

The Eternal War Series:
The Lost Pages
Sampler

Holly Vane

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Introduction

Reckoning, the fourth book in the Eternal War series, took a year and six months of my life. It is the biggest novel I've ever wrote and over that time I amassed quite a lot of material.

A friend of mine thought you might like to delve deeper into Holly's story, so I've put this special ebook together. Its not a novel but every little scrap, scene or note that didn't make Reckoning' final cut. Due to length, file size restrictions, or plain just didn't fit right with the rest of the book you'll find it all here.

Most of the pages contained within never got past the drafting phase and will not be up to the standards of a novel, but sometimes its nice to see a story such as Holly's in raw form.

Some will say that they abruptly end and that I'm teasing but quite honestly its all I wrote in that particular draft. Please don't expect a novel but individual and unfinished little diamonds in the rough.

Holly.

Past & Present

This was one of the earlier drafts featuring Colt. In this short scrap Lucifer had been imprisoned by Gabriel and Michael for helping Holly. For once Satan had chose another path; his son over vengeance.

One

Colt Prince's laughter carried on the light evening breeze. "My money's on Lizzie guys." He proclaimed with a smirk while watching the cat fight spill all over the parking lot.

"I've got ten on Tricia." Benny Bean exclaimed excitedly, shoving his money at an amused Colt. "God these girls are brutal." He added after Lizzie literally pulled a chunk of Tricia's Brown curly hair from her scalp. The other girl roared and leapt at Lizzie like a coiled jaguar, the two girls rolled over the tarmac.

"Hey Asia, care to make a wager?" Colt asked the tall sultry-looking Goddess walking past, she momentarily paused to eye the fight.

Asia Austin gave Colt a disgusted glare. "Pathetic Colt." His mischievous grin widened. "You girls should save the violence for the one who really deserves it." She called out to them. "Andrea will have your ass if she catches you." Asia added turning back to Colt when the girls carried on slugging each other.

"He's mine bitch!" Lizzie threw at Tricia.

"Please, I can handle Andrea." He retorted. Asia sighed and carried on to the gym of St. Heralds campus. The Spring dance was well under way with music throbbing out the doors, but Colt was having more of a good time out here, watching the cat fight.

"He doesn't have your name written across his forehead, whore!" Tricia yelled slamming Lizzie's head off a nearby car hood.

"Ouch!" Colt exclaimed while his buddies cheered, "that'll leave a mark tomorrow."

"Maybe we should break it up," Jack Ryans asked meekly, "before they kill each other?"

"They can take it." Colt responded.

"I think Jack's right." The female voice made Colt grimace and his happy grin slipped. He turned to see St. Heralds Headmistress behind him. Andrea glared with Green eyes full of fury, disappointment and dismay. It served her right, she expected too much of him. All Colt wanted to do was have fun and lark around, not try to live up to the standards that the world held him to. Colt Prince wasn't his Father.

Benny, Jack and Francis obeyed Andrea immediately, dragging Lizzie off Tricia, both girls looked like road kill. "Take them to nurse Cliff, she'll be inside." The boys half dragged, half carried the girls inside the gym, looking like frightened rabbits. Andrea held her hand out.

"What?"

Andrea sighed, "the money Colt. You know gambling is prohibited on campus, hand it over." Grudgingly he obeyed, placing the wad of bills in her palm. "Those girls could have severely injured each other Colt, the callousness you show is..."

"Save it Andrea." He interrupted throwing his White Carnation on the ground. "I can't take another of your sermons." Colt started to walk to his Mustang, tugging off his tux jacket as he went.

"Don't you walk away from me..." Andrea bellowed.

"You're not my Mother!" Colt shouted back, taking joy in the pain his words caused. He discarded the jacket in the back seat and slammed the driver's door. Andrea's voice was

drowned out by Nickleback.

"He's a twisted trickster." Asia commented, coming up behind the Headmistress. "Nurse Cliff wanted you to know the girls will be fine, after a few ice packs that is."

"What did you call him?" Andrea asked watching the Mustang peel out the parking lot in a vapour of White smoke.

"He's a messed up heart throb, girls can't resist him. That tortured thing he's got going on really gets them going. Plus his celebrity status doesn't hurt.. not that I'm into that kind of thing." Asia added on seeing Andrea's raised brows. "I'm just saying..."

"He just needs to accept who he is."

"if you were him, would you?" Asia asked before going back inside the gym. Andrea watched her go, wishing she could say yes.

Colt Prince however didn't get far. As he was pulling out of campus a stupid and blind waste of space resembling Seth Collins rolled over his hood. "Son of a bitch!" Colt cursed as the brakes squealed out in protest. "Mother fucker..." Colt uttered getting out the car. "What the hell you playing at?" He hollared as Seth Collins picked himself up.

"Behind you!" A girl's voice rang out and Colt pivoted, narrowly avoiding a blade. The knife caught the wing of the car as the man welding it lost his balance and face planted the Mustang's hood, leaving a dent in the metal.

Colt saw Red at the damage done to his pride and joy, the man swung at him wildly and Colt avoided it easily, grabbing the attacker's wrist Colt twisted and heard the bones crack. The knife fell from the man's broken hand and his howls of pain filled the air. A well placed boot to the face ended the scum's screams. "What the..." Colt said to himself looking around at the chaos.

The men, armed with baseball bats, knives, crowbars and chains, seemed to form out the night itself. Two were man handling Seth but it wasn't him Colt was concerned about. Sophie Harrogate, the girl who had called out the warning, had been shoved down onto the ground, a gorilla of a man towered over her, metal gleamed in the moonlight. "Sophie!"

There was pure panic in Colt's tone as he called out her name, he hadn't realised he'd moved until Colt found himself shoving the man away from Sophie, stooping down he helped her up. "Are you okay?"

"Fine." She replied flashing him a smile despite their situation. The gorilla returned launching himself at Colt who sensed him coming and stepped out of the brute's path.

"What's going on?" He asked Sophie, again the gorilla collected himself but seemed to have learned from past mistakes. This time he circled them eyeing Colt up. More men emerged from the dark. They all sported the same Demin cut-offs and reminded Colt of a cult but none flourished in this new world except for the rebellion. And even its days were numbered.

The man caught Colt lost in his thoughts, he landed a punch that landed firmly on the jaw and Colt staggered back. A bolt of lightning flashed across the night sky without warning making Sophie start. Rain lashed the earth without mercy. Colt rubbed his jaw, annoyed at being caught napping. The familiar sensation of fury flowed through his veins, knocking something very old and very rare that he had inherited from his parents, loose; his power.

The gorilla stepped back and his smug grin vanished as crimson flashed in Colt's eyes. Inside he felt on fire, like liquid nitrogen was flowing instead of blood. Colt smiled before launching a pure ball of fire at the gorilla. He screamed and ran around, trying to douse the flames, that hungrily licked every part of him till there was nought but ash left. The gorilla's comrades in arms suspended all acts of violence, watching their companion burn.

As if someone clicked their fingers the men took off, fleeing for safety. Colt could have let them go, but his power was all consuming when it took over like this. Begging for blood, it wouldn't be denied and Colt, ever its slave was helpless to stop it. Screams filled the night and could be heard even over the lightning, that repeatedly stabbed the ground with a fury never before seen.

The dark inside of Colt had been unleashed.

Sophie Harrogate had never feared Colt Prince, sure she had heard the stories, just as everyone else had, but never once had she believed them. Until now.

Colt stood still beside her, almost like he'd become frozen. The ground beneath her sneakers trembled like an earthquake, and yet she knew it wasn't Mother Nature rocking the earth. It was Colt.

Their attackers had fled into the night like cowards, but their wailing was enough to make Sophie clamp her hands over her ears. She had never heard suffering like that. The screams rose in pitch as the Red that invaded Colt's eyes flooded his pupils till it dominated all other colours. Colt Prince was somewhere else entirely.

Just when Sophie couldn't take any more Seth grabbed Colt and shook him hard. "Stop it!" He demanded. Colt eyed him like he would garbage and Sophie fearing what he might do joined Seth.

"Colt please!" She pleaded, "listen to him."

The darkness within Colt receded and once more he was her Colt. Her Prince again. "Thank God..." Sophie whispered, throwing her arms around him, willing her pounding heart to slow.

"The stories really are true." Seth said with bitterness and dislike in his voice. Sophie felt Colt pull away and only held him tighter.

"Stop. Both of you. This is the time for your petty bickering." She scolded finally releasing Colt. "We should get out of here. Whatever you did to them, I don't fancy being the one to explain it. Let's go." She got in the front seat of the dented Mustang and waited for the boys to follow.

Colt followed Spring Road and joined the interstate. Sophie couldn't resist sneaking looks at him in the driver seat. Every time Sophie saw him it was like seeing him for the first time again. The butterflies stirred in the pit of her stomach and drowned out everything but Colt Prince. They said he had his Father's looks, that silky mane of raven hair that fell in waves to his broad shoulders, those cheekbones that looked like they had been chiselled from stone, dark stormy eyes that were as turbulent as the North sea in winter, all said to be Dominic's. Sophie could appreciate the utter devastating desire Holly Adams must have felt if Colt's Father really had looked this perfect. There was no way you could fight such a force.

Of course all this Sophie kept to herself. He might look flawless but Colt's soul was far from beautiful. It pained her to see him tormented like this, so far from the man he could and should be. He thought of women purely as a form of entertainment, and Sophie had more respect for herself than to let Colt use her like that. But still her passion overwhelmed her mortal body sometimes. Especially when Sophie denied herself of him, which she had been doing for years. Colt Prince always hit her like a sledge hammer.

Abruptly the Mustang swung off the Interstate and squealed to a stop. Colt got out the car and walked to the edge of the grass bank. Traffic whizzed past, at odds with the calm vast space of dark Blue that stretched out before him.

Sophie quickly followed, while Seth dragged behind, worry aged her face prematurely. "What is it?"

Colt turned to her. "You owe me an explanation. What was that back there?"

"We owe you nothing." Seth spat before she could answer. Sophie saw Colt's dangerous eyes settle on the younger boy.

"I just saved your life, I think I deserve..."

"That's all you think." Seth interrupted. Sophie was shocked to see Seth squaring up to Colt like this. "You think you're entitled to anything you bloody want."

"Stop it!" Sophie demanded with such anger they both turned to her. "I'm sick of this." She paced. "Seth, he did help us, maybe he can be trusted..."

"No." Seth said firmly, his Blue eyes pleading with her to stay silent. "We need to go." He walked off down the grass but stopped when Sophie didn't follow.

Sophie Harrogate was a girl caught in the middle of a rock and a hard place. It had always been that way. She told herself it was for the best, for the burden she carried to remain hers alone, it was too dangerous to involve anyone else, but Sophie was wary and her conviction floundered. Colt had a right to know the truth, didn't he?

Sophie gave Seth an apologetic shrug and began to speak. "Colt you have..." that was all she could manage before a sharp sting stole her words. Sophie looked down to see a long thin weapon, that resembled a big needle, sticking out her stomach. Blood soaked her sweater within minutes. Sophie grabbed the thing with both hands intending to pull it out, but she had lost mobility. Her hands wouldn't respond. She glanced up with shock and pain.

Colt Prince's horrified face was the last thing Sophie Harrogate saw in this world.

Two

Rain pelleted the side walk and pinged off the hood of the Black Rolls Royce as it pulled to a stop outside Mercy Hospital. It was as if the heavens were mourning the death of Sophie Harrogate.

Gabriel shook his head sharply, as if to rid himself of the unwanted notion. Sentimentality was a weakness he couldn't afford. Not now. Now he must play his part perfectly. None could suspect. The door opened and the cold, wet air invaded the interior of the car like a whirlwind. Pulling his rain coat tighter, Gabriel got out the Royce.

Mercy Hospital was the last functioning hospital within the city limits. When he had done away with crime, there wasn't much need for emergency treatment. Mortals still got sick and injured themselves, but the vast and by far superior medical knowledge and capabilities Gabriel had introduced since coming into power, cured those that could be. The reign of the Angels saw mortals living well in to their hundreds.

Mercy had been saved as more of a dedication to the past than for its actual use. The building showed its age. Stone Gargoyles with menacing expressions and sharp claws stared down at him. Gabriel had never cared for the humans love of these troubling things. The stone that made up the hospital was crumbling in places and had become mossy and damp with time. As he started up the steep ramp two nurses passed, falling into a stunned silence at seeing the Crown.

Inside was as hope free as the exterior. Ageing Black and White lino squeaked as Gabriel walked across it. The chatter of the poor souls sitting in the uncomfortable plastic chairs abated as they noticed him.

"My Crown," a middle aged woman in a White long dress said, bowing her head in respect. "This way." She lead Gabriel into a corridor that smelled of bleach and something else unpleasant. The woman opened a door to her right and he heard his Grandson's voice.

"Ow! Will you stop! I'm fine, stop fussing."

"Colt." Gabriel's voice was as mesmerizing as a symphony, even when raised. "That's no way to talk to someone who is only trying to help you."

Colt Prince's red and tired eyes travelled over to the door than stayed focused on the tiled floor. Gabriel's heart ached at seeing his Grandson's grief. It was etched into his body like initials in tree bark. "Please excuse us." Gabriel said to the nurse who smiled before leaving the tiny treatment room. He crossed over to the bed which was propping up a haunted looking Colt, and sat down on it, next to him. "I'm so sorry Colt."

Colt managed a thin smile. "Thank you. Have they caught the murderer?"

"No."

This seemed to bring back a little bit of life and Colt heaved himself away from the bed. "Whoever it was wasn't your average run of the mill. I didn't see it coming Gabriel. I didn't feel them..."

"Colt," Gabriel interrupted knowing where Colt was going with it and couldn't bear to see the boy put the girl's death firmly on his own shoulders. "You only turned eighteen two days ago. Your still learning and even you can't sense every little thing..."

"But I can Grandfather! I can feel when Angels are near. An Immortal can't get within two miles of me without my spider sense tingling. I should have felt the murderer long before he got within reach of Sophie."

"Then just maybe the killer was mortal."

Colt threw him a disgusted glare while pacing the floor. "Please, they breathe so loud you don't have to sense them. I'm telling you I felt nothing. How is that possible?"

Grandfather?"

Gabriel stared at the angry looking cut on Colt's right cheek. "How did you get that?"

"Its nothing."

"Its deep enough to require stitches. What happened?" Gabriel tried to keep his voice light and expression neutral but fell short.

"The bullet grazed my cheek before..." Colt trailed off unable to actually say it.

"But you told the Watchers that you had you're back to the ocean."

"Exactly Gabriel. Whoever fired that shot had to be on the other side of town, they had to be on West pier, miles away from where we were. It just doesn't sound possible, who could pull off something like that? And since it was clearly an Immortal why not just use their power to... and why go after Sophie at all?" Colt ran his fingers through his hair. "It just doesn't make sense, who would want Sophie dead?"

Gabriel rose abruptly, motioning to his driver that had followed him. "You've been through a lot Colt. You need some rest, Bernard here will take you home."

"Aren't you coming?"

Gabriel smiled before embracing Colt warmly. "There hasn't been a murder in fifteen years Colt. I'm needed here, I'll be home as soon I can. Go on." Colt nodded and followed Bernard outside. The Angel had to literally prop Colt up at one point.

"It was sheer bad luck that he was there." A deep booming tone said behind Gabriel, breaking through his thoughts. Gabriel's smile and compassion died, when he turned to face the speaker, Gabriel was all business.

"Lets get this over with." He said. The two Angels took off down the corridor.

"Seth Collins was also present." The other Angel began, handing Gabriel a manilla folder. "He's being treated for shock. I bet our favourite Headmistress will be by shortly to pick him up." Resentment entered the Angel's tone.

They passed a sad looking waiting room and Gabriel's Golden eyes found Seth's. The sixteen year old had the same look Gabriel had seen on countless wounded soldiers; dazed and lost. Yet although the Crown had pity for these men, he had none for Seth and animosity filled him.

The Angel marched through the swing doors that led to the morgue, holding the door for Gabriel. They found themselves in a cold and depressing room filled with the dead. A body under a White sheet was positioned on a metal slab in front of them. The Angel pulled back the sheet to unveil the dead face of Sophie Harrogate.

"Has her identity been confirmed?" Gabriel asked ruffling through the pages in the folder, careful not to look at the dead girl.

The Angel raised his brows.

"We have to be thorough." Gabriel told him with a hint of annoyance.

"Both DNA testing and Dental confirms its Sophie Harrogate Gabriel." The Angel breathed tiredly.

"See? That didn't hurt, did it Brother?" Gabriel shot, closing the folder he finally allowed himself a glance at the dead girl. He could see why Colt was so mad about her, she had been very pretty. "I wish there could have been another way." He uttered.

"You did what had to be done." The other Angel told him. "She was a traitor..."

"Colt loved her."

The other Angel mocked the comment. "There's plenty women in the world."

Gabriel studied his Brother, time and duty had taken its toll on the Archangel. His broad shoulders sagged a little, his wavy hair had started to turn Grey and the Angel's eyes were constantly filled with anger. Michael had always been the outsider, ever eager to please Father, eager to play the dutiful son when he truth Michael's real talent lay in being a blunt

instrument for others to use. War was Michael's gift. "Spoken like someone who has never been in love." Gabriel commented sadly. "What of Griff?"

"He's waiting at the rendezvous right now. I'm going over there when I'm done here. Say what you like about him but he's one hell of a shot." Michael added with a touch of respect.

"He employed the Order of Aurelius to attack her on school grounds..."

Just like that Gabriel changed. Michael had seen it more and more in the days leading up to the war that had changed the course of this universe, had realized that the Brother he had loved and lost was still dead. This Gabriel was harsher, cruel and bloody brilliant, the way he had planned everything, saw every little line of fault before it happened. Gabriel was a master at deception and not someone Michael would want to cross.

"He had no choice." Michael argued.

Gabriel's eyes blazed colder than the Arctic. "He touched Colt and that is something I don't forgive easily."

"He had to take the shot before Sophie fled! It was just a flesh wound, Colt's fine."

"Michael. Griff dies."

Realization hit the Archangel like a fist and once again he was flabbergasted by how little he knew his Brother. "That was always the plan, wasn't it?" He demanded. "He doesn't know anything! This cannot be traced back to you, I made sure of it Gabe."

"Listen to me very carefully," Gabriel ordered quietly and the room seemed to grow colder, "I haven't built all this to see it demolished by a lowly assassin. Griff knows enough, he does not leave this City alive and you Michael, as my General, who swore an oath to keep this empire safe, will do as I command, do you understand me? This is not a democracy."

Michael did not admit fear easily, but Gabriel was the only thing that did frighten him. He exhaled heavily and as proud as he was, admitted defeat. "It will be done."

"Good." Gabriel swept from the room but paused before he exited.

"And Michael, make it a painful one."

Three

Andrea watched the rain run down the window pane. Inside she felt as breakable as the glass but now was not the time to show the chink in her armour. Seth had clammed up and Colt was back in the clutches of Gabriel.

"What are you doing? Summoning me here like this." The masculine voice invaded the stillness of Sophie Harrogate's room. Andrea turned from the window.

"Sophie's dead."

"I know." The voice replied. "Her loss is a sad one but it has forced the Crown into risky action."

Andrea laughed out loud, but it was a noise devoid of humour. "Gabriel does not act rashly. He'll have covered his tracks flawlessly."

Mitch Peregrine stepped into the moonlight. The leader of the resistance looked as ruff as he's old leather coat. He had once been a handsome young man who lived to serve his country and paint balling. That life had all but disappeared and forced to rally some kind of rebellion against the Angel's rein had taken its toll on Mitch. He had lost his wife and young children to the war, their loss was reflected in his cold eyes. "He hired the assassin Griff, who in turn employed the Aurelius nuts when he learned of Colt's interest in Sophie. They attacked her and Seth on campus tonight." Andrea's slender jaw dropped at the news. "Colt's intervention saved them, but unfortunately he only prolonged Sophie's life by thirty minutes."

"Jesus..." Andrea knew how low Gabriel was prepared to go to keep his kingdom, but going after Colt's heart and soul was a low Andrea thought Gabriel wouldn't sink to. She had been proved wrong. "We have to get Colt away from him Mitch..."

"You've had the past ten years to do that Andrea. Colt's loyalty to Gabriel has proved to be stronger than we thought."

"He needs to learn the truth..." Andrea made to leave but Mitch caught her arm.

"You would tell him everything? I thought that wasn't an option for you."

Andrea tore away. "It wasn't but what else can I do? Gabriel has shown that he has no regard for his Grandson, I have to get Colt far away..."

"Gabriel would have you killed for treason before he lets you do that. Its suicide."

"What else are we going to do?" Andrea demanded. "Gabriel has grown too powerful, and with Michael by his side its impossible to get to him. Your rebellion is taking casualties daily. We are out of time Mitch. Colt is the only one powerful enough to go against them."

"You'd be breaking the promise you made to Holly." Mitch's words cut through Andrea deeper than a blade. "Not only would you be turning Colt's world upside down, you'd be leaving him alone to take on Gabriel, something Holly would never forgive you for."

"What do you want me to do?" Andrea hissed, desperation settling over her like a grey cloud. "Stand aside and do nothing! Watch Gabriel corrupt and use everything I love until one day he decides to be merciful and ends my torment?" She had said too much, knew it by the look on Mitch's scarred face, it wasn't wise to show your true feelings, they were always used against you.

Her position was one of suffering. Holly had placed Colt's care firmly in her hands. Holly had entrusted Andrea with the most precious thing she had had in her life, and Andrea had failed. Gabriel's lure and lies had won Colt over and Andrea had been forced to watch the boy she loved grow up into a twisted, tormented and haunted young man under Gabriel's influence.

"There's always another way Andrea." Mitch whispered. "We've found him."

Andrea's head snapped up. "What?"

"They move him around a lot." Mitch continued. "Never keeping him in the same place for more than a few days. But all our patience and diligence has finally paid off. He's in New York."

For the first time in a long while Andrea had something to smile about. "Are you positive?"

"A hundred percent positive." Mitch answered, "we keep tabs on the places he has been. My men saw them cart him in twelve hours ago. Michael himself was present."

"And that's nearly proof enough." Andrea added. "Where in New York?"

"The Garden of course. Michael has transformed that place into a fortress. Angels are posted on every roof top within a two block radius, as well as on the ground. It'll be near impossible to break in without being seen."

"Have you actually seen him?" Andrea asked her smile fading, "it could be just another decoy."

"Not seen him, no, but I've heard him. Whatever they're doing to him it doesn't sound good Andrea."

"They're torturing him?" The Headmistress gasped, shocked that Gabriel would inflict punishment on one of his own, a Brother he had been particularly close to.

Mitch nodded solemnly. "And there's only one reason why Gabriel would risk keeping an Immortal as powerful as he alive."

"They want the stone." Andrea finished. "I can't believe he's held out all this time. Michael is very skilled in making people talk."

"He is Lucifer." Mitch smirked, "it must be hell trying to torture the Angel who invented the word, but still after two years Andrea, you gotta believe he can't keep it up much longer."

"Clearly you don't know Lucifer." Andrea retorted. "But still...we have to get him out. He'll be enough to sway Colt."

"And he'll lead us to the stone. That's game over for Gabriel."

Andrea tried to share Mitch's new found hope but there was no way they could possible use the stone against Gabriel. The last time it had been used it nearly destroyed the world. It was too powerful to be let out, no matter how much Andrea wanted to. But it would still be a very persuasive bargaining tool. It was the only thing Gabriel feared; his reckoning. But first thing was first they had to get Lucifer out.

"I presume you have a plan..."

Four

"I thought you'd be asleep." Gabriel's voice sounded eerie in the lonely rose garden. It was three in the morning and the rain had finally eased. Colt stood on the bottom step staring off into the garden.

"I tried," he answered in a tone that wasn't as strong as it usually was. "Every time I close my eyes I see her."

Gabriel was aware that he had destroyed his Grandson's one chance at salvation, the way he had Lucifer's and told himself it had needed to be done. Sophie had been a threat to everything he held dear.

Gabriel was about to open his mouth to speak when he caught a movement out the corner of his eye. A girl walked in garden, temporarily disappearing behind the hedges. Gabriel's heart raced and he willed her to leave him be. Holly Adams came out from the hedge looking like she had the day she had died. Her mass of dark curls snaked down her body and her Blue eyes bore into him accusingly.

"It gets easier." Gabriel found himself saying, unable to take his eyes off the apparition stalking him. She haunted his dreams and had recently stayed with him when he woke. Gabriel knew Holly wasn't really there, it was his guilt holding onto her and he wished he knew how to break free.

He was faintly aware of Colt saying something and when Gabriel finally managed to drag his eyes off the ghost he saw Colt climbing the steps. Michael appeared at the top and mussed Colt's hair, giving him a warm smile which Colt returned before disappearing inside.

"Its done. Griff did not die well."

"Its about time Lucifer did the same." Gabriel snapped before following Colt. Leaving Michael stunned at the bottom of the steps. No matter how hard he tried to please the Crown, he always found himself doing the opposite.

Colt Prince had rubbed his skin raw in the boiling hot shower he had had upon returning from hospital. He had dropped onto his bed and cried, eventually waking up to utter darkness. His restless slumber was disturbed with images of Sophie. Her face as they both glanced down at the blood seeping through her sweater... Colt knew sleep wouldn't come easy, and rather than face these images he had gone down to the garden.

Gabriel loved that garden. The smell of all those roses mixed in the air like perfume, somehow Colt associated the smell with his Mother. The rose garden always brought him peace but tonight it's charms had failed him.

Tugging on his leather jacket Colt left his room and stealthy made his way through the hollow but impressive hallways of the coliseum. When war had broke out between Immortals and mortals the White House had been the first casualty. Guess Immortals saw it as a sign of the humans strength and stuck at it with the intent to destroy. They had succeeded. Now all these years later the coliseum rose from the ashes of the White House like a Phoenix.

Re-forged and impressive as ever. Gabriel had chose this location to house the new Power. Colt had grown up within its walls, finding out all the buildings secrets, like his Grandfather's secret library which lay behind a trap door in his room. Colt had spent countless nights reading through all the books he found in there. All referred to the war but every single book or parchment had contradicting facts. It was like no one could really recall it. Even Colt who had only been three at the time, found his limited memories fading with every passing day.

He knew home like the back of his hand so didn't find it hard to sneak out, unseen.

Colt had no idea where he was heading, he just needed to do something, anything that would take his mind off tonight's events. Tommy's on 44th always provided a great distraction. Colt zipped up his jacket as he emerged from the servant quarters and dashed for the big, black railings that he launched himself over.

Pleased that he had made it out undetected Colt allowed a slight grin to play on his lips, a grin that vanished when a bag was yanked over his head and darkness engulfed him.

When Colt Prince came to, darkness was still all he saw. His first thought was that he was dead and this was afterlife, but hushed voices began to shift the mind-numbing fog that clouded his head.

Colt tried to focus on what they were saying but the throbbing pain at the base of his neck made it impossible. He tried to move but rope cut into the skin around his wrists. "Whoever you are I'm going to hurt you badly," Colt warned trying to get himself free, "if you'll just give me a minute."

The bag was removed before Colt could use his power and his eyes settled on Andrea's face. The Founder of St.Heralds looked slightly dishevelled. Her normally immaculate appearance was marred by a rumpled Green blouse and her straight Blonde hair had broken free of its bonds and jutted out at funny angles. "Andrea?" He uttered totally mystified, "have you lost you're mind?"

Andrea gave him a tight smile, "maybe."

Colt took in his surroundings. Another man that felt strangely familiar hung back, half hidden in shadows, but with his enhanced Supernatural eyesight Colt could see clearly in the dim light that descended from the ceiling. He was in what looked to be some kind of room. Old Brick surrounded him while water dripped from broken pipes overhead, above came the rumblings of trains.

"Colt," Andrea started taking a deep breath, "I need you to hear me out, we don't have much time."

"What did you hit me with?" He interrupted as the throbbing got worse.

Andrea grimaced, "a steel pipe. I'm sorry it had to be done, I needed you to come with me, and it was quicker than arguing, as I've said time is of the essence here."

"I don't know how you managed to sneak up on me, but I'm impressed." Colt allowed.

"A cloaking spell. It only lasted a few seconds but it did the job."

Colt looked at the woman he used to trust sadly. "Why? And who's the mute?"

"A friend." Andrea said firmly interrupting the man who had began to laugh. "Don't you recognise him?"

Colt hated being on the back foot. He knew the man he just didn't know how he knew him, and the feeling unsettled him.

"Gabriel sure did a number on the little Prince." The man snorted, earning him a death glare from Colt.

"Mitch please," Andrea barked before turning back to Colt. "You've been lied to Colt. Gabriel is not what you think he is, and I have proof. I need you to see something."

"Gabriel will have you're head for this Andrea, what were you thinking, kidnapping me like that?"

"I'm all out of options Colt. For over ten years I've tried to keep you safe, tried to keep the promise I made, but... I have failed. I have failed you, Colt. And now I'm doing the only thing left to me." Tears ran down her sun kissed cheeks and Colt found his frostiness towards her dissolving. This woman had done everything for him but her constant accusations about Gabe had driven a wedge that Colt somehow couldn't fix. No matter how hard he tried. Andrea held his eyes, pleading with him. "Trust me Colt, like your Mother once did."

The mention of Holly made his throat dry up and he bit down the grief that rose in his chest. Colt was sick of people using his parents as leverage over him. "Fine." He eventually said, "I'll come with you Andrea, but this is it. After this we're done. And damn you for putting me in this position." He saw her heartbreak right in front of him, but Colt was far from upset. He was wary of being a pawn in Andrea's vendetta against his Grandfather. How he would explain this to Gabriel Colt didn't have a clue. By now his absence would have been noticed and when they couldn't find him at his usual haunts...

Andrea cut his binds and had composed herself, placing the small dagger she had used to free him in her boot. "I need you to blink us to New York."

Blinking was an ability blessed to his Father and demons. In the blink of an eye he could travel to anywhere he so wished, hence the name, but it was also forbidden. "New York is a wasteland Andrea."

"Trust me." Was all she said and Colt had to bite his lip to stop from growling his response. He took her offered hand roughly and the room seemed to glimmer as their feet left the ground. The wet bricks disappeared and was replaced with the haunting remnants of a damned City.

The man coughed and vomited violently onto the rumble. Blinking was rough on mortals and the sight brought a smile to Colt's face. New York had been ground-zero. War had made it into the biggest graveyard ever known. A thick layer of ash covered everything like snow.

"We must be quick." Andrea told them while the man rubbed his mouth on his sleeve. "Colt's blinking will have alerted the Crown, we have minutes if not seconds. Follow me." She took off at a run, darting between the remains of a once thriving civilization. The man gestured for Colt to follow and grudgingly he did.

As they danced around abandoned cars, fallen buildings and holes in the tarmac a sensitisation seized Colt. It compared to nothing he had ever felt before. It tugged at his very core, almost whispering to him like a lover. He stopped at an intersection that had now become a dense forest. Plants weaved up from the cracks in the road, reclaiming what had once been theirs. "What is it?" The man asked, stopping alongside him.

Colt didn't have an answer. Beyond the intersection, in-between spaces within the foliage lay what seemed to be your average abandoned street. Buildings lined the sides, yet this strange sensation was pulling him to it. For a moment the bright rays of the sun exploded from the heavens, poking holes into the thick smog that hung above New York like a death shroud.

In the light Colt thought he saw a girl. He glimpsed dark glossy hair, and a flash of Red. "Mother?" He called out despite himself and was about to step forward when a hand latched onto his arm, seemingly breaking the spell.

"We must not linger." Andrea said quietly, her eyes follow his own. "Come on." Gently but firmly Andrea pulled him past the intersection and continued running, releasing his arm.

The further Colt got from the intersection, the better he felt. He was about to ask just where the hell they were heading, it seemed like he had been running forever, when the strange sensitisation hit him like a hammer to the stomach, he stumbled and sank to his knees.

Water soaked through his jeans and Colt looked up about to ask when it had started raining again, only for the words to die in his throat. He wasn't in New York anymore, or rather he was just not *his* New York.

Somehow, in the time he had fallen to now, mere seconds, the Big Apple had changed around him. It was now the bustling City that it had once been. Cold rain pelleted the streets, and what few people there was, were cowering under parked cars, or hidden behind walls.

"What the..."

He was in Times Square but the screens were filled with video's of carnage and fighting, not the bright happy adverts that had once lit the Square. Colt tried to move but his brain had trouble catching up. The change in time had seriously messed with his mojo. Colt felt like a astronaut adrift in space, helpless over his own body.

"What's wrong with him?" The man's gruff voice cut through the time loop. Colt couldn't see him or Andrea but could still hear them, and the feeling felt like he was being torn in two.

"...How could I have been so stupid..." Andrea' whispered in response.

A scream filled Colt with dread and dulled out the voices of his companions. He barely had time to acknowledge it before something whizzed past him. A body whose clothes had been dyed with dampness and blood rolled across the road, feet away from where a captive Colt was knelt.

A figure came from behind like darkness itself. As it stopped beside Colt he could feel the power radiating from it. It was strong, way stronger than him or anything he had come into contact with. Blood ran down its steel tipped boots and they crunched against the tarmac as it started to move again.

The body that rolled across the floor in front of Colt came to and when it turned oxygen abandoned Colt. His chest tightened and his body came to a stop. It was Holly Adams, his Mother.

She looked just like he remembered and tears slipped down his already wet cheeks mixing with the rain water. He tried to call out to her but words wouldn't come. Colt was a spectator watching a movie, that was how it felt.

"It didn't have to be like this." The figure towering over his Mother said. He had his hood over his face but Colt didn't recognise his voice. Holly propped herself up on her elbows and tried to scramble out of his way, but her body was spent.

Holly's raven hair was slick with water and blood. Crimson ran down her face and into her eyes, angry looking bruises had formed all over her face, and her top lip was busted. "Sure it did." She spat and hearing her voice again made joy spring in Colt for a minute.

"Why throw in your lot with them?" The figure asked in a exasperated tone. "A thing such as you could be limitless, yet you side with those who wish to chain you, keep you from who you truly are. This utopia we are about to make could have been heaven for you."

Holly's chest heaved like she was having trouble breathing and Colt gritted his teeth in attempt to move. His efforts proved unfruitful and he let out a howl of agony. To be this close yet unable to touch her was worse than losing her.

"Spare me," Holly uttered, her voice faint, "you're just another of his puppets. You're not building a new better world Lucas, you're building *his* world."

Lucas was silent for a few minutes and Colt realised what he was witnessing and fresh torment rippled through him. Is this what Andrea wanted to show him? His Mother' last minutes on earth, how could she be so heartless?

Colt was powerless to stop his Mother's murderer as he sat over her, removing a lethal looking blade from his boot, Lucas trailed the tip down Holly's body. "All that power going to waste," Colt saw his hood move as he shook his head, "you could have been magnificent."

"She already is."

Colt couldn't help the smile lightning up his face. That voice belonged to his Father and a sound of relief broke from Colt's throat. Dominic Prince oozed danger as he appeared like a Knight to a besieged King. The son of Satan moved with a grace and speed Colt had never seen. A 2x2 piece of wood collided with Lucas' head making it snap back and throwing him from Holly.

The Immortal rolled to his feet displaying his own prowess. "Dominic Prince," he sneered, "you are proving hard to kill."

"The same won't be said for you if you touch her again."

Colt couldn't help but be in awe of his Father. Even soaked and covered with what seemed to be dirt Dominic Prince' presence was a dominate one. He had a style that had never been mirrored since or before.

Lucas scoffed, "I'm kind of strong, don't you think? You know you can't take me."

Dom discarded the snapped wood and worked a kink out his neck, a mischievous glint entered his dark eyes. "Let's find out."

Colt saw the swagger leave Lucas' demeanour and silently egged his Father on. The two clashed like a wave and a breaker. Dominic rolled over Lucas' back landing a kick to the face as he landed. Lucas cursed and charged him. The two Immortals went at it with breath taking speed. Colt found it hard to follow Lucas' attacks and Dom' parries. His Father blocked every move perfectly.

To his right Holly was trying to get vertical but every movement looked like a knife to the gut. She dragged herself to a sitting position and had to bit down on her lip, while her fingertips clawed at the ground in silent agony.

Colt averted his eyes unable to witness his Mother' agony anymore. The fight still raged and hope abandoned Colt when Lucas seemed to melt into nothingness. It looked like Dom was fighting air. Lucas' Black robes whirling was all that Colt could see. There was no way anyone could hold that forever.

Holly knew it too. With a scream Colt watched with horror as Holly gripped the Sliver blade that had been buried in the flesh of her right side, it had been obscured until now. A grim determination set on her face and she pulled it out.

Dominic landed heavily on the tarmac and Lucas was on him like a hungry dog, pounding with fists, kicking with his powerful legs.

A whistle pierced the air and Lucas stopped. "You have serious anger management issues." Holly mused before Crimson filled her eyes and invisible hands swatted Lucas off Dominic like he was a pesky fly. He went back first into the screen located directly behind and hit the floor amid a shower of sparks.

"What are you doing?" Dominic demanded getting to his feet.

"Your welcome." Holly responded, "what does it look like I'm saving your ass."

"Thought I was saving yours." Dom mused.

A howl of anger drew their attention. "He's gonna be a handful."

Holly looked at him, "so are we."

Amongst certain death and all this carnage Colt's parents looked at each other and it was there in every small motion their bodies made, how much they adored each other. Dominic studied Holly with something close to desire. "God I love you." He said almost involuntary.

Another angry growl spoilt the moment and Lucas appeared out the debris. "How much juice you got left?" Dominic asked all business again. Colt saw the concerned crease of his brow as his anxious eyes took in Holly' ravaged body.

"Let's find out." She replied.

The Divine Order

In this alternative prologue the Divine Order, a council of Immortals, had been called to address Colt Prince's powers.

Prologue

Bourbon Street was packed full of ravers celebrating Mardi Gras. A block away, deep in the French Quarter, detached from the festivities The Divine Order convened. It was to be the Fifth time the Order had been called into session, and the last time.

The most dangerous and powerful Immortals made up the members of the Order. It was the only time Good and Evil entertained the same room without blood being spilled. The Order only met at times of great need, when their world was threatened or a problem arose that effected all races, a threat had been perceived and the Order convened to deal with it.

Angels, Demons, Vampires and more sat around the round Oak table, each concealing their own agenda for being there. "Does the girl know we are convening?" A woman with large dangling earrings asked the room.

"No." The Ebony Seraphim known as Castillo replied. "I thought it best not to inform her, giving the circumstances."

"But surely she should be here." Another, rather large woman, piped. "She is he's Mother after all..."

"She's an abomination! Is what she is." A ageing man smoking a Cuban barked. "Things such as that should not be allowed to breed."

"Yes well...moving on." Castillo said looking down at the dark wood. "The matter of it is we do not know what the child is capable of. His unique lineage and the protection that surrounds him makes it hard to keep tabs on him."

"Is it true that he has power already?" The round woman interrupted.

"It is." Castillo confirmed gravely, "I've seen it for myself." A swell of voices filled the room as everyone began to talk at once. "Silence!" The Seraphim commanded and the voices died off grudgingly.

"How is that possible?" The woman who had spoken first whispered. "Immortals don't come into their powers till they reach an appropriate age to handle them."

"That's precisely the problem we face." Castillo began, "Colt has no comprehension of what he's doing, the damage he could cause is almost devastating. Especially now that we have to be careful of the attention we draw to ourselves."

"Damn humans!" The man with the Cigar barked again, slamming his fat furred fist down onto the table. "Damn this Devil child too! I say we kill them all!"

Castillo shot a warning look his way with hard eyes. "That is what we are trying to prevent. We have to show the humans they have longer to fear from us..."

"All these peace talks Castillo, there is no need for them!" The man grunted. "They accept our existence or we crush them! It's as simple as that."

"I will have no more blood spilt!" Castillo roared suddenly. The Sandstone walls shock with the ferocity of the Seraphim's tone. "Heaven has lost enough as it is." The battle with Lucifer had cost Heaven a lot of Angels. They had dropped from the sky in their droves when Lucifer had attacked. Castillo knew Heaven would never fully recover from their losses and wanted to avoid more bloodshed at all costs. He had to protect his Brothers but most of all, he had to protect a weak Heaven.

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