

## Chapter 24 - Dark Past

Zak sat still on the chair in the kitchen. I know he can feel Luke's eyes watching us, and the guy isn't even in the room. I also know that he is watching through Marco, but I'm not sure if Zak has realised it as well. The bird had fluttered in and sat on top of the fridge without a care in the world, it had freaked me out when his eyes had turned electric blue. That's when I came to the conclusion that Luke's bond with Marco is more than he makes it out to be. I guess Luke either has no trust in me, or no trust in Zak. This whole situation is embarrassing and irritating.

"Marco, go and find Luke and peck him in the eye please." I beg the bird. I feel triumph when Zak smiles, even though it was barely noticeable. The bird just stared at me, as if it ended I just told it to do something. "I said please! I won't be your friend anymore if you don't". The bird's eyes widen, and then he's off in a flash of feathers.

"WHAT THE-" There was a squawk, than vicious cursing. It was hilarious. I had to hold my stomach because the amount of laughing I was doing was beginning to hurt. Even Zak was laughing. Woohoo!

"EMMA!" Luke thunders into the kitchen with a swollen left eye, there was also blood dripping from his eyebrow but it was quickly healing right before my eyes. Ok that was worse than I was expecting.

"I was expecting one peck Marco. One!" The bird perches on my shoulder, almost making me topple over; the damn thing was so heavy. Marco looks so proud of himself though, I couldn't scold him anymore. "Good shot though." I say, stroking his beak.

"You thought that was funny? Turning my own bird against me?" Luke hisses. Zak subtly shifts to the other side of the room, coming to stand two steps behind me. Was it a supportive gesture?

"Well, you were irritating me." I shrug.

"Irritating..." Luke brings both his big hands up to cover his face, "irritating." He repeats. His deep breath could have been heard from the other side of the house. "Ok, ok. You know what? Fine, I'll take my irritating self away. I have jobs to do." With that he turns and leaves, slamming the front door behind him.

"I must say, this place is very interesting." Zak says.

Damn it. What have I done? "Marco, keep an eye on him please, no pecking." Marco jumps off my shoulder, making me fall on my arse.

Zak helps me back up, but jumps back a metre when he realises he touched me. This gangly angel is an anomaly in this world.

Just like me.

"Thanks, so you want something to eat, I apparently make a great bacon sandwich. I apologise for the theatrics, I know what I did was wrong but he pushed it." I pull out the ingredients for a bacon sandwich, not waiting for his answer. I turn on the grill and neatly place four strips of bacon on the shelf. Once the bacon begins cooking and I have washed my hands I turn back to Zak, who just blankly stares at me. "Is there something on my face?" I wipe my nose.

"No... it's just that... I don't like to eat..." He shrugs his bony shoulders.

"What? Why?" I gasp, no wonder he is so skinny.

"I'm famine..." He says that like it explains everything. He scratches the back of his neck when I continue to stare. "Look, each of us... the talent or purpose we have... I don't know how to explain this." His hand moves from his neck to his hair, which he pulls in frustration. "Ok, Micah loves it when people get sick, Raphael loves fights, and Luke revels in death... do you get it... I love starvation, I love the feeling. It is quite literally who I am."

That does actually make sense.

"Oh... so I made you bacon for no reason?" My shoulders sag, great advice dad Zak must have taken my shoulder sag as something else, because he bites his nails and stares at the bacon.

"I'll eat it..." He cringes.

"No it's fine, I don't want you out of your comfort zone, I want you to feel welcome here!" I hear the bacon sizzling and flip them. "I can give them to Sam; he loves bacon, always has and probably always will."

"No... they smell really good, I'll eat them." He tries to smile, but it seems more like a grimace.

When the bacon is done I butter some bread and carefully place the two strips next to each other on the slice. "You ok with ketchup?" I ask. I faintly hear a mumbled 'yes' and proceed to squirt the ketchup onto the bacon. When I give Zak his sandwich, he stares at it. I sco mine down in minutes, yet he still sits there and looks at it. "One bite Zak, that's all." I challenge him with my eyes. Perhaps he has an archangel ego in there somewhere. My thoughts are proved correct when he picks it up, still keeping eye contact and bites into it. He chews twice.

"Oh, sweet heaven." He groans, closing his eyes and sagging into the chair. "This is so good." He takes another bite, and another, and another. In seconds the entire sandwich is gone.

"Wow. I think you ate that faster than Sam ever could, that is an achievement." I snort. "I take it you were hungry?" He chuckles at my statement.

"I like flavours just as much as anyone else." He picks up his plate and my own, and takes them over to the sink.

"You don't have to wash those, I can do it later. I put a big load in the dishwasher every evening; much to the house maids' horror." I smile at the memory. She had gone crazy that I had dared even touch a dish with the intention of cleaning it. This whole lifestyle is going to take some getting used to.

"No, I like to do them." He scrubs them the leaves them on the draining board to dry.

"Ok... So what do you do in your spare time apart from making sure someone out there is hungry?" I never meant it in a mean or spiteful way, it was supposed to be a joke, but I realise how that must have sounded when he flinched. Smooth Emma: Look... that sounded rea-

"It's ok; I can sense you meant no harm." He smiles sadly at me. "I hate what I am... making people suffer makes me suffer... I wanted to be part of the good guys... like a hero, but I was anorexic in my younger years, and my gift manifested from that." He sits back into the chair opposite me at the table. This poor guy is really miserable.

"You still have a chance to be a hero." I assure him.

"No I don't." Stubbornness must run in the family. I decide to drop the subject.

"So, I will understand if this is a touchy subject, but what was Luke like when he was younger?" I ask, I hope I don't regret asking.

"No it's fine." Zak's eyes glaze over, obviously remembering the past.

"Surprisingly, I was closest to Luke. He was the fourth and youngest son, with Raphael as the oldest, then Micah, and then me. He was born with black eyes, and mother had been horrified, everyone knew of the taint and refused to go near him. We never knew our father, but mother did eventually meet her bond mate, I'll get back to that later.

Luke was out-casted, stamped as a demon, not an angel. Wings don't start growing until your second birthday, so that was a crucial time for Luke's future. I shamefully admit I was happy he was the way he was, I was only twenty when Luke had been born, which is still practically a toddler by the way, but I was already very skinny and quiet, so attention was off of me for the time being and I loved it." He takes a moment to check my face, but I keep it neutral.

"Everyone was relieved when two little wings began to grow out of his back, yet the next obstacle was that they were pure black. He didn't have the blue then, so now people feared him. No other angel has ever had black wings like Luke's before. So he was still an outcast. Raphael and Micah eventually found the time to give me their attention and I think Luke caught them one day, and in an attempt to fit in, picked on me too. I immediately forgave him for it, because I knew why he was doing it. People had threatened to cut off his "Cursed wings" so he was frightened. Anyone would do what they could to fit in. As he grew up he was always a head taller than everyone else his age. By the time he was fifteen, which is roughly sixteen or seventeen in human years, he had more muscle mass than an archangels best warrior. Raphael and Micah grew jealous. Girls were no longer afraid of him and fought each other for his attention, yet he always turned them down, never interested. Luke stopped picking on me and began fighting. Whether it was his teachers or his own brothers, I stayed away." My eyes had welled up with tears and it was difficult to keep them in. Zak's eyebrows crinkle in concern but I gesture for him to continue.

"One day, he found an injured crow hanging from a tree. He tried to save it; he put a splint on the bird's wing, fed and watered it. He was getting better, but one day, when he got back from school, he found it with its neck snapped. I think he went into a state of denial and most definitely rage, that day, something clicked inside of him. He presumed it was one of his brothers, so he searched for them, Raphael had been out training, but Micah was in his bedroom with a woman. I had heard him punch the wall and went to check what was going on; I followed him to Micah's room. He had him by the throat, pinned up against the wall; Micah's feet were about half a metre off the ground. Blackness had begun to creep from Luke's fingers into Micah's neck and travelled up into his eyes. That is how Micah got tainted. Luke had no idea how he did it, he was so blinded in his rage over everything that had happened in his life, and he got pushed too far with the bird. He refused to believe it was dead, and spent weeks with it, pushing food and water down its throat. I had never seen him so broken. Spending every day with something dead marked him as death. Turns out Luke had broken its neck himself by accident, he was changing into his mature angel strength and had not realised how powerful he was. He was never welcome into training and mother never spoke with him about what to expect." The tears were pouring now, that toppled over ages ago. My poor Luke.

"It was about a year later, when he had got his bearings and control, that he found the blue egg on his bed. He was so excited that he told me to come check it out. I had told him to get rid of it; I did not want a replay of what happened last time. But when he touched it, the blue of the egg found its way into his eyes and the tips of his hair and wings. It was amazing to watch, but a fear that Luke would not leave the eggs side, he locked his door and refused anyone entry, which was only me, considering no one wanted to go near him. I don't know what happened when the egg hatched, but it had been four months. He finally let me in, and there sat the biggest crow I have ever seen. It must have grown super quick, because I am certain it was an egg four months ago before. The bird had black eyes eerily similar to Luke's old ones, and it was so black that you couldn't see it in the dark, not even with the moonlight. Luke stopped talking to anyone and moved out, I never saw him until he got promoted, and he became an archangel when he was about 500. Which is similar to the rest of us, I was 511. Now we only see each other when necessary. I don't know what he did in those years earlier he left, but he must have gained more powers, and he remained feared, which is what motivated Raphael and Micah to be cruel; they wanted to be more feared than Laueg."

"Are they?" I ask.

"You tell me." Hmm...

"What about your mothers bond? You said you would get back to that..."

"Oh yeah his name was Andre, he was best friends with your father, and I believe it was him who killed your father right in your own home."

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**A/N - Tadaa! Longest chapter so far! Sorry for taking so long with my updates. I promise that exciting stuff will start happening soon, but you guys need to know all this to understand the story.**

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