indulged in a threesome. But after a few moments, he realized that would never happen with these two, not now, not ever.

He cleared his throat and addressed Belinda. “I have a message from Satan. He would like to see us in his chamber in an hour.”

He knew he must leave them now that Satan's message was delivered, but he couldn't bring himself to do so quite yet. His feet remained planted in place while he kept ogling them.

Belinda's servant walked to the door and shooed him away with her hand. “Go on now, Avgar.” She pushed him out quick, closing the door in his face.

When the door slammed on his nose and pain shot through his face, his feet and body finally began to work and he walked away in a fury. He heard the ladies laughing and cursed them both. Thank Satan he had an hour before their meeting. He needed to take a cold shower to tame his rampant urges and calm his anger.

Taking one final glance over his shoulder at their closed door, he groaned. In due time, they both would pay for demeaning him in such

a way. He just had to wait for the perfect setting. In all his years of existence, he had learned that revenge was sweetest when aged.

* * * *

Smirking, Sebastian dropped the bath towel and turned to Belinda, morphing back into his male form. “Did you see the look on his ugly face?”

Belinda stretched out from under the sheet, pulling it lower, thus exposing her pert left nipple. “Yes, that was close. If he had entered without knocking, he’d have uncovered your secret.”

He shook his body and head in revulsion. “That demon is vile. The way he looked at us with such lust made my stomach turn over.”

“His lust isn’t what worries me. His ambition does. He’s been here for only a short time and already has built a ruthless reputation. I’ve seen him at work and he will do anything to get what he wants. Trust me, if he ever found out that you are really Sebastian Cole and were banished from this level of Hell centuries ago, he would use it against us both.”

She rolled sideways and rested her head on her hand. “All that I have done will mean nothing, then. Satan will not spare us. His wrath will be great.”

Sebastian stared at her exposed nipple. “Don’t worry about him, Belinda. Avgar is too dumb to be any danger to us. He thinks with his cock first and foremost.”

His brow lifted and a sly smirk spread over his face. “And speaking of ‘cocks,’ mine is screaming it wants *in* your delectable chasm.” He fell onto the sofa, making it shake vigorously. Belinda’s plump breasts jiggled with the movement and his desire mounted.

With gentleness, he pulled her long, luscious legs apart and then slid his fingers lightly over her soft, olive skin. Goosebumps formed under his touch and Belinda stared at him with want. It was obvious her passion ran as deep as his did at this moment. But he didn’t want

to copulate, at least not just yet. Foreplay was an appetizer that if served before dinner would open one's palate to savor the main course, sex, fully. And with Belinda, the 'appetizer' was as much fun as the 'main course.'

Bending to place his lips on her hot skin, he kissed and licked his way from her ankle up to her upper thigh. Belinda moaned and brought her hands up to her breasts to fondle herself. He smiled up at her and proceeded to do to her other leg what he just did to her right one.

She widened her legs when he got to the top wanting him to continue higher. She smelled of her arousal and their previous mating. What an exquisite scent it was.

He pushed open her legs even wider, and starting at her anus, he worked his probing tongue up to her swollen, wet, hot lips, making circles around them as he went. She sat up to grab his hair and pulled him closer to her.

He pushed his tongue further in, parting her lips and making her juices, mixed with his saliva, fall onto the sheet. "Oh, Sebastian, we don't have time for such foreplay. Please, take me now. I can't take any more of this."

He lifted his body up to kiss her lips, thus making her taste herself. Smiling and staring deep into her eyes, he declared, "Your wish is my command, Mistress."

He brought his engorged penis to her opening and rubbed it back and forth to tease her some more. A stern look came over her, telling him she was getting annoyed. Then she opened her legs wider and grabbed his buttocks and squeezed hard, pushing him closer to her.

That worked all right. His excitement rose and he plunged into her then deep and fast. Her tight passage hugged him to perfection and he pushed in and out of her hungrily. She matched his rhythm movement for movement while she kissed his neck, nipping his ear from time to time.

He quickened his pace to please his and her mounting hunger, pumping faster and deeper in her with each thrust until the walls around his cock tightened and convulsed with her climax.

The rush of pressure rose in him, as well, and spurted out a few seconds later inside her.

He slipped off her panting and drained. “That was amazing. *You’re* amazing.”

She laughed as she got up. “Thank you.”

Perplexed, he looked at her. “Where are you going?”

Heading for the lavatory, she turned. “To meet with Satan. He wants to see me, remember?”

He laid his head back on the soft, feather-filled pillow. “Oh, I forgot. You have that effect on me, you know.”

She giggled, disappearing behind the closed door.

Sebastian closed his eyes, sated and content. He began to imagine what wild, lustful things they would do next once her meeting was over and he could have her all to himself again. He smiled due to his lewd fancy.

Chapter 2

Belinda cursed her languid legs and wished she could walk faster. She was five minutes late for her meeting thanks to a lower level demon she met along the way who wanted to know Belinda's secret to success. Being the only lower level demon to have become a soul collector, and not just any soul collector, but the best, made her quite a celebrity.

Feeling compassion for the female demon and understanding the plight she had to endure on a daily basis, having been in her shoes once, she stopped to talk to her. Unfortunately, she couldn't tell her the truth that her success was part hard work, but a bigger part had to do with Sebastian Cole, the infamous rebel demon who once had been Satan's right hand, but after a falling out was supposed to have been banished to a lower, darker level of Hell.

He was her advisor, her mentor, her best friend, and her lover. If it weren't for him, she would have never gotten to her position today.

Instead, she gave her the best advice she could under the circumstances. "Keep your ears and eyes open at all times. Assume nothing and trust your instincts." This counsel had helped Belinda so far. Hopefully, it would be of the same service for the female demon.

Arriving at Satan's outer chamber and seeing the door ajar, she headed inside. To her surprise, Avgar and Satan huddled together in the corner with hushed voices, discussing something. Neither of them took notice of her presence. She cleared her throat and bowed her head in respect. "Excuse me, Sire, I'm sorry for my belated arrival."

Both parties turned to face her. Avgar's gaze roamed from her head down to her feet, focusing intently on her breasts. She knew he

envisioned her nakedness and when his brow lifted and he licked his lips, a shudder of disgust rolled over her. If demons were allowed to kill other demons in Hell without Satan's approval, she would have brought a spear hidden under her tunic, and pierced his dead heart right here and now.

But all she could do was ignore his insolence and focus on Satan and why he called this meeting. Apparently oblivious to Avgar's rude behavior, Satan motioned for Belinda to sit down. "I'd like us to get this meeting started now. I have a lot to get done after this."

Following his gesture, she sat beside him. "What is it you wanted to discuss, Sire?"

Meshing his fingers together around his knee, Satan glanced at her. "I have an assignment—an important one—I'd like the two of you to work on together."

What? No, she didn't hear right. "Sire, excuse me for saying this, but I usually work alone."

Satan shook his head. "I know, Belinda, and you have done a remarkable job thus far. Simply remarkable. But so has Avgar. In this short time, he has proven himself worthy. It is time he learns from the best and that is you. I have appointed him your new apprentice. And he will be helping you on this next assignment."

If her shock and then rage could have been measured in any way, then it would have surely broken all records for how she rattled and boiled inside. She didn't dare look at Avgar who she knew smiled smugly and she couldn't defy Satan or show her disapproval, so she inhaled deep and waited until her drumming heart slowed its pace and the proper response formed in her mind.

"I agree with you, Sire. Avgar's performance thus far has been remarkable. Perhaps he is already ready to set out alone on his first soul collecting mission."

Satan growled, showing his impatience with her. "If I would have wanted him to solo, I would have done so already. No, he still needs training and you are the only one who can give it to him." He looked

her square in the eyes. “Are you questioning my judgment, Belinda? Or is there another reason you don’t want Avgar as your apprentice on this mission?”

Panic tightened her throat, making breathing difficult. Taking a big swallow to liberate her windpipe and vocal cords, she replied, “No, Sire, never. I have no qualms making Avgar my apprentice. It was a stupid suggestion now that I think of it.”

Satan remarked, “Good. I’m glad we see eye-to-eye on this.”

Smirking, Avgar pushed himself to the edge of the couch, so he was closer to her when he spoke. “Yes, Belinda, I have been wanting to work with you for quite some time. Your reputation is remarkable. I’m nowhere near being as good as you, but maybe working this closely with you, I’ll learn all there is to becoming the best soul collector I can be.”

She squinted as she glared at him. *And if you get a chance, you’ll plunge a dagger into me and eat me alive.* Clearing her throat, she added, “Thank you. It will be a pleasure working with you, Avgar.”

Satan stood up and walked over to the far corner of the room, not giving them a second glance. “Now that it’s settled, you may both leave.”

“Of course, Sire.” Avgar bowed in respect and walked to the door, opening it and waited for her to pass him. He gave her a sideways look as his smile widened. “After you, Belinda.”

She huffed and exited. She didn’t wait until he closed the door. She quickened her pace and walked as fast as she could, trying to get away from the loathsome demon.

Just as she got to the end of the corridor, she heard Avgar shouting, “I’ll meet you at the Passage in three days, Belinda. I look forward to it.”

Not stopping to turn, imagining the satisfied and priggish grin he must be wearing, she waved her hand in the air showing she would meet him there, and hurried off. She needed to talk to Sebastian. What would they do? If anyone had the answer, it was him. Perhaps by

some miracle, he would find a way out of this Satan damned assignment and she'd be spared another Hell named Avgar altogether.

* * * *

Avgar rubbed his hands together in anticipation. "So the vixen will be my teacher. This couldn't get any better. I can learn so many things from you, Belinda. One of these being your Achilles' heel. We all have one and something tells me yours will be monumental given how you protested so to Satan's decision."

Everything comes to those who wait, Belinda. Soon...soon. He licked his lips, almost tasting the sweetness of revenge.

Chapter 3

Belinda came rushing through the door flushed. “This is horrible!”

Sebastian had been lounging on a chaise, trying to tame his sexual urges. He had picked up the *Scripture of Satan*, hoping for a distraction. But it was ineffective.

Seeing Belinda so flustered excited him. Putting the scripture aside, he stood and walked over to her, and pulling her hair away from her shoulders, he began massaging her neck. “What is it? You make it sound like Hell froze over.”

She closed her eyes, slumped her shoulders, and rocked her head from side to side sighing, obviously enjoying his touch. “Well...Hell freezing over would be better than this.”

Her soap scented skin enticed him and he hungered to kiss her delicate neck. He passed his tongue in a quick lick over her soft skin. He couldn't help himself. “What? What is worse than Hell freezing over?” Then he nibbled her earlobe.

She palmed his face and pulled him in closer for a kiss. “Mmm, what?” She looked at him lustfully.

He growled and bit her lower lip in gentleness and enticement. “How about I make you forget about whatever is troubling you and we have passionate, intense sex? You know it has been the best remedy for you in the past.”

She turned around and pulled his shirt open. Rubbing her hands over his muscular, tanned chest and toned abdomen, she bargained, “Only if I can have two of you. That could probably make me forget.”

Sebastian had several powers other demons didn't. Having been Satan's assistant for so long, Satan had bestowed him with the power

of morphing and multiplying. Belinda loved it when he pleased her in multitudes. She enjoyed threesomes best. And he loved pleasing her any way he could. The more excited she became, the more hungry and desperate her desire and the more satisfying and numerous their climaxes.

He grabbed her, picking her up and bringing her to the bed. “If you insist, Mistress.”

She giggled as he tossed her on the bed. He removed his shirt and pants and smiled, standing fully naked and erect in front of her. With a single thought, he created a replica of himself. Glancing at his other self, he turned to her and began crawling onto the bed. “Let’s get on with our ménage a trios, shall we?”

* * * *

Belinda looked at the two Sebastians coming at her and a chill of excitement went up her spine, making goose bumps form on her skin. She purred and raised an eyebrow while she moved backward, to the other side of the bed, pretending she wanted to escape.

Sebastian I laughed as he got closer. “And what do you think you are doing, Mistress?” He grabbed her foot and pulled her closer to him, making her tunic roll up her legs to her waist.

Sebastian II moved behind her and lifted her enough so *Sebastian I* could remove her tunic completely. She wore no undergarments underneath and lay completely nude on the bed. Cool air hit her warm skin and her nipples became taut in an instant.

With a Sebastian on either side of her, her breathing became labored as she admired their perfectly sculpted bodies. Her arousal mounted with each intake of air.

Sebastian I got on his knees on the floor and leaned onto the bed so he could kiss her and fondle her left breast. His lips were wet, and his tongue, strong and long, reaching all the way in her mouth, made her sigh in pleasure. His warm fingers rolled and twisted her nipple

first with gentleness and then roughness, making her arch her body closer to him and his nimble fingers.

While *Sebastian I* worked on her upper sexual parts, *Sebastian II* worked on her lower body, first pushing her legs wide apart and then kissing his way inch by sinful inch to her pelvis, making her already labored breathing harder. Her dead heart pounded fast and powerfully, bringing the desire surging through her arteries more quickly to her twat and her breasts.

Sebastian II opened her lips and brought his dexterous tongue to her folds and nub, circling them with vigor, making her clitoris and lips quiver with excitement and her juices of arousal flow.

She opened her legs even wider and moved her upper body so she could get a grip around *Sebastian I*'s engorged penis. She stroked it swiftly and strong, making him move to and fro in a pumping action while he still kissed her and played with her other breast.

She knew *Sebastian II* felt everything his duplicate did and within a few minutes' time, in heightened arousal, he entered her passage with a quick thrust. She took a deep intake of air as her insides spread for his thickness and length. The heat traveled from her pelvis to her legs and up to her bosom.

He pulled out of her and then plunged in as quickly and powerfully as he did the first time, but the walls of her vagina had widened and this time around, she felt no pain just pleasure, pure and wicked pleasure. He continued this as *Sebastian I* kissed her passionately, bringing his hot, full lips down to her breast, first suckling it then nipping it soft and roughly.

Within seconds, when her heart pounded so furiously she felt it would burst out of her chest, she climaxed not once but twice. The second orgasm had been more powerful and satisfying. Both *Sebastian's* came then, too. From their moaning and groaning, she knew it was just as puissant for them as it had been for her.

Panting and looking physically drained, *Sebastian I & II* merged into one body, one entity, her Sebastian. The one who called himself her servant.

He collapsed on the bed beside her all sweaty. “That was fantastic.”

She licked her lips and rubbed her stomach, which felt just as sweaty as Sebastian looked. “Mmm, yes, it was good, wasn’t it?”

He turned to her and rested his head on his hand. Gazing into her eyes, moving a strand of hair out of her gaze, he commented, “Yes, Mistress, indeed.”

She rolled her eyes. “Why must you call me that constantly? I understand you do it when we are amongst others and you are in the female demon servant form, but even when we are alone, too.”

He raised and lowered his brows in a teasing way. “I like the idea of being your slave and that whip you use on me just sends my cock into a tailspin.”

She slapped him. “You are impossible, you know that?”

He nodded. “Yes, and that’s why we make such a good team, you and I.”

Her mind traveled back to the meeting and her new assignment. She turned around and curled up in a fetal position in instinctive survival. “Well, thanks to Avgar, you can soon kiss *our team* goodbye and say hello to the lower depths of Hell, where the inferno will be pure torture.”

He rubbed her arm and kissed the back of her head. “Why? Does this have to do with your meeting with Satan earlier?”

She turned to look at him, briefly nodding, then turned back to her position of security. “Yes, Satan has appointed Avgar my apprentice. He will be accompanying me on my next mission of collecting souls.”

He half laughed. “What? That is the dumbest thing I ever heard!”

“Well, dumb or not, it is a fact. And knowing how conniving and ruthless he is, he’ll stop at nothing to get what he wants. And from the look he gave me before, he wants my job.” She sat up, looking at him.

“That’s why you cannot come with me on this mission. You must stay here.”

He lifted himself up, as well. “Why?”

She huffed. “Because if he ever finds out you aren’t really my female servant, and are really Sebastian Cole whom Satan exiled from this level, it’ll be the end for us.”

He moved his legs over the side of the bed and got up. In his nakedness, he paced the room in apparent thought, tapping his lips with his index finger. After a minute, he walked over to her and kissed her forehead. “No, I must come with you”

Her heart sank with his words. “But why, Sebastian?”

“Because you never travel without your servant. If I were to stay here, it would surely raise some questions with him. No matter how dumb he is that would be something he’d pick up right away.”

“But you cannot stay in that form all the time. You’ll need to transform to your true self after several hours.”

He caressed her face. His warm hand comforted her. “Nothing will change. We will do this as we have always done things. The only difference is we’ll be on alert and always looking behind our backs.”

She held his hand to her face, absorbing his strength and courage. He had been her guide and advisor for so many years. He was right. This was the only solution.

She sighed deep. “Okay, we’ll do it this way. We leave in three days through the Passage.”

He smiled and got back into the bed beside her. Pulling her onto his chest, he rubbed her hair. “Sleep now. The morning always makes everything look better.”

She closed her eyes and rubbed his chest, hearing his beating heart, letting the soothing rhythm of its beat and his chest’s rise and fall bring her into a deep, restful sleep.

* * * *

Amato sat in the crystal globe chamber in Heaven waiting. He hadn't seen Belinda surfacing through the Passage in over a month. He missed her so. She may be the infamous soul collecting demon and represented everything he was not, but he couldn't help his infatuation with the black-haired beauty.

He followed her every movement and action whenever she surfaced. If the crystal voyeur globe allowed him to spy on her in Hell, as well, he would have done so ages ago. But unfortunately, it did not and he had to sustain himself with only her infrequent visits to Earth.

He had learned a lot about her and especially about her 'big' secret—Sebastian Cole. He had observed their numerous lovemaking experiences on Earth, in their closed chambers, and that in public Sebastian traveled incognito as her female servant. Many a times, he imagined he was in Sebastian's place, making love to the enchantress. What he'd do to have just one night with Belinda...

His wicked thoughts were suddenly interrupted by Archangel Michael's arrival in the chamber. "Amato, I have an assignment for you."

Amato stood up in attention. "Hail, Michael. What is it you wish of me?"

Michael waved his hand over the globe showing Amato a ship in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. The captain of this ship is in need of a guardian angel. You must go to him now to protect him. His life will be in danger very soon. He must live at all costs. The future of the New World depends on it."

Amato bowed in respect. "Yes, of course, Michael."

The Archangel exited the room leaving Amato to his thoughts for a few more brief seconds. He looked at the globe and sighed.

It had been over a month since he last saw Belinda and now thanks to his new assignment—which he didn't know how long would last—it might be months, maybe years, before he'd be able to

gaze upon the beautiful face of Belinda the Enchantress once more through the globe.

Chapter 4

Avgar arrived at the Passage bright and early, in anticipation and impatience. The attire he wore was becoming quite incumbent. The short, pleated jacket and shirt underneath made him hot and the wool tights with the codpiece made him itchy and highly irritable.

The fact he was tired didn't help his mood any either. He had not slept well the night before. Sinful thoughts of Belinda and her delectable servant kept filling his mind. He couldn't quite understand it, but her servant affected him like no other lower demon did. She was feisty, sharp-tongued, and he wanted to have her, possess her.

If he played his hand right and searched high and low, finding Belinda's weak point and using it against her to destroy her, then all that she had would be his—her prestigious position, her dwelling, *and* her servant. A smile spread over his face with his evil, ambitious cogitations.

As he waited there, deep in thought, Belinda arrived along with Gisele, her servant, behind her. His lungs ceased to function for a few seconds as his gaze took in their elegance and beauty. Belinda wore a burgundy red gown with a full skirt. Gisele's dress was a royal blue with tapered sleeves. But these minor details, he barely noticed. Their enticing cleavage was what kept his gaze fixed.

Both female demons gave him a stern look as they caught his gawking eye.

Biting his lower lip, he nodded. "Morning, ladies." He motioned with his forward chin he spoke of their exposed cleavage "Not quite appropriate for this era, Belinda."

Belinda huffed and began to walk in haste. “Well, we must do what we must. It is part of the plan. Now let’s get to the boat before we waste any more time.”

He lifted his eyebrow in mischief as they passed him. “An effective strategy, I’m sure. Yes, I agree, let’s get on with the mission.”

While he followed them, his curiosity got the better of him, and he decided to speak up. “So what exactly is the strategy, Belinda? I’m certainly excited to see you in action. Your reputation and record speak for themselves. I want to learn *everything* I can about you and how you collect your souls.”

Upon hearing his last sentence, Belinda stopped in her tracks and turned to face him. Her eyes narrowed, confirming his suspicions she was hiding something...something really big.

“You’ll find out when I feel you need to know. For now, just follow my lead and do as I say.” She then turned back and continued to stride to the boat.

When she glimpsed behind her to make sure he followed, he moved forward with the sincerest smile he could muster. “Yes, of course.”

* * * *

Belinda tried stretching in the cramped rowboat wishing Avgar would stop ogling her and Sebastian/Gisele. She swore drool drenched the brute’s chin. It was loathsome and pathetic. Sebastian hit the mark the other day when he said Avgar’s cock ruled over his mind at times.

They had been in the boat for half a day already having traveled through the Passage early in the morning. The sun had started setting in the east when they saw the three sail ships in the distance moving toward them.

Avgar scratched his leg and took off his felt hat, fanning himself. “The bigger ship will be here first. Is that where Cristóbal Colón is supposed to be? Or will he be on one of the smaller ships?”

Belinda gazed at the approaching ships. “No, he’ll be on that ship.”

“Did Satan mention why he wants Cristóbal’s soul?” Sebastian asked her.

Before Belinda could reply, Avgar jumped in, “Because he is about to uncover the New World.”

Belinda gave Avgar a sneer. “Yes, but to be more specific, God wants Cristóbal to be the explorer to uncover the New World. And basically Satan wants his soul now before he can discover it and bring back the news to Europe, to Spain.”

Sebastian shook his head. “But I thought Leifr Eiríksson was the first European to discover the New World.”

“Yes, but his discovery didn’t affect trade and Europe’s economy as this voyage will. The world will change with this one, special voyage. The catalytic effect will be historical.”

Avgar leaned forward on the wooden bench he sat on and raised one brow. “For a servant and lower demon, you know quite a lot, Gisele.”

Sebastian squinted as if countering his move and replied without hesitation or delay. “That is thanks to my mistress, Belinda. She has schooled me on history, the arts, and much more.”

Avgar licked his lips, diverting his gaze over to Belinda then back to Gisele. “What other *things* has Belinda taught you, Gisele?”

Belinda’s skin crawled and she wanted to slap him. But she knew Sebastian would have an opposing move, so she just leaned back.

“It is none of your business, but it is nothing that a demon of your limited knowledge could ever appreciate.”

A frown came over Avgar’s face. He turned to Belinda and growled. “You should teach your servant to hold her tongue and remember her position in our society.”

Now it was Belinda's turn to give the brute a dose of the medicine he so deserved. "She is only relaying my thoughts, Avgar, which is her job. You, on the other hand, should remember you are the apprentice and I am your mistress on this mission. Things will probably change after this mission, but for here and now, you should hold your sharp tongue and keep your eyes from roaming."

He impulsively lifted his lip in scorn, but then squinted and bowed his head as if in deep thought. A moment later, with his head still lowered, he proclaimed, "I apologize for my behavior, Belinda. I am here to observe your work and skill, not give my opinion on how your servant should be behaving. As for my roaming eyes, I will try to control myself." A naughty smile lifted his lips sideways. "But you have to pardon me my indiscretion. You and your lovely servant are quite a distraction for any man, let alone a demon who is but seated only a few feet away from you."

She challenged him in warning. "You must keep your focus on our mission, Avgar, any distraction—and I repeat any distraction—could jeopardize our mission. If we fail because you could not keep your focus, Satan will have your hide."

She leaned forward mimicking his gesture earlier, "You know how angry Satan can get. Do you want to take the risk?"

He huffed, making his nostrils flare. He looked like a bull contemplating whether he should charge or not. "Yes, Belinda. I will keep my focus. I thank you for reminding me of my position and your kind and wise advice."

He diverted his gaze to the ocean and the ship that was less than a nautical mile away. "Shall we row to it now, Belinda?"

She nodded. "Hmm, that we shall."

And so they began to row, but Belinda kept one eye on Avgar. She sensed he had more in store for her and Sebastian on the mission. Taking an exasperated breath, she hoped they could continue to keep one step ahead of the troublesome brute.

* * * *

Amato hurried to get to the deck of the ship. He had heard the shouts from the crewmen a few minutes earlier and headed up to see what the ruckus was about. He worried about Cristóbal. Could he be in danger?

He had boarded the Santa Maria two days ago as the first mate Fernando Rodriguez and had been keeping an eye on Cristóbal. The explorer was an interesting man. He had a vision and fixated on his purpose constantly. An hour did not pass that he didn't look at his charts and start mumbling something to himself.

They were headed to the Canary Islands to stock up on supplies and make some minor repairs, and then they would be headed west.

Although Amato had been unhappy leaving Heaven and knew it would be some time before he would see Belinda the Enchantress through the crystal voyeur, he found this new assignment being Cristóbal Colón's guardian angel very interesting. To be a part of the discovery of the New World was something every angel, or man, would dream of.

As he made it on the deck, he realized the ship had stopped moving and a crowd had gathered in the starboard area looking to the water below. They mumbled to themselves, but Amato couldn't decipher what they said. He decided to go there and find out exactly what caused such a commotion on board. Did it have anything to do with the smaller ships that followed the Santa Maria?

To his surprise, it wasn't one of the other boats, but a rowboat approaching them. From what he could perceive, there were three passengers aboard, a male and two females. As the boat came up to the ship's haul and they stopped, he could see them clearly. His jaw fell open and he couldn't bring himself to close it.

The most beautiful vision he could ever have imagined sat in the rowboat just 20 feet below him. A vision he had beheld from far above for what seemed like an eternity. A vision who was far more

beautiful and breathtaking in person than the crystal voyeur could have ever offered him. It was his Belinda the Enchantress, here in the flesh.

Beside her sat Sebastian who was now incognito pretending to be her female demon servant, Gisele. And next to him/her stood a tall man with wide shoulders and a dark complexion and hair. He had never seen him before when spying on Belinda and wondered who he might be.

As he pondered about the man and what they were all doing here wearing nobles' clothes, one thing became clear in his mind—the reason why Michael asked him to protect Cristóbal. Belinda had been sent to claim the explorer's soul.

He felt a smile spread across his face and stretch his skin.

One of the crewmembers who had a couple of gaping holes in his mouth from teeth that had most probably rotted and fallen off, nudged him. “From tha smile on yer face, you like wha you see, no?” He leered at them as one of the men dropped a roped ladder down to the boat. He stretched his neck as if to get a better look at Belinda as she mounted. “Tha other ona is nice, but this ona, in red, now she isa beautiful. And look a hera...” He cupped his chest to mean her breasts.

The man's vulgarity and lack of any sort of education sickened Amato. And the fact he, along with the entire crew it seemed, looked at Belinda and her servant with lust made anger boil in his veins and his stomach tighten.

As Belinda and her group set foot on the deck, Cristóbal came forward with a quizzical look on his face. He rubbed his chin as the larger man extended his hand. “Thank you for your kindness in saving us. My name is Vizconde Miguel de Moya of Seville and these are my sisters Vizcondesa Maria De Moya and Florinda De Moya.” The ladies bowed with the introduction. “Our ship was overtaken by pirates this morning and we were forced to escape in the rowboat. We

have been rowing aimlessly for many hours and are hungry and thirsty.”

Cristóbal shook the man’s hand and nodded. “I’m sorry for your misfortune. My name is Cristóbal Colón and this is the Santa Maria. We are headed for the Canary Islands. We can bring you there if you like, though it will be several days before we reach it.”

The tall man calling himself Vizconde Miguel De Moya opened his mouth to reply, but was interrupted by Belinda acting as Maria who stepped forward with a serene smile. “That would be perfect. We have family there we can stay with until a ship comes back for us.” The so-called vizconde frowned at her then and Amato noticed the sideways glance Belinda gave him.

Obviously, tension hovered between the two and from Sebastian’s expression, he wasn’t too fond of their male companion, either.

Cristóbal turned and motioned for Amato to approach them. “This is my first officer Fernando Rodriguez. He will bring you to the galley where you can get some nourishment and drink.”

Amato’s heart pounded in his ears upon hearing Cristóbal’s words. Never in his life as a mortal or as an angel had he ever imagined being this close to Belinda, let alone be the one to guide her to the galley.

Taking a deep intake of air, he walked over to them and bowed. When his gaze centered on Belinda, who was peering at him intensely, smiling, he swore that time had stopped for a few moments and everything around them stood still. Nothing else seemed to exist or matter for that moment.

His urge to proclaim his love for her, or his obsession depending on how one looked at it, gnawed at his insides then.

But as his senses brought him back to reality, his mind finally kicked in, telling him he should speak. Clearing his throat, he uttered, “If you would like to follow me, Vizconde and Vizcondesas?”

Belinda walked first, coming close to his left side. “Of course, Fernando, please lead the way.” A whiff of her fragrance tantalized

him and he had to tame his wild urge to nuzzle his nose in the nape of her long, delicate neck.

Glancing back to make sure they all followed him, Amato noted the tall man acting as their brother displayed an angered, frustrated expression as he tailed and stared at Belinda.

Why he accompanied Belinda and Sebastian on this assignment baffled Amato. And why he looked at Belinda with such contempt peaked his curiosity. His gut and his instincts as a guardian angel pounded a message in his mind. This man meant harm to Belinda and maybe even Sebastian.

As he led them to the galley, he decided he'd find out exactly what the vizconde had up his sleeve.

* * * *

Belinda swore Avgar shot daggers at her back with his gaze. Glancing at Sebastian, he confirmed her inkling. Her patience was running thin. If the brute continued acting like this, their charade would be uncovered and any hope of claiming Cristóbal's soul would be extinguished.

She needed to bore her message deeper into his dense skull—she was his mistress and he the apprentice. He took orders from her and not the other way around. He had no right second guessing her decisions or taking the lead as he tried to do a few moments ago.

The fact the cute, blond first officer with the gorgeous blue eyes, the color of the ocean, kept looking back at him now as they followed him made her worry. There was something about Fernando she couldn't quite place, something about the way he gazed at her. For some reason, she got the feeling he could see right through her, right to her very soul.

It wasn't an eerie feeling. Quite the contrary, it made her feel warm and calm.

But the feeling she got each time Fernando looked at Avgar was a completely different story. It teetered on anger and hatred. Her instincts warned her that Fernando was extremely perceptive and if he continued to observe Avgar's behavior as he did, he would soon piece everything together and figure out exactly what they were up to.

Her plans of taking Cristóbal's soul would have to wait. First, she needed to focus on Fernando. Learn all she could about him and distract him from snooping where Avgar was concerned.

Walking closer to him, she began to snake her arm around his. "Tell me, Fernando, how big is this sh—"

The moment their skin made contact, a spark traveled through Belinda. At first, the sensation was cold. But as it coursed through her veins and picked up momentum, moving to the lower part of her body, it turned to heat and passion, awakening her sexual urges and making her nether lips quiver with want and her aroused clit throb, yearning for friction.

An odd sensation, indeed, none she had ever experienced, nor could comprehend, but oh so pleasurable. She licked her lips and needed to take a deep breath to stop herself from rubbing her breasts and stomach against his muscular, wide chest and kissing him long, deep, and hungrily, here in front of Avgar and Sebastian.

Letting go of his arm before she went mad with uncontrollable lust, she gazed at this mysterious first officer and wondered what the hell just happened.

* * * *

Amato's lungs refused to feed in air. His body, especially his penis, had overtaken his rational, reasoning brain and left him a horny, vulnerable vegetable for a few seconds. The electrical energy that surged through his body just now must have had the same effect on Belinda. It was the only reason why she would have stopped talking and let go of his arm so quickly.

He had a theory why it happened. From what he had learned in the company of the wise Archangel Michael about angels and demons' supernatural states, it most probably was because of magnetism, a negative force meeting a positive force—total and complete attraction, like in a magnet—he being the positive side of it, and she being the negative side of another. Opposites attracting.

He was an angel of Heaven and she a demon of Hell. One couldn't get more opposite than that.

Now as she looked at him with perplexity in her eyes, he knew he should say something, otherwise, the others would note something happened between them. From what he had deciphered from observing Sebastian and Belinda for so many years, Sebastian was kind to Belinda, her ally, lover, and mentor. But this vizconde with the shifty eyes was a different story. Warning bells continued to shrill in Amato's head that he wanted to harm his enchantress.

He began to walk again, heading for the galley. "I believe the ship is between 70 and 75 feet long."

Sebastian walked up closer. "You are not that far off from Spain and are headed for the Canary Islands with three ships, why so many for such a short voyage?"

Amato smiled. "Because we are only stopping there for supplies and some minor repairs. We plan on journeying far after that."

Belinda gave him a curious look. "To where?"

He glanced at her and swore her dark brown eyes twinkled, then replied, "West, for fish and exploring."

The vizconde added with a warning gaze, "Many dangers lurk in deep waters and on the high seas, Fernando. Dangers like pirates who will take everything you have, your boat, your belongings, and even your life."

Belinda gave the vizconde a sideways sneer, which he noticed but still continued, "Look at our misfortune for instance."

Amato nodded. "Yes, it is possible, but given we are three ships in travel, not one, it is more likely never to happen."

The vizconde waved his forefinger back and forth in front of him.
“Ah-ah-ah, never say never.”

His toying infuriated Amato and from the looks Sebastian and Belinda gave one another, they had the same reaction.

Narrowing his eyes, trying to swallow his curses, he responded,
“Here is the galley,” and pushed the door open.

Chapter 5

Belinda sat at the corner table in Cristóbal's quarters. Since she and Gisele were the only females on board and he alone had separate quarters, he kindly moved out so they could have privacy.

She drummed her fingers, pondering. This mission was becoming more complicated at every turn and she didn't know how they should proceed.

Sebastian had morphed back to his male form and lay on the lumpy cot under the wool blanket. "Stop worrying, Belinda."

She huffed and stood to pace. "How can I not, Sebastian? Avgar is doing everything to jeopardize our mission."

He laughed and lifted his head to rest it on his hand. "What? Because of that stupid statement he said earlier about pirates and stealing lives?"

She came to sit beside him at the end of the cot. "Yes, exactly. Why didn't he just blurt out we are demons on the prowl for souls?"

"Belinda, you are being paranoid. How could Fernando possibly extrapolate the truth from Avgar's ramblings?" He sat up. "If anything, from the look he gave him, he thinks him mad or quite strange at the very least."

"That may be the case now, but if Avgar persists, he will figure it out." She combed her fingers through her hair to pull it out of her face. "There is something about Fernando that I cannot place."

Sebastian passed his forefinger lightly over her hand and up her arm. The sensation gave her goose bumps. "Like what?"

"I do not know. It's as if he can see through me."

He smirked. “See through you, no, but I did see him admiring your beauty. Actually, he fixated on it.”

Her heart lightened. “Was he really?”

Sebastian fell backward in laughter. “Ah, Belinda, your eyes give you away tonight.”

“Give away what?” She frowned.

“You are taken with the tall, fair-haired mortal.”

“I am not.” She stood and put her hands on her hips.

He laughed even louder. “You’ve never reacted in such a way when I told you other men admired your beauty.” He patted the cot. “Come sit back down, Belinda. You know I’m right.”

She looked at him with his raised brow and beseeching eyes and knew it was no use denying it. He knew her too well. Walking back, she collapsed in front of him. “Is there anything I can hide from you?”

He wrapped his arms around her and kissed the top of her head. “Very little. Now, tell me more.”

She closed her eyes and absorbed Sebastian’s warmth and strength. “There was something very strange that happened when I took his arm earlier. It felt like a bolt of electricity traveled through me. It was cold at first, but then it heated to burning passion. I had an uncontrollable urge to kiss him passionately and meld my body against his.”

He took a deep breath while he continued to hold her. She wondered what he thought. She knew he had no jealous thoughts because their relationship wasn’t one of love. They were demons incapable of such an emotion. No, their relationship could be best described as one of mutual pleasuring. They were best friends and lovers only for the reason of satiating their hungry, sexual appetites.

After he remained silent for a few more minutes, she turned her head to look into his eyes and asked, “What do you think the reason is for it?”

His eyes were no longer jovial. His mind churned, she could tell from his expression. “Sebastian, what is it?”

His face softened then and he kissed her forehead. He diverted his gaze and replied, "He must be pure of heart."

Pulling his arms tighter around her, she whispered as she kissed his neck, "Then there is nothing to worry about?"

"No, my sweet Belinda, nothing to worry your pretty little head about." He smiled, bringing his hands to the front of her dress and slid them in to cup her mounds. His heated, sensual touch made her lose her breath for a moment. She turned her head to kiss him, moaning.

He snaked his tongue deep into her mouth, loping hers and tickling her palate. Bringing his hand to the back of her dress, he undid the lacing and pushed it off her shoulders, exposing her breasts.

Cold air hit her naked skin, making her nipples perk. He brought his hand down to her left breast rubbing the raised nipple then gently pulled it. A spark of excitement shot to her pussy, making her wet with arousal.

Obviously sensing her heat, Sebastian said, "What is it you want this time, Mistress? A threesome again? A foursome?"

She grinned and licked her lips. "Hmm, no...how about...how about you become Fernando?"

He smirked wickedly. "Oh, I'm going to enjoy this. Given the smile that spread over your face when I told you he fixated on your beauty, I think your passion this evening will surpass all other evenings."

He moved out from behind her, his erection standing to attention as he stood straight. Her heart skipped a beat with the sight. Smiling and winking, he bent down to undress her the rest of the way. As the dress and undergarment were pulled over her head and she glanced back at him, he had already transformed into Fernando, a magnificent specimen of a male mortal.

She bit her trembling lip to calm it, and smiled.

Sebastian looked at her mischievously. "Does this please you?" He lifted her leg and placed it on his upper thigh while his gaze never

left her eyes and he began untying the ribbon that held her wool stockings in place.

Belinda slid her foot to his tight balls and rubbed them back and forth. Sebastian closed his eyes and took a deep intake of air. Growling, he forgot the stockings and pulled her to him. He flipped her over, so she rested on her bended knees and her ass was close to him.

He rubbed his big, strong hand down and up her legs, around her bottom, making gooseflesh form with her excitement. She moaned and pushed her pelvis closer to him, touching his erect penis with her swollen, wanton lips.

He slapped her ass cheek tenderly. "Not just yet, my sweet Belinda. There are still things I must do to you."

Her mind shrilled with ideas of possible things he had in mind. Sebastian had a very wicked mind. Before she had a chance to guess, he inserted one finger slowly into her anus and another into her cunt. He slid them out and then in several times, lubricating her narrow anal opening and making her shake with craziness. She threw her head back. "Please, Sebastian, enter me. I cannot wait another minute."

He growled. "Nor can I."

Before she realized it, he entered both her entries. The fullness and surprise made her heart jump into her throat and her legs weak for a few seconds. Rubbing her back and then bending to reach and caress her jiggling breasts, he whispered, "Two cocks for the price of one. I figured the double delight would please you."

As he moved back and forth inside her, she screamed out with excitement. Then swallowing another cry of arousal, she replied, "It has the same effect on you."

He slapped her right cheek hard, making it sting. "Indeed. You know me too well, Belinda."

Taking hold of her hips, he pulled her closer to him, thrusting deep into her pleasure passages. He pulled out swiftly and drove in again with the same momentum and hunger as before.

Panting and feeling sweat form with the exertion and arousal, she followed his lead, moving her pelvis with his guide. The climax came with no warning. It rushed up on her and made her convulse and sigh simultaneously. Sebastian suddenly lifted her then and turned her so she sat on him and he continued riding her for a few more minutes as he came in her.

Both satiated, they collapsed backward onto the cot, Belinda on top of Sebastian. She rolled off of him when she caught her breath and looked at his face. He hadn't changed back to himself, so she could now admire the perfect face of the mortal Fernando.

Caressing his strong chin and full lips, she asked, "How can you do that?"

He turned his body to her. "What? Change? I don't know. Ask Satan. He is the one who gave me these powers."

"No, Sebastian, how can you make yourself look so like him? His eyes? His chin? How can you remember every detail like that?"

He lifted his head and rested it on his bent arm. Raising a brow, curiously, he countered, "I think I should be asking you the same question, Belinda. How do you know I was so accurate? You've taken a bigger fancy in him than I thought." Pulling her hair away from her eyes, he added, "As for my ability to be so precise, again, I do not know. I just do."

Turning and moving closer to him so his body could warm her chilling torso, she yawned and closed her eyes. "Mmm, I guess it was that electrified joining we had earlier. Perhaps it fused his image into my mind permanently."

Sensing sleep crawling up on her, she thought of Fernando's angelic face and smiled as dreamland welcomed her into fantasy.

* * * *

Sebastian stared at Belinda as she slept with a serene smile on her face. He caressed her hair as his restless mind gave him no peace. He

was preoccupied with Fernando. Belinda had been right that this mission would be complicated. But Avgar wasn't the only one they needed to keep an eye on. They had to also worry about Fernando...if that were even his name.

Having spent centuries as Satan's aide, Sebastian had learned a lot from him, and what Belinda had described that happened between her and Fernando could mean only one thing. No doubt in Sebastian's mind, Fernando was an angel.

It explained why Belinda felt he could see right through her. He didn't want to tell her anything because she already was preoccupied with the meddling Avgar. Knowing there was an angel here with them on this ship would make her worry even more, which would complicate things further.

No, keeping her in the dark by telling her he was pure of heart remained his only choice for the time being. Perhaps when he uncovered his purpose and figured out a solution to their dilemma, then he would tell her.

Turning over in the cot and fluffing up the wool stuffed pillow, he mulled two plaguing questions in his mind. Why was an angel on board this ship? And why was he so infatuated with Belinda?

Chapter 6

Amato stood on the barren deck admiring the sunrise. He hadn't slept all night thinking of his beautiful enchantress and longed to caress her delicate skin. The moment they shared the day before when she touched his arm and their bodies reacted with intensity was too short and he yearned for more, far more.

But he had to be realistic. She was a demon and he an angel. They could never be together, ever. And reminding himself of his assignment, he acknowledged they were on opposite sides. He needed to focus on Cristóbal. He must protect him against Belinda and her party at any and all costs.

As he began to build his stamina and resistance, he heard a siren's voice behind him call his name, "Fernando," and all his resolve disintegrated as his heart swelled with affection. He turned to behold paradise's perfection in her face, his ears still tingling from hearing her sweet voice. His heartbeat quickened and his mouth numbed. He tried replying, but it was futile.

The vision of her in her red dress with her black hair flowing freely around her shoulders dancing with the ebullient wind left him dumb.

She walked up to him and smiled. "I see you are an early bird as am I."

"Uh-huh," was all he managed to leak from his lips.

Admiring the horizon and the rising sun, she sighed. "It's beautiful, isn't it?"

His gaze never leaving her face, he responded, "There is much beauty to behold this morning." And once the words slipped from his

lips, he wished he could silence them. What would she say or how would she react?

But to his surprise, she glanced at him, catching his stare and then lowered her eyes, blushing. A moment later, she turned to him and lifted her face to look at him. “So how long have you been sailing the seven seas, Fernando?”

“Uh...many years.” He hadn’t expected the question and hoped his gaze wasn’t shifty when he replied.

“Have you always been a first officer?”

Think, man, think! He swayed from one foot to the other. “No, this is my first voyage as that. Cristóbal Colón found me worthy of the position.”

“How long have you known Cristóbal?”

“Not long, a few months,” he lied.

She leaned in, then lifted her seductive gaze to meet his eyes and whispered, “What specifically does Cristóbal plan to do after he leaves the Canary Islands?”

Oh, temptation curse him! All his dreams hit him instantly. How many times had he wished and imagined her being this close to him? He wanted to touch her porcelain white face, every curve of it perfect. Her full, ruby lips and her dark, exotic, almond-shaped eyes hypnotized him.

For a brief moment, he lifted his hand to do just that, but then his cowardice took over and he brought his hand up to his head and combed his hair with his fingers.

Taking a deep breath for courage, he spoke. “He travels west as I told you last night. He has charted a shorter route to the Indies.”

She laughed, throwing her head back. “That is madness! The Indies? Going west, not east?”

He nodded. “No, it isn’t. Cristóbal has been studying the charts for many years, and if there is another, shorter passage to the Indies from the west, he will find it.”

Coughing to clear his mind, he asked, “And you, Vizcondesa, will this be your first trip to the Canary Islands?”

She shook her head. “No, I’ve been there several times since I have family there.”

Lifting a brow in intrigue, he asked, “And speaking of family, your sister seems as sweet as you, but your brother, the vizconde, is—”

She frowned and completed his sentence for him. “Is a loud mouth brute who keeps embarrassing my sister and I.”

After the words left her lips, her expression softened once more as if she had cast away the negative thoughts of the vizconde. Then she leaned in even closer so her perfume tickled his nose and she placed a hand lightly on his shoulder, lifting her brow in a flirtatious way. “So you find me...sweet?”

He almost lost his bearings then. Had he said that? Yes, being an imbecile, he had.

He opened his mouth to respond, but only, “Uh...,” escaped, and then quietness.

Their physical contact and the instance of silence between them were reactive. It was as if the magnetic pull of the earth’s core suddenly turned on them, bringing them closer together inch by tempting inch.

Amato couldn’t resist his urges any longer. He knew it was her physical contact with him that caused it, but he didn’t care. He wanted to touch her, hold her, kiss her passionately. And so he did. He lowered his head, tilting it sideways, and brought his lips to hers.

The moment they made contact, a shock of coldness flowed through him and then heat, surging heat that turned his body, his sexual organ, and his mind to madness for her, for her body. He brought his hands to the back of her head as his tongue pushed open her lush lips and probed her hungry mouth. Her tongue came to meet his and they looped each other’s in a dance of lust.

Amato lowered his arms to wrap around her waist and he tugged her closer to him so their bodies melded practically to one. He could

feel the rise and fall of her chest as she panted with arousal, her plump breasts rubbing against him through their clothes with every desperate breath she took.

His cock rose in demand and he knew she felt it hardened and engorged because she moaned with pleasure, bringing her arms to his back and rubbed her fingertips up and down with urgency. Each stroke of her bewitching fingers brought him that much closer to insanity.

Her excited reaction meant only one thing—she wanted him to continue to intensify this. Sweet mercy, he would abide her wishes. He lifted her into his arms then, catching her by surprise as he heard her deep intake of air. But she didn't stop, didn't react negatively to it. Instead, she giggled knowing he meant to bring her someplace no one could see them.

Years, even centuries, of wondering would soon be over. As he carried her in his arms to the stern of the ship, where they could easily hide behind some barrels and equipment, he imagined one last time what it would be like to make love to Belinda the Enchantress. Would he reach a paradise far better than Heaven, or would the gates of Hell open and devour him whole?

One thing was for sure. He would enjoy every sacrilegious second of it.

* * * *

Belinda couldn't quite grasp what was happening. All she knew was that she wanted, no, *hungered* for Fernando. Hungered for his delicious tongue that tantalized her mouth. Hungered for his electrifying hands that sent chills of excitement and desire flowing with vigor through her veins right down to her cunt. And damn her to the lowest depth of Hell a thousand times over, she hungered for his cock deep inside her chasm.

No matter how she crushed her body against him as he carried her, she couldn't get enough of him to appease her unquenchable thirst for sexual satisfaction.

Every second they moved closer to the stern seemed a century in time and her breasts ached to have his strong, big hands stroke them and tease them to perkiness.

Once they got there, he stood her on her feet and removed his coat, placing it on the wooded floor. While never diverting his stare, he took her hand and gently guided her to lie down before him. Once she lay completely flat, he bent down to kiss her luscious lips once more.

Releasing her lips, he whispered as he struggled to remove every stitch of clothing from her and himself in record time, "You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen."

When he had uncovered her breasts, he added, "Most beautiful." Her skin rose in goose bumps with his desperate gaze and when he removed his wool stockings and stood before her buck naked and fully erect, she lost her breath completely.

By Satan, he was well endowed! His cock measured eight inches at the very least. Sebastian had certainly underestimated that. He was a prime example of a sex god. Every inch of him spelled perfection and lustful bliss.

She licked her lips in eagerness as he lowered his mouth to her neck. Once again, a spark hit her and traveled to her breasts, swelling them in heat and then traveled down to her clit and lips, doing the same to them, making her tremble.

She pulled his face to hers in thirst for his wet lips and tongue. She moaned as his cock came to rest on her lower stomach and she wiggled so it centered above her pelvic bone. She grabbed hold of his buttocks and pushed his cheeks, telling him she wanted him in her *now*, at this very instant, before she would explode from the lightning energy flowing through her body hitting her sex organs relentlessly.

He must have understood her actions, or perhaps what was happening to her was happening to him, because he slid his thick penis into her passage then. The walls of her vagina stretched with his size and she trembled as more lightning energy entered her through there.

By Satan, it was almost unbearable and completely euphoric. She felt on the verge of death and rebirth at the same time. Fernando and his delicious cock had awakened something in her she thought she never had. It enveloped her heart, her body, her mind, and yes, even her very soul, which she thought was charred forever.

With every thrust and plunge he took, sinking his penis deeper into her, she trembled and moved with him trying to meet his actions and desire move for move.

They continued their electric, erotic dance of love and lust for several minutes until she felt her climax come upon her. It enveloped her, swift and powerful, overtaking every sense—stars exploded in her vision, a ringing sound hummed in her ears, her nose was flooded with the strong scent of his arousal, her taste buds watered with the sweet nectar of his saliva, and her entire body tingled and throbbed, including her nub and twat, making her shake.

He came a few seconds after her, and by his body's reaction, she understood it overwhelmed him, as well.

He moved off of her and lay limp beside her on the floor, panting. His skin gleamed with sweat, accentuating every muscle in his chest and thick biceps. He smiled, staring at her. "That was even better than I imagined or dreamed."

Intrigued by what he said, she lifted her brow. "Oh? So you have been dreaming of me?"

His smile vanished instantly and a look of panic took its place. "Ah...what I meant is, 'That is better than I ever could have imagined or dreamed of.'"

She laughed then, passing her forefinger on his full lips getting another delightful shock. For one pure of heart, he certainly knew

how to pleasure a woman. Somewhere deep in her mind, questions began to stir getting more chaotic with each ponder.

There was much more to Fernando than he let on.

* * * *

Sebastian partially woke up with the sound of booming, hammering knocks. He rubbed his eyes to focus and replied without thinking, "Who is it?"

Avgar's voice came through the wooden door. "It's the vizconde. Who is this?"

Sebastian bolted up widening his eyes in shock. "Damn!" he muttered to himself. Looking around the room and finding it empty, he wondered where Belinda was. Before he could figure things out, Avgar shouted, "Let me in."

Sebastian quickly morphed into Gisele and wrapped the blanket around him as he got up to open the door. In a feminine voice, he opened the door a creak and whispered, "Stop shouting. Everyone will hear you."

Avgar pushed the door open forcibly. "I don't care if they hear me. Anyway, I'm here visiting my sisters." Looking around, he added, "Who was that I heard before? And where is Belinda?"

Sebastian closed the door and walked around stalling, trying to think. "I don't understand. Why do you think there was someone here?"

Avgar narrowed his eyes. "I heard a male voice asking who I was."

Sebastian walked to the porthole and looked out. "That's ridiculous. Your ears are playing tricks on you. I was the one who asked who it was. There is no male here."

He looked at the cot. "As for Belinda, she is an early riser. She must have gone on deck to enjoy the sunrise and figure out her plans for Cristóbal."

Avgar walked over to Sebastian and leaned in closer, his gaze raking over his female body. “So you also sleep in the nude, Gisele. I too find clothing encumbering in bed.”

Sebastian’s stomach roiled. Sneering, he pushed him away. “Tame your urges, Avgar.”

Avgar cackled. “My urges? What about yours?” He brought his rough, dry hand to Sebastian’s face. “Are all your urges satisfied with Belinda, Gisele? Don’t you ever want a man and his...” he looked at his pelvic area, “*virile organ* to satisfy all your womanly needs?”

Sebastian wanted to gouge the brute’s eyes out. “My urges, as you call them, are none of your business.” In a belittling gesture, Sebastian raked his gaze over Avgar’s burly, brutish body. “And you’d hardly please my womanly urges.”

Walking away, trying to get as much distance from the oaf as he could, Sebastian added, “Belinda will not be pleased to hear you are trying to seduce me. Did she not warn you to keep your focus on the assignment and not your *manhood*? If things don’t go as planned with this assignment and we fail to acquire Cristóbal Colón’s soul, it will be you who Satan will blame because Belinda’s record so far has been perfect.”

Avgar spoke through clenched teeth as he obviously tried to calm his mounting anger. “Fine, I understand my position.”

He strode to the door and opened it abruptly. “I’ll be in the galley in half an hour. Find Belinda and meet me there.” He slammed the door closed behind him.

Sebastian let out the stale breath he had been holding. *That was close. As stupid and arrogant as Avgar is, our hoax was almost uncovered just now. I must be more careful.*

Picking up the royal blue gown, he thought of Belinda. His sixth sense told him that she had gone in search of the mysterious angel. Their attraction to one another most probably compelled her. He knew she couldn’t help herself, but the fact remained that this distraction would leave Belinda unguarded.

Sebastian's instincts screamed that Avgar had more tricks up his sleeve and with Belinda in this vulnerable state, there was no telling what would happen next.

* * * *

Damn Gisele and damn Belinda! Avgar paced in the narrow space in the far, isolated corner of the crew's quarters. They were hiding something. He was positive, though he hadn't the faintest idea what it could be.

He had heard a male voice coming from their room before. No doubt about it. Yet there was no one there....*Or maybe there was*....He didn't think of looking under the cot.

Now the question that haunted him was why could they be hiding a man in their room. They didn't have to be so secretive if they had been. By Satan, he had never met any two female demons more promiscuous or liberated as they.

He tapped his dry chin with his long index finger. They definitely didn't want him knowing about this man. Why? Could it have been Cristóbal? Maybe Belinda was secretly seducing the explorer and wanted to steal his soul under Avgar's nose and then complain to Satan that he didn't help in the mission. Satan would surely condemn him then and all hopes of him ever taking Belinda's place as the head soul collector would have disintegrated.

No, he would destroy them both before they could do that to him. Rubbing his hands together, he began to premeditate and scheme. After a few minutes, his face widened in a smug, assertive smile.

Chapter 7

Feeling giddy, Belinda stepped through the door, but one look at Sebastian's stern expression and her euphoric mood just vanished. She closed the door behind her and crossed her arms. "What has happened?"

"Avgar happened."

She gasped. "Oh, no, did he find out?"

Sebastian, disguised as Gisele, shook his pretty, little blond head. "No, but it was close. He decided to pay us a visit this morning when I was still asleep. I hadn't completely awakened when I replied; therefore, I didn't camouflage my voice."

"I should have awoken you before I left earlier, but I couldn't. You looked so peaceful in your sleep." Belinda walked over to the chair and sat.

"So..." He clenched his lips and moved them from side to side, before asking, "So, where did you go?"

A smile briefly overcame her upon reflection of what happened less than an hour ago and she felt flush. "I awoke early and decided to go on deck to think."

"I figured that much." He nodded and raised his left brow. "I assume you weren't alone."

"No, I wasn't." It's uncanny how Sebastian could see right through her. "Fernando was there. And we—"

Sebastian finished the sentence for her, "And you got to know each other, really, really well."

She stood up and went to the basin to splash cold water on her heated face. "Is it that obvious?"

He came behind her and rubbed her shoulders. “Yes, it is, Belinda.”

“I don’t know what overcame me, but I couldn’t help myself. It was like we couldn’t stay away from each other. And the sex was....” She closed her eyes enjoying Sebastian’s massages and envisioned Fernando’s magnificent, nude body. “Well, it was unbelievable. I have never felt like that before.”

He stopped kneading and mumbled, “I would imagine so.”

Finding his remark odd, she opened one eye and peered at him. “Why would you say that?”

His eyes widened momentarily. “Ah...I can see it from your expression.” He let go of her shoulders and walked over to the door. “We’ll discuss this later, for now we need to get to the galley for breakfast. Avgar is waiting for us there, and we wouldn’t want to keep him waiting or make him anymore suspicious than he already is.”

“All right, let’s go meet up with the brute, but we will talk about this later.” Belinda followed him out the door and gave him a sideways glance.

Sebastian was keeping something extremely important from her. His preoccupied look gave him away. Worry started to ferment in her mind as she following him down the long, narrow corridor.

* * * *

The day had been long and fruitless. They were no closer this evening in their plan to get the explorer’s soul than when they first got there. Sebastian’s mind churned with their predicament as he gazed at his full plate.

The room was filled with hungry crewmembers who sat down at the long, wooden tables eating their evening meal and drinking their crude brew of ale. Sebastian had taken a taste of both and refrained from trying anymore. He worried they would come up on him with

biting whiplash. Besides, being a demon meant he didn't have to eat. His dead body didn't need any nourishment or liquids to sustain itself.

Avgar, on the other hand, devoured the mixed stew as if it were a century since he had last eaten. Upon further reflection, Sebastian contemplated that it most probably had been that long since the annoying demon had eaten. His manners were revolting as liquid dribbled down his chin and he slurped his ale. He hardly portrayed the image of a refined vizconde and embarrassed the hell out of him.

The fact he kept glaring at him and Belinda from across the table made Sebastian's dead blood boil. He wanted to lean over and slap his face silly. Thank Satan, Cristóbal hadn't really taken note of their companion's peculiar, brutish behavior. The last thing they needed was Cristóbal becoming suspicious of the noble trio who just happened to appear in the mysterious sea, destitute and in need of their help. No, the distracted explorer had far more serious things on his mind, like perfecting his charts for their voyage to the Indies.

Sebastian had to laugh knowing that Cristóbal would be really uncovering the New World in less than seven weeks from now. Having analyzed the explorer's behavior and having spoken to him for more than an hour earlier, he knew why Satan had set his eyes on him. Yes, capturing his soul would certainly put a kink in God's global plan.

Stealing his soul wouldn't be too difficult the more he thought of it, but before they could do so, he needed to get a handle on two very volatile factors. One being the simpleton, blundering Avgar and the other was the cataclysmic attraction the angel and Belinda had for one another.

Belinda's mind wandered several times this day as they discussed their plans and spoke of Cristóbal. And whenever the first officer was in the room, she became completely aloof. The look that would possess her features told him that they were all invisible to her, everyone except the angel. She had eyes for him alone.

And now as he thought about it, he noticed the same wandering look take over her facial expression. Turning, he saw the tall, fair-haired Fernando had just entered the room. No surprise his gaze was focused on Belinda.

Taking a deep, frustrated sigh, he cursed under his breath. "Here we go again."

* * * *

Amato knew not how much more he could take of this. Seeing Belinda the Enchantress's face once again this day and not being able to touch her voluptuous breasts he had fondled, licked, and suckled just that morning was driving him insane. He had to keep under control the urge to whisk her away to a secluded area of the ship. He yearned to take her in his arms and make passionate, mind and lust blowing love over and over again.

Although he was able to keep his mind under some level of control, his body was a different story. Thank God his codpiece kept his cock and balls restricted, otherwise, his penis would have been fully erect every time he laid his eyes on his gorgeous, raven-haired fallen angel. His lips wanted to touch her warm, lush ones, and his cock needed her, craved to plunge into the hot, tight chasm of her sex, having the walls of her vagina tighten around his shaft and bring him to heavenly bliss.

A day ago, he thought he couldn't desire or love his enchantress any more than he already did, but after they had that unbelievable encounter, he realized he could. She was slowly becoming his everything. Even breathing became labored when she wasn't in the same room with him.

Somehow, his priorities of protecting the explorer had gotten muddled now and he had difficulty focusing. He didn't know how he would do it, but he needed to get a grip on his urges and wanton

desires for the sake of God's plans. If Belinda and her party ended up stealing Cristóbal's soul, then things would surely unravel.

Picking up a bowl of steaming stew, he walked over to the table and sat beside Cristóbal, facing Gisele and Belinda, who stared at him with intensity. He took a deep breath to ignore the powerful pulling sensation he had driving him to touch her, caress her.

The vizconde was seated to his right making the unworldliest sounds with his nostrils and deep in his throat as he gorged down his meal. Amato's stomach turned at the repugnant scene.

Cristóbal looked at Amato and uttered, "We will be arriving in the Canary Islands the day after tomorrow, early in the morning if my calculations are accurate. I want you to make plans for our arrival." He looked at the vizconde, Belinda, and Sebastian, as he added, "We will of course bring you to your family. On which island are they situated exactly?"

Sebastian and the vizconde spoke at the same time. "Puerto de Rosario," Sebastian said.

And the vizconde said with a full mouth, "Santa Cruz de Tenerife."

Cristóbal jerked his head back in surprise at their different responses. Amato was sure their cover had been jeopardized then. But Sebastian reacted quickly. He looked at his so-called brother and laughed. "Miguel, have you forgotten that *tío* and *tía* stay in their villa in Puerto de Rosario in the summer? Since it is the 4th of September only, they would be there."

With shifty eyes, the vizconde hit his head with his palm. "Yes, of course, Florinda, I forgot about that."

Sebastian was quick and perceptive. Amato had to give him that.

Amato glanced at Belinda then and caught her eye. Apparently, she hadn't stopped staring. He certainly didn't mind her attention. God, he wished they could just up and leave the others there and be intimate with each other once again.

Just as the sinful thought fermented in his mind, Cristóbal stood from the table. “Well, I am going to smoke my pipe up on deck and get some fresh air.” Looking at the vizconde, he asked, “Would you care to join me, Vizconde?”

He stood up then and replied, “Yes, I would.”

Shaking his head in affirmation, Cristóbal turned to Amato. “Fernando, would you mind making sure we are still on course? You know I like to check this every hour or so.”

Amato nodded. “Of course, sir. Once I’m finished here, I will go take a look.”

Sebastian got up then, straightening his full skirt. “Would you mind if my sister and I joined you, Cristóbal? I find this voyage of yours very interesting and would like to ask you a few questions.”

The explorer bowed. “Of course not. I would love the pleasure of your company as well, Vizcondesas.”

Belinda said with a sincere smile, “I haven’t finished my dinner yet, and I’m feeling quite fatigued. Perhaps it is because of the stress we have been under. I would like to retire early this evening. You go on without me, Florinda.”

Sebastian looked like he would say something, but then bit his tongue. He gazed at Amato, then back to Belinda. “Of course, Maria.”

After the others had left and Belinda and Amato sat alone at their table, they gazed deep into each other’s eyes saying nothing while their stews became cold.

When twenty minutes passed, Amato got up and extended his hand. “I must go check on our course’s progress. Would you like to accompany me before you retire, Vizcondesa?”

Smiling as she laid her hand in his open palm, she replied, “Yes, I would. Lead the way, Fernando.”

Once again when they made contact, an influx of coldness then heated desire flowed through him. When she passed him, he took a deep inhale as her fragrant hair flowed behind her. He restrained himself from touching her soft curls and imbedding his nose in it.

His assignment, Cristóbal, and Belinda's associates had disappeared completely from his psyche. All that remained was his lustful and loving obsession for his enchantress.

* * * *

Her heart beat furiously with excitement. This was the closest she had been to Fernando all evening. They stood outside Belinda's room staring into each other eyes once again. His irises of blue just captivated her. She had wished he would have touched her, kissed her already, but he hadn't laid one finger on her. She wondered if he had lost interest. By Satan, she prayed not.

Hoping to get him riled, she smiled and said in a flirtatious manner, "Thank you for showing me the ship's wheel, binnacle, and compass, Fernando. I never knew how complicated steering the Santa Maria was." Perhaps her sultry gaze would make him react.

He peered first at her eyes then brought his vision lower to her cleavage. She took a deep breath making her bosom bigger. His eyes seemed to widen in awe with her actions. He leaned his arm against the wall next to her shoulder, bringing his body just a few inches away from hers. His mouth came close to her ear and his breath caressed her cheek. "You're welcome, Vizcondesa. I guess I will leave you now so you can rest."

Damn this Spaniard! He toyed with her. She turned her head so her lips were almost touching his and brought her body even closer to his, making her breasts contact his chest, with only their garments as barriers. A mild shock passed into her then making her nipples tingle and tighten. "Um, I guess...unless..."

He took a deep breath and his chest pushed on her bosom. Gazing at her lips, he licked his. "Unless what, Vizcondesa?"

She suddenly moved away from him then and turned to open her door, saying, "Never mind. I'm sure you have work to do since we will be arriving in the Canary Islands soon."

Before she registered what happened next, he whisked her into his arms and kissed her roughly. Flashes of bright lights went off behind her closed eyelids and she relaxed in his embrace, bringing her arms around his wide shoulders.

Feeling the cold, then heated energy seep into her veins and flow through them with a frenzy, she giggled and said through her lips while he still kissed her, "I guess not."

"I'm all yours, my enchantress," he growled as he picked her up in his arms with one easy lift and continued kissing her passionately. By Satan, he was strong. And she loved the nickname he gave her.

With ease, he pushed open her door and then closed it as he entered her room. He set her down on the cot and began removing his clothing clumsily while he panted. She got up then. "Allow me, Fernando."

He smiled. "Of course."

She undid the buttons of his white shirt, smelling his manly scent and swooning. She brought her hands to his pectorals and rubbed them. They were made of steel. She walked behind him and lifted herself on her tiptoes to kiss his wide neck and shoulders. He laughed at first. "That tickles."

He brought his strong arms behind him to pull her to his front, but she dodged his hands. "Ah, ah. I'm not finished yet." She moved her arms around his waist and began to undo the ties to his codpiece, making it fall to the floor in seconds, then she pulled his tights down, making him step out of them.

His magnificent ass was bare for her hungry eyes to feast on. She grabbed his cheeks, squeezing and kneading them.

He moaned then but didn't move. She inched her way to his tight balls, massaging them. She felt his penis jerk up and down with each movement, getting more and more engorged.

He threw his head back. "This is maddening."

She just giggled and brought her hand to his cock. When she wrapped her fingers around his thick shaft, he gasped. As she pumped

back and forth, his juices dripped to lubricate it. He tightened his ass cheeks and he thrust his pelvis forward whenever she pulled her fingers to the tip of his penis.

After a few more strokes, he pulled her hand off his manhood and turned around to face her. “Keep that up and I will come before I’ve had a chance to please my enchantress.”

Lifting her brow, she said, “Oh, and how do you expect to please me, sir?”

He smiled wide. “Oh, I have many ways and I know you will love all of them.”

“My, you are quite sure of yourself.”

He half-laughed. “Let’s just say that I have observed a lot in my life and I’m positive I know what will please you.”

He undid the lace ties to her red dress and made it fall to her feet. She slipped out of her undergarment and stood naked in front of him. His eyes fixed on her breasts and she felt her nipples perk and goose bumps form on her skin. He brought his fingers to touch her nipples and circled them, rubbing the tip of each. A shock of arousal shot to her pussy and wetness seeped out to coat her lips and clit.

She closed her eyes enjoying his ministrations. “No, keep your eyes open. I want you to see the desire in my eyes as I feast on you.”

Fixing his gaze on hers, he brought his lips to her left nipple and licked it, making her tremble with delight. He lavished her breast with gentle, arousing strokes of his hot, wet tongue, then while still gazing at her, he slinked downward inch by agonizing inch until he was at her pelvis. He pushed her feet wide apart, so he could bring his tongue to her nub. Rolling the tip around it, he brought his middle finger to her swollen lips and inserted his finger in deep

She almost came with the penetration. He smiled, obviously enjoying how her body reacted to his foreplay. Bringing a second finger to her lips, he first inserted it into her vagina, then once it was lubricated, brought it to her anus.

He thrust both fingers in her cunt and anus at the same time and she buckled with a shock of desire. Biting her lip, she lifted her arms to touch her breast that begged for attention, too. She pulled the nipples, teasing and rubbing them, while Fernando continued to plunge his fingers in and out of her openings.

He looked at her breasts as she fondled herself and moaned, obviously enjoying her reaction.

She felt it mounting. Her climax was coming. She wanted to pull his hand away so that he could fuck her with his cock rather than his nimble fingers, but she couldn't bring herself to do it.

The approaching climax overpowered her will and as Fernando brought his thumb to circle her engorged nub, it trembled, carrying to the inside of her vagina and then traveling throughout her body. She crested as a pleasurable moan escaped.

Collapsing on the cot behind her, satiated, she gasped for air. Belinda laughed in between catching her breath.

He lay down next to her and grinned. "Did you enjoy it?"

She turned and kissed his lips, tasting her salty fluids on his wet lips. "Hmm, yes, but you knew I would." Narrowing her eyes, she proclaimed, "You are full of surprises, Fernando. I have a feeling there are more to come soon."

He diverted his gaze then and Belinda found it odd. Fernando Rodriguez was indeed a mystery, an obsessive one she couldn't quite solve or get out of her system. Come the day after tomorrow, what would happen to them?

Even though she barely knew this gorgeous man before her, her heart hurt knowing she wouldn't see him again once their assignment was over.

Chapter 8

Sebastian rubbed his sore neck as he walked to his and Belinda's room. What a stressful couple of hours he had to endure. Avgar kept blundering things with his sharp tongue and brutish behavior and Sebastian had to rectify the damage he did. It was a miracle Cristóbal didn't order them off the ship this very night.

He did however get to know more about the human being behind the explorer persona—his beliefs, weaknesses, and passions. With this information, he would be able to figure out a plan to claim his soul. All he needed to do would be to think a little harder. The problem was Belinda and the angel kept fogging his thoughts. He had an idea of what happened when he left them alone at the table.

And now as he approached their sleeping quarters, his inkling was confirmed as he saw Fernando sneaking out of the room, his hair ruffled and his clothes wrinkled. He walked up behind him. "I gather you were with Maria."

A look of surprise came over the angel's face as he turned around to face him. "I...ah..."

Sebastian put up his hand to silence him. "No need to tell me more. Is she in there now?"

The angel shook his head. "Yes, she is sleeping."

"Good. Then that means we can talk."

A confusing frown came over the angel's face. "About what?"

Sighing and rubbing his feminine chin, he replied, "Many things. None of which we can discuss here where someone may overhear." He looked around and then pointed with his chin. "Let us go to the galley. At this time of night, it should be empty."

Nodding with wide, curious eyes, Fernando said, “All right. Let’s go.”

Sebastian walked alongside the angel while a million thoughts swirled in his mind. He was sure the angel had no idea what would come next.

* * * *

When Amato closed the door to the galley, he didn’t know what to expect. Why did Sebastian need to talk to him? Did he want to punch him out of jealousy? He doubted that very much.

From the many times he spied on Belinda and Sebastian’s sexual adventures on Earth, they never claimed to love one another. Their relationship was one of friendship and mutual adoration and respect. They helped one another in work and with their urges, nothing more, nothing less. So why did he need to talk to him now?

He gestured to the demon. “Have a seat, please.”

Sebastian fixed his gown as he sat. “We need to talk about many important things. I have been going over everything in my mind and didn’t know how to approach you with this. But then I figured the best way is just to ask you.”

Whatever the demon was saying flew over his head. What did he hint at?

With a deep sigh as if to muster courage, Sebastian said, “I know who you are.”

Frowning, Amato replied, “Do you know my family?”

Frustration plagued his face. “Stop playing ignorant with me! I know *what* you are.”

Panic swarmed in on him then. The look in the demon’s eyes told him he knew he was an angel. Did he come here to try to destroy him? Ordinarily, angels were more powerful than demons, but Sebastian was no normal demon. Through the discussions he eavesdropped on between Belinda and Sebastian on Earth, he knew

Sebastian had been Satan's assistant and the Devil had bestowed powers on him. He knew about his morphing and multiplying, but maybe there were other powers, deadly ones he knew nothing about.

As he contemplated his options, worrying, Sebastian replied, "Relax, angel. I'm not here to harm you. Nor will I divulge your identity if you tell me the reason why you are here."

He remained silent for several minutes, not knowing what to reply. All the excuses he came up with were poor, and having seen the demon in action, he knew he'd see right through any lie he'd tell. Shrugging his shoulders in defeat, he replied, "I'm here acting as a guardian angel. I'm protecting Cristóbal Colón."

Sebastian put his feminine hand over his mouth. His eyes were blank, but obviously the wheels in his mind spun quite fast. Nodding, he asked after a few minutes, "Okay, and what is your reason for going after Maria? I know you know she is a demon because of your opposite energies colliding."

Nothing got past the astute demon, did it? Seeing he had no option, he figured the truth, the whole truth, was the only solution.

"I tried to stay away from her, but it is impossible. If I knew I was being assigned to the same person Belinda was sent to take, I wou—"

Sebastian lifted his hand up and he scrunched up his brows. "Wait a second. Belinda?"

Amato huffed. "Yes, Sebastian, I said Belinda."

His eyes widened. Getting up, Sebastian morphed into his true male form, stretching his dress considerably. He charged Amato and brought him against the wall. "How do you know about her and me? Has God sent you here to destroy us?"

Choking, Amato tried to speak as Sebastian had his elbow on his throat. "No, no, nothing like that. I'm only a guardian angel. Nothing more, nothing less." He gazed into the astounded demon's eyes. "I've been spying on you both for a few centuries."

"What? Why?" He let him go. Sebastian's face contorted in perplexity at his preposterous claim.

“I was gazing through the voyeur globe to Earth one day when I came across the most beautiful human I had ever seen. She captivated me right from the start.”

He scratched his head and strode back and forth. He knew the story would be long and complicated. “And as I continued to spy on her, I realized she wasn’t human, but a demon, and you were really Sebastian Cole, the notorious and powerful demon Satan condemned to the lower depths of Hell. Only you escaped and pretended to be Belinda’s servant.

“You are soul collectors. Or rather Belinda pretends she is the famous soul collector, only the real truth is you are the soul collector. She is your front.”

His face went pale. “By Satan, I can’t believe this!”

He let go of Amato and paced the room. Amato jumped in, “I love her.”

Sebastian looked at him sideways and laughed crazily. “I bet you do if you’ve been spying on us for a few centuries.”

Amato moved closer to him. “What happens now?”

“I honestly don’t know, Fernan—Is that your real name?”

“No, I’m Amato.”

Sebastian cackled. From his expression, he looked like he teetered on the brink of insanity. “Of course ‘love’ would be your name.”

Morphing back to Gisele, he strode to the door and opened it. “I need to think everything over and figure out what we do next without destroying ourselves in the process.”

As he shut the door behind him, Amato pondered just what exactly he meant by that.

Chapter 9

He couldn't bring himself to do it. He had paced all night worrying and thinking, but he couldn't wake up Belinda. Seeing her serene face as she slept, he figured a few more hours wouldn't hurt anyone and she needed her rest. In the meantime, he needed to sort things out.

But no matter how he went over everything in his mind, he came up empty. Basically, they were damned every way he looked at things.

Just when he was about to sit on the cot to rest, he heard her stir. She moaned as she stretched out. Opening one eye, she peered at him. "Sebastian, you're awake."

He smiled as he sat next to her on the cot. Stroking her forehead, he said, "Actually, I never slept."

Her face became serious and she bolted up. "What has happened?" The cover slid down to her waist exposing her delicious, plump breasts. Ordinarily, this would have enticed him, but not today. There were far more serious things to deal with than his sexual appetite. Besides, something told him that he lost Belinda as his sexual partner the day she and Amato bonded.

He placed his hands on her shoulders. "Relax. Don't panic, Belinda. Avgar hasn't figured out I'm Sebastian Cole yet. Nor has Cristóbal become suspicious of us." He took a deep breath to give himself courage to continue. "But we need to talk...about Fernando."

A smile came over her features and Sebastian knew then without a doubt she had fallen in love with the guardian angel. Before he could tell her anything more, he heard the door shut and scuffling outside.

“What was that?” Belinda asked as she glanced at the door.

Sebastian jumped to his feet. “I don’t know.” He ran to the door and opened it. He saw Avgar running away. By Satan, he was so preoccupied with the problem of Amato last night that he forgot to lock the door when he came back.

Just when he thought things couldn’t get worse, they did. Something screamed in his mind they’d fry in Hell for this.

* * * *

His legs weren’t moving fast enough. He needed to get away, pronto. When he awoke that morning, something told him today would be his lucky day, but he never expected this. Who knew when he snuck up on them that they would have kept the door unlocked or he would have overheard what he did?

Damn, that was heavy shit! He had heard a male voice, the same one he heard the day before and tried the door to see if it was opened. To his surprise, it had been and he opened it a crack and peeked in. He saw Belinda’s beautiful perky breasts and his mouth watered. He wanted to jump in there and take one of them into his mouth and suckle it. But then he saw a male sitting next to her dressed in a blue gown. What a peculiar thing to witness.

When Avgar heard him say he was Sebastian Cole, he was shocked. As he ran away, he started rolling over the familiar name in his head and he realized he was the same Sebastian Cole he had heard Satan had condemned centuries ago.

A chill of revolt crawled up his spine and he practically gagged as he remembered he wanted to fuck Gisele, who was really Sebastian in disguise. But then a distinct taste teased his taste buds and he knew exactly what it was—the sweet taste of revenge.

Clearing his mind, he channeled to the one creature that could make all his wishes come true. Soon he would have Belinda’s job, her prestigious dwelling, and if he played his cards right, he’d have her as

his servant as well, serving his every sexual fantasy. And he had many, oh, so very many.

* * * *

“Blast you, Avgar. This had better be important that you would summon me here,” Satan cursed as he appeared in the empty crew’s quarters.

“Yes, it is, Sire,” Avgar replied as he bowed.

“Is it about Cristóbal?”

“No, Sire.”

“Where is Belinda?” the Devil commented as he gazed around the dark, dirty room.

“She is in her room. What I need to discuss, we should do with the soul collector present, Sire. Please follow me to her room. I’ll tell you everything there.”

Avgar didn’t want to tell Satan just yet his incredible news. He wanted Belinda and Sebastian to be present when the ax fell. Their beheading would be priceless.

“Very well, make this quick, Avgar. My time is limited.”

Bowing, he walked ahead of the Beast. “Of course, Sire, please follow me.”

As he strode down the narrow corridor, he smiled to himself. *Soon. Very soon, I’ll get what I deserve.*

* * * *

“What the Hell is happening here?” Belinda hollered as she saw Sebastian disguised as Gisele open the door. He had run out of there like a maniac after they had heard the sound outside their room. And now, he came back just ten minutes later.

“I needed to get someone,” he said as he opened the door wider.

To her delight, Fernando followed Sebastian into the room. Her heart swelled with affection for him and she smiled.

Fernando reciprocated her smile, but she could see the worry in his eyes. “What is wrong, Fernando?”

Fernando turned to Sebastian. Before either of them could answer her, the door to the room flew open and in came Avgar and shockingly Satan right behind him.

By Hell, was she in some sort of warped nightmare?

Pointing his finger at her, with a smug expression on his face, Avgar said, “Sire, it is time we got to the bottom of Belinda’s many secrets.”

Satan raised a brow and glanced at Fernando. Crossing his arms, he said, “Oh, I have to hear this.”

Walking over to Sebastian, Avgar grabbed his delicate feminine arm and shouted, “Belinda and Gisele, here, have been pulling the wool over your eyes, Sire. This morning, I figured out that Gisele is really Sebastian Cole in disguise.”

Belinda thought she would faint then, but she stayed focused. To her bafflement, Sebastian didn’t react. It was as if he knew this would happen.

Narrowing his eyes, Satan walked over to Sebastian and peered into his eyes. Then a look of recognition overtook his expression. “I would recognize those eyes anywhere. Why the Hell are you disguising yourself as Gisele, Sebastian? Didn’t I remove your morphing powers when I condemned you centuries ago?”

Morphing into Sebastian, he bowed. “Hail, Sire. No, my powers were left intact.”

“How stupid of me. So...what are you doing on this ship and why are you impersonating Belinda’s servant?”

“I *am* Belinda’s servant, Sire. Gisele was my disguise.” Glancing over at her, he continued. “We have been working together for a few centuries, collecting your famous souls for you, Sire.”

“Is this true, Belinda?” Satan asked as he stared at her.

“Yes, Sire, it is. I wouldn’t have been able to collect all the souls you desired if it weren’t for Sebastian’s help and council.” She bowed in humility.

A crazed, loud laugh came from Avgar just then as he danced around the room, chanting, “I knew it. I knew Belinda couldn’t have done all that by herself!” Turning, he walked up close to Satan and spoke close to his ear. “Sire, she doesn’t deserve her title. She deserves to rot in the deepest part of Hell and Sebastian along with her. Punish them. Punish them now.”

With a sneer, Satan turned to him and raised his hand, sending a fireball at the repugnant demon. “Are you giving me orders, you fool? Do you not know whom you speak to? Silence your bubbling mouth before you anger me even more.”

Utter fear reflected in Avgar’s eyes, then, and he cowered to the corner of the room, rubbing his scorched forearm. “Yes, Sire.”

The Beast looked at Belinda and then at Sebastian again. His gaze showed he was deep in thought. Then he walked over to Fernando and peered at him closely. “And what are you doing here? Where do you play in this bizarre ploy?”

Poor Fernando. He must be frightened to no end. Who knew what conspired in his mind just now? His expression was blank. He must have figured out the fallen angel of Hell was here in his room and they all served him as his demons. What must he think of her now?

All hopes for her and him being together again disintegrated then and a heavy anchor weighed on her heart making it hurt to her very core. She had never before experienced such sorrow and knew instantly she loved the fair-haired man who served this ship and Cristóbal Colón as first officer.

When Fernando spoke, the words would have shocked her to death if she weren’t already dead. He stood tall and never teetered. “I am Amato a guardian angel sent to protect Cristóbal Colón.”

This time, her head did spin and she collapsed in the chair behind her, not believing his words. Could this be? Could he be an angel?

Then her brain kicked in and the pieces began to place themselves in her mind. Now it made sense why she experienced such potent energy traveling through her body whenever they made physical contact. And why she needed to be near him always. Their opposite energies brought them together.

She glanced at Sebastian, expecting him to look as surprised as she felt, but he too wore an unemotional expression. Damn, things got weirder and weirder by the minute.

The only person whose face depicted pure shock was Avgar. His eyes bulged and his mouth had fallen open and hung from his jaw.

Satan nodded. "I figured out who you were. Your purity and your aura sent me signals the moment I came in here."

He turned and looked at the three of them and pondered out loud. "This is a fine mess we have here. Now, the question that keeps flooding my mind is what do I do with all of you?" Glancing back at Fern—Amato, he exclaimed, "I guess stealing the explorer's soul is futile now that God has sent a guardian angel to protect him."

Belinda noticed Amato gazed at Sebastian and Sebastian nodded and pointed his chin for him to advance. Then Amato nodded back and stepped forward. "Everything is not lost, Beelzebub. Yes, Cristóbal's soul must remain with him and he must uncover the New World as God wishes. But I offer another soul in his place. One that is worth a hundred Cristóbal Colóns."

Satan's brow lifted in intrigue. "Oh? Whose soul would be so valuable?"

"Mine....My soul. I would sacrifice my soul on certain conditions."

What? Did she hear correctly or were her ears deceiving her?

Satan waved his hand in the air. "Here we go. I knew strings were attached." He walked around the angel and added, "But your offer is tempting and worth a hear. Continue, angel."

Taking a breath, he stated, "In exchange for my soul, I ask that you leave Cristóbal Colón's alone..."

“I gathered that much already, angel. What else? You are beginning to try my patience.”

Amato stared at Belinda then and her heart yearned for her to caress his cheek and kiss his full lips. “I ask that Belinda and Sebastian be spared your wrath. And that Belinda and I can be together in Hell far away from everyone.”

Satan laughed. “Oh, is that all?” He looked sideways at Belinda. “Why would you want—? Oh, now I see why you would want to sacrifice your soul in this way.”

Amato never moving his gaze from hers, replied, “Yes, I love her.”

Those words broke the anchor weighing on her heart and it swelled to double its size in adoration for the selfless angel who would give up everything to save her and her friend just to be with her. She smiled as tears of love and joy filmed her eyes and poured down her cheeks.

Satan walked over to the porthole and peered out. “Hmm, ordinarily I wouldn’t be prone to negotiations. But your offer is most tempting. Having an angel in Hell would certainly anger your Master up above. What a delight that would be.” He gazed up to Heaven.

“Your offer is good and I accept it, angel.” Then he turned and walked over to Sebastian and stared at him. A smile spread over his face. “Given the fact you are responsible in helping Belinda capture all the souls she did, has won back your graces in my eyes, Sebastian. Your condemnation has been revoked.”

Just then, Avgar cursed. “What? You cannot be serious, Sire. They must pay for what they did!”

Dropping his shoulders in frustration, Satan lifted his hand and sent another ball of fire at Avgar. “Silence, before I send you to the deepest depths of Hell instead!”

The fireball hit Avgar’s left foot and he jumped up in pain.

He glanced back at Sebastian. “You will take Belinda’s place as my head soul collector.”

Sebastian bowed. “It will be an honor to work so closely with you again, Sire.”

Grinning at Sebastian’s words, the Beast turned to Belinda. “You have served me well, Belinda. I will miss conversing with you as we did. But seeing the look of love reflecting in your eyes will turn my stomach.”

Lifting his hands in the air, a mist of fog enveloped him and just before he vanished completely, he said, “I’ll see you, Sebastian and Avgar, when you come back to Hell. In the meantime, Sebastian, collect the angel’s soul and tie up all loose threads on this mission, so no one, especially Cristóbal, will figure anything out.”

And then he was gone, leaving choking smoke in His place.

* * * *

“This isn’t over, Sebastian,” Avgar hollered as he limped to the door. “Your time of punishment will come and I will revel in it when it does.” He turned to Belinda and his gaze raked over her body. “And you, it’s too bad I never got to taste any of that, but *c’est la vie*. Being sent to an isolated part of Hell with that angel sex toy as your only companion is punishment enough. Good riddance!”

“You bastard!” Belinda screamed as he closed the door.

Sebastian smiled, seeing the dust finally started to settle. He slumped on the cot with exhaustion. The stress had taken its toll.

Belinda came to sit beside him. She peered at him, then at Amato. “Would one of you like to tell me what just happened here? My head is hurting.”

Sebastian turned and lifted his head to rest on his open palm. “It’s quite simple, actually. I knew it was Avgar who had eavesdropped on our conversation earlier. And reading the simpleton’s mind is very easy, since he has been so predictable so far. I knew he would summon Satan to expose our secret.” He laughed, glancing at Amato. “What he never figured out was that there was a guardian angel on

this ship who was madly in love with you and would do anything to save you.”

She smiled at her beloved angel then asked Sebastian, “You knew all along who he was, didn’t you?”

He nodded. “But I didn’t want to tell you until I figured out what he was doing on the ship. Once I confronted him and figured out he was a guardian angel sent to protect Cristóbal and that he was completely and madly in love with you, I knew I had to come up with a plan that would help us all.”

Chuckling again, he added, “I have to thank Avgar for that. If he hadn’t been such a ruthless, stupid snoop, the idea would have never come to me.”

He looked at the angel. “I went to Amato and told him of a solution that would make him and you live happily ever after. Having served as Satan’s close assistant for so many centuries made me a pretty good judge of his character. I knew having an angel’s soul would be the ultimate temptation. He would meet all of Amato’s demands just so he could steal one of God’s precious angel’s souls.”

Amato came to kneel before her. “Thanks to Sebastian, everything worked out fine.”

Her eyes widened as she brought her hand to caress his cheek. “Fine? You gave up your soul for me. And will be living in Hell, not Heaven for all eternity.”

He grabbed her hand and kissed her open palm. “Yes, I did it because I will be with you, my love. I cannot live without you. I knew that the moment I laid eyes on you on the ship that my fixation with you all these years wasn’t an infatuation but really love.”

Her brow lifted. “Your fixation with me?”

Sebastian interrupted their discussion. His fatigue was getting the better of him and he wanted everything explained quickly so he could sleep. “Yes, Belinda, you see Amato had been spying on us for a few centuries through the voyeur globe in Heaven.”

“Spying?” Her eyes widened. “You saw everything?”

“Only when you were on Earth. I could not see into Hell.” He paused then added, “Are you mad at me?”

She laughed as she cupped his cheeks and kissed him hard on his lips. “No, my love. Now I know why you knew what would please me the most in bed.”

Sebastian lifted his hand. “Ah, as much as this conversation sounds interesting and arousing, it isn’t for my ears. Amato, go someplace else with your enchantress and tell, or rather show her, of your undying love. I would like to sleep before my eyes burn in their sockets and go to my brain.”

Amato stood. He extended his hand, smiling. “Of course. Come, Belinda.”

She smiled back and bent down to kiss Sebastian’s cheek. “You are a wonderful friend. I will always remember this.”

Sebastian felt a tear form in his eye and he stopped it before it leaked out. He didn’t want her to see his sentiments. “It was my pleasure, Belinda. You deserve to be happy. Now, will you leave me sleep? Your soul mate is waiting for you.”

She giggled and got up to take her angel’s hand. “Yes, I will. I’ll see you later, my friend.”

He gave her one last smile before she closed the door. When at last alone, he turned to gaze at the ceiling. He was happy everything worked out—Belinda got her beloved angel and Satan pardoned him. He wouldn’t have to morph into Gisele ever again once they left this ship.

Although he found the female body a beautiful, exotic work of art, being one was not enjoyable. The clothing women wore was encumbering and impractical. Plus the ogling looks men gave him revolted him. Especially Avgar’s.

Cursed Avgar. Unfortunately, he hadn’t gotten rid of the bumbling brute. But now, he had no secrets. No vulnerability the fool could use against him. The most the brute could do to him now would be to give him a headache from time to time.

He would miss Belinda. She had been his companion and his good friend for so long. He would definitely miss their mind-blowing sex, indeed. But the beauty of being in Hell was that lust and sex were an everyday thing. Female demons had insatiable appetites and no scruples everywhere one looked. *Umm, threesomes. Foursomes are even better.*

He smiled as he put his hands behind his head and he closed his eyes imagining all the fun in store for him when he got back.

Epilogue

Two months later...

Sebastian sat anxiously awaiting Satan. He had summoned him early this morning wanting to discuss something very important. Sebastian had just fallen asleep a few hours before, after having a wonderfully wicked sexual encounter with two twin lower demons. Both females were young and so eager to learn his techniques. Having spent hundreds of centuries in Hell, his techniques were quite explicit and wanton. He smiled, remembering the numerous positions in which they pleased each other.

He remembered the first time he tried some of the risqué positions with Belinda, the look of shock and then pure delight that came over her so long ago. Ah, they were such fond days.

He had heard from her just a week ago. She lived blissfully in a far upper level of Hell with her beloved fallen angel. She was never happier. He smiled, glad she had found her soul mate.

As he sat there, a yawn came over him. His mouth was wide open and air flowed in and out when he heard Satan say, "My, I can see your uvula. And it isn't pretty. Tired, are we?"

Sebastian half smiled. "Somewhat." He knew Satan wouldn't be interested in the details, so he just remained silent.

"Well, let's get on with the meeting, shall we?" Satan uttered as he sat beside his head soul collector.

"Of course, Sire."

Coughing to clear his throat, the Beast began, "This next assignment I am sending you on will be about 40 years in Earth's

future. It will be the most difficult mission you will have ever experienced.”

“Oh, how?” His ears perked up with interest.

“This person is sly and conniving, and quite irresistible. She has captivated many with her...attributes...and her complex mind.” He laughed. “If she were a demon, she’d be a match for you, Sebastian.”

Sebastian pinched his lips closed. “Hmm, really? Fascinating. How so?”

“Look for yourself and you’ll understand what I mean.” Satan began to spin his finger in a clockwise fashion in front of him. The most beautiful vision Sebastian had ever laid his eyes on appeared in a sphere image surrounded by smoke.

The raven-haired beauty was in her private quarters bathing in a tub with one of her maids washing her back and another, her leg. Her plump breasts and pert nipples bobbed in and out of the soapy water as she bowed her head and licked her lips, obviously enjoying her servants’ ministrations.

Sebastian’s cock peeked to full erection in his pants with the arousing spectacle. He crossed his legs hoping Satan didn’t see his excitement.

When the beauty in the image opened her bewitching, dark eyes, and seemed to stare right at him and smile, he lost his breath and almost drooled.

Satan continued, “That is Anne Boleyn.”

Sebastian’s mouth fell open then and he didn’t care. He couldn’t believe what he saw or heard. “You want me to go after *her*?”

Satan laughed. “Come now, Sebastian, you are the infamous soul collector. You have conquered so many notorious and ruthless historical figures for me. What is this one soul for you?”

Sebastian shook his head and then as he thought of this new mission, a smile spread over his face.

Satan slapped him on the back. “There’s the confident and genius mind I enjoy seeing at work. I gather you are thinking up a plan already?”

Sebastian replied, “Perhaps. I think I will enjoy this very challenging assignment.”

Satan chuckled. “Yes, win me her soul and you’ll be a legend around here. You’ll be known as the demon who stole the outspoken, rebellious Queen of England’s soul.”

* * * *

Avgar sat at the bar drinking. He mumbled to himself in his stupor, “That bastard has my job. I should be the head soul collector working at Satan’s side. Instead, he made me look like a fool in front of our Sire’s eyes.”

As he sat alone there, pouting, wallowing in his pity, he felt eyes on his back. He turned around, but no one was there. It must have been his imagination.

Getting back to his shot of whiskey, he experienced the funny feeling someone watched him again. A cold shiver crawled up his spine. Then he heard someone whisper, “Avgar...”

He turned once more and again saw no one. Gazing at the bartender, he asked, “Did you just call me?”

The bartender frowned, looking confused. “No.”

The raspy, whispered voice returned. “Avgar, come...come to me. Come to my lair.”

He jumped off his stool in fear. Paying his tab, he exited the bar in a hurry. He was losing his mind. *That must be it.* Or maybe he was more inebriated than he thought.

The voice spoke. “I know what Sebastian did to you. There are others like you who have been wronged by him. Come to me if you seek revenge.”

An image of a cave and a map on how to get there were then forged in his mind suddenly. "Come to me, Avgar."

Compelled, he followed the imprinted map in his mind.

He arrived at the mouth of the cave almost a day later. It was in the deepest level of Hell. The heat at this level made his bodily fluids boil in his veins. Even the double skin on his eyelids did little to keep his eyes from becoming red with irritation.

There was water dripping from the rocky surface of the walls at the entrance. When he put his mouth under the dribble, his tongue became inflamed and throbbed. The liquid was as hot as molten lava. Feeling his insides burn in pain, the voice beckoned him, "Come in, Avgar."

Ignoring the internal pain that now began to diminish, he walked into the cave in complete darkness. After a few minutes of feeling his way forward, he saw a fluttering light up ahead. Following it, he came to an opening, which was alit by hundreds of tiny candles. The image was spectacular.

"Come here, Avgar. Over here, at the back." This time, the voice wasn't in his mind, but came from the right, far corner of the open area in the cave.

Glancing up, he saw a hunched figure sitting on rocky steps. As he got closer, he tried to peer at the figure's face, but a hood covered his head and bathed him in darkness. Cold abhorrence choked Avgar's mind then, making goose bumps form on his dry skin.

Trying to appear unaffected by this mysterious figure who made him tremble with jitters, he spoke with a confident voice, which cracked only once. "Who are you? Why have you summoned me here?"

Not lifting his head, the figure said, "We have something in common, you and I, Avgar."

"What? What do we have in common?"

The figure cackled then, making Avgar's ears tremble from the shrieking sound. "A common hatred for Sebastian."

Frowning in confusion, he said, “I doubt your hatred runs as deep as mine. What has he done to you?”

The figure stood up. He measured over seven feet high. He walked closer to him. Avgar yearned to re-track his steps and bolt in a run for his life. But his body remained frozen in place.

“No, Avgar. My hatred for him runs deep. Far deeper than yours. I knew him before he became Satan’s head soul collector. I knew him when he was Satan’s assistant. He was an arrogant and cruel demon. What he did to me could never be forgiven, or forgotten.”

When the figure was upon Avgar, it lifted its head and grabbed his arm so he couldn’t runaway. Bright lights of pure fire glared at him then and poured out of the creature’s sockets and traveled to his, entering his dead body and putting him into shock.

As his body shook vigorously and the venomous creature took over his beating, dead heart, his body, and his mind, its conscious thoughts became his and he realized who this creature was and knew he had damned himself to a far worse hell than the Underworld.

He had freed Allocer, the Great Duke of Hell, to roam the Earth once again, first to seek his revenge on Sebastian and then once successful, focus his hatred and vile wickedness on the rest of the demons, angels, and humans.

Heaven, Hell, Earth, and Sebastian be damned.

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cherie Amour has been married for several years to a man who personifies the ideal hero. His love and passion for life have made her see the beauty in this world and in herself. Love is a powerful emotion. It gives us life and makes us grow to what we are meant to be.

This belief along with Cherie's passion for writing led her to become a romance writer. She writes from her heart and soul. Her characters and their stories have become quite real to her and she hopes they will have the same effect on her readers, bringing them hours of pleasurable reading.



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