



Hell Hath No Fury

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Hell Hath No Fury

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Hell *aka* “The City”

n.

- any place of pain and turmoil
- the home created for Lucifer and those forced from Heaven
- a world in which only the dead may reside
- a world where sin is commonplace

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Chapter One

Lucifer stretched out on his favorite lounge chair beside his large, rooftop swimming pool. The city below was lazy during the day, and Lu planned to take full advantage of the quiet. Images of his brother played through his head as he soaked up the sun.

Despite his ongoing feud with his brother, Lu still couldn't forget Michael. Even after thousands of years, he couldn't stop loving the Archangel. Michael hadn't always been the favored one. Lu had once held that position. Humans could believe what they wanted, but his ousting had more to do with him breaking a law that should not be on the books in the first place.

He'd spent several hundred years working to build a place to call home, and finally finished it. Most people referred to it as Hell, but Lu preferred to call it *The City*.

"You're gonna get sunburned," a deep voice declared.

Lu opened one eye and grinned at his best friend, Basileios Kostopoulos. "Hey, Baz."

The black-haired Spartan reached down and stroked Lu's erection for several moments before tossing a towel over Lu's groin. "I've got too much going on to get distracted."

Lu shrugged. It was normal for him and Baz to end up fucking at some point whenever they were together. Baz may claim to be too busy, but Lu knew all it would take was an invitation and his best friend would be all over him.

For some unknown reason, his father had made him irresistible to most humans. He didn't blame Baz or anyone else in *The City* for wanting him. Lu knew humans were much weaker at abstaining from sex. It went with their nature.

"What's up?" Lu asked.

"Besides you?" Baz joked. "Thinking about that brother of yours again?"

Lu tore off the towel and spread his legs. “Does it matter?”

Baz let out a loud grunt and threw himself down in another of the poolside chairs. “Stop it. I’ve got something important to talk to you about.”

Baz was always on alert. A warrior in life, he carried over the same mentality in death. They both knew Baz shouldn’t even be in The City, but Baz had actually asked to be assigned there, unlike most of the residents. According to his friend, Heaven was a tad too sedate for his taste. He needed the action The City provided.

“What’s up?”

“I’m worried about you. I’ve been hearing a lot of shit lately about a guy wanting you dead,” Baz explained.

Lu closed his eyes and resumed his attention to the sun. “I wish him luck. Do you have any idea how many fools have tried to kill me?”

“This is different. One of my friends just informed me the guy claims to have the Dagger of the Beast.”

Lu blinked several times before staring numbly at the sky. He was glad his dark sunglasses hid the emotion he knew was clearly on display within their black depths. His heart began to hammer in his chest at the mere mention of the long lost dagger. Only one person could wield the dagger successfully, its creator, Ambrosios. “Do you think it’s true?”

“I don’t know, but do you really want to take the chance?” Baz asked.

The Dagger of the Beast was the only way to kill an Archangel. Although he’d fallen out of favor, Lu was still, technically, one of them. “Has anyone contacted Michael or Gabriel?”

Baz shook his head. “Your brothers don’t exactly have a fan club here.”

Lu chuckled. “It would appear neither do I.”

“That’s not true. Sure there are some who’d love nothing more than to see you bleeding in the streets, your guts spilled out beside you, but most of us think you’re doing a good job of keeping a modicum of order in a place like this.”

Lu’s black eyebrows drew together as he turned his head to regard his friend. “Bleeding in the street with my guts spilled out beside me? Nice.”

Baz shrugged but didn’t bother to amend his statement.

Lu swung his legs to the pool deck and stood, unconcerned by his nudity. He walked toward his penthouse and spoke over his shoulder. “See what else you can find out.”

Stepping inside the cooler temperature of his home, he tossed his sunglasses to the table. He knew he needed to get word to his brothers. If Ambrosios really was in possession of the dagger, it could become dangerous for not only him, but his brothers as well.

How long had it been since he'd tried talking to Michael? Luc winced as he remembered the anger on his brother's face when they'd faced off in the court of Angels, just before Michael had banished him from heaven. Maybe Gabriel would be a better choice.

With a wave of his hand, Lu was dressed in his finest black suit. He admired his reflection in the mirror. Those who thought vanity was a sin just weren't as pretty as he was. This was Hell, and if he wanted to admire what God had so thoughtfully and carefully created, that was his right.

As he adjusted his red silk tie, Lu began to wonder whether or not Baz's friends were telling the truth. After all, The City was not known for housing honest citizens. He glanced out to the pool area and spotted Baz on his phone.

"Hey, Baz! When you're done, get in here."

Baz didn't answer but nodded his head in reply. He gazed at Lu, standing in the doorway, and ran a hand over the front of his suit pants.

Lu shook his head, letting his fuck buddy know it wasn't the time for fun. Baz finally ended his call and strode toward Lu.

"What's up?"

"I want you to go to The Inferno with me after dinner." Even though he didn't have time to play at the moment, Lu's eyes wandered to the familiar erection pressing against the front of Baz's charcoal grey pants.

"If you'll watch my back, I'll let you have my ass at the end of the night," Lu informed his best friend.

"Unless you get a better offer," Baz snorted.

Lu shrugged. He refused to make apologies for his sexual appetites and Baz knew it. "Will you come with me or not?"

"Sure. Let me call a few of my friends though. I'd feel better if we had a few allies in the place if the guy shows up."

"Shall we go to the Glass House for dinner?" Lu asked.

"If you can get us a table," Baz answered, opening his phone once again.

Lu rolled his eyes. The City was his. He could go anywhere, do anything he pleased. Even though he usually showed restraint, every now and then, the citizens needed to be reminded he wasn't truly one of them.

While Baz finished his phone calls, Lu fixed himself a drink. Although he preferred something a little more exotic, he decided on the bottle of aged Scotch. He didn't like to indulge in his drink of choice unless he was alone.

Glass in hand, he began to pace back and forth in front of the wall of windows. He stared out beyond The City to the Fires of Hell, as they were known. Lu grinned and shook his head. He knew the fires weren't some demonic sign of purgatory. They were put in place to remind the citizens of their sins and to keep them content in their forced surroundings.

Nothing more than a parlor trick, but it seemed to work. No one ever tried to venture outside The City. Why fire had gotten a bad reputation, Lu would never understand. Was there anything more beautiful than a burning flame dancing in the wind?

"You ready?" Baz asked from behind him.

Lu finished his drink and set the glass on the bar. "I'm not taking your friends to dinner, you know, just you."

"Yeah. Yeah. You'll forever be a cheapskate, no matter how much money you possess."

Lu didn't dignify the snide comment with a response. He slipped his wallet into the inside breast pocket of his suit coat and pushed the private elevator button. The doors immediately opened and Lu stepped inside, Baz on his heels.

Once inside, Lu pressed the bright yellow button, signaling his chauffeur to have the car ready when he reached the lobby.

"It's two blocks away. I think we could've walked," Baz said.

Lu glanced up at Baz. "I pay Will a king's ransom and barely go out of my house. I think he can drive me the two blocks."

As they traveled down ninety-nine floors, Lu began to wonder what was going on with Baz. His friend rarely sniped at him about his wealth and he'd done it almost nonstop since the phone call he'd received by the pool.

Lu turned and pressed his lithe body against the muscled Spartan, letting his hands roam freely. "What's wrong, Baz? Are you mad at me for something?"

The muscles in Baz's jaws began to contract as he obviously fought to ignore Lu's

wandering hands. “I don’t like the idea of you playing fast and loose with your life.”

Although they really were just friends and fuck buddies, Baz would be lost in The City without him. Baz’s statement was obviously given out of true concern. Lu put a hand to the back of Baz’s head and pulled him down for a kiss. He swept his tongue around the interior of Baz’s mouth before moaning and breaking the kiss.

“I’ll be fine.”

Baz glanced down at the hard ridge threatening to break through his zipper. “Why do you always have to do that to me right before the doors open?”

Lu grinned as the elevator settled on the ground floor and the doors opened with a swoosh. “Because I like knowing I made you hard.”

Baz made a sound deep in his throat and stepped off the elevator. Lu followed behind his friend, taking the time to stare at the man’s gorgeous ass. Lu’s chauffeur, William Bales, stood outside the front of the building beside the long black limousine.

“Good evening, Sir,” Will greeted as he opened the passenger door.

“To the Glass House,” Lu instructed. He slid inside the luxurious interior of the stretch and smoothed his jacket. Sitting across from him, Lu noticed Baz staring. “What?”

“I found out a little more about the guy who wants you dead. He’s an Atlantean.”

Lu shook his head. “Impossible. There are no Atlanteans in The City. Atlantis was God’s...” Lu bit his lip. There were certain things even he wouldn’t speak of.

Baz leaned forward, bracing his arms on his knees. “Raquel wouldn’t lie to me, Lu. There is an Atlantean here.”

Lu didn’t know Baz’s friend Raquel well, but he did know enough about the woman to trust her. Well, as much as he trusted anyone. “Then the big question is why now?”

* * * *

After a fabulous dinner, the limo pulled up in front of The Inferno, the sexiest club in The City. Lu exited the car and buttoned his suit coat. He waited for Baz on the sidewalk, nodding casually to people he recognized.

“My guys should already be inside,” Baz told him.

Lu walked toward the front of the club, bypassing the long line. Not a single person questioned him as he stepped up to the door and waited for Andre to let him in.

“Nice to see you again, Lu,” Andre greeted.

Lu leaned in and gave the man a quick kiss. He'd spent many enjoyable evenings with the bouncer in his bed. "I hope all is well with you."

"Real good," Andre said with a smile.

Lu started to pass but stopped and narrowed his eyes at Andre. "You're in love? You?"

Andre actually blushed. "I'm close. Met a real nice girl, Margo."

"Margo." Lu tested the name, but it didn't sound familiar. "She new?"

"Yes, sir."

Lu nodded. He'd learned long ago not to ask why people were in his city. It was what they did once they arrived that was the important thing. "Well, take care of her."

"I will," Andre said.

Walking into the club, the crowd naturally parted as Lu crossed the room. He spotted several new faces on the way to his usual alcove and smiled. Despite the threat to his life, he always enjoyed getting to know the new arrivals.

Evidently, Baz read his mind. "Don't get distracted."

Lu took a seat on the semi-circular black leather sofa. "Chill. Getting a blowjob is more of a relaxer than a distracter."

He turned to his private waitress, Lillian. "Scotch."

Baz gave Lillian his order and stood to welcome his friends.

Lu barely acknowledged the four men who crowded into the small space. One of the men cut off Lu's view of the delicious blond twink on the dance floor, and he reached out and moved the man to the side. "Better."

"Lu, pay attention," Baz said, lightly punching him in the shoulder.

Lu turned and leveled a look at his best friend that would make most men shrink away from him. Baz...wasn't most men.

Baz narrowed his eyes and gestured to his friends. "They're here to help. Treat them with respect."

Lu sighed. "Fine." The twink forgotten for the moment, Lu returned his attention to the men hovering on both sides of the couch. "Have you learned anything useful?"

"Just a description of the guy," one of the men, Volker, said. "He shouldn't be hard to spot. According to sources, he's almost six-and-a-half-feet tall, completely hairless, with only one arm."

Lu swallowed. He recognized the description, but it was impossible for the man to enter The City. "I need to speak to Gabriel."

"Do you know who this guy is?" Baz asked.

Lu nodded. "I do. Although, I don't know how it's possible. Perhaps Gabriel can shed some light on it."

"We need a name, Lu. It'll be easier to track him if we have a name."

Lu pulled Baz across the couch easily and whispered into his ear. "Leave it alone, Baz. You're no match for this guy."

Baz pulled away and stood, towering over Lu. "I am a Spartan. We do not cower."

While Lu appreciated Baz's pride in his ancestry, he didn't want anything to happen to his best friend. "Then accompany me to The Temple."

Baz's black eyebrows shot up. "You're going to The Temple?"

Lu stood and swallowed the drink that had been left for him in one gulp. "I am."

Although The City was a place for men and women deemed not fit to live in Heaven, it didn't mean all of them had given up their religious ways. Worshipping a god, any god, wasn't a guarantee of making it into Heaven. Lu understood that more than most. He'd built The Temple as a place for all citizens to worship the gods of their choice, each deity worshipped in a different wing off the main hall. Lu visited The Temple quite often, but in secret. It wouldn't do his reputation any favors for the public to know he still prayed to the very God who'd turned his back on him.

Shoving the depressing thoughts away, Lu began walking back through the club. He stopped at the twink he'd eyed earlier and ran a finger down the man's soft, stubble-free cheek. "We will meet again."

The man's jaw dropped as he was besieged by the lust Lu often left in his wake. Lu decided to give the man a reward and leaned in to rim the man's ruby lips with his tongue before dipping inside for a quick taste.

"Excellent," Lu purred as he turned and walked away.

As usual, Will stood beside the limousine, anticipating Lu's hasty departure. He acknowledged his driver with a slight nod as the door was opened for him. "Take me to The Temple."

Will took the command in stride. He was the only one in The City who knew of Lu's

regular visits to The Temple. “Right away, Sir.”

Lu was uneasy as he climbed into the car. For the first time since settling into life in The City, he feared for his seat of power. The City was full of society’s undesirables, but Lu had given them a home and respect, something many of them weren’t used to while still living. The results had been amazing. Although the citizens indulged in lurid activities, it wasn’t the Hell written about in books.

If someone was able to upset his position, Lu actually feared The City could become the Hell of people’s nightmares. Lu fisted his hands. He’d do everything in his power to make sure that didn’t happen.

The car traveled down an alley and stopped at Lu’s private entrance to The Temple. Lu glanced at his friend sitting silently by his side. “Stay with Will.”

Lu could tell Baz wanted to argue, but his friend finally nodded as Lu climbed out of the car.

Lu turned and with a wave of his hand, the wall slid open and he stepped inside his private sanctuary. He crossed the room to the carved statue of Gabriel and placed his hands on the cold marble.

In the blink of an eye, Lu was standing in the void. A realm between Heaven and Hell Lucifer had called home for centuries before he’d settled on a permanent location. Gabriel appeared, obviously surprised to have been summoned by his wayward brother.

“Lucifer,” Gabriel greeted with a nod.

Although Lu was no longer allowed to touch his brothers, he still loved them. “How’ve you been, Gabriel?”

“Fine. Why have you called me?”

The cold tone of Gabriel’s voice stung, but Lu tried not to let it bother him. A lot of time had passed since they’d stood side by side. “Ambrosios Vasilis is in The City.”

Gabriel’s ivory skin went even paler. “Vasilis? That can’t be.”

Lu nodded. “That’s what I thought when I was informed someone was bragging about killing me with the Dagger of the Beast, but I received a description of the man earlier this evening.” Lu stared into Gabriel’s eyes. “It’s him.”

Gabriel began to pace, dragging his elegant fingers through his tousled blond curls. “I don’t understand this.”

“Neither do I. I thought Ambrosios along with the Dagger of the Beast were taken care of long ago.”

Gabriel nodded. “He was supposed to be contained.”

“With the dagger?” Lu questioned the logic of such a move.

“No.” Gabriel continued to pace. “I need to speak to Michael about this.”

“And what should I do in the meantime, lock myself away in my tower? We both know I can’t live that way.”

Gabriel’s eyes narrowed. “You won’t live if you continue to wander around your city. The dove will summon you when I have answers.”

In the next moment, Gabriel was gone, and Lu was once again in his sanctuary. After several deep, calming breaths, he crossed to the altar and fell to his knees. Lu clasped his hands in prayer and tried once again to speak to his maker. He didn’t know if God could even hear him, but Lu continued to worship regardless.

Chapter Two

Lu was once again on his favorite lounge chair beside the pool. He rested a hand on the head of the little blond twink from the nightclub as he received an enthusiastic blowjob. Lu knew the guy was hoping for more than oral sex, but he simply couldn't be bothered.

He probably shouldn't even have the guy with him, but days trapped in his penthouse had taken their toll and he was getting grumpy. With Baz constantly trying to find the whereabouts of Ambrosios, even he hadn't had time to play.

Everyone in The City had learned not to let Lu dwell in a bad mood for long. Lu rarely got angry, but the few times he'd been pushed, his tantrums were monumental. So, despite his friend's reservations, Baz had sought the services of the twink for Lu.

A particularly loud slurp came from the blond man and Lu glanced down and smiled for the first time in days. David, Lu thought his name was, appeared to be having fun as he spit and sucked all over Lu's cock.

"Easy," he warned when David's teeth scraped Lu's tender flesh a little too hard. Lu had always enjoyed a certain amount of pain with his sex, but losing the tip of his beloved cock to the inexperienced man wasn't cool.

His pleasant mood was interrupted by the ringing of his phone. Lu reached beside him and picked it up. "Hello?"

"Sir, there's a man here who says he needs to speak with you. He said to tell you his name is The Dove," the lobby security guard said.

Lu sat up, pushing David away. "Send him up."

David started to protest, but one narrowed gaze from Lu shut him up.

“I have business to attend to.” He decided to take pity on the man and reached out to cup his face. “Thank you. Leave your number on the pad by the door, and I’m sure I’ll be calling soon.”

David grinned and got to his feet. With one last glance at Lu’s cock, he walked away.

Lu sat for several moments, trying to work out his newest visitor. It wasn’t like Gabriel to send a man as his messenger. He looked down at his still hard cock and sighed. He knew Gabriel wouldn’t appreciate Lu greeting The Dove naked with an erection slapping against his stomach.

He stood and waved his hand, the erection was easily taken care of as his cock erupted in strings of pure white seed that painted the cement. Lu had to reach out and brace a hand against the back of the lounge chair to hold himself steady.

The elevator chimed, signaling The Dove’s arrival. Lu quickly recovered his breathing and with another wave of his hand, he was dressed in yet another expensive, expertly tailored suit.

On the way to the private elevator, he stopped and fussed with his hair in one of the many mirrors. “Perfection.”

The elevator chimed again just as Lu reached it. He turned on the security monitor and gasped. Staring up at the security camera was the most gorgeous man Lu had ever seen. Dressed in white, the man’s dark hair and bronzed skin was surpassed only by his body—muscles, masses of glorious muscles. Damn. *Why do I have to be a sucker for the male physique?*

“Who is it?”

“The Dove,” the man answered with a grin.

“Fuck,” Lu cussed.

“Excuse me?”

Lu silently cussed himself again for the unintended outburst. He shut off the monitor and adjusted his hardening cock, thankful his jacket was long enough to hide it. Lu squared his shoulders and pressed the button to open the elevator doors. “Come in.”

He stepped back and gave The Dove room to enter his home.

“Lucifer?” the man asked.

Lu cringed at the use of his full name. “Call me Lu.”

“I’m supposed to take you to The Temple for a meeting with Gabriel.”

Lu crossed his arms over his chest. It simply would not do to let the man see the effect he was having on him. “Do you have a name, or am I supposed to continue to call you The Dove?”

“Dominic Ramos.”

Lu rolled the name around on his tongue. It fit. The man certainly looked like a Dom. Lu grinned at his private joke. “Should I call my guards to escort us?”

“No need. I brought my own team. They’re downstairs,” Dominic answered.

Team? Gabriel must be taking the threat to Lu’s life seriously. He entered the elevator. “Shall we go?”

When Dominic stepped back into the luxurious elevator, Lu swore the oxygen had been sucked from the small space. He pressed the button for the lobby before pushing the one for his car. “How many men are in your team?”

“There are only four of us total.”

Lu did his best not to stare at Dominic, but he did watch his reflection in the brass doors closely. “Four? That’s all?”

Dominic nodded. “Four of us are like an army of regular men.”

Lu smiled. “Quite full of yourself, I see.”

Dominic shook his head. “I’m not bragging. Simply telling the truth.”

They rode in silence the rest of the way to the lobby. When the elevator doors opened, three other giant men surrounded the door. Lu lifted a single brow and stared at the testosterone-laden men.

“Excuse me,” Lu said and shoved his way through. He was aware of grumbling behind him, but didn’t care. Before he reached the door, all four men were once again surrounding him. Lu stopped and addressed Dominic. “Is this something I should get accustomed to?”

“Let us do our job,” Dominic growled.

Lu reared back. He wasn’t used to people speaking to him in such a way. He narrowed his eyes at the taller man. “Don’t forget who you’re talking to.”

Dominic leaned forward and narrowed his own gaze. “As far as I’m concerned, you’re just another job. If you don’t like it, take it up with Gabriel.”

By the time Lu reached the car, he was fuming. He certainly would have a talk with his brother about the thugs he’d sent to protect him. As they rode to The Temple, Lu refused to give Dominic the satisfaction of knowing he was upset. He opened his phone and called Baz.

“Baz.”

“Hey. Anything?” Lu asked as he stared out the window at his city.

“No. We still haven’t figured out where this guy’s staying, and half of my snitches won’t talk. I’m not sure if they’re afraid of this guy or siding with him.”

“Probably both. Are you free later?” Lu could really use a stress-reliever, and there was nothing better than a thick cock up his ass to make him forget his troubles.

A big hand reached out and grabbed the phone out of Lu’s hand, ending the call. “What the fuck!” Lu screamed at Dominic.

“No visitors.”

“Relax. Baz is my best friend,” Lu argued. He couldn’t believe he was actually arguing with a mere mortal, even one as big and gorgeous as Dominic.

“No visitors,” Dominic repeated. “Not yet. Give us time to do our own investigating.”

Lu rolled his eyes. He decided to have a bit of fun with the bossy sonofabitch. “I was hoping for a big, throbbing cock up my ass this evening. Are you going to take care of that, too?”

Dominic sneered. “I’m not that desperate.”

Once again, Lu felt like he’d been knocked on his butt. Why wasn’t this man enamored with him like everyone else in The City? Lu wondered if it had something to do with Dominic’s home turf.

The car pulled into the alley and to a stop in front of his private entrance. “Wait here.”

Dominic shook his head. “We’ll go in with you. Make sure the room is secured, and only then will we wait outside the door.”

No one could get into Lu’s private sanctuary, but if it made Dominic happy to think he could rush in should there be trouble, who was he to kick up a fuss. “Suit yourself.”

With a wave of his hand, the doorway opened and Lu waited while two of the men went inside. With a tight grip on Lu’s upper arm, Dominic hurried him inside.

“Seriously, must you manhandle me?” Lu questioned as his temper continued to climb.

“If you’d rather stand outside in a dark alley and take the chance of getting a dagger imbedded in the back of your neck, go ahead,” Dominic said as he released his hold on Lu and held his hands up.

“We’re clear,” one of the men told Dominic.

“Thanks, Nick.” Dominic grinned and bowed. “It’s all yours, Lucifer.”

Lu bristled. "I told you, my name is Lu."

Dominic chuckled as he guided his men from the sanctuary.

Lu immediately went to the statue of Gabriel, closed his eyes and placed his hands on the marble. When he opened his eyes, Gabriel was trying to hide a grin behind one of his pale hands.

"Don't," Lu warned.

"He's the best, really."

"The best or not, he's an arrogant pig."

Gabriel actually chuckled. "Well hello, Mr. Kettle."

Lu ground his teeth to keep from pouncing on his brother. "What did you find out?"

"Your powers are useless against Ambrosios while he's in possession of the dagger. Without Dominic and his team, you'll be dead within a matter of days.

"Why? What makes them so special?" Lu questioned.

Gabriel pursed his lips, something he always did when he concentrated. He clasped his hands behind his back and began to pace. "They've been given certain...skills. They are the chosen few who guard the gates of Heaven."

"And what? You decided to loan them to me, leaving the gates unprotected?" Lu knew what it meant even though he didn't voice it. The Father sent Dominic and his men, not Gabriel. The threat from Ambrosios must be more dangerous than he'd originally thought.

"Dominic and his men are equipped with the means to destroy Ambrosios and the dagger," Gabriel said, ignoring Lu's previous question.

"Did you find out where he's been all this time?" Lu asked.

"He was imprisoned deep within The Volcano of Time. What has been thousands of years was merely yesterday to him. His hatred toward you is still fresh in his mind."

"How did he escape?" Like Gabriel, Lu began to pace. No wonder Heaven was concerned.

"We don't know. Like we still don't know how Ambrosios managed to get his hands on a dagger that was buried in the ocean, two miles under the great city of Atlantis."

"Of all the places to hide the dagger, why there?" Lu questioned.

"It is poison to us because of you."

"No. Not because of me. I didn't create the situation in the first place. I was merely the only one with big enough balls to try and stop it," Lu defended himself, tired of being accused of

things that weren't his fault.

Gabriel stopped pacing and stared at Lu. "Ambrosios somehow managed to not only escape his prison, but gain control of the Dagger of the Beast. If he succeeds in killing you, he'll be that much closer to destroying Heaven. Dominic and his men know this. That's why Dominic might be acting like an arrogant pig. He knows exactly what can be lost if he fails to protect you."

Lu had been reprimanded enough times to know when he was being dealt a dressing down. "In other words, shut up and do as Dominic tells me."

The corner of Gabriel's mouth lifted. "Yes. It's not only your life at stake, but all our lives."

* * * *

The door slid open and Lu stepped out into the alley. "I'm hungry."

Will opened the car door and Lu climbed in. The three other guards got in before Dominic, who chose to sit beside Lu. "I'll cook."

Lu glanced sideways. "Excuse me?"

"I don't eat anything I don't prepare myself. If I'm going to cook my own food, I might as well feed you at the same time."

"Feed me? You make me sound like a dog," he said, completely offended by the remark.

Dominic ignored Lu. "Once we get you safely back to your penthouse, I'll send the men out to do some shopping. You do have grocery stores in The City, don't you?"

Lu shrugged. "You'll have to ask someone else. My kitchen's never been used."

Dominic snorted. "What do you do, use your gifts to materialize your food?"

"Don't be stupid. Conjured food doesn't have nearly the same flavor as what I can order at The Glass House or The Omega Three."

Baz was waiting in front of the building when Will pulled to a stop. Lu could tell by Baz's expression that he'd been worried sick. Lu closed his eyes and groaned, knowing it was his fault. "I need to talk to my friend."

Dominic looked passed Lu to Baz. "Two minutes, inside the lobby where we can see you."

Lu started to snap at Dominic but remembered the conversation with Gabriel. He bit the inside of his cheek and waited for the other three men to exit the car. One of them spoke briefly

to Baz before ushering him inside the building.

“Are you ever going to introduce me to my guard dogs?” Lu asked, unhappy with the way his best friend was being treated.

“Later,” Dominic put him off.

Lu walked into the lobby surrounded by Dominic and two of the men. The other still stood next to Baz. As soon as Lu was inside the building, Baz started toward him. The guard tackled Baz to the ground, but the big Spartan wasn't giving up without a fight.

“Stop it,” Lu told the two men throwing one punch after another at each other.

When Dominic did nothing to control his man, Lu stepped forward and waved his hand. Within a heartbeat, both men were pinned to the floor by unseen hands. Lu once again stared at Dominic. “Do your research and you'll find Baz is in The City by choice. He was an honorable warrior, he still is. Now get that man the fuck away from him,” he ground out between clenched jaws.

Dominic walked over and stood between his man and Baz. “Release them.”

With a twitch of his finger, the men were released. Baz shot to his feet in attack mode.

“It's okay, Baz. He won't bother you again.” Lu looked at the guard. “What's your name?”

The man looked to Dominic for permission before speaking. “Nick.”

“Well, Nick, this is my best friend and protector here in The City, Baz. Now, shake his hand and play nice. If you're lucky, Baz might even take a liking to you. Believe me, no one sucks cock like Baz.”

Dominic made a disgusted sound and turned away, putting his back to Lu before looking at Baz. “Two minutes.”

Lu gestured Baz over and the two of them walked out of hearing range. “Sorry about that.”

“What the fuck is going on?” Baz asked.

Lu gave Baz an abbreviated version of Dominic, his men, and their place in his life. “It seems I have no choice but to put up with them, at least for now.”

“What about me?” Baz asked.

Lu leaned forward and kissed his friend, thrusting his tongue deep. “Keep doing what you have been, but be careful. If at any time you need help, call me. I'll try to talk with my new

warden. Maybe he'll allow a conjugal visit if I'm a good boy."

Baz gazed over Lu's shoulder toward the group of men and chuckled. "I doubt that. I just caught the big guy staring at your ass."

Lu grinned. "Really?" Maybe his sexual appeal wasn't lost on Dominic after all.

* * * *

Dominic stood with his hands fisted at his sides while Lu and Baz talked. "Two minutes."

Lu didn't even turn around. Dominic took a deep breath. Why did he find his assignment so incredibly annoying and sexy at the same time? "Lu!"

The sexy little morsel eventually turned. "What?"

"Time's up. I said two minutes."

Lu rolled his eyes. "This is Hell. We don't exactly keep time."

He had all he was going to take. Dominic almost walked over and tossed Lu over his shoulder when the pair in question broke apart.

Lu held up his hands. "Relax."

Dominic veered toward the elevator. "You coming?"

Lu grinned. Wicked was the only way he could describe it. "Not yet, but if you're a good boy..."

"Shut up and get in the elevator," Dominic ordered.

Lu said something to Baz, before walking toward Dominic and pressing the button. "You're so full of yourself."

Dominic nodded to his team as the elevator doors closed. He stood with his hands behind his back, sorely tempted to spank Lu's ass. In all the years he'd been a guard, no one had been able to get under his skin the way Lu did. He'd had men and women try to bribe him and seduce him but never once had he been tempted.

Dominic caught Lu's reflection in the elevator door. How in the world could Lucifer, the man he most despised, tempt him?

Chapter Three

Bored out of his mind, Lu sat on the pool deck, rolling a small ball of flame between his fingers. The last four days had been...interesting. He honestly couldn't remember a situation ever being so awkward. It wasn't that he didn't have anything in common with his new houseguests. It was more like they had no desire to talk to him.

Lu would never admit it, but the teams' disapproving stares hurt. He supposed it had a lot to do with his title as the Prince of Darkness. Thanks to John Milton and his stupid *Paradise Lost* poem, Lu had been saddled with a nickname that was in no way accurate in his opinion.

"Would you put that down? You're making me nervous," Dominic said as he walked outside.

Lu glanced down at his hand. With a simple thought, the small ball of flames spun on the tips of his fingers, traveling back and forth across his hand. "It's a perfectly harmless parlor trick."

"I wouldn't call juggling a wad of fire harmless." Dominic nodded in Nick's direction and sat down. Nick stood and went back into the penthouse.

"Actually, it's just light manipulation." Lu flicked his hand and the ball of flame landed on Dominic's bare arm.

Dominic jumped and tried to brush it off. The big man stilled as he obviously realized he wasn't being burned. "How'd you do that?"

Lu held out his hand and the fireball was once again in his palm. He closed his hand and the flame disappeared. "I told you, it's an illusion. A manipulation of light and movement."

He gestured to the flames burning beyond the city. "Same with those, but don't tell anyone."

After standing, Dominic walked to the edge of the patio. He grabbed the rail and looked out into the distance. "So it's not really the fires of Hell?"

Lu chuckled. "No. This city is hot enough already. Can you imagine how unbearable it would be if we were really surrounded by mountains of fire?"

Dominic turned back around to face Lu. "So why do it?"

Lu shrugged. "For the people who live in The City, this is it. They aren't allowed to go beyond the limits. What do you think would be easier for them to handle, seeing green spaces and beautiful mountains, knowing they could never explore them? Or having them look at a wall of flames they have no desire to visit?"

Dominic nodded, and if Lu wasn't mistaken, he detected a slight smile on the muscled guard's beautiful face. "I see."

Looking at Dominic had a direct, unwelcome, effect on Lu's cock. Just knowing what Dominic and his team thought of him should be enough to disgust him, not arouse him. There was a large part of him that wanted to defend his reputation, but the longer Lu thought about it, the angrier he became.

According to the masses, Lucifer was the root of all evil, the tempter of good men, yada, yada, yada. Had anyone, besides Baz, ever taken the time to find out what Lu was about? Lu never professed to be as pure as his brothers in Heaven, but he wasn't the evil being everyone accused him of.

He'd stood up for what he felt was right, going against others in his family. And although he'd been reprimanded with expulsion from his home, he'd do it again if faced with the same decision. The real kicker was that he didn't blame God, or Michael, for making him pay the piper, so to speak. The punishment was laid out in front of him before he committed himself to carrying out the act. But damn, did he miss his old home at times.

Tired of dwelling in the past, Lu stood and stretched his arms over his head. "I want to go out."

"Impossible," Dominic said, his voice low enough to send a tingle through Lu's balls.

Lu had been running through it in his mind all day. He couldn't continue to stay in the penthouse and still remain sane. "Explain to me how staying here is going to draw Ambrosios

out into the open?”

“We’re working on that.”

Lu gave Dominic a fake yawn, tapping his fingers over his open mouth. “You’ve been saying that for days.” He hated to flex his muscle, but evidently, Dominic and his team didn’t understand how The City worked.

Lu walked over to where Dominic still leaned against the rail. “This is my city. The importance of me staying in charge of it is monumental. I don’t mean to brag, but without me, the place would fall into the den of evil most people already think it is. I’ve worked damn hard to make this city what it is, and I’m not ready to let it go to shit just yet.”

“And if you’re dead? How will your beloved city fair then? Maybe, just maybe, I know what I’m doing,” Dominic argued.

“And *maybe* we can come to a compromise. I’m not talking about strolling around the streets, waiting for Ambrosios to jump me. More like popping into one of my favorite restaurants unannounced, or ducking into a club for a dance or two. I just need to be visible, even if for a few minutes.”

Dominic crossed his arms, clearly unhappy with the idea of Lu venturing out into The City. “Do you think your friend Baz is being watched by Ambrosios or whoever he has working for him?”

“How should I know? I haven’t been allowed off this floor since you got here. I can tell you that not only is Baz trustworthy, but he’s also discreet when he needs to be.”

Again, Dominic seemed to mentally run through his options. “Call Baz and ask him to slip into whatever place you think you’re going to go and get a feel for the crowd. If he feels it’s safe, my team will accompany you there for precisely thirty minutes, no more. The time is incredibly important. Thirty minutes won’t give Ambrosios time to make a phone call, work out a plan and get to where you are. Understand?”

Lu nodded. Of course, he wanted more time, but Dominic’s idea actually made a lot of sense, so he kept his mouth shut. With a wave of his hand, Lu was dressed to the nines in an expensive black suit with a dark blue silk shirt left open at the collar.

Dominic chuckled. “I always pictured you more as a leather guy.”

Lu reared back as if he’d been slapped. “How cliché. Have you ever actually worn leather pants?” Lu dramatically shivered. “No thanks. If I have to wear clothes, I want them to caress my

skin, not contain it in a sausage casing.”

Dominic chuckled and headed inside. “I’ll get myself and my team ready, you call Baz.”

* * * *

Dominic rode beside Lu in the car. He’d been told they were going to The Cask, a wine and cheese bar. Dominic was pleased with the choice. It would be much easier to spot trouble in a low-key environment. His biggest nightmare would be trying to protect Lu in a loud, crowded nightclub.

The limousine pulled up to a building in the middle of a downtown block of similar buildings. Instead of the usual neon signs that decorated the street, The Cask was spelled out in elegantly carved wooden letters with a simple spotlight on each word. “Nice.”

Lu glanced at Dominic. “What did you expect?”

He shrugged. No way would he tell Lu the entire city had been one surprise after another. Where was the torture? The screaming, murdering maniacs he knew resided in Hell? Lu could call the place anything he wanted, but it was Hell regardless of the name. So, why didn’t it feel like the Hell he’d expected?

The door opened and Will stood stoically beside the opening. Dominic had heard only a handful of words from the chauffer. The kid’s apple-pie looks made Dominic wonder what he was doing in Hell driving Lucifer’s limousine.

Dominic shook the thought away as he exited the car directly behind Lu. He nodded to his men. “Try to look casual.”

Lu turned around and grinned. “Yes, smiling might even be a nice touch.”

The hostess opened the door upon spotting Lu and his ‘friends’. “Good evening, Sir.”

“Evening, Jasmine.” Without waiting to be shown to a table, Lu walked to a large seating area at the back of the room. The sofa and four chairs sat proudly on a raised dais in a luxurious yellow silk fabric. Lu looked right at home as he sat on the sofa and crossed his legs in a casual fashion.

Dominic began a three hundred and sixty degree tour of the wine bar, making sure nothing seemed out of place. He spotted Baz in the corner of the room and waved him over. Dominic refused to analyze his decision, but he quickly sat on the sofa next to Lu before Baz could join them.

Baz sat in the only empty chair. He started to speak, but a waiter chose that moment to

approach Lu. “A bottle from your private stock, Sir, or would you prefer to try something new?”

“My private stock is fine, James, but you’d better make it two bottles,” Lu said.

“Very well.” The waiter bowed and walked away.

“We can’t drink two bottles of wine in...” Dominic looked at his watch. “...twenty-six minutes.”

Lu smiled. “I’m aware of that, but James isn’t. I thought you’d rather not advertise our short stay.”

Dominic nodded, pleased Lu was thinking.

Baz glanced over his shoulder before addressing the group. “I haven’t heard Ambrosios’ name mentioned in here, and I haven’t seen any of the men and women I suspect might be working with him.”

A man and woman two tables away caught Dominic’s attention. The man not only had his hands inside the woman’s open blouse, fondling her breasts, but she was jacking him off under the table. “What the hell?”

Lu leaned toward Dominic, seemingly aware of the scene going on only a few steps away. “Exactly. We’re sexually free here. It’s something you’ll have to get used to seeing.”

“Seriously? You just let that sort of activity go on in public places?” Dominic couldn’t believe it. After their discussion by the pool, Dominic had begun to think differently of Lu. Maybe his change of heart had been premature.

Lu scooted closer and laid a hand on Dominic’s thigh. “Do you see people killing each other?”

“No.” Dominic put his hand on Lu’s to keep it from wandering toward his cock.

“This city is full of people who, when alive, did a lot of bad things. I’ve shown them they can relieve their daily stress through sex instead of violence. I’m sure it’s not something you’re used to seeing, but it works here.”

What was it about Lu’s voice that seemed to go right to Dominic’s base instincts? In life, he’d been more into women than men, so why did he continue to conjure images of plunging his cock deep into Lu’s ass?

Dominic’s gaze went back to the couple. “So, that sort of display is not only accepted, but encouraged?”

“I don’t know about encouraged, but yes, it is certainly welcomed over the alternative.”

After a slight squeeze to Dominic's thigh, Lu removed his hand.

The waiter came back with two bottles of wine and six glasses. "Would you care for something to eat?"

"No thank you, James," Lu answered.

Dominic was handed a glass of deep red wine. He put it up to his nose and inhaled, wondering what sort of wine a person received in Hell. He was happy to find the smell agreeable and took a tentative sip. "This is good."

Lu chuckled. "You say that like you're surprised."

He shrugged. "I guess I am."

"It's amazing how little the outside world knows about The City." Lu gestured upward and shook his head.

"Enlighten me." Dominic took another sip of his wine.

"Later, right now, I think we need to keep our eyes on that woman over there."

Dominic followed Lu's gaze to an older woman sitting alone. She looked perfectly harmless to him. As a matter of fact, she resembled his grandmother in a way. "Why? You know her?"

"No, but she came in right after we did and still hasn't ordered anything, despite James approaching her on two occasions."

Dominic couldn't believe he'd missed it. He looked at his team, who'd obviously not seen the potential threat of the elderly lady. Setting his glass down, Dominic started to stand, but a hand on his arm kept him in place. He glanced at Lu, shocked the man had the strength to hold him in place.

Lu leaned close to whisper in Dominic's ear. "Tell me again. How do you plan to put an end to Ambrosios if you never come into contact with him? This may be the chance you need."

Goose flesh broke out on Dominic's skin as Lu's breath tickled his ear and neck. "My orders are to stop Ambrosios without you around."

Lu's black eyebrows rose. "Why?"

Dominic shook his head. "Later."

Lu grinned. "In that case, I'd suggest we get out of here while we can." He left his unfinished wine on the table and crossed to stand in front of Baz. "Thank you."

Dominic's jaws clenched as Lu leaned down to offer Baz a deep kiss. Dominic didn't

miss the subtle grope Lu gave Baz either. He'd had enough. "Let's go."

Lu broke the kiss and stood straight, smiling at Dominic. "Should I lead or follow?"

Dominic nodded to his team members, Darian Brooks and Boone Lawley, to lead the way. He held out his hand to Baz. "Thank you for your help."

The heavily muscled Spartan squeezed Dominic's hand. "Lu means the world to me. Keep him safe."

Dominic appreciated the vehemence in Baz's words. It was obvious the man cared a great deal for Lu. It was the manner of feelings Dominic wasn't sure about. "I will."

Dominic left The Cask with Lu at his side and Nick bringing up the rear. The hand he placed at the small of Lu's back was purely professional, or so he told himself. His mind kept going back to Baz and the kiss he and Lu had shared.

As soon as they were back within the safety of the penthouse, Dominic excused his men to their assigned reconnaissance in the city. Lu went to his room for the night, and Dominic eventually retired to the guestroom he'd been assigned.

The evening continued to play through his mind as he tried to read. What was it about Lu that attracted Dominic? The man was extremely conceited, but no more so than Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and the other Archangels he'd been around.

Lu's looks definitely gave the man reason for conceit, but it was more than that. Lu appeared full of confidence in each step he took and every decision he made. They were all three traits Dominic admired in the people he came into contact with. Was that what drew him to Lu?

A noise caught his attention. Dominic tossed down his book and went to the door. Opening it slowly, he moved through the living room toward the kitchen. In the dim light of a single pendent over the island, Dominic spotted Lu. Dressed in thick fleece pajama bottoms with multi-colored polka dots, Lu stood at the counter drinking a glass of...strawberry milk?

The moment Lu spotted Dominic, he stiffened. In the blink of an eye, Lu stood at the counter in black silk lounge pants holding a glass of Scotch. "Problem?"

Dominic tried to hide his smile. The simple glimpse of Lu without his arrogant walls up warmed Dominic's heart. He decided not to call Lu out on the changes to his drink and attire. "Thought I heard something."

Lu nodded. Dominic noticed the man didn't take a drink of the liquor. "Just grabbing a nightcap before bed."

Dominic moved further into the kitchen. "Can I ask you something?"

"You can ask. Don't know if I'll answer," Lu said, setting down his glass.

Dominic had warred with himself for days over the question. He decided to just go for it.

"What exactly is your relationship with Baz?"

"Baz? He's my best friend. I've told you that."

"Yes, but the two of you seem to be more than friends," Dominic mumbled.

Lu smiled. "We fuck pretty regularly." He shrugged. "It doesn't mean anything more than friendship though."

Dominic shook his head. Surprisingly he wasn't disgusted. What he truly felt was sad. Dominic wondered if Lu had ever had an emotional connection other than friendship.

He was so lost in thought, he didn't realize Lu stepped up next to him until a hand rubbed across his bare chest. Dominic looked down before meeting Lu's gaze. "What're you doing?"

"You looked lost. I thought I'd give you something different to concentrate on," Lu explained.

Dominic's eyes started to close when Lu's fingers brushed across his nipple. He ground his teeth together, trying to fight his body's attraction to the man in front of him. Dominic was gathering the strength to push Lu away when a soft kiss landed on his neck. *Fuck.*

Giving in to his body's needs, Dominic reached out and grabbed the back of Lu's hair, tilting Lu's head back as he crushed his mouth against the red lips he'd dreamt about for days.

Lu moaned as Dominic immediately took control of the kiss, thrusting his tongue deep into the warm recesses of Lu's mouth. He couldn't get over the incredible taste. It was more than the wine or strawberry milk he'd spotted Lu drinking earlier. It was one hundred percent Lu, spicy with a hint of danger.

As he continued to indulge in Lu's mouth, Dominic let his hands wander down Lu's body. Lu's leanly muscled back gave way to an ass that seemed to fit Dominic's hands perfectly. Dominic squeezed the tight butt cheeks as he pulled their lower halves together.

Forced to break the kiss for needed oxygen, Dominic stared into Lu's eyes. "I've never wanted anyone like I want you."

Lu grinned and ground his erection against Dominic's upper thigh. "I'm not like anyone you've ever met."

The simple statement succeeded in snapping Dominic back to reality. *What the hell am I*

doing? He took a deep breath and stepped back. “I’m sorry. This isn’t right.”

Without another word, Dominic turned and retreated to his bedroom. He fell onto the bed and buried his face in the pillow. “Dear God, please forgive.”

Chapter Four

Dominic sat at the dining room table with his team. It had been two days since their wine bar outing and still they'd yet to learn anything new. He glanced out the wall of windows to where Lu was sunning himself beside the pool.

Although Lu was nude, he'd at least rolled over onto his stomach. In truth, the perfectly shaped ass was even more tempting to Dominic than the front. Dominic did his best not to let his eyes wander to the gently rising slope of the bronzed cheeks he wanted to bury his cock between.

Things between him and Lu had been tense, unbearably so, since the kiss in the kitchen. Dominic's cock was in a constant state of arousal whenever Lu was within twenty feet of him. One whiff of Lu's spicy cologne and Dominic had to leave the room or risk embarrassing himself. He didn't like it one bit.

Dominic returned his attention to his team. "Anything new?"

Darien shook his head. "All we hear are whispers about the guy. It's like no one wants to say his name out loud."

Nick took a drink of his morning coffee. "I hate to say it, but I think we need to get Lu out there again. This sitting around shit isn't working."

Dominic scrubbed his hands over his face before taking another peek outside. "So you think we need to draw Ambrosios out using Lu as bait?"

Nick shifted in his chair. "I understand why you don't like the idea, but yeah. I think that's exactly what we need to do."

Dominic stilled. "What do you mean you understand why I wouldn't like the idea? What

the hell are you trying to say?"

Nick exchanged glances with the other two men, but it was Boone who finally spoke up. "You like him."

"I most certainly do not," Dominic tried to deny. He realized by the expression on the men's faces that they didn't believe him. "Okay, I may be physically attracted to him, but come on, it's Lucifer."

"*He's* Lucifer. I think we've all seen Lu isn't who we thought he was," Nick fired back. "I guess the only reason we're surprised is because we've tried to hide our own sexual preferences from you for years."

Dominic was shocked. He stared at the three men around him. "You mean..."

Boone nodded. "Darien and I have been lovers for years. You just never bothered to pick up on it, and we weren't about to shove it in your face."

Dominic ran his fingers through his short black hair, scratching his scalp in thought. Now that it was out in the open, he realized he had noticed the two men always seemed to be together, even when they were off-duty.

It sounded like his team didn't think less of him for falling in lust with Lu, so why did he still have a problem with it?

Dominic decided to shove the dilemma to the back of his mind and concentrate on the job at hand. "What would you suggest as far as drawing Ambrosios out into the open?"

"Some place very public," Nick announced. "The Inferno."

Dominic had yet to visit the well-known nightclub, but he could only imagine what went on within its walls. If the public display at The Cask was any indication, The Inferno had to be much worse. He wasn't sure it was a wise decision to voluntarily put himself in that kind of position with his already lusty thoughts toward Lu.

Boone, the most perceptive member of the team, reached across the table and put his hand on Dominic's wrist. "It's okay to feel the way you do about him."

Dominic pulled his arm back, breaking the contact. "I'll go talk to Lu about going out tonight. Someone needs to call Baz and have him meet us there."

Nick nodded. "I'll do it. We've managed to come to an understanding since our first meeting."

Dominic stood and went to the kitchen for a glass of water. He chuckled as he filled the

glass with ice cubes, another myth people had about Hell.

He carried the glass out to the patio. The sun was really blazing hot, even though it was barely ten in the morning. Dominic set his drink on the pool deck beside Lu. From his standing position, he had an even better view of Lu's perfect ass.

He turned away and sat on the chair next to Lu. "We need to talk."

Turning his head toward Dominic, Lu lowered his mirrored sunglasses. "About what?"

When Lu started to sit up, Dominic held out his hands in a panic. "Don't get up."

Lu chuckled. "You are such a prude."

"I am not," Dominic argued. "I just don't need to see all your junk right now."

Lu smiled. "Right now? Does that mean you've been thinking about the kiss in the kitchen?"

Dominic refused to get into that conversation. "The guys think we should try and draw Ambrosios out by taking you to The Inferno later."

Lu reached for a towel beside him and discreetly covered his cock as he sat up and swung his legs over the side of the chair. "Why the change of heart?"

"Because Ambrosios isn't making a move. This stalemate could go on indefinitely if we don't do something," Dominic explained.

Lu leaned forward to rest his arms on his knees. He rubbed his hands together as he appeared to think things through. "I don't mind drawing him out, but I don't want to see others get hurt by doing it."

Dominic blinked. Lu's dedication to The City never ceased to amaze him. The place was full of undesirables. How could they invoke such protectiveness from the fallen Archangel?

"We'll do everything we can to keep your people out of harm's way," Dominic finally said.

Lu nodded and stood. He wrapped the towel around his waist, but not before giving Dominic a brief glimpse of the suntanned package between his legs. Dominic swallowed. Like the rest of him, Lu's cock was glorious.

"I'll go prepare," Lu said as he started to walk toward the penthouse.

Dominic stood and followed the towel-encased ass. "We won't be leaving until late this evening."

Lu turned suddenly and Dominic almost ran into him. "I feel like a long soak in the tub."

Lu reached out and ran a hand from Dominic's neck down his chest to the top of his jeans.

"Want to scrub my back?"

Dominic stared into the black eyes of the man in front of him. All it would take was a simple nod and he'd have Lu in his bed in no time, but he couldn't, not yet. Backing down from a challenge wasn't in his nature, so Dominic reached down and brushed the back of his hand across the erection barely concealed by Lu's towel. "Maybe later. I've got something I need to take care of first."

Lu's eyes sparkled at the gesture. "I'm here when you change your mind."

* * * *

Dominic stepped into The Temple and looked around. He followed the sign to the Christian chapel. There were only two worshipers present, but what Dominic needed to do required him to be alone. He sat in the back pew and waited for the man and woman to finish praying.

As he watched the pair, he witnessed what appeared to be a private marriage ceremony. The idea that two people, condemned to Hell, would actually ask God to bless their union rocked Dominic to the core.

He was still shaken when the newly married couple stood and kissed before filing out of the chapel. After getting himself together, Dominic rose and walked to the statue of Gabriel. Kneeling, he closed his eyes and spoke directly to the carved marble. "I need you."

"Hello, Dominic."

Dominic opened his eyes. He appeared to be in a field of wildflowers. He recognized his small house in the distance and knew he was home. "Hello, Gabriel."

Gabriel gestured for him to stand. "You look troubled."

"I am," Dominic answered as he got to his feet. "I'm confused about Hell."

Gabriel's head tilted to the side. "What confuses you?"

"It's not what I expected. Some of the people don't seem to belong there. It's actually not much different than New York City was when I was alive," Dominic tried to explain.

"In many ways, Hell is like any other city. It's not God who condemns most people there, it's the people themselves. There are those who regret things they've done so profoundly they believe they are not worthy to reside in Heaven." Gabriel stepped forward and put a hand on Dominic's shoulder. "There's something else, isn't there?"

“Lu is different than I expected, too. He’s...” Dominic bowed his head. “I like him.”

Gabriel surprised Dominic with a smile. “I knew you would. It’s one of the reasons I sent you to him.”

Dominic’s head snapped up. “What? Why would you do that?”

“I have my reasons.” Gabriel turned as if to leave.

“Wait,” Dominic called. “What are the reasons?”

Gabriel shook his head and disappeared.

A moment later, Dominic was kneeling in front of the statue, more confused than ever.

* * * *

The ringing in Dominic’s pocket startled him. He blinked several times, realizing he was still kneeling in front of the statue and withdrew his phone. “Yeah.”

“We’re ready to go. Are you coming?” Nick asked.

Dominic rubbed his eyes. He’d been so deep in thought and prayer that he’d lost most of the day. “I’ll meet you there.”

“See you then.” Nick hung up.

Dominic put away his phone and got to his feet. He was still confused, but at least after hours of prayer, he was more at peace with himself and his feelings for Lu.

Outside The Temple, Dominic hailed a taxi. “The Inferno,” he told the driver.

As they traveled to the nightclub, he glanced down at his clothes. “What’s the dress code at The Inferno?”

The driver regarded him in the rearview mirror and laughed. “You’re kidding, right?”

Not interested in giving his ignorance away, Dominic smiled and nodded. He turned to stare out the back driver’s side window. Evidently, jeans and a white T-shirt would have to do. The driver pulled up behind Lu’s black limousine.

“You’re in luck,” the driver said. “Lu’s here tonight. He always gets the crowd into a good mood.”

Dominic wasn’t sure how to take the comment. He paid the man the money Lu had given him and got out. He expected to see Lu and his men, but all he saw was Will having a conversation with an unsavory-looking man beside the car.

The hair on the back of Dominic’s neck prickled when Will spotted him and immediately brushed the man off. “What’s up?”

Will had the decency to look guilty. “Nothing. They’re already inside.”

“I see that.” Dominic glanced in the direction of the man Will had been talking to.
“Who’s your friend?”

Will shook his head. “Not a friend. Just some guy asking about Lu. He said he was going home to change and he’d be back. Everyone likes it when Lu parties.”

Dominic narrowed his eyes. Although Will’s explanation was suspiciously close to what the taxi driver had said, Dominic didn’t buy that Will didn’t know the man. Their conversation appeared to involve more than a simple question.

Not willing to announce his distrust of Will just yet, Dominic walked toward the entrance. The giant man at the door started to tell him to go to the back of the line, but a simple word from Will got Dominic right in.

He entered the club cautiously and looked around for Lu and his team. Dominic spotted a crowd of patrons huddled near an alcove moments before he saw Nick’s face, red with rage, screaming at them.

Dominic grinned and walked toward the chaos. It appeared Lu’s adoring fans wanted a better look at their leader. As Dominic shoved through the crowd, yelling for everyone to go back to their own tables, he tried to get a visual fix on Lu.

Dominic wasn’t sure if it was the expression on his face or the tone of his voice, but soon the group started to wander away. He finally broke through the throng and addressed his men.
“Any trouble?”

Darien shook his head. “They just got a little too close for comfort.”

Dominic automatically took the open seat next to Lu on the sofa. “You okay?”

Lu smiled. He was decked out in skintight black leather. The look was enough to make Dominic’s mouth water. “Of course.”

Dominic looked Lu up and down. “I thought you said black leather was cliché?”

Lu’s smile widened. “I did.” He leaned over and whispered in Dominic’s ear. “I wore this for you.”

Dominic turned and brushed a soft kiss against Lu’s lips. “Thank you.”

Lu’s eyelids lowered slightly at the touch. “Dance with me.”

Tearing his gaze away from Lu, Dominic glanced around the club. “Is it always this crowded?”

Lu nodded.

Lu's hand landed on his upper thigh and almost groaned. The conversation with Gabriel played over and over in his mind as he tried to decide whether or not to act on his desires.

The moment he saw Baz headed their way, Dominic's mind was made for him. He knew he wasn't in the mood to see the two men kiss, friends or not. He stood and pulled Lu to his feet. "Let's dance."

Lu openly adjusted the erection trapped behind the tight leather pants. Dominic wasn't the only one who noticed the gesture. Several patrons seated close to them moaned loudly, putting Dominic even more on the defensive.

In a show of possession, Dominic wrapped an arm around Lu and led him to the dance floor. He was happy to see the crowd part for them as they worked their way through the maze of people and tables.

Dominic led Lu to a corner of the dance floor and turned to face him. With a grin, Lu shook his head and pointed to the raised platform in the center of the floor.

"That's my spot," Lu said in Dominic's ear. He followed the statement with a lick to Dominic's neck.

Dominic looked at the small, elevated dance floor and shook his head. "It's not safe for you up there."

Lu stepped closer, rubbing himself against Dominic. "Believe me, it's more dangerous down here. I had them build it because I was tired of being groped by every Tom, Dick and Harry within reach."

Dominic's gaze went back to the large pedestal. The need to protect Lu warred with his innate desire to keep other men from touching him. He eventually gave in and let Lu lead him up the narrow ladder.

Once he had Lu in his arms again, Dominic began to follow Lu's lead. The seductive man swiveled his hips, teasing Dominic by rubbing the hard ridge of his erection against Dominic's hip.

Lu pulled Dominic's head down and spoke in his ear above the loud music. "Have you changed your mind about wanting me?"

Dominic's chest rumbled with a moan when Lu's hand landed on the front of his jeans. "It was never a question of wanting you."

Lu gazed into Dominic's eyes. "Afraid you'll be sent here if you fuck me?"

Dominic's hands moved to cup Lu's leather-encased ass, squeezing gently. "Something like that."

Even though he said nothing, Dominic saw the hurt expression cross Lu's face. Dominic wondered, not for the first time, how much Lu's reputation hurt the fallen Archangel. There was no way he could ask, but he could do something to wipe the sadness from Lu's eyes.

Starting at Lu's neck, Dominic slowly kissed his way to Lu's sensual mouth. He swiped the red lips with his tongue and waited for entry. Instead of simply opening his mouth, Lu stuck out his tongue and ran it across Dominic's.

"Mmm," Dominic moaned at the erotic gesture. He sucked the offered tongue into his own mouth as he pressed his body fully against Lu's. The tight leather left absolutely nothing to the imagination as Lu's cock rub against his own. Breaking the kiss, Dominic nipped Lu's bottom lip. "Easy, or I'll fuck you right where you stand."

Lu groaned and hiked his right leg up around Dominic's hip. "Be my guest."

Grinding his teeth, Dominic fought to control the urge to do just that. "I don't think that's the kind of show I want to put on for anyone but you."

Lu's hands moved to Dominic's jeans and unfastened the top button. "It's what they expect. It'll please them to see their Prince happy."

Dominic squeezed his eyes shut as Lu lowered his zipper and pushed his jeans down enough to allow his cock to spring free. Dominic's fingers tingled moments before he felt bare skin under his palms. He glanced down to see Lu naked from the waist down. "Fuck!"

Lu nodded and clasped his hands together behind Dominic's neck. "Yes."

Dominic rubbed the soft skin of Lu's ass. "I don't have any lube."

Lu laughed and hoisted himself up to wrap both legs around Dominic's waist. "Lube? Oh ye of little faith. You don't need anything to fuck me but a big, hard piece of meat."

With his hands supporting Lu's ass, Dominic backed to the wide chrome rail surrounding the raised platform. "I can't believe I'm even thinking about doing this."

Lu braced his feet against the rail and reached behind him to position Dominic's cock at his hole. "Don't think. Fuck."

Without another word, Lu slowly lowered himself on Dominic's shaft. As tight as Lu's hole felt, he wondered why the man didn't scream in pain. One look at Lu's face gave him the

answer. It was obvious the pain was a welcome part of the process. Dominic didn't know whether to be appalled or turned on.

He gripped the cheeks of Lu's ass tighter as Lu's body swallowed his cock whole. "Fuck!" Dominic ground out.

With his feet firmly braced on the rails, Lu began to raise and lower himself on Dominic's rod. Dominic heard the moans and cheers as the crowd below them began to get into the action on the platform. In his old life, Dominic would have been mortified to be the center of attention like he was, but now, it turned him on like nothing ever had.

Dominic searched for Lu's mouth without opening his eyes. He found it and pushed his tongue deep in time with the thrusts into Lu's ass. Although the crowd and the music were incredibly loud, Dominic would swear he heard Lu's continuous moans as the pace and intensity of their fucking increased.

Never, *oh fuck*, had he experienced anything like the tight squeeze of Lu's body. He briefly wondered if the fallen Archangel had him under a spell of some kind. Dominic groaned as Lu swiveled his hips. Spell or not, Lu's body was incredibly real and surrounding him. Dominic decided to push away the negative thoughts and concentrate on the fucking of his life.

His balls tightened as Lu's fingernails dug into his back. Maybe Lu wasn't the only one who enjoyed a bite of pain. An extra squeeze of Lu's internal walls had Dominic thrusting deep and emptying his cum into the gorgeous man.

Dominic was so lost in the afterglow of his climax, he was startled when Lu's ass lifted out of his hands. Dominic opened his eyes and reached to support Lu as the incredibly sexy man stood on the rail, putting his dripping erection in front of Dominic's face.

Dominic opened wide and Lu slid his long, thick cock inside Dominic's mouth. Dominic couldn't help but groan at the spicy flavor of Lu's pre-cum as it coated his tongue. Just as it had been the first time he'd kissed Lu, the spicy essence thrilled him.

Using the heavy black stubble of his usual five o'clock shadow, Dominic rasped his chin against Lu's balls. The move earned him a grunt from Lu as well as a tight-fisted grip in his hair. Lu took over and fucked Dominic's mouth much to the delight of the crowd.

Dominic had a momentary thought of his men. He hoped they not only didn't think less of him, but were also watching his back. The grip on his hair tightened as the first splash of seed hit the back of his throat.

Dominic managed to swallow the majority of Lu's cum, but there was more than he'd thought possible. The desire to choke on Lu's gift in front of a roomful of people wasn't his idea of a good thing. He looked up and met Lu's gaze.

His new lover must have sensed his dilemma. Lu gripped his cock by the base and pulled it from Dominic's mouth, using the rest of his cum to splatter the crowd below. The place practically erupted around them as men fought for a taste of Lu's seed.

Drained of the last drop, Lu slid his way down Dominic's body and kissed him. "Fantastic."

Dominic agreed, but he suddenly felt the embarrassment of his situation. He started to reach for his pants only to realize they were already in place and fastened. His hands rubbed against the soft leather of Lu's pants. "That's an amazing trick."

"Glad you liked it. We might need a few of my other tricks to get us out of here in one piece after that show."

Dominic looked around. His team was busy fighting to keep people off the ladder up to the platform. *Shit*. "You'd better get us out of here before someone gets hurt."

"What about waiting for Ambrosios?" Lu asked.

"We'll worry about him later. In this crowd, we'd have a hard time even dealing with him," Dominic explained.

With a wave of his hand, the entire crowd froze. Dominic looked around and shook his head. "Incredible."

Lu grinned and gave him a quick kiss. "Another of my parlor tricks."

Dominic helped Lu down the ladder. "What about my team?"

"Do you want them to ride back with us?" Lu asked.

Dominic wasn't sure he could handle the knowing looks of the men he'd worked with for years. "No, but I don't want them crushed by the crowd either."

Lu touched each team member on the forehead. Nick, Darien and Boone blinked several times.

"What the hell?" Nick said, coming out of their trance.

Lu laughed. "You guys are so funny. Let's go."

"What about Baz?" Nick gestured to Baz who was surrounded by people.

"He'll be okay. He's been through it before."

Nick continued to stare at Lu's best friend for several moments. "I'll stay and make sure he comes out of it okay."

Lu grinned. "Suit yourself."

Dominic's legs felt like rubber as Lu led him by the hand through the club. It wasn't until they were in the limo that Dominic remembered Will's meeting earlier with the scary-looking guy. He reminded himself to question Lu about his chauffeur once they were alone.

Chapter Five

Lu was happier than he'd been in a very long time as he stretched out on his lounge chair the following afternoon. His ass was sore, which only served to remind him of the night he'd spent with Dominic. He grinned as he remembered Dominic's orders before leaving the penthouse a few hours earlier.

"Don't lay out in the nude with my guys around anymore," he'd said in a gruff, possessive tone.

Lu still couldn't believe he'd sprung a hard on at the command. He was used to giving orders, not taking them, but giving in to Dominic's demands seemed almost natural.

He wiggled his hips, rubbing his erection against the lining of the skimpy red swimsuit he'd been forced to wear. Although the little thing barely managed to contain his cock, at least he was covered.

"Baz is here to see you," Nick yelled from inside the penthouse.

He heard Baz yell at Nick that he didn't need to be announced, moments before he came strolling out to the pool. "Hey."

"Nice to see you and Nick getting along," Lu said around a chuckle.

"Fucker doesn't know who he's messing with. He left, so at least I don't have to see his ugly face again before I leave."

Lu grinned. Nick was anything but ugly and they both knew it. He rolled over and shielded his eyes from the sun. "Sorry we didn't get a chance to talk at the club."

Baz shrugged and threw himself in the chair. "You were occupied. I get it."

Lu leaned up on his elbow. “Something wrong?”

Baz took a deep breath before removing an envelope from his inside jacket pocket. “This was stuck under my door earlier.”

Lu took the envelope. “It’s got my name on it. Why was it delivered to you?”

Baz chuckled. “I guess Ambrosios doubted he could get it by your watchdogs.”

Lu sat up and tapped the sealed envelope against his hand for several moments before opening it. In a jagged scrawled pen, the note contained only two lines.

Nice show at The Inferno last night. I enjoyed it immensely. - A

Lu crumpled the sheet of paper in his hands and tossed it to the deck. He lay back down and readjusted his sunglasses. “He knows where you live. Perhaps we should find you a new place.”

“I’m a Spartan. We don’t run or hide,” Baz declared.

Lu rolled his eyes. He was about to tease Baz like he always did when he heard Dominic’s voice talking to the men inside the house. “Dominic’s home.”

Baz chuckled. “Home? Have you got visions of setting up house with your new boyfriend?”

Lu shrugged. He didn’t know what he wanted, but being made fun of by his best friend wasn’t it.

“*Lucifer*, the man guards the Gates of Heaven. I doubt he’s going to trade that in for a life in Hell.”

Lu narrowed his eyes at Baz. Instead of revealing the hurt the words evoked, Lu showed Baz his temper. “You know better than to call me that. Get out!”

Baz stood and straightened his suit coat. “I just don’t want to see you get hurt.”

“That’s none of your business.”

“Is there a problem out here?” Dominic asked, walking toward them.

Baz bent over to pick up the ball of paper. He handed it to Dominic on his way back to the house.

Before looking at the paper, Dominic leaned down and gave Lu a deep kiss. “What was that about?”

Lu didn’t want to lie to Dominic, but he couldn’t tell him the whole truth either. He decided on the lesser of two evils. “He called me Lucifer.”

Dominic's eyebrows drew together as he made room for himself beside Lu on the lounge chair. "I noticed when I first introduced myself that you don't like that name. Why?"

Lu glanced away as he swallowed around the lump in his throat. He'd never told anyone why the name he'd been given hurt so much to hear. Lu cleared his throat when Dominic wrapped his arm around him.

"The name was given to me out of love. Now it means anything but." Lu looked at Dominic. "How would you feel if your name was associated with true evil?"

Lu was surprised to see tears in Dominic's eyes. Before speaking, Dominic leaned in and kissed him. "I'm sorry."

Lu shook his head. "It's not your fault."

"Maybe not all of it, but I'm as guilty as everyone else of misjudging you," Dominic whispered.

Lu scooted down until he could lay his head on Dominic's chest. He didn't like opening himself up to people. Lu just hoped he could trust Dominic. Trust was another thing he had issues with. Other than his brothers, God and Baz, people had betrayed him many times over.

Lu knew it wasn't Baz calling him by his full name that had upset him. What really sucked was his friend was right. What kind of life could he possibly hope to have with Dominic? They were from two different worlds, literally.

"Ambrosios knows where Baz lives. Do you think one of your men could keep an eye out for him? I offered to move him, but he's too damn stubborn."

"How do you know?" Dominic asked.

Lu reached to the pool deck for the crumpled piece of paper Dominic dropped when he laid down. "This was slipped under his door."

Dominic sat up enough to smooth out the note.

With his head still on Dominic's chest, Lu felt his lover's stomach muscles contract under his hand. "At least we drew him out."

"But why didn't anyone see him?" Dominic wondered.

Lu was positive the answer was obvious to both of them, but he kept his mouth shut. He pulled Dominic's tight T-shirt out of his jeans and reached underneath to the warm, muscled stomach. His fingers followed the individual dips and ridges of Dominic's six-pack, trying his best to get his lover's mind off Ambrosios.

Lu started to worry that he was losing his touch when Dominic's hand ran down his spine. "I can make you feel better."

"I've no doubt," Dominic moaned when Lu's hand traveled down to cup his cock.

Lu sat up and straddled Dominic's legs. Staring down at the gorgeous man, he couldn't help but lean over for a kiss. The second his tongue invaded Dominic's warm mouth, his lover took control. Lu inwardly smiled. He liked it when his Dominic became his Dom.

"Take off that thing you call a swimsuit," Dominic ordered.

Lu climbed off Dominic and stood beside the lounge chair. He maintained eye contact as he slowly lowered the tiny red swimsuit.

"I thought you could do that with a wave of your hand?" Dominic reached out and grabbed Lu's balls, applying just the right amount of pressure.

"I thought you wanted the show," Lu answered as he waved his hand ridding Dominic of his clothes.

While still fondling Lu's sac, Dominic reached down and wrapped his hand around his own erection. "Sit on my face and suck my cock."

Lu grinned. "You like giving orders don't you?"

Dominic grinned in return and helped Lu into position. "What can I say? I've been giving orders for too long to stop in the bedroom. Does it bother you?"

Lu shook his head. He gripped the base of Dominic's cock and kissed the crown. "I like giving up control occasionally. Before it was only Baz..." Dominic slapped Lu's ass.

"I don't want to hear about Baz fucking you." Dominic swiped his tongue down the crease of Lu's ass before settling on Lu's hole.

The warm, wet attention on his sore ass felt amazing. "As long as you're here, I have no need for another lover."

Dominic's tongue paused for several moments before continuing its assault on the inside of Lu's hole. Lu returned his attention to Dominic's cock and began nursing at the crown, sucking the wide bulbous head into his mouth.

"Dominic?" Boone called from the doorway.

Lu groaned when Dominic's tongue left his hole to address Boone. A tap of Dominic's hand on Lu's ass told Lu the fun was over, at least for now. He climbed off Dominic and with a wave of his hand, they were both dressed.

Dominic mouthed the words “Thank you” before sitting up and pulling Lu down beside him. “What’s up?”

“We just received a strange phone call from Baz,” Boone began.

Lu was immediately on alert. Dominic’s arm tighten around his waist. “Is he hurt?”

Boone shook his head. “We don’t know. He said he was being followed and then the signal cut out. We tried calling him back, but we’re not getting an answer. Darien has a call into Nick to get him back here.”

Lu jumped to his feet. “There’s only one area of The City where the signal is sketchy. But what the fuck is he doing in Old Town?”

“Old Town?” Dominic asked.

Lu began pacing the deck, worrying his fingers through his long hair. “No one goes to Old Town.”

“What the fuck is in Old Town?” Dominic asked, his voice rising.

Lu stopped and met Dominic’s gaze. “Those that were here before me.”

* * * *

Dominic rode beside Lu, their fingers intertwined. It was the first time he’d seen Lu the least bit afraid, and that alone was enough to scare the shit out of Dominic. “So this Old Town is the place where the baddest of the bad live?”

Lu nodded. “When you think of Hell, what you’re really thinking of is Old Town.”

“Why would Baz go there?” Dominic asked.

“Voluntarily? He wouldn’t.”

Dominic glanced around the car. He could tell his team was in full fight mode. The expression on Nick’s face was enough to turn a man to stone. Dominic felt the vehicle slow and looked out the window. They stopped in front of a tall cement wall. “You walled them off?”

Lu shook his head and opened the door. “I didn’t do it, they did.” He leaned over and gave Dominic a deep kiss. “Stay here.”

Dominic squeezed Lu’s hand and kept him in the car. “Where do you think you’re going?”

Nick’s phone rang, momentarily distracting Lu.

“Lu!” Dominic tried to get his lover’s attention.

Lu leaned in and gave Dominic another kiss. “To ask permission to enter. Stay here.”

Whatever happens, stay in this car.”

“The fuck I will,” Dominic answered back.

Nick snapped his fingers, getting Dominic’s attention. Nick pointed to his phone. “I know where Baz is.”

Dominic held his breath until Nick ended the call.

“Baz is at his place. Sounds like he was roughed up. According to him, he was knocked out entering his building, but he’s okay now.”

Lu shut the door with a loud sigh. “Thank God.” Lu pressed a button on the control panel beside him. “Will, take us to Baz’s loft.”

Lu collapsed against Dominic’s side. Dominic slid both arms around his lover, trying to soothe the subtle shaking he felt vibrate through Lu’s body. Dominic wasn’t sure if the shaking had something to do with the relief that Baz was okay or not entering Old Town.

By the time they arrived at Baz’s building, Lu had settled considerably. “You okay?” Dominic whispered in Lu’s ear.

Lu turned his head and brushed his lips across Dominic’s. “I’ll stand in the center of the city and scream Ambrosios’ name before I let any of my friends get hurt because of me.”

“Hopefully it won’t come to that.” Dominic gave Lu another kiss, this one deeper. He swirled his tongue around the interior of Lu’s mouth before pulling back.

Nick was the first one out the door. Dominic watched his number one go-to guy enter the building and smiled. He glanced at Boone and Darien. The two men who’d already confessed to being lovers seemed non-phased by the display of protectiveness coming from their teammate.

“Is there something I should know?” Dominic asked Darien.

The large, brown-skinned man smiled. “Nope.”

* * * *

By the time the group rode the elevator to Baz’s loft, the front door was already open. Lu walked in and gasped. Baz’s beautifully sculpted features were hidden under various cuts and bruises.

Nick was seated on the dark red leather sofa with Baz’s head in his lap. “I think they’re all superficial wounds.”

Baz reached up and hit Nick in the center of the chest with his fist. “They sure as fuck don’t feel superficial, asshole.”

Nick brushed the black hair out of Baz's face. "Better than the alternative."

Lu stepped closer and knelt beside the couch. "Do you know who did it?"

Baz's tongue slipped out to run over a nasty split in his lip. "It wasn't Ambrosios, but I'm sure it was done on his behalf."

Lu stood and went to stare out the wall of industrial-looking windows. "You're coming home with us."

"I've already told you..." Baz began.

Lu spun around and cut his best friend off. "I won't let anyone else hurt you."

"If it hadn't been for that first blow to the head, I could've handled myself. You don't need to worry," Baz tried to argue.

Lu walked to the area designated as the bedroom in the big open loft. He opened Baz's closet and waved his hand. The clothes disappeared in the blink of an eye. He turned back to Baz and crossed his arms. "I've already put your things in the guestroom Boone has been pretending to occupy."

Boone and Darien coughed at the same time. Lu looked at the men and grinned. "Come on, my room's next door to Darien's. Did you really think I wouldn't hear the two of you fucking your brains out every night?"

Baz sat up, a hand on his forehead. "What good am I going to be locked away in your tower? At least Ambrosios is finally making his move."

"Yeah, on you! Make the sonofabitch come to me. I'm the one he wants revenge on," Lu fired back.

Baz swung his legs to the floor. "What did you do to Ambrosios to make him hate you so much?"

Lu refused to answer the question. He strode to Dominic. "Let's get out of here." Lu glanced over his shoulder at Nick. "Even if you have to physically carry Baz from the building, I want him out of here."

Lu walked out of the loft with Dominic at his side. Once he got into the elevator, he collapsed in his lover's arms. "I can't do this anymore."

Dominic rubbed Lu's back. "Don't get any stupid ideas about standing in the middle of town."

Lu buried his face against Dominic's neck. "Then help me figure out another way."

* * * *

After making sure the penthouse was secure, Dominic went to the kitchen and fixed Lu a drink before retiring to the master bedroom. Stepping inside, he smiled at the naked man spread seductively across black silk sheets.

He held out the glass of strawberry milk. "I brought you something."

Lu stared at Dominic for several moments before sitting up and taking the glass. "Promise you won't tell anyone about this."

Dominic removed his clothes the old-fashioned way and slid to the center of the bed to wrap his arms around Lu's waist. He rested his head against Lu's thigh and stuck out his tongue to tickle the heavy sac in front of his face. "Why do you hide who you really are?"

Leaning against the headboard, Lu continued to sip at his milk. "Because who I really am has nothing to do with the position I've taken in The City. I have a certain image people here have come to respect. Do you think they'd respect a fallen Angel who'd rather indulge in strawberry milk and fuzzy pajamas?"

Although Dominic saw the truth in Lu's explanation, it still bothered him. How many years had Lu been forced to live a lie in order to make The City the place it was? He rolled over, insinuating himself between Lu's spread legs and nuzzled his face against his lover's wrinkled sac. He let the smell of Lu envelop him before staring up at the gorgeous man.

"With me, you can be who you truly are."

Lu finished off his drink and set the glass on the table beside the bed. He threaded his fingers through Dominic's short hair. "I'm afraid."

"Of Ambrosios? Don't be. I'll protect you with my life."

Lu shook his head. "Not of Ambrosios, of you."

Dominic leaned up on his elbows. "Me? I'd never hurt you."

"You have the power to hurt me more than anyone ever has because you're the first I've wanted to open myself up to," Lu whispered.

Dominic gripped Lu's waist and pulled his lover down under him. He gazed at the face of his future. He knew he'd stay in The City if it meant giving the incredible man even a moment of peace in his day. He hesitated to say the words. There was still so much he didn't understand about Lu. Everything he thought he knew had turned out to be lies, created by people who didn't know the real Lucifer.

When Lu's legs wrapped around him, Dominic reached between them and directed the head of his cock home. The expression on Lu's face as Dominic entered him almost brought tears to Dominic's eyes. Once again, the words were on the tip of his tongue but he held back.

"Tell me why you were sent here?" he finally asked.

Lu broke eye contact and turned his head to the side. "Just fuck me."

"No," Dominic answered with a shake of his head. He wiggled his hips, trying to tempt his lover into talking to him. He wasn't expecting the strong shove he received in return. In the blink of an eye, Dominic was at the foot of the bed and Lu was curled into a ball against the headboard.

The next few moments would be critical in their blossoming relationship. He crawled to the center of the bed and sat facing Lu. "I want to prove to you, and yeah, maybe myself, that I can love you no matter what. But I can't do that unless I know what you're hiding from me."

His face half-hidden by his arms, Lu shook his head. "I can answer that question for you. No. You won't love me if you know what I did."

Dominic reached out and ran his fingers over Lu's smooth cheek. "So you'd rather just give up?"

Lu pulled away from Dominic's touch, burying his face fully. "I'd rather you loved me without placing conditions on it."

Dominic sat back. "I don't know if I can do that. It's not about conditions, it's about the truth."

Lu uncurled himself and climbed out of bed. "Sure." Lu walked out of the room without looking back.

Dominic sat, stunned by the turn of events. The sound of the elevator's chime got his attention. He jumped out of bed and ran through the house. He pushed the elevator button, but of course, it was already on its way down. "Fuck!"

Chapter Six

Lu barely remembered walking along the dark streets, but suddenly he was kneeling in front of Michael's statue. He doubted his brother would answer his call, but he knew he had to try. "Please speak to me."

The air shifted and Lu, still on his knees, was on a bed of green grass. He reached down and ran his fingers through the cool manicured blades. How long had it been since he'd seen grass?

"What do you want?" Michael asked from behind Lu.

Lu glanced over his shoulder, not surprised to find Michael in full battle armor. His brother took his job seriously, too seriously at times.

"I need permission to talk about Atlantis," Lu said as he got to his feet.

"You know that is forbidden." Although Michael's voice was commanding, his eyes gentled.

Lu bit the inside of his cheek to keep from arguing. "One person. Please."

"Why?" Michael questioned, setting down his shield.

"For only the second time in my life, I think I'm falling in love." It went unspoken who his first love had been. "Only this man wants to love me back."

Michael shrugged. "So? Let him love you."

"According to him, there can be no love without complete honesty."

Michael laughed. The deep booming sound rattled the ribs in Lu's chest. "And if you break your oath and tell him the truth?"

Lu bowed his head. "He may walk away from me."

"So why take the chance?"

Despite the sting of tears in his eyes, Lu lifted his head to face Michael once again. "Because it's the only chance I have to keep him."

Michael reached out and placed a hand on Lu's shoulder. "You can't. You know the rules, just as you knew them then. You're too close to earning God's forgiveness. Don't do anything to jeopardize that. Please."

Lu swallowed around the lump in his throat. "You're telling me I'll have to choose between Dominic and regaining my place in Heaven?"

Michael nodded and squeezed Lu's shoulder before letting go. "I'm sorry, Lucifer. The rules were written long ago. They cannot be changed."

Lu pulled away from Michael's touch. "I know the rules."

"Tell your man that you are not allowed to discuss it. If he really wants to love you, he'll accept it." Michael turned and vanished.

Lu sighed as he looked up at the marble statue of his warrior brother. He heard a fist pounding against the hidden door. "Go away," he whispered, more to himself than the intruder outside.

"Lu!" Dominic's bellow barely reached Lu's ears.

Lu got to his feet and went to the door. He opened it and stared at the man he was close to risking everything for. "How did you know where to find me?"

Dominic stepped inside and pulled Lu into his arms. "I didn't. I hoped though. It was either look here or at the clubs, and I prayed you'd be here."

He had to give Dominic some kind of an answer. He cupped his lover's face. "I can't tell you why I'm here. It's against our laws."

"Whose laws?"

"Archangels don't live by the same laws men do." Even though he told the truth, Lu knew it would weigh on him until he told Dominic the rest of it, but he had some serious thinking to do first.

The news that he was closer than ever to being forgiven for his past sins was quite a shock. If he continued to keep his secrets, he might eventually be allowed to join Dominic in Heaven.

Dominic's lips landed on Lu's. Lu opened, wanting to consume his lover and keep him no matter what. If only he believed that could truly happen. After several long moments, Lu broke the kiss. "Take me home."

* * * *

Lu walked into the kitchen and smiled. Wearing nothing but his underwear, Dominic was eating a big, meaty sandwich. "I thought we were going out?"

Dominic swallowed and leaned over for a quick kiss. "We are, but I asked Baz and he said the restaurants you like serve that fancy kind of food that never fills a person up."

Lu took a bite of Dominic's sandwich. Damn, the man knew how to build a masterpiece of flavors. "I'm taking you somewhere special. I don't know how much eating we'll get done though, so it's probably a good thing you made a sandwich."

Dominic paused with his food poised at his open mouth. "Why? What kind of place are you taking me to?"

"Just trust me."

Dominic chuckled. "Yeah, right. I trusted you when you got me all worked up in the club that time."

"And you enjoyed every second of it." Lu insinuated his hand down the front of Dominic's underwear and squeezed the hardening cock.

Dominic moaned. "You're right, I did."

"I have a feeling you're going to love Ecstasy." Lu continued to stroke Dominic's cock as he spoke. The elevator chimed moments before Darien walked into the room. Although they turned to look at Darien, Lu didn't bother removing his hand from Dominic's cock and his lover didn't make him. Lu grinned to himself. His lover was becoming quite the exhibitionist.

"What's up?" Dominic asked.

Darien didn't seem uncomfortable at all. In fact, the man reached down to run a hand across his own growing erection. "I thought I'd take Boone with me and check out a lead I just got."

"What kind of lead?" Dominic reached down to lower the waistband of his underwear just under his balls.

Darien's nostrils flared in response to the sight of Dominic's cock in all its glory. While the two men discussed business, Lu dropped to his knees and engulfed the head of Dominic's

shaft. He continued to lick at the heavily veined cock as Dominic buried his fingers in Lu's hair and spoke to Darien.

It was only when he heard the mention of Old Town that Lu took notice of the conversation. He pulled his mouth from Dominic's cock and stood to face Darien. "What's this I hear about Old Town?"

"I swear we've searched every inch of the city except there. Ambrosios has to be there," Darien repeated.

Lu shook his head. "Then leave him there." Lu turned to stare at Dominic. "Do not let them go."

Dominic leaned in and kissed him. "I'm sure Gabriel told you we've been equipped with certain skills..."

Lu covered Dominic's mouth with his palm, cutting him off. "It doesn't matter. You cannot let them go inside the walls of Old Town."

Dominic pulled Lu's hand away from his mouth. For several seconds they stared into each other's eyes before Dominic glanced over Lu's shoulder to address Darien. "Give us a moment, would you?"

After Darien left the kitchen, Dominic wrapped his arms around Lu. "What's this about? We're all ready to go in after Baz. What's changed?"

Lu shook his head. "I was ready to go in after Baz. I wouldn't have let you come."

Lu could see the argument in Dominic's expression before he even opened his mouth. He decided to cut his lover off before it started. "I've told you before that true evil lives in Old Town, an evil so intense that a soul can't help but be tainted just by entering its walls. If your men go in there, they'll never again be welcome in Heaven."

Dominic rested his forehead against Lu's. "Okay. So we have to think of a way to draw Ambrosios out."

Lu breathed a sigh of relief. Dominic's trust meant everything to Lu. "Thank you."

* * * *

Dominic was getting ready for his dinner out when there was a knock at the door. "Come in."

Baz stepped into the room. The last several days had done wonders for Baz's bruises, but the small cuts still looked sore. "You got a second?"

Dominic nodded as he continued to tie his tie. He'd learned quickly what Lu considered proper dress for dinner. He smiled, thinking of the episode in the kitchen earlier. The expression on Darien's face had been hot. Exhibitionism may be new to him, but he was completely addicted. He briefly wondered what life would be like without it.

Dominic pushed the thought away. He'd actually given quite a bit of thought to relocating. Although he loved his job, he was falling deeper and deeper in love with Lu all the time. There was no one else that would make him feel the way Lu did.

Baz cleared his throat. "I was wondering if I could ask a favor."

"Sure." Dominic had a good idea what Baz's favor was.

"Lu still won't talk to me."

Dominic finished perfecting the knot on his tie and reached for his jacket on the bed. "Have the two of you fought like this before?"

Baz shook his head. "I shouldn't have said what I did, but he won't even listen to me long enough to apologize."

Dominic had seen Baz try to approach Lu over the last couple of days. Baz was right. Lu didn't want anything to do with him it seemed. "I think it hurt him when you called him by his full name."

Baz shook his head. "That's not it." Baz glanced down at the floor. "I was jealous of you. I made a comment about the two of you."

"Yeah? What was that?" Dominic asked as he narrowed his eyes.

Baz met Dominic's gaze and squared his shoulders. "Basically that he was a love-sick fool if he thought you'd give up your place in Heaven for him." Baz shook his head. "I shouldn't have said it. It was anger and jealousy coming out, not the truth."

Baz sighed. "I'd do anything for him."

"You love him," Dominic concluded.

Baz surprised Dominic by shaking his head. "Not in the way you think. I love him, but not the way you do. I know things about him that he doesn't know I know. He's the reason I came to The City. I guess in a way, I worship him."

Dominic was confused. Lu had told him that Baz belonged in Heaven but had asked to live in Hell. But why? Because of Lu? "Does he know that?"

Baz shook his head. "He knows I care for him and that I think his ass is to die for." Baz

must have realized his mistake. “Sorry.”

Dominic waved away Baz’s apology. “I know the two of you used to fuck.” Dominic nodded. “I’ll talk to him.”

“Thank you.” Baz started out of the room.

“Oh, and Baz? You’re right. Lu does have an ass to die for,” he said with a smile.

* * * *

Lu stood at the edge of the building studying his city when the phone in his breast pocket began to ring. He withdrew it and looked at the display. When it came up “unknown” Lu took a deep breath and flipped it open. “Lu.”

“I’m growing bored of this game. Meet me at The Red Dog in Old Town, or I’ll be forced to exact my revenge on your brothers instead. It makes no difference to me. Either way, I plan to spill Archangel blood before the night is over. Oh, and if I see your little boyfriend with you, I’ll be sure he gets a chance to watch you die before I let loose the entire population of Old Town on him.”

The call ended. Lu shut the phone with a shaking hand. *Old Town*. He shoved the phone back into his pocket and collapsed in one of the chairs. *What am I going to do?* According to Gabriel, Dominic and his men were equipped to deal with Ambrosios, but there was no way Lu could let any of them step foot inside the walls of Old Town.

Although Ambrosios made it sound like his blood could take the place of his brothers, Lu doubted he could trust him. Still, what choice did he have? He glanced over his shoulder to the penthouse. He’d finally found what he’d always dreamt of.

There was a part of him that wanted to tell Dominic. There was a very real possibility his lover could kill Ambrosios. If Dominic had to enter Old Town, it would solve Lu’s problem of Dominic returning to Heaven.

Lu shook his head. Even if Dominic managed to kill Ambrosios, he’d never be able to survive the bloodthirsty men and women in Old Town. Once he’d worked through each scenario in his head, Lu knew he didn’t have a choice. Not only did he refuse to put Dominic in that kind of danger, but he was the one who deserved Ambrosios’ retribution, not his brothers. It was Lu’s fault the Dagger of the Beast was created in the first place. It had been intended for him all along.

His mind made up, Lu slipped into the house and went straight to his office.

* * * *

“Do you mind if we stop by The Temple before dinner?” Lu asked Dominic once they were in the limo.

“Why?” Dominic questioned.

“Because I want to share it with you again.” Lu cringed at the half-truth. Although he did want to share his private place with Dominic once more, Lu knew it was the only spot in town that would keep Dominic safe.

Dominic pulled Lu closer to his side. “I’d like that.”

Resting his head against Dominic’s shoulder, Lu closed his eyes. He wished he had time to say a proper goodbye to his lover. He soaked in the warmth of Dominic’s body, knowing he only had a short time left with the man he’d grown to love so deeply.

The car stopped and Lu begrudgingly opened his eyes. The door opened and Dominic slid out first. Always on alert, Lu noticed the way Dominic’s eyes scanned their surroundings before reaching for Lu’s hand.

“We won’t be long,” Lu told Will.

Within seconds, they were inside the chapel. Lu broke away from Dominic and placed a kiss on the feet of each statue in the room, sending up a private message to each of his brothers before kneeling in front of the alter. *Please forgive me, Father. I have always strived to do what was right. Although I know you think I’ve lost my way, you have always been in my heart.*

“Lu?”

Lu opened his eyes and stood. He turned to Dominic and smiled. “I wanted to bring you here, in front of God and my brothers, to tell you how much I love you.”

Dominic held out his arms and pulled Lu into an embrace. Lu buried his face against Dominic’s neck and inhaled, trying to commit the smell of his lover to memory.

“Is everything okay?” Dominic asked.

Lu knew Dominic could feel the slight tremble in his body. “I think I could stay right here with you forever,” he whispered.

“It’s nice, isn’t it?” Dominic asked.

“Mmm hmm,” Lu agreed. His time grew short. He pulled back and kissed the man he loved. Lu put all his feelings into the kiss, thrusting his tongue deep into Dominic’s mouth. He moaned as Dominic’s tongue swirled against his. Even in kissing, Dominic had to be the

dominant one. Lu grinned around the tongue invading his mouth. He wouldn't have his Dom any other way.

Breaking the kiss, he knew it was time. "Oh, shit. I forgot something in the car." He pulled back. "I'll just be a second."

Dominic's brows drew together. "I didn't see you bring anything."

Lu was already to the door. He waved his hand and it slid open easily. Before stepping from the room, Lu quickly reached in his breast pocket and withdrew an envelope. He quickly set it on the pedestal beside the door.

He walked into the alley and turned back for one last glimpse. "I love you," he whispered as he waved his hand.

Lu saw the realization dawn in Dominic's eyes just before the door slid shut. He then heard the muffled cry of his name just beyond the sealed barrier.

Ignoring the dull ache weighing his heart, Lu turned to Will. "Take me to Old Town."

Chapter Seven

Dominic ran toward the door and pounded his fists against it. “Lu!”

He frantically waved his hand in the general area he’d seen Lu use several times to open the door. He pulled out his phone and searched the entire interior of the private room for service with no luck.

“No. This can’t be happening.” Dominic stuffed his phone in his pocket and went back to the door. He began pounding again with every ounce of strength he possessed. He continued until his hands were bloody and his strength completely sapped.

All he could think about was the look in Lu’s eyes the last time he saw them. Dominic slid down to the floor. He spotted the bottom edge of the envelope Lu had left and scooted toward it. He reached up and snatched the envelope from its pedestal.

Dominic’s name was written in an elegant script on the front. Tearing at the flap, he managed to get the letter open in record time. He unfolded the heavy stationery and held his breath as he read.

My Dearest Dominic,

By the time you read this, I’ll be on my way to Old Town. I received an ultimatum from Ambrosios earlier this evening. If I don’t meet him, he’s promised to exact his revenge on my brothers. We both know I can’t allow that to happen.

I’m sorry for tricking you into The Temple, but I knew you wouldn’t allow

me to go alone, which is exactly what I must do. I love you more than I ever thought possible, which is why you must never enter Old Town. By the time you're released from the chapel, I'll already have met with Ambrosios.

My death is my fate. I've come to terms with my punishment, which is long overdue. My wish for you is to return to your home. Although I hope to own a small piece of your heart always, I pray that someday you'll love again.

I realized something as I sat down to write this letter. You, Dominic Ramos, are my Heaven. I'm thankful I spent the last few weeks of my life in your arms.

Love Always,

Lu

Dominic crushed the letter to his chest as the tears escaped his eyes and streamed down his face. He'd never even told Lu how much he loved him. Suddenly the secret Lu held seemed small in comparison to the loss he felt.

Falling to his side, he smashed his already bloody fist onto the marble floor. *I never deserved him.*

* * * *

Lu tried his best to hold himself together on the long drive through The City. He didn't dare blink for fear that the moisture building in his eyes would turn to tears.

"Sir?" Will's voice said over the intercom.

Lu reached over and hit the button. "Yes?"

"Sir, are you sure you want to go to Old Town?" Will asked.

A small part of Lu wanted to tell Will to turn the car around and return to Dominic, but he knew he couldn't do that. "I'm sure."

The limo slowed to a stop.

"Sir?" Will's voice came again.

"Dammit, Will. I'm doing the right thing here. If you don't want to take me, fine. I'll drive myself."

"I've enjoyed working for you, Sir."

The door opened and a bright white light bathed the interior of the car. Lu looked over, expecting to see Will, but came face to face with Gabriel and Michael instead. As soon as Lu saw them, he knew he was no longer in The City.

Gabriel held out his hand. "Come with me, brother."

Lu sat, rooted to his seat. "What's going on?"

Once again, Gabriel gestured for Lu to get out of the car. "We need to speak to you."

Lu finally slid to the edge of the seat and out the door, although he declined to take Gabriel's hand. The limo was parked beside a babbling brook, complete with green grass and mossy rocks. *Heaven?* "What am I doing here?"

Michael and Gabriel exchanged glances before Michael finally spoke. "You passed the test."

"What test? What're you talking about?" Lu asked.

"The Keeper of the Archives read the story of Atlantis. He felt so strongly that you deserved a second chance, he formally petitioned God," Gabriel began.

"Unfortunately, Father didn't feel you were ready to return. It has taken a great many years, but you were finally given a second chance to prove your loyalty. I'm happy to inform you, you passed." Michael stepped forward and embraced Lu.

Lu felt like he'd been knocked on his ass. He pushed Michael away. "Who had the nerve to petition God with such a request? What test?"

Once again, Lu's brothers regarded each other before addressing him. "Basileios Kostopoulos."

"Baz?" Lu gasped. He turned to face the limo and braced his hands against the cold black metal. He closed his eyes, afraid to hear the answer to the question he had to ask. "Ambrosios isn't out of his containment, is he?"

"No. He's still safely locked away," Michael told him.

"And the Dagger of the Beast?" Lu asked.

"Still buried under the ruins of Atlantis." Michael put a hand on Lu's shoulder.

"Welcome home, brother."

Lu spun around, knocking Michael's hand away. "Don't. You lied to me. You all lied to me."

Gabriel stepped forward, shaking his head. "We had to make sure you would always put

Heaven and man above yourself. It's our law."

Lu couldn't breathe. He bent over with his hands at his waist. Everything had been a lie. Baz's attack. Ambrosios. He'd been played by not only his brothers and his best friend, but most likely by Dominic as well. Is that the reason Dominic hadn't told him he loved him? Was he just an assignment to Dominic? Were the questions about Atlantis another fucking test?

Lu turned and opened the door to his car. He climbed in and slammed the door. "Will?" he asked, pressing the intercom.

Lu was met with silence. "Will?"

The door opened once again, courtesy of Gabriel. "Will's gone home to be with his family. He's earned it."

"Huh? Will doesn't have a family."

Gabriel gave Lu an understanding smile. "His family is here. In Heaven. I sent him to you years ago to watch over you."

First Baz, now Will? Lu turned away from his brother. Everyone he'd trusted had betrayed him. "Send me back to The City."

"Don't be ridiculous. You don't belong there anymore," Michael piped up from behind Gabriel.

Lu gazed into the clear blue eyes of his brother. "You're wrong. That's exactly where I belong. I love my home, my people." Lu wiped an errant tear. "At least I knew better than to trust most of them. Life's a lot easier when you don't open yourself to trust."

"Lu, please, it wasn't like that."

"No. It was exactly like that. I was tricked into proving a love that I had already given you. All of you." Lu shook his head. "I don't want to be here. Please, Michael. Send me home."

Michael and Gabriel turned and walked several yards toward the stream. Lu was disgusted by the sight of the two of them discussing his future. He hadn't asked the most important question because he was afraid the answer truly would destroy him.

If Dominic and his men were back in Heaven, Lu would rather come to terms with his loss slowly. Hearing that the man he loved had betrayed him was a blow he wouldn't recover from.

Gabriel came back to the car, but Lu noticed Michael chose to stay where he was. "Michael thinks you're being ungrateful."

Lu shrugged. How had he ever thought himself in love with his headstrong brother? “I don’t care what Michael thinks. I would never. Ever. Do to anyone what was done to me.”

“You’ll have a period of one hundred years, per law, to change your mind,” Gabriel stated, his tone colder than it had been before.

“I won’t change my mind.” Lu reached out and grabbed the door handle. “Please send me home now.”

* * * *

As if by divine intervention, the chapel door slid open. For several moments, Dominic stared at the dark alley beyond the softly lit room of his prison, before struggling to his feet. He folded his letter from Lu and carefully put it in his pocket. There was no doubt the letter would be read and reread hundreds of times.

Once in the alley, Dominic pulled his phone out once more. He called Darien, hoping his teammate had access to a car. As he waited for Darien to pick up, Dominic fingered the smooth, variegated, green stone in his pocket. He knew it was the only thing that could keep the man he loved alive.

“Darien.”

“Get a car and pick me up at The Temple.”

“I thought you left with Lu,” Darien said.

Dominic didn’t have time to go into details, but he knew Darien deserved to know what he was getting into. “Lu locked me in the chapel and went to Old Town to confront Ambrosios on his own.”

“Fuck!” Darien spat out.

“Just come and get me. I need to get to Old Town before it’s too late,” Dominic told him.

“What? You can’t go there. You told me what happens. No. I’m not taking you to Old Town.”

“Fine. I’ll get there on my own.” Dominic hung up and ran toward the main part of town. He didn’t have time to argue with anyone, especially when he knew every second counted. If he were lucky, he’d be able to catch a taxi and leave his teammates out of the mess he was likely to encounter.

It took precious minutes to find an available cab that would stop and pick a bloodied, crazed-looking man up. As soon as he told the driver where he needed to go, the driver stiffened

and put up a sliding glass wall between them.

Dominic knew he sounded crazy. Hell, he felt crazy, but at the moment, all he cared about was getting to Lu. The fallen Archangel that everyone outside of Hell hated was the finest, most caring man Dominic had ever met.

The Lucifer written about in books would never willingly sacrifice himself to save others. How had history gotten it so wrong? Why had the other Archangels allowed it to happen?

The taxi came to a stop in front of the walled city at the edge of town. When Dominic knocked on the glass to try to pay the driver, the man waved him out, evidently wanting nothing more to do with Dominic.

He was surprised to find Baz and Nick standing in front of the Old Town entrance.

“What’re you two doing here?” Dominic asked.

“You can’t go in there,” Baz said.

“Watch me,” Dominic said, trying to veer around the two men. He didn’t have time to fuck around.

Nick grabbed Dominic’s arm. “He’s not in there.”

Dominic reared back to punch Nick, but stopped once his friend’s words sunk in. “What? I have a letter. He said he was going to Old Town.”

Baz stepped between Dominic and Nick. “He thought he was going to Old Town.” Baz sighed and glanced over his shoulder at Nick. “He was taken to Heaven instead.”

Dominic stumbled backward. “What?”

* * * *

Lu wandered the streets of his city until the sun was well overhead. He felt completely numb, and even though he knew The City like no one else, he felt lost. Would he ever again be able to find his way?

Tired and ready to bury himself under the covers for the next hundred years or so, Lu headed toward his penthouse. In the blink of an eye, Lu had lost his driver, his best friend, and the only man he’d ever truly loved. It definitely hadn’t been one of his better days.

As expected, the penthouse was dark. His so-called bodyguards must have lit out in a hurry because there were still dirty dishes on the dining room table. Lu looked at the mess and shook his head before heading to the bedroom.

He stripped off his clothes on the way. *Yeah, a hundred years of sleep sounded good.*

Entering his bedroom, the bright sun of the floor to ceiling windows was suspiciously absent. Lu didn't remember closing the blinds before he and Dominic had left the previous evening.

In the dark, Lu stumbled toward the bed and turned on a lamp. He jumped when he saw the familiar face sound asleep on his pillow. His first instinct was to smother the beautiful face with kisses, but then reality set in. He'd been betrayed. He needed to remember that.

"Get out!" he screamed, his hands fisted at his sides. He could will Dominic back to Heaven with a simple wave of his hand, but he deserved a knockdown drag out with the man who'd used him.

Dominic's dark eyes opened. "Lu?"

"Get out. I can't believe you have the nerve to be here," Lu growled.

Dominic sat up, the covers sliding down to expose the man's sculpted chest. "I've been waiting for you like you said."

"What the fuck are you talking about?" Lu was beginning to rethink the need for the confrontation. It hurt more than he thought it would to see Dominic and not be able to touch him.

Dominic pulled a ratty piece of paper out from under his pillow and pointed to the letter Lu had written earlier. "It says right here. *My wish for you is to return to your home.* So that's what I did."

Lu shook his head. He couldn't argue with a naked and sleep-tussled Dominic. He turned on his heels and strode from the room. The cold air on his flaccid cock reminded him he was also naked. With a wave of his hand, he wore his favorite fuzzy sleep pants. Who did he have to impress after all? He'd even indulge in his favorite drink.

He pulled the milk out of the refrigerator and a glass out of the cabinet.

"Lu?" Dominic said from the kitchen doorway. "What happened?"

Seething at the question, Lu spun around, knocking the glass off the counter. Shards scattered as the hand-blown goblet fell against the marble floor. "You know exactly what happened."

Dominic shook his head, his eyes on the sharp pieces of glass glistening on the floor. "I know Baz's side of it. I'm asking for yours. Why are you mad at me?"

Lu took a step toward Dominic. He felt a pinch to the bottom of his foot connected with one of the shards. "Don't say that name in my home."

Dominic held up his hands. "Stop. Just stop and let me clean the floor before you cut

your feet to ribbons.”

“I don’t give a fuck about my feet. It’s my heart that’s been cut to ribbons, asshole.”

Dominic had the nerve to rear back in surprise. “Why are you mad at me? If you think I had something to do with this shit, you’re wrong. All I know is that I was ordered by Gabriel to come here.”

Dominic reached into the pocket of the wrinkled dress pants he’d had on earlier and extracted a green stone. “I was given this and told to place it against Ambrosios’ skin. Gabriel said it would act like poison to Ambrosios.”

Lu looked at the stone in Dominic’s hand and shook his head. Had he so harshly misjudged Dominic? “Then we’ve both been lied to, because what you’re holding is nothing more than vernipulite, a mineral composite found on Venus.”

Dominic glanced at the rock in his hand and tossed it to the floor. Lu watched as the realization hit the Heavenly Gate Keeper.

“Why?” Dominic asked.

Lu shook his head. Did his brothers have any idea how wrong the entire ruse was? “They were testing me. But I’m sure Baz already told you that.”

Dominic headed toward the pantry, his face completely blank. He got out a broom and dustpan and began cleaning up the broken glass. After several moments of quiet, he stopped and gazed into Lu’s eyes. “Baz told me he was trying to right a wrong that had been done to you. That it was the reason he’d come to The City in the first place.”

He was stood on the edge of danger, in more ways than one. If Dominic told the truth and he really hadn’t known about the test, he deserved to know the full truth. Lu knew the hundred year grace period to return to Heaven would be moot if he divulged the reason he’d been condemned in the first place.

He watched as Dominic continued to clean the floor. When Lu noticed his lover almost step on a piece of glass, he waved a hand and the remaining shards disappeared. Dominic stopped and released the broom from his hand.

In the time it took for the broom to land on the floor, Lu was reaching for the man he loved. The moment he was in Dominic’s arms, at least part of his world had been righted. He covered Dominic’s lips and ate hungrily at his mouth. The only thing on his mind was the man whose tongue he was sucking.

Dominic moaned and lifted Lu off his feet, taking the kiss even deeper. Lu wrapped his legs around Dominic's waist. "Take me to bed."

Chapter Eight

Dominic crawled on top of Lu and placed a feather light kiss to his lips. “I love you. I was afraid I’d never get a chance to say that to you.”

Lu reached up and traced Dominic’s lips with the tip of his finger. “I need to tell you what happened to send me here.”

Dominic shook his head. Lu had already explained that telling him would mean breaking one of the laws the Archangels lived by. After everything Lu went through to earn his way back to Heaven, Dominic didn’t want to be the one to ruin it.

“No. I was wrong. I don’t need to know the truth of your past in order to know I love you now. I’m sorry I ever put you in that position.”

“This is my home. Regardless of what test I’ve passed, I’ll never leave.”

“Then I won’t either,” Dominic stated. Surprisingly, it wasn’t a hard choice to make. He’d thought long and hard about it after his conversation with Baz earlier. He’d finally come to the conclusion it didn’t matter where he lived as long as Lu was with him. It was plain to see Lu meant it when he said he wouldn’t return to Heaven.

Lu’s information about the stone Gabriel had given him had upset him, but he knew it was nothing like the betrayal Lu felt toward his best friend and brothers. Although what Baz did was wrong, Dominic hoped he could get Lu to understand the man’s attempts were honorable.

“Wherever you are is home to me,” Dominic reiterated.

The corner of Lu’s mouth turned up slightly. “It’s an awfully long commute for you to go to work.”

“Then I guess we’ll just have to find something here in The City for me to occupy my time.”

“I can think of a few things. I still want to take you to Ecstasy.”

“Babe, you take me to ecstasy every time you’re in my arms.” Dominic kissed the finger that was still traveling over his features.

Lu snorted and rolled his eyes. “What a very Casanova-like statement.”

Dominic chuckled. “I tried. I’m new at this romance stuff.”

“Are you?” Lu asked. “Have you ever been in love?”

Dominic didn’t like to think of his past. He’d been a grumpy sonofabitch, and he knew it. Still, he’d worked hard to be the best man he could be. Too bad he hadn’t had the balls to come forward with his sexual preferences. His life might have been completely different.

“I thought I was several times. I was actually married to three different women. I think I wanted to be in love. I wanted what everyone expected me to have. I’d marry and quickly realize how miserable I was. Instead of looking at myself, I always blamed it on my wives.”

Dominic shook his head. “Someday I’d like to find them and apologize.” He grinned. “Although I’m sure at least one of them probably lives here in The City.”

Lu laughed and gave Dominic’s ass a playful swat. “I’ll pray you never again feel the need to poke at a vagina.”

“No need to worry about that.” Dominic ground his cock against Lu. “I have all I want right here.”

Dominic nestled further between Lu’s legs, giving him room to love his man. At least for now, he was done talking. As if it had a built in homing device, the head of Dominic’s cock immediately found the puckered skin of Lu’s ass.

Despite what Lu continued to tell him, Dominic never felt right trying to fuck the man without some form of lube. He spat in his hand and reached between them to spread the saliva onto the crown of his cock.

He noticed the subtle eye roll coming from Lu and shrugged. Lu would have to get used to it because Dominic doubted he’d ever fully change his ways. As if by pure will, Lu’s body seemed to open and capture Dominic’s cock and draw it in.

He stared down at Lu. “Are you doing that?”

Lu grinned. “More parlor tricks. You like?”

Dominic groaned at the suction being created by the unseen force. It felt like fucking and getting a blowjob at the same time, another first for him. It was definitely a feeling he could become addicted to. "Oh, yeah."

Dominic stared into Lu's eyes as his cock was sucked in to the root. It was a momentary setback, knowing he was no longer fully in charge, but Dominic realized Lu probably needed the brief show of dominance to settle his shaken world.

Lu scraped his short nails down the length of Dominic's back. "Fuck me."

As quick as it had started, Dominic's cock was released from the suctioning force, giving him the ability to do just that. He pulled out until only the head of his cock remained inside Lu before slamming back in.

Lu cried out at the harsh invasion. The expression on Lu's face was one of peace, not pain.

Dominic pulled completely out and tapped Lu's hip. "Turn over, babe."

Lu rolled to his stomach and got his knees up under him. He balanced himself on his shoulder and reached behind him to spread his cheeks apart. "Do it. Make me feel it for days."

Dominic once again pushed the head of his cock into the pretty stretched asshole. He gripped Lu's hips and surged deep in one, smooth thrust.

"Yessss," Lu hissed.

With each hard thrust, Dominic tried to deliver the right amount of pleasure and pain Lu seemed to need so desperately. There was no doubt in Dominic's mind that his lover would have bruises after their coupling, but he hoped that would only further remind Lu of their time together.

Dominic's balls were being batted back and forth with his momentum, and he wondered if he'd end up with bruises as well. Adjusting his angle a bit, Dominic nailed Lu's gland, sending the man into a shaking, cum-shooting machine.

"Aaahhhh, Dominic!" Lu screamed.

Dominic did his best to hold Lu up as his lover's body vibrated with the intensity of his orgasm. Dominic ended up wrapping his arms around Lu's waist as he slammed inside in rapid succession. He ground against Lu's ass as he released the first jet of seed into Lu's hungry ass.

Dominic collapsed with his arms still around Lu's waist, rolling them both to their sides as he struggled to breathe.

“Fuck!” Lu gasped.

Still connected to Lu, Dominic reached down and ran his finger over Lu’s stretched skin as it continued to hug his cock. “I didn’t hurt you, did I?”

“Yes. And it was wonderful.” Lu snuggled further against Dominic’s chest. “Thank you.”

“One of these days, I hope we can take our time a little more. Making slow love to you sounds like a glorious way to spend an afternoon.”

“Mmm,” Lu hummed as he drifted to sleep.

Dominic rested his head close enough to steal kisses from Lu’s neck as his lover slept. They still had things to work out, primarily Lu’s relationship with Baz. He knew neither man would be happy until their friendship was mended.

He hadn’t mentioned it to Lu, but he knew Baz was still in The City. Dominic doubted the man would give up until Lu at least agreed to speak to him. He wondered if Nick had stayed with Baz. The two of them seemed to be more than friendly when they’d stopped him from entering Old Town.

Maybe it was wrong, but a large part of Dominic hoped Nick would stay in The City. Although Baz could easily relocate to Heaven, Dominic doubted he ever would. If Nick stayed, perhaps the two of them could go into business together. Dominic didn’t know what he wanted to do yet, but he knew the only man he cared to guard was presently asleep in his arms.

* * * *

Dominic finished his last lap and stepped out of the pool. He gave his arms a few big rotations, noticing his sore muscles once again. For two days, Lu had kept him in bed, only getting out long enough to grab a quick bite of food before starting over again.

He took a towel off the rack and walked toward his bronzed lover. “Water feels good. You should try it once in awhile.”

Lu grunted, making Dominic smile. He’d never seen Lu in the pool and wondered if he ever would. He bent and gave Lu a brief but deep kiss before taking his position on the lounge chair next to the bathing beauty.

“I destroyed Atlantis by sinking it,” Lu said out of nowhere.

Dominic sat up. “What?”

Lu lowered his mirrored sunglasses and looked at Dominic. “One of our most trusted prophets came to me. He said he knew how the world would end. He told me the people of

Atlantis would inadvertently use their superior engineering and intelligence to blow up the planet.”

Dominic realized what Lu was doing. “I told you I didn’t need to know what you’d done. Stop now and you may be forgiven.”

Lu shook his head. “I’ve always known I wasn’t ashamed of what I did, but it took the events of the last few weeks to cement my feelings.”

Lu sat up and swung his legs over the side of his lounge. “When God made man, we, the Archangels, were made to promise never to harm or interfere with God’s precious humans. I don’t blame anyone. I signed my name to the law willingly. It wasn’t until the prophet came to me that I began to question the law I’d signed.”

Dominic ran his hands through his quickly drying hair. “So you sank Atlantis knowing you’d be breaking your law?”

“Yes. I weighed my fate against the fate of the rest of the world and realized I had no other choice.” Lu shook his head. “You see, they were thousands of years more advanced than the others. They were playing with power that should only belong in the hands of God. I—I couldn’t let the world end because they didn’t know...”

Dominic was stunned. It was one more reason to love the man in front of him.

“So you see, the Bible has it partially correct. My argument with God and my brothers was over humans. I’m sure if the truth ever came out, there would still be many who’d feel I was evil for striking down an entire race of superior humans.” Lu shrugged. “But I did what I had to do.”

“And Ambrosios? How does he fit into it?” Dominic asked.

“Ambrosios was a general in the Atlantean army. He was away with a small group of men when I sank Atlantis to the bottom of the ocean. When he returned and found nothing but open water, he thought he’d misjudged his position and continued to sail. Without the proper provisions, his men slowly began to die of thirst and starvation.”

Dominic watched Lu carefully as he gave Dominic the history lesson from the vantage point of an eyewitness. Although Lu’s sunglasses were back in place, it was obvious to Dominic just what retelling the story was costing his lover.

“Lost at sea, the last of Ambrosios’ men died, leaving him as the only living Atlantean on the planet. To say he went insane would be an understatement. Ambrosios actually cut off his

own arm in an attempt to fashion a crude dagger out of the bones. He cursed the makeshift dagger with the congealed blood of his dead men while swearing to God to someday kill those responsible for the death of his beloved people.”

“That’s what they call the Dagger of the Beast?” Dominic asked. He’d always pictured an ornately carved bejeweled weapon.

Lu nodded. “I’m sure you’ve heard the idiom, I’d give my right arm for that? Well, Ambrosios coined the phrase, literally. He bled to death before he could fully finish the dagger. God, who had taken the entire population of Atlantis into Heaven, didn’t know what to do. Ambrosios’ heart was so full of hatred and bloodlust, God worried for the safety of the Archangels in Heaven...” Lu ducked his head, “and Hell. Eventually, God decided to place Ambrosios in The Volcano of Time. It really is the best place for him.”

Dominic reached out and cupped Lu’s face. “And now that you’ve told me, you’ll never be able to return to Heaven, will you?”

Lu shook his head. “I’ve been doing a lot of thinking. And I’ve come to the conclusion that my place is here. The world can think of me as a fallen Angel, but I know the truth. I’m here for a reason.” Lu actually grinned. “Besides, even if I went back to Heaven, man would never know. They have their stories and their fears, and that’s okay. I know who I am.”

Dominic swung his body over to sit next to Lu. He pulled his lover into his arms. “I think you’re right. You’re good for this place.” Dominic leaned in for a deep kiss. “And you’re good for me.”

Lu smiled and turned to straddle Dominic’s lap. Without a word, he fit Dominic’s cock into his still-stretched hole and wiggled his hips. “So, now that The City is free from Ambrosios’ threat, where are you taking me for dinner?”

* * * *

Dominic pulled Lu’s new bright red sports car in front of The Inferno and climbed out. “I think I’m going to have to get myself a bigger car. I feel like an old man when I have to twist my body out of the pretzel shape it takes to get in this thing.”

Lu stood on the sidewalk grinning from ear to ear. “But you look so damn sexy driving it.”

Dominic joined Lu and immediately kissed him. He was completely addicted to the man and didn’t give a shit who knew it. At least in The City, he didn’t have to hide his lustful

thoughts. Here he was free to act on them at will, and he'd found he loved that aspect of Hell.

Before breaking the kiss, Dominic reached down and groped Lu's cock through his dress pants. "Just don't forget who you came with once we get around all those young twink's."

Lu rolled his eyes. "As if."

Dominic let Lu lead the way through the crowd. He cringed when his lover stopped to give the big guy at the door, Andre, a kiss, but Lu had explained it meant nothing more than he cared about them. Dominic still had a few issues with jealousy, but at least he was man enough to admit it.

In his heart, he knew Lu belonged with him and would be going home with him at the end of the night. Still, it would be yet another thing he'd have to get used to.

"Stop pouting," Lu said over his shoulder, his hand squeezing Dominic's.

"I'm not pouting," Dominic argued.

Lu led them to the private alcove they'd sat at before. "I'm going to the restroom. Order me a Scotch."

"Want me to go with you?" Dominic asked. Even without the threat of Ambrosios, Dominic felt odd not protecting Lu from hidden danger.

Lu pulled Dominic into a kiss. "I need you to remember something. I'm the meanest, strongest motherfucker here. I can take care of myself long enough to go to the bathroom."

"You're not the meanest," Dominic mumbled.

Lu grinned. "Yes, but you're the only one who knows that. Don't ruin my reputation."

With those parting words, Lu strode off through the crowd. Dominic took a seat and ordered their drinks. A quick look at his watch had him heading back to the door.

"Andre, if you see Nick, send him back to Lu's table," he said in the doorman's ear.

"He the big blond guy you used to go around with?" Andre asked.

Dominic nodded before starting back into the club. As he fought to get through the crowd, he realized how much easier it was to travel with Lu on his arm. Out of nowhere, a hand reached out and squeezed his cock.

Dominic stopped in his tracks and turned to the man with narrowed eyes. "If you want to keep that hand, you'll remove it."

The man laughed and squeezed Dominic's cock once more. The guy was fucking huge and it was obvious he was used to getting his way by intimidating people with his size. "What're

you gonna do about it?”

The music overhead cut off and a gasp rippled through the crowd. Dominic glanced over to see Lu, two large balls of fire balanced easily in his hands. “You’re in the shit now, buddy,” Dominic told the guy.

“Hector, what have I told you about harassing people? If they want to give themselves to you, that’s one thing, but you are to never force yourself on someone. Got it? Perhaps a visit to Old Town would remind you.”

Hector immediately released Dominic and fell to his knees. “Please, Lu. I didn’t know he belonged to you. I won’t do it again. I promise. Those fuckers are crazy over there.”

Although Dominic knew the fire in Lu’s hands was an illusion, the fire in his eyes wasn’t. Lu was pissed, and Hector had a right to be scared. Dominic wanted to tell Lu he’d deal with it, but he also knew Lu needed to gain back some of the respect he’d probably lost for being out of circulation for so long.

The flames extinguished and Lu leaned down to grab Hector’s face in a tight grip, squishing his cheeks together. “I’ve almost ran out of patience with you, Hector. I’d suggest you make yourself scarce for a little while.”

Hector nodded. “Yes, Sir.”

Lu released the much bigger man and stepped back. “Get out of here.”

Hector scrambled to his feet and practically ran out of the club. Lu held out his hand and Dominic took it. “This is my partner!” Lu shouted to the room. “You will treat him with the same respect you show me. Am I clear?”

The crowd verbalized their acknowledgement. With a nod from Lu, the music began again.

“I can’t leave you alone for a second,” Lu chuckled, shaking his head.

When they returned to their alcove, Dominic leaned over to speak in Lu’s ear. “Does the music have to be so loud? Nick’s coming, and I’d like to talk to him without doing it like this all night.”

Lu waved his hand and the music lowered considerably. Dominic looked out onto the dance floor. The people didn’t seem to notice the difference. “How’d you do that?”

Lu shrugged. “We all hear what we want to hear.”

Dominic brushed a kiss across Lu’s lips before reaching for his glass of beer. “Would you

really send Hector to Old Town?”

“Of course I would. If people can’t respect the home they’ve been given, they don’t deserve it.”

Although Dominic had rarely seen this side of Lu, he understood it. “I guess that’s why you’re the boss.”

Lu kissed Dominic. “Compassion is one thing, but too much of it can send a society straight to Hell, so to speak.”

“Yeah. I get that.”

“So, did you invite Nick here tonight to talk about going into business together?” Lu asked, rubbing Dominic’s chest.

“Partially. I still haven’t quite figured it out, but I’ve got a few ideas.”

“Care to share?” Lu asked as he lowered his hand to caress Dominic’s growing erection.

Dominic shrugged. He hated sharing ideas before they were fully worked through in his head. “I don’t know. I was thinking The City could use another club. This one’s okay, but I’d think a place where people could dress up for a change might be nice.”

“You mean something with a little more class than jeans and T-shirts?” Lu seemed to think about it for a few seconds. “Actually, that might go over nicely.”

“Yeah, that’s kind of what I thought. Besides, if you have to be seen, I’d rather it was at my place. I’d feel a lot better if I could have more control over the environment.”

Lu grinned. “You could sit me on a pedestal so high no one could touch me.”

“Something like that,” Dominic agreed with a chuckle.

Dominic knew he needed to tell Lu who else he’d invited. He’d tried over dinner, but Lu had quickly changed the subject and climbed into his lap. “I told Nick to invite Baz.”

Lu stiffened and shook his head. “I’m not ready to see Baz.”

Dominic pulled Lu over to straddle his lap. He gazed into his lover’s eyes and kissed him. “I know you still feel betrayed by him, but you need to work through it. Baz worked for years to give you the second chance he felt you deserved. He loves you. Hell, he told me he worshipped you. You can’t just cut him out of your life. You’ll both end up miserable.”

Lu narrowed his eyes. “Since when are you Baz’s champion?”

“Since I found out the only reason he’s been in Hell all this time is because of you. He’s sacrificed a lot to do right by you, Lu. Give him the benefit of the doubt.”

Dominic spotted Nick approaching the alcove. "Please. Just try. I know in my heart you won't be happy again until Baz is back in your life."

Lu crossed his arms and slid off Dominic's lap. "I'll think about it."

Dominic stood to greet Nick, but Lu stayed in his seat, his arms still crossed. "Hey, buddy."

Nick shook Dominic's hand before sitting in one of the chairs. "How've you been?"

"Good." Dominic nudged Lu in the ribs.

"Good," Lu agreed. "Where's Baz?"

Dominic was surprised Lu asked. "I thought you were going to stop by his place and pick him up?"

Nick shook his head. "Baz isn't coming. He said if Lu was ready to see him, he would've called." Nick leaned forward, resting his arms on his knees. "He's a fucking mess. I don't think he's bothered to shower since the shit hit the fan."

Dominic discreetly watched Lu. Although Lu pretended to be unaffected by the news, Dominic could see the concern in his lover's eyes.

"I thought he'd go back to Heaven where he belongs," Lu mumbled.

"Yeah. I tried to convince him to go back, but he said after what he did to you, he belongs here," Nick told Lu.

Dominic could tell by the set of Nick's strong jaw his friend had also been affected by Baz's condition. It was easy to see that Nick was drawn toward the big Spartan; the two men just hadn't yet worked it out between them.

Lu let out a dramatic sigh and pulled his phone from his breast pocket. He gestured to the dance floor. "You two go and dance or something while I do this. The last thing I want is witnesses."

Dominic grinned and leaned over. "I love you."

Lu gave Dominic a deep kiss. "Remember that when you're dancing with Mr. Blond over there."

Dominic glanced at Nick. "Do we really have to dance?"

Lu nodded. "If I'm going to swallow my pride and call Baz, I want to watch the two of you dance."

"You're so devilish," Dominic teased.

“I know. It’s kind of my job,” Lu replied.

Dominic stood and gestured to the floor, writhing with people in all sorts of undress.

“Ready?”

Nick appeared as uncomfortable as Dominic but eventually stood and led the way.

Dominic pointed toward an open spot. Once there, Dominic put his arms around Nick. “Why doesn’t this feel natural?”

Nick chuckled. “Because you’ve been my boss for too long.”

Dominic nodded. “I didn’t want to ask around Lu, but I need the truth about something.”

“Okay,” Nick agreed.

“Did you know?” Dominic asked.

Nick’s spine straightened. “Not right away, but I knew something was up when I spotted Baz at the penthouse that first time.”

“How?”

Nick broke eye contact and stared over Dominic’s shoulder. “We were dating when Baz became obsessed with Lu in the first place. We had a huge knockdown, drag out fight over his decision to relocate here. When he decided to do it anyway, I told him I’d kill him if I ever saw him again.”

“So that’s why you reacted the way you did in the penthouse lobby?” Dominic asked.

Nick nodded. “I thought I was over him. I mean, come on, I had a lot of years to move on.”

“But you hadn’t,” Dominic surmised.

“Evidently, not entirely.”

“So are the two of you together now?” Dominic probed.

“No. I think there’s been too much said on both sides to work through it.”

Dominic wondered. “So why are you still here instead of back in Heaven?”

“I like it here,” Nick replied in a defensive tone.

Dominic didn’t buy it. “And?”

Nick sighed. “Okay. I’m still hoping to work things out with Baz, but don’t you dare say a word to Lu about it.”

Dominic could well imagine Nick and Baz back together. Although their body types were exactly the same, their coloring was remarkably different. Dominic figured they would make a

striking couple.

Dominic glanced across the room to Lu. His lover was still on the phone only he'd begun pacing the confines of the small alcove. "Do you think Baz and Lu can work out their issues?"

"They aren't Baz's issues. They're Lu's," Nick growled.

A bit surprised by his friend's vehemence, Dominic stared at Nick again. "You're still in love with Baz, huh?"

Nick shrugged. "Love doesn't mean shit if you can't be in the same room for more than ten minutes without fighting."

Lu stepped up behind Nick and tapped him on the shoulder. "I'm cutting in. Baz will be here in a few."

Nick nodded and stepped back. It was then Dominic realized the two of them hadn't even been touching each other. They'd merely been standing close enough to have a conversation on the crowded dance floor.

Dominic wrapped his arms around Lu and pulled him close. "I missed you."

"You did not."

"Did you get things worked out with Baz?" Dominic asked, insinuating his thigh between Lu's legs.

"Sort of. It'll take a while before I fully trust him again, but he knows that." Lu ground his cock against Dominic's thigh.

Dominic let Lu ride, applying even more pressure. The expression on his lover's face was priceless as Lu began bucking his hips, fucking Dominic's leg.

"Shit!" Dominic swore when Lu's hand wrapped around his cock. He glanced down long enough to see his pants spread open, held up only by the contact with Lu's groin. Dominic lifted Lu's ass long enough to slip three fingers inside his lover's hole.

"Harder," Lu cried as Dominic began fucking him with his hand.

Dominic knew what he wanted, and it wasn't to make love to Lu in the middle of a crowd. He hoisted Lu higher against him. "Wrap your legs around me and pull my pants back up so I don't trip."

Lu complied and Dominic carried Lu back to the alcove. He spotted Baz and nodded. "Excuse us for a moment."

Baz smiled and waved away Dominic's excuse.

Dominic sat on the sofa and lowered Lu to his cock. "Fuck yourself, babe."

Lu braced his hands on Dominic's shoulders and his feet on the couch as he went wild. Dominic had a feeling it was Lu's way of releasing the tension he'd been carrying since he'd found out about Baz's part in the "test".

Dominic placed his hands on Lu's ass and spread his lover's cheeks apart, giving Lu more room to slide down the length of Dominic's cock. He glanced up and noticed Nick and Baz enjoying the show.

Once again, Dominic was surprised at himself for allowing such a thing. Only a short time ago, he would have been appalled if he'd seen such a display in a club, and now he was the one doing it.

Lu's exuberance outweighed any reservations he may have had. The man seemed to thrive on the attention he garnered with his exhibitionism. Dominic ran a finger over the stretched skin surrounding Lu's hole.

"That feel good, baby?" he asked his partner.

In answer, Lu bowed his back and braced his hands behind him on Dominic's knees. "For you," he cried as his cock erupted with thick strands of cum. The splash of Lu's seed painted Dominic's chest and face as it continued to pump from Lu's dick.

Dominic quickly opened his mouth, catching a few drops on his tongue. He heard a deep groan coming from Nick. Dominic glanced toward his friend and smiled. The usually conservative Nick had his hand on the front of his pants, kneading his cock.

"Welcome to The City," he said loud enough for Nick to hear.

About the Author

An avid reader for years, one day Carol Lynne decided to write her own brand of erotic romance. Carol juggles life as a full-time mom and a full-time writer. These days, you can usually find her either cleaning jelly out of the carpet or nestled in her favorite chair writing steamy love scenes.

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Extinction

Professor of Environmental Science/Wildlife studies at UNLV, Jack McBain has spent his adult life trying to track a legend overheard during his youth. Born and raised in the Canadian Province of Newfoundland, Jack remembers his grandparents telling stories of a race of people eradicated by European settlers in 1829. According to the legend, the Beothuk people didn't die out as first thought, but were transformed into wolf shifters.

When Newfoundland wolves began to appear in great numbers, the European settlers began killing them under the guise of population control. In 1910, the last of the Newfoundland wolves was shot, making them one of the few extinct species of wolves in the world.

Following spotty leads, Jack begins to track what he believes are Beothuk/Newfoundland shifter wolves. His search leads him to the Lake Mead National Recreational Area outside of Las Vegas. There, on Spirit Mountain, he finally comes face to face with not only the shifter he's been looking for, but the man of his dreams he didn't know he needed.

Retribution

Three lonely souls find each other in the midst of an all out war between the shifters and the Hunters.

Mother Earth gave Ryker Allen rebirth over a century ago, his main purpose to protect Mother's shifter children. Ryker has never begrudged his duties, but the loneliness is something he'll never get used to.

Daniel was the King of the Coyotes until a mistake led to the decimation of his species. Alone and half-dead, he was taken in by a pack of wolf shifters as a pet for the Alpha's mate. When he's given a chance to live as an Alpha once again, he's reluctant to accept, afraid he's no longer worthy to lead.

Hakan is the son of Father Sky. He was awarded rebirth over a thousand years ago to protect the Native American Bird Shifters. When animosity towards Native Americans escalated, Hakan's charges took to the sky permanently, leaving him without a purpose. He's lived his long life alone, waiting for the day he can once again serve his Father.

Three men, three very different backgrounds, one thing in common. Loneliness. Can these three souls come together to form a family?

Evolution

Jarek, a young cougar shifter, arrives at Refuge full of hope. He is finally in a place where he can have a lover and his first-ever home. Meeting Mica feels like icing on the cake, but his dreams are quickly shattered by a night of pain and violence at the hands of his Alpha.

Mica, a stone man, is trying to get his emotions under control. He likes Jarek, but isn't sure what to do with the overwhelming lust he feels whenever Jarek is near. After the two of them are caught in a compromising position, Jarek goes missing, and Mica will do anything in his power to track him down.

Suni, the true-blue Alpha of the cougars, doesn't want anything to do with the rest of his kind. He is perfectly content to live out his life in seclusion. When he stumbles across a young cougar shifter near death, he realizes he's found his mate. When Jarek regains consciousness and tells Suni about Mica, the true Alpha is left wondering where he'll fit in.

Three men, one who wants to feel, one who doesn't know how to feel, and one who refuses to feel, come together on the side of a mountain. The resulting clash of personalities and sexually charged energy will change their lives forever.

Resolution

After an attempt on their lives by an unknown group, the bird shifters are forced to seek shelter at Refuge. Having spent years in their bird-skin, the adjustment for some isn't easy.

Bird shifters Takoda and Enapay have been best friends for years. Enapay knows Takoda is his chosen mate, but Takoda refuses to consider a life living in his man-skin. When Enapay starts to work closely with Dr. Gray Whitmore, he can't understand his overwhelming attraction to the human.

With Takoda's continued rebuffs, Enapay finally gives into his desire for Gray. It is soon apparent, Gray was meant to be Enapay's mate. But when Takoda's health takes a turn for the worse, old feelings resurface. Enapay is left wondering why Father Sky gifted him with two mates, especially when one of them still refuses to live as a man.

***Also Available from
Resplendence Publishing***

***In For a Penny* by Carol Lynne**

What's the old saying...you can never go home again? Raven Black resigned himself to never returning after being ordered from the only real home he'd ever known. Now, seven years later, Raven is back to face the man who sent him away.

Zane Conner is not only Raven's foster brother but the only man Raven ever loved. Despite his mixed feelings about the situation, Raven can't deny Zane when the older man asks for his help in saving the Lazy C Bar Ranch. A boy found dead on the ranch clinches Raven's decision.

Why did the young boy look so much like he had at that age—the same age he'd been when his own father had beaten him and left him for dead?

***Tropical Hedonism* by Dakota Rebel**

After a boating accident, Sean Harris wakes up staring into the eyes of a handsome doctor. Even when he discovers that he is on an island within the Bermuda Triangle, and there is no way for him to get back to his old life, he can't be too disappointed if it means being stuck with the doctor.

Dr. Wesley Carpenter cannot believe that the younger Sean Harris would want anything to do with him. After half-heartedly turning down the advances of his patient, he realizes that resistance is futile.

The men find themselves falling for each other quickly, but ghosts from their pasts and outside influences try to get in the way of their happiness. Sean and Wesley may be on the island forever, but neither is sure if that guarantees they'll be able to continue their *Tropical Hedonism*.

***Mind F*cked* by Mia Watts**

Sage has the ability to read minds, but only in high passion moments when thoughts transmit at a higher frequency. But the gift is double-edged. Sage is inordinately handsome. Some might even say he's a walking orgasm. So what's a half-breed to do when every person he meets seems intent on seducing him, and how will he know if the man he chooses will love him for more than his looks?

Joe has never been the object of anyone's lust before. Now Sage, the hottest guy he's ever laid eyes on, has Joe starring in his sexual fantasies. It would be perfect if only Sage could shut up for one minute, and quit talking about his own hotness—or about how he can read minds.

Meanwhile, Joe and Sage must secure the last three Zodiac Stones and prevent their theft while they wait for exhibition. Can they put their sexual tension aside long enough to stop a clever thief? And even if they do, will Joe's heart be a casualty of their inevitable fling, or could Sage really be looking for more than a one-night stand?

***Saving Noah* by Carol Lynne and Cash Cole**

Dexter Krispin arrived in the small Kansas town of Schicksal with one thing on his mind: finishing his doctoral thesis. He hoped getting away from his hectic life in Pittsburgh would allow him to concentrate on the long overdue paper and to forget about his last lover.

Life-long Schicksal resident, Noah Stoffel, has managed to keep his sexuality a secret. Yet, after one look at the dark-haired newcomer, he knows his life in the sleepy town will never be the same.

But more than Noah's desire for privacy stands between him and Dexter. For years, the residents of Schicksal have been hiding a horrific secret, one that takes Dexter mere days to uncover and expose...a secret that could destroy—or heal—they all.

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