

Life vs. Death

Book Three of the Eternal War Series

by

Holly Vane

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Also by Holly Vane

Heaven vs. Hell (The Eternal War Series#1)
Love vs. Lust (The Eternal War Series#2)
The Eternal War Box Set (Coming December 2013)

*For Mitch,
the coolest Yorkie on the planet.*

1

The couple stepped out into the cold December night and crossed the street hand in hand. “That was...I don’t even have words to describe it.” Dominic Prince said.

“The Prince of Hell lost for words?” Holly Adams quipped, squeezing his hand playfully. It was three degrees below and while she was wrapped up in scarf gloves and hat, he wore only jeans and a cashmere sweater, being Immortal had its advantages. “It wasn’t that bad.” He threw her an incredulous look and Holly couldn’t help but grin. “Okay so it pretty much...sucked, but at least it wasn’t a chick flick.” She admitted. He led her to the parking lot where his Red Harley motorbike sat, glowing under a street light. It was Dom’s pride and joy and wherever they went so did it. Holly had been pushing him to get a car, the seat played havoc with her back, but she knew it was like asking him to saw off his arm.

“That’s the last time you’re picking the movie princess.” Holly rolled her eyes as she took the offered helmet and pulled it over her head. The bike roared to life and she cuddled into him as the Harley glided through the notorious New York City traffic. The winds icy fingers played with her dark curls as they plummeted forward with such speed that the world around her blurred. When he pulled over outside her favourite restaurant Holly grudging let go and yanked off the bash hat. She hated wearing the damn thing it made her head sweat but Dom wouldn’t have it any other way, she had even tried the sex card but he stuck to his guns.

Placing the helmet on the seat Holly hesitated. She had learned over the past year to trust her instincts and right now they were telling her she was being watched. The hairs on the back of her neck stood on end and a shiver travelled down her spine.

“What is it?”

Holly looked back to see Dominic studying her while holding the door to the restaurant open. She still found it thrilling that they were in sync enough for him to notice the little changes her body made in its language. She took one last glancing sweep of the crowded street and shrugged. “Guess I’m just paranoid.” She could tell by his stern expression that he wasn’t buying her façade. The waitress showed them to their regular table at the back; it had a perfect unblocked view of the whole restaurant and was close to the kitchen if they needed to make a hasty exit.

“What can I get for you Dom?” The waitress asked, leaning over him with a look of adoration in her brown eyes. Holly still found it hard to deal with the effect Dominic had on the female population, not that she blamed them. Holly had been drawn to him just like they were but he was all hers and encounters like this made jealousy rear

its ugly head.

“Usual.” He replied distractedly, his dark eyes focused on the window. “Please.” He added finally looking at her and Holly actually saw the girl swoon. “My pleasure.” She told him with a beaming smile that showed a full set of pearly whites. “I’ll be right back.”

“Take your time.” Holly saw his eyes follow the waitress as she walked to the kitchen and arched her eyebrows at him. “What?” He asked catching her irritated glare. “I was just being friendly.”

“Whatever.” She mumbled while shrugging out of her coat. The rest of the staff huddled around the till casting flirtatious looks Dominic’s way and Holly suddenly found herself wondering what it was that had made him chose her.

Dominic Prince had gone against his family to protect Holly. He had given up everything for her, but she had never actually asked him why. He would say it was because he had fallen in love with her and Holly believed it. The only part of him that wasn’t hard as stone were his eyes and they couldn’t lie, but Holly had never asked him why he loved her.

When they had met she had been a naïve small town girl, who preferred to sit home and study instead of partying. They were complete opposites and without sounding big headed Holly knew she was pretty, her best friend Jo had told her enough times, but Dominic was a pure God. And she would never be as slender or as beautiful as the girls standing just a few yards away.

“What are you thinking?” He asked her suddenly.

“What?”

“You’ve got that look I can’t read.” Holly was about to tell him what was on her mind when the girl returned with their order. She plonked the big ham and cheese pizza onto the table and scowled at the waitress behind who carried their drinks. “Vodka and Coke for you..” the second slightly older woman said placing Dom’s drink in front of him ceremoniously. “And sparkling water for you.” Holly started a little when her glass was slammed down with such force it made the wooden table shudder. “Can I help with anything else?” Holly and their original waitress exchanged a look of outrage. “I think we can manage.” Dominic replied trying to stifle a laugh. “Well call if you change your mind.” As they backed off Holly heard the girl curse at the older woman. “You’ve started a cat fight.” She told an amused Dominic who placed a slice of pizza onto her plate.

“Best kind.” Holly threw him an exasperated stare. “Do you emit like a pheromone or something?” Dominic gave her a quizzical look then shrugged. “It’s a devil thing.”

“Huh?” She heard him sigh and he slumped back into his chair. “Lucifer has a certain aura about him. I inherited it.” Holly forgot her growling stomach. “You’ve never told me that before.” She hadn’t entertained the idea that her love might not be real.

“That’s precisely why I didn’t.” He replied quickly. “Holly you love me because we’re meant to be, not because you’re under some...effect.” She leaned closer. “So what? It

doesn't work on me?" Dominic picked up his slice of pizza and took a bite. "It so works on you." He replied teasingly. "But it doesn't create what wasn't already there."

"You're a riddle you know that." She took a mouthful of her own food and almost groaned with pleasure. Dominic's sad expression made her freeze. "Something I said?" He looked like his world had just ended. He dropped the pizza back onto the plate and took her hand in his.

"I don't want you to think of me like that princess. I know there's a lot about me you don't know, and I'm not the most forthcoming guy in the world but God I love you Holly. I love your fire, your spirit, your kind heart, plus you're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. I don't want there to be space between us, so ask and I'll answer." Holly felt her heart pick up a gear. Whenever she had tried to get him to open up about his past he changed the subject, so this U-Turn was too good to pass up, even if it was a bit surprising.

Holly glanced at the guy entering the restaurant and her words dissolved. The un-easy feeling hit her full force and she stiffened. "Holly?" Dominic followed her eyes and as soon as he saw the man he tensed up. "You have got to be kidding me." He uttered in frustration.

"Who is he?" Dominic clicked his tongue in annoyance as the man approached. He was slim and tall and walked with a grace Holly wouldn't have thought him capable of; it dawned on her that he moved like Caleb. Flittering through the tables with a gentle ease. "He's an Angel." She groaned with realization as the man came to a stop beside their table.

"Evening." The Angel's voice was light and pleasant but there was a hardness to his grey eyes. "I won't intrude. I just need to deliver this." Dominic recoiled from the small gold envelope in the man's hand.

"Is that what I think it is?" The Angel nodded.

"The coming war concerns us all. The Devine order has been called. You and you're..." Holly saw the Angel force himself to look at her. "Partner." He spat out the word like it was poison in his mouth. "Have been summoned." His cool demeanour didn't bother Holly. After Castillo's betrayal she had no love for Heaven or Angels, and they carried none for her after what she had done to Michael, but Dominic's show of emotion rattled her. She watched as he reluctantly accepted the envelope.

Throwing one last disgusted look her way the Angel left. "Well?" Holly prodded after he had gone. "What's the Devine order?"

Dominic looked ill. His eyes held a haunted glint and when he looked at her Holly had never seen him look so vulnerable.

"Trouble."

2

“Li.”

Dominic paced the living area floor with agitation. “Dom, what’s going on?” Holly asked starting to feel very anxious. He had rushed them out the restaurant and had said nothing to her all the way home.

“Nothing.” He muttered absent mindedly then repeated with more vigour. “Li.”

“Don’t give me that crap!” Holly flung at him dis-guarding her winter wear onto the couch. “You’ve been like a bat out of hell since getting that damned thing!” She motioned to the gold envelope in his hand.

“Holly please...Li!”

“You rang.” Legion’s deep silky voice said. He was dressed in his usual black suit with a crisp white unbuttoned shirt underneath that exposed his flawless milky skin. Legion was taller than his younger brother and looked more like his identical twin. They shared the same high cheekbones and ruby red lips, but whereas Dom had dark and stormy eyes Legion had cold detached grey.

“Do you people ever use doors?” Holly asked with slight annoyance at the sudden intrusion. Legion had been glued to them since arriving in New York a few months ago, and he had gotten damn right paternal when Dom and Holly discovered what Legion had been hiding.

“Want to explain this.” Dominic tossed the envelope at him. Legion caught it effortlessly and examined it.

“The Divine Order...”

“Don’t look so surprised.” Dom snapped. “This stunt reeks of you.” Legion looked at him with calculating eyes before replying calmly. “What makes you say that?” He asked cocking his head to the left, the gesture made Holly suspect that Dom was right, and Legion was stalling to see how much his brother really knew.

“Before leaving Oregon you met with Castillo, the only one who has the power to call the Order.” Holly looked at Legion sharply, he seemed impressed by the amount of knowledge Dom possessed.

“How did you know about that?”

“I have my spies.” Legion studied Dominic for a second then let a knowing smirk part his lips.

“Cyrus. The slimy git.”

“Why would you do this? You said you’re helping us, how’s this helping?” Dominic glared at him with eyes as black as midnight. Something changed in Legion, the cocky

smile fell and he swallowed slowly before answering.

“Because Lucifer is coming and if we are to stand a chance against him, then we need Cas and his Angels.” He got to his feet and closed the distance between them. “Brother we can’t just wing this one like we have before. This time we’re simply not enough to protect Holly.”

“What do you mean?” Holly watched Dominic’s composure slip slightly. They all knew that the devil was coming for her, but after spending the last year running from the Archangel Michael who had been intent on her demise, these past few months in New York had been heaven. After watching her round the clock twenty four seven Dominic had to be just as tired, immortal or not it was no way to live. Holly couldn’t go back to that.

“Holly we knew this couldn’t last forever.” Legion told her softly, breaking through her train of thought. “Hell has been gathering all evil to it. Soon they will have amassed an army unlike anything we’ve ever seen. Make no mistake about it this fight concerns every living thing on this planet, mortal or otherwise. We need help and so does Heaven. They can’t hope to face Lucifer’s army by themselves, they are greatly outnumbered. The Divine Order is our last chance. We all must unite in a common cause or we will fall.”

The room suddenly felt colder and Holly hugged herself tightly trying to chase away the icy dread that formed in her stomach. “What exactly is the Order?” They both looked at her but it was Legion who answered. Dominic seemed to be having trouble dissolving what Legion had done.

“It’s a Council made up of the most powerful of Immortals. Good and evil. It’s only called at times of great need.”

“But they can never agree on a thing, there are too many egos.” Dominic added grimly. “It will cause more harm than good. They won’t listen to you Legion, and what’s worse is you’ve handed Holly straight to them.”

“What?” Fear unfurled inside her.

“I asked Cas to keep her out of it, but in his great wisdom he’s decided otherwise.”

Legion said with a touch of sarcasm to his voice. “There’s no way around it now Holly, I’m afraid you will have to attend.”

“She is not going.” Dominic said firmly.

“You know as well as I do that she has no choice. One cannot simply decline a summons Dominic.”

“Why not?” Holly asked simply.

The brothers shared a look. “You tell her. You’re the one that got her into this mess.” Dom told him with barely contained fury.

“That’s not fair.”

“Guys!” Legion took a deep breath.

“The invitation.” He held up the envelope. “Is laced with a very old and powerful incantation. It gives the Council the right to...extinguish...”

“He means Kill.” Dominic clarified. Legion shot daggers at him before continuing. “Any person who does not answer the Order’s call.” Holly crumpled onto the couch with sheer disbelief.

“You have to understand Holly.” Legion implored her. “These rules were put in place to keep the members in line. Some of whom are the worst offenders of genocide, murder and such. They have to be severe.”

“I’m going to go to bed...”

“Holly please...” Legion held her arm but she yanked free.

“I’m tired. I’m going to bed.” She repeated slowly trying to control her flaring temper. He let go and Holly felt his eyes on her until she got to the bedroom.

“Nice one.” Dominic snorted at his older brother after the bedroom door slammed shut behind her. “What were you thinking?” He added with a sigh. The small apartment was a glow with the soft crisp light of the glass lamp in the corner. And outside on the street car engines filled the uneasy silence that had now fell over the two brothers.

“It’s a risk we have to take.” Legion finally whispered. Dom could almost feel the regret coming from him and his anger died down a little.

“They’ve just been waiting for an excuse to get their claws into her, and you’ve given them the perfect ammunition. I know you didn’t mean for this to happen Li, but quite frankly I’m amazed how you could be so dumb.” Legion’s head snapped up and Dominic saw rage dance in his cold eyes for a moment. “The Order,” Dom carried on.

“Will take the easiest route they can. War with Lucifer is the hard way.”

“What are you getting at?” Legion snapped.

“You really don’t see it do you? They’ll order Holly’s execution rather than face Lucifer on the battlefield. Kill Holly and this whole thing goes away. She’s the last of her kind. Lucifer’s hopes are all pinned on her.”

“But they have sworn to protect her.” Dominic laughed at his reply. “Like it or not they have protected her for eighteen years.”

“Oh really. What about Michael? Castillo? Have you forgotten Cas let a whole town die just to prove a point.”

“And I know he feels remorse for his actions. Cas is on our side. And as far as Michael goes, his vendetta against Holly was not backed by Heaven.”

“They did fuck all to stop him.” Dominic tossed at him. Legion sighed and joined Dominic on the couch.

“You know I would never let any of them touch her. You know why I have invested myself in the girl you love. I would die before I let history repeat itself.” Dominic sank further into despair at the mention of the past. He hadn’t always been the guy Holly had fell in love with; he had kept his past from her because the Prince of Hell was scared of losing her if she found out about it. But he also realized that if they were to

work he would have to come clean eventually.

“It’s about time you let it go.” Legion told him firmly. And Dom knew his face gave him away. “You weren’t to blame for what happened, you didn’t know.”

“It’s about time you stopped blaming Caleb.” Dominic counted getting to his feet. “I was the one who killed her not him, and I’ll tell you this now. If anything happens to Holly because of you...”

“You best hope you never see me again.”

3

Holly opened her eyes and sighed as last night's events rolled through her mind. After tossing and turning for hours she had finally managed to fall into a troubled sleep.

"Have you slept at all?" She asked, finally turning her head to look at Dominic. He was lying on his side with his head propped up by a hand. He was still dressed in the jeans and sweater from last night.

"Too busy watching you." Her heart picked up when his eyes swept over her with admiration. He leaned in and brushed his irresistible lips against hers, want and need overwhelmed her and Holly wrapped her arms around his neck taking his mouth passionately.

Not matter how much they made love she still craved more, Dominic made her heart do things no one else could. "Is Legion gone?" She whispered. A wicked smirk broke out on his face and he pulled her on top of him. Straddling his lap Holly slid her hands underneath his sweater and groped his firm hard body.

A commotion outside the door made her freeze. "What was that?" Dominic hesitated then grimaced. Leaning back Holly glared at him through narrow eyes.

"Dom?" He looked away while holding her hips and sat up, before he said anything the bedroom door burst open and Layla Rodriquez and Miles Benson, Holly's friends from St. Heralds, stood in the doorway.

"Surprize!" Holly could only stare at them with her mouth hanging open. She had never expected to see them again. "Sorry." Miles said to Dom who looked a little pissed. "She couldn't wait anymore." He motioned to the Latin goddess standing next to him.

"That's right blame me," Layla said. "I didn't hear you object." She crossed the room and flung herself down on the bed. "Relax Dom. You can bang her anytime." Holly regained her senses and looked down at the comprising position she was in, and thanked her lucky stars she still had her pyjamas on.

"What are you guys doing here?" Layla shrugged like it wasn't a big deal.

"Moral support."

"Huh?"

"Okay." Dominic said moving out from underneath Holly. "I think this will be best left till later, don't you Layla?" Holly saw the two of them exchange looks, and grew even more confused.

"Hungry?" Miles asked moving towards the kitchen where Holly heard even more voices. Grabbing her robe she followed and nearly had a stroke. Everyone she had ever

cared about was sitting round the small kitchen island, gossiping over eggs and bacon. “Holly.” Andrea said warmly making the others look up. Andrea looked flawless as ever with her long blonde hair and stunning features. She was the headmistress of St. Heralds and Holly owed her a lot. Professor Brooks sat next to her with his golden curls and unusual eyes magnified by steel rimmed glasses. It wasn’t hard to believe that he had once been an Angel. Brooks had chosen to fall after Michael had murdered Holly’s biological parents.

“Good morning.” He greeted with a mouth full of tomatoes. Legion sat at the opposite end and smiled nervously at her.

“You didn’t have to slap her...” Holly could have almost cried with joy but the second voice that wafted in from the opening front door made her breath catch.

“She was a second away from suffocating you with her mouth!” Jade Summers came into view and Holly’s joy melted immediately. She caught sight of Holly and the two glared at each other. Caleb’s broad frame filled the space behind her, and Holly tore her eyes away from her arch nemesis to the person that, besides Dominic, meant everything to her.

Caleb Williams closed the door while balancing a huge box of Krispy Kreme donuts in his hands. His sapphire eyes seemed to glow brighter through the dull light of the morning that filtered in through the blinds. Since deciding to stay behind in Oregon with Jade almost three months ago, Holly had missed him more than words could say. He was a part of her and truth be told knew her better than anyone. Jade took the box off him and strolled over to the others, giving Holly a black look as she passed.

“Hey Holly.” Caleb said carefully, they were both aware of the eyes that rested on them. A lump stuck in her throat and without thinking she threw herself into his strong protective arms.

Holly couldn’t begin to express what she was feeling but hoped her body could. Caleb was her ex Guardian Angel and despite the connection that linked them so closely being severed, there was an unspoken understanding that Caleb would always be *her* angel.

Someone cleared their throat and Holly thought it sounded like Jade, Caleb’s new charge, amongst other things. Making herself step away she looked up and basked in Caleb. He was more tanned than she remembered and his golden hair had grown, laying over his forehead. He looked better than ever.

“Can I interrupt this love feast for a second?” Dominic quipped coming up beside her. He tried to make his voice light but she heard a touch of hardness to his tone. Caleb dropped his eyes and joined the others while Dominic guided Holly outside the apartment to the corridor.

“What...? How...?” Holly gasped once the door was closed. Dominic had changed into dark jeans, vest and leather jacket, he adjusted the collar while she leaned against the far wall for support. Never in her wildest dreams had she thought any of this could be possible.

“Legion blinked them all here last night, while you were sleeping. Jade insisted on inviting herself.”

“But why?” Holly was overjoyed that they were here but she knew Legion and Dominic pretty well by now. If they were gathering the troops something was coming. Dom sighed and looked down at the floor.

“The Devine Order is tonight Holly.” She gaped at him in horror.

“What?”

“And there’s so much you have to learn before then, Andrea and the others are here to guide you through it.”

“Guide me through what?” Where are you going?” Holly’s head spun and she hugged the wall. Dominic came closer but stopped shy of touching her.

“The Divine Order is rarely called, I think in the past millennia it’s only been held twice. So it’s something of an event. They make a big deal of it, black suits, ballroom dancing, the works.” The door to the apartment opened and Legion slipped through.

“I can’t do this...” She breathed feeling dizzy, Dom steadied her.

“Listen to me I wouldn’t leave unless I had to. There’s...” Holly saw him hesitate as he looked at his brother. “Stuff that needs to be sorted before tonight. But I swear I’ll be there waiting for you.”

“Tell me everything’s going to be okay.” She had this feeling of complete and utter dread. They hadn’t spent a day apart in a long time, and Holly didn’t know if she could cope with all that she would need to without him. It sounded weak and pathetic but he had become her rock. If he ever left she would fall on her face.

“Do you trust me?” She looked up at him and saw sheer determination in his expression. “You know I do.” He moved closer and their bodies touched.

“Then everything *will* work out. I promise you.” He slipped his arms around her waist and kissed her with such intensity that her legs buckled. As he pulled away he let his left hand hover over her stomach. “I’ll see you tonight.”

She watched him walk away; as they reached the elevator he turned back and flashed Holly his usual devilish smile that would make the biggest iceberg melt in seconds.

“Princess do me a favour and do what they say.” Holly stuck her tongue out at him and she heard him laugh as the lift doors closed.

Taking a deep breath she headed back inside where breakfast had ended and Miles was washing up. “Right Holly,” Andrea chimed. “Why don’t you get dressed and then we’ll get going.”

“Where?” Andrea shot her a mystified look.

“To the shops of course, you have to have something to wear tonight.” Holly swallowed hard as sheer terror settled on her. “Don’t worry. Dom left his credit card.” Without another word she went back to perking up the sofa cushions. It wasn’t money that worried Holly; Dominic had a bottomless piggy bank.

Holly tossed on a baggy jumper and jeans that were way too big for her. She brushed her wild curls into a messy bun and threw on some eyeliner before brushing her teeth.

“Jeez Holly your look like a hobo.” Layla said with disgust when she stepped into the living area.

“Layla.” Andrea snapped, before turning back to Holly. “Ready to go?” She was far from ready but wanting to get this over with Holly nodded and grabbed her coat from beside the door. “Where’s Caleb?”

“He took Jade out.” Miles offered. “She was whining about something or other.” Andrea and Layla ushered Holly out of the apartment while Miles and Brooks stayed behind; claiming clothes shopping with a group of women resembled their worst nightmare.

“This is going to be awesome.” Layla told them in the elevator. “I’ve never been to New York before. Imagine all those shoes...”

“We’re not here for a shopping spree.” Andrea said reproachfully. “Holly has a lot to get through and not a lot of time. We get the dress then leave, understand?” Layla nodded disappointedly.

Holly practically ran out of the lift when the doors opened, she didn’t like keeping things from her nearest and dearest, especially when they had all given up their time to help her.

They scoured boutiques and department stores, Holly in her rush to find a dress without incident insisted on buying the first one they came too, but Andrea had told her it was too dowdy. Holly needed to make an impression. After entering the sixth store that was stocked full of beautiful elegant dresses Holly had to sit down. She felt completely drained.

“What about this one?” Andrea appeared with a mountain of cloth over her arm. She held a green gown that shimmered with diamonds underneath the strobe lighting. “It’s great.” Holly said.

“Nah.” Layla disagreed holding up a rather feisty red one. “This is the one you need if you want to pack a punch.” Andrea frowned at her.

“Let’s see what they look like on, and then we’ll see whose is best.” Layla shot at her. Holly grimaced, but let them guide her to the changing room. Layla waited outside while Andrea helped her into the gowns. Her green one was first and she had a hard time getting it past Holly’s stomach. “We’ll try another size.” Andrea remarked finally giving up a losing battle.

“I need something more...billowy.” Andrea looked at her then smiled. “Just because you gained a...little weight doesn’t mean you have to hide yourself Holly. Your beautiful.”

“No. It’s not...” Holly sighed and slumped down on the chair that was propped in the corner beside the mirror. Her hair had fallen out, her feet ached and she was hot and starving. “Andrea...I’m pregnant.” Pure shock passed over the headmistresses face and it was sometime before she spoke.

“Dominic’s?” Holly gave her an irritated glance. “Who else would it be?” She snapped. “I’m sorry Holly, it’s just...this changes everything.” The dresses fell from Andrea’s

hand and she slumped against the wall.

“Tell me about it.” Holly muttered.

“How far along are you?”

“Four month.” Holly registered Andrea’s look of disbelief.

“You look five.”

“I know that’s why I need to hide it. Legion warned me not to tell anyone.”

“He’s right. If the order found out...” Andrea trailed off, she didn’t need to spell it out Holly already had a pretty good idea what they would do.

“Andrea what is it about this baby that I have to hide?” Holly asked her. She had struggled with this for months; she had all these questions but no one to ask. Dominic had been against keeping it in the first place which made no sense, since Legion had said that Dom had never wanted anything more badly than a family. And after his warning to tell no one Holly knew there was more to this than she was being told. Andrea’s face softened. “I would love nothing more than to tell you Holly. I can’t imagine what you’re going through, both of you. But I don’t think it’s my place and we are running on a tight schedule. Before I leave we’ll sit down and have a chat.” She added after seeing Holly’s dismay. “I’ll go find what we need, you stay here.”

Holly heard Layla’s objections about her red dress not being suitable, then Andrea’s footsteps as they padded away on the plush carpet. Holly found the resulting silence deafening. The last thing she had wanted to do was betray Legion but what he didn’t realize was that Holly needed answers. She let her thoughts travel to her parents and wondered what their views on her being knocked up by the Prince of Hell at the age of eighteen would be.

Shortly Andrea came back carrying three puffed out dresses that would certainly hide Holly’s baby bump. After finding the perfect one they quickly paid and caught the tube back to the apartment.

The smell of roasted chicken filled their nostrils and Holly followed the smell inside.

“Ah just in time.” Brooks said with a warm smile. He carried a rather large roasted chicken to the island and placed it beside a bowl of steaming vegetables, mash potatoes and a jug full of gravy. “I had nothing else to do.” He shrugged at Holly’s look of awe.

After a double helping Holly helped Andrea with the dishes. “After this we will need to get on with waltzing.”

“Waltzing?”

“It is a formal event Holly, there will be dancing, and I’m assuming you’ve never waltzed in your life.”

“Never really had the need to.” Holly joked and got a disapproving glare.

“There’s nothing to it.” Caleb’s voice said as the door opened.

“Caleb’s somewhat of a master at waltzing.” Andrea murmured affectionately. “I’m sure he can show you the basics.”

“I’ll bet.” Jade mumbled sweeping past them and headed for the bathroom. Caleb gave

her a stern look but she had already shut the door.

“Well since my job is done,” Layla said getting up off the couch. “Me and Miles are going to take in New York. See ya.” Miles looked surprised by this and Layla literally had to yank him out the door.

Brooks rummaged around in his duffel bag that was placed beside the couch; he pulled out a disc and popped it into the CD player that was on the second shelf of the bookcase beside the TV. “Pays to come prepared.”

Classical music erupted from the speakers and Caleb pushed the coffee table along the carpet. “May I have this dance?” Holly couldn’t help but laugh as she let him guide her around the floor.

“The trick is to follow.” He said after she had stumbled into him for the seventh time. “Which may be hard for you to do.” He teased. “You have to give control over to your partner. Place yourself in his hands.”

“Yeah, because he would just love that.” Jade almost yelled. Caleb’s body stiffened and he shot Jade a look that could have literally killed.

“Wouldn’t you rather be elsewhere?” He snapped and the harshness of his tone made Holly look up. Jade rose from the couch.

“Why? You two want to be left alone? Last time I checked Caleb it’s me your fucking not her. She doesn’t want you remember?” Holly averted her eyes. It wasn’t her place to interfere, this was between them but biting her tongue was getting almost impossible.

“This isn’t the time Jade.” Caleb practically growled at her.

“You think I’m stupid don’t you?” She continued unaware of how hot Caleb’s blood was running. Holly could practically feel the heat coming off him. “You finish with me days before coming here to see her?” Holly’s head jerked up but Caleb wouldn’t meet her gaze. “I’m your Guardian Angel.” Jade mocked. “I can’t screw and guide you at the same time. What a lot of bullshit. Your just hoping Dominic will mess up and Holly will come running back to you. Well news flash jerk! It’s never going to happen!” The front door slammed loudly behind Jade as she stormed out the apartment.

“I’ll go after her.” Andrea said. “You two just keep practicing.”

An awkward silence prevailed until Brooks cleared his throat. “Well I’ll...em...I’ll take a bath I think, if you wouldn’t mind?” Caleb crossed the room and sat down on the couch.

“Course not.” Holly replied distracted. She waited till the bathroom door had closed before switching off the music.

“Leave it on.” Caleb told her suddenly. She threw him a perplexed look then nodded as it dawned on her. Whatever Caleb wanted to say to her he didn’t want to be overheard. Jade was Nephilim and although her hearing wasn’t as sharp as an Immortals it was good enough to hear them. Holly turned the volume up then jerked her head towards the bedroom.

Caleb shut the door firmly before leaning against it. “You left her, why?” Holly asked

sitting on the feathery mattress. “You seemed...invested in her.”

“Sleeping with Jade was the biggest mistake I’ve ever made.” He eventually allowed.

“She’s messed up enough she doesn’t deserve to be mucked around.”

“I thought you said you cared for her.” This sudden U-turn surprised Holly. He had broken up the band because of her. Caleb had picked Jade over Holly and now all of a sudden it was over?

“I do. But I’ve never loved her. I’m tied to her but staying with her out of duty is making us both suffer. I had to end it, it’s better this way.” Holly got a sinking sensation.

“What do you mean you’re tied? Because she’s your charge?” Caleb sighed and joined her on the bed. He looked so weary and defeated.

“She’s my soul mate Holly. The same as Dominic is yours.” It took a while to digest the news. Caleb had told her all about soul mates. Despite what romantic novels and movies would have you believe, the term soul mate was anything but romantic. It physically bonded you to your other half and when they weren’t around you pined for them like crazy. It took over completely till they were all you thought about. It burned so much it hurt.

“Why didn’t you tell me this?”

“It wasn’t important.”

“How can you say that? Caleb...I just want you to be happy. If that’s with Jade then so be it.” Caleb smiled sadly and his bare arm brushed against the material of her jumper, sending electricity through Holly’s body. Their relationship was foggy now that they were both with different people. Holly still loved him with all her being but it wasn’t the passionate fire she had for Dominic it was more steady, reliable.

“The only time I’ve ever truly been happy was when I was with you.” He said so quietly Holly had to strain to hear it.

“Caleb...that ship sailed a long time ago.”

“I know. I just sometimes wish things between us had worked out differently.”

“Dominic would say you had a lucky escape. Apparently I’m hell to live with.” Holly mused. Caleb let out a laugh.

“Come on let’s back to waltzing, shall we?”

Jade and Andrea came back in to the apartment ten minutes later, and although she still stared holes into Holly she kept her silence. After three hours of waltzing Caleb finally declared her ready. Holly felt dead on her feet and it must have showed because Andrea suggested she take a nap before having to get glammed up.

Holly trekked to her bed and didn’t even bother lifting up the covers, her eyes closed as soon as her head touched the pillow.

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