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*The events that transpired in the small merchant town of Fourhe became widely known through word of mouth and bed time stories. Through time it became dismissed as a fantasy, an impossible dream cooked up by excitable elders. Some assumed it was an attempt to create fear, warning those who didn't follow the teachings the temples had laid down. Others used it as an excuse to preach propaganda exclaiming that the Holy Sorceress was deserting the people.*

*Of course it was not a fabrication. Most individuals who survived the pandemonium could only tell fragmented tales of how they retreated into the deep forests as a great evil caused a calamity the likes of which had never been known before. Those who were that little bit braver witness a most extraordinary sight, for the dark entity was being repelled by a group of individuals.*

*Even for the most fantastic of stories it seemed impossible that whatever creature caused the destruction of Fourhe there were those who managed to defeat it. Every retelling embellished the details until the truth became lost in time.*

*It is important that the tale is told properly. Everything that transpired was neither a random act nor chance; it was the result of human meddling.*

*Years ago, under the illusion that a demon could be bargained with, a man begged for the creature not to kill his daughter. He instead exclaimed that he would bring a sacrifice, a chosen individual every three months to where the creature resided.*

*Pleased with this offer, the demon agreed and waited for the sacrifice. Unbeknown to the demon the Chosen, as they were referred to, were laced with a powerful sedative to lull it to sleep. Sure enough the creature was never awake long enough to terrorise Fourhe and each successive Chosen lulled it back to sleep.*

*It was a dangerous game, one which seemed to have paid off for some time. The town was content that He was contained and that the cycle could never be broken. That is, until the ambitions of a High Priestess began to disrupt this delicate stability.*

*That is where we begin our tale.*

## Part 1: Desperate measures

'It is a shame that we must meet in such dire circumstances my dear Mayor.'

Lady Katsuro took a delicate sip from her fragile china cup, placing it elegantly down on the saucer that was balanced in her opposite hand. The movement was flowing and graceful. 'These are concerning times for us all. I have a most urgent matter that we must discuss.'

As each word escaped her lips, the Mayor seemed infatuated by the movement. He gently nodded and drank himself. 'I assumed a visit from yourself would bring bad news,' he added.

Lady Katsuro nodded gently with the smallest of smiles. 'Indeed so.'

The Mayor fidgeted with his cup nervously. It danced over the saucer before he placed the saucer onto his desk a little too forcefully. Glancing at his guest she smiled once again before sternly making her point.

'To business,' she suggested. 'I am afraid I herald news worse than you can imagine.'

'I assume you mean...the Spirit, right?'

'Yes,' the woman nodded making the decorative charms in her dark hair rattle together. 'You understand the significance of the Chosen. We understand the troubles that have surfaced recently. The people need to understand their duty. Recently they have become...confrontational with this responsibility. The needs of us all greatly outweigh the selfish fears of a handful. There is a movement in place that encourages the outspoken to rebel against our enlightened choice. The effects of this have been felt in the belly of Him. He stirs with unease. Naturally this selfishness must be quashed. A faction against our well being and one so reckless must be quashed. I assume I have your support on this matter?'

'Oh course my Lady.'

'Dearest Mayor, since when was the public so distrusting of the Church? They need to see that we work in their best interests. The young of today seem to breed defiance. Something has gone awry in their upbringing.'

The Mayor sat meekly, wringing his hands as if he was personally responsible. 'What is the solution?'

The Priestess tilted her head slightly. 'He stirs because the peoples' sacrifice is jaded. Recently the Chosen have been criminals, vagabonds; people who we needed removing. They have been low in status and lacking in faith. Limit knows this and is displeased, so we have chosen a higher profile sacrifice.'

The Mayor felt a sinking feeling in his gut.

Katsuro then lifted her head straight and looked sternly at the man before her. 'Eve Franz, the daughter of General Hector.'

With no emotion Lady Katsuro stood up, dusting down her long robes before turning on her heels and walking to the door. She stopped as she turned the handle. 'See that it is done.'

When she had left, the Mayor stared at the door and contemplated how he was to let the General know the fate of his daughter.



The simple animal cries from the forest were halted by a low booming wooden siren emanating from inside the walls of the trading city of Fourhe, signalling the changing of the guard. In the market place, young children cheered and cooed as the impeccably dressed guards marched in file to the barracks. Watching over the proceedings from his office, General Franz, a short portly man, stroked his snow white beard and observed the proceedings. He grunted with a permanent scowl on his face. The past few weeks had not been the best. He had been ordered to stretch his forces along every main road, patrolling every gate and doubling the garrison to Limit's Shine.

Hector Franz scowled once again and stared at the extravagant monument on the horizon. In all his years of command his judgment had never been questioned, his orders never dictated from high above. Something was amiss and as hunches would have it, he was not wrong.

There was a knock at the door. The man behind it let out a heavy sigh before letting himself in. As soon as the Mayor saw Hector, he turned away, unable to make eye contact with him.

'Mayor, what is going on?' Hector asked taking a seat by the window as the Mayor shifted over to his side, looking out.

'General...Limit has been stirring, another Chosen has been selected, we are preparing now...' his last words were stuttered. The Mayor turned to Hector, biting his lip before standing up straight. 'The High Priestess has demanded that the sacrifice is to be someone important to us all, someone who will show the Spirit we respect his presence...she believes anyone else would mean nothing,' he paused as he blurted out his words, 'The Chosen has to be Eve!' The Mayor quickly turned away with Hector in sudden shock. Hector gasped for a moment and stood up quickly.

'Eve...?' Hector said slowly, his heart starting to race inside his chest.

'You of all people should know that there must be sacrifices made in situations such as this,' the Mayor spoke. 'Believe me my friend this was not an easy decision to make.'

Hector threw his head back. 'But my daughter of all people!' He hissed, his hands shaking in front of him.

'And if not yours, then somebody else's. But the difference is Hector, is that she is as strong as her father, she would not waver from this path she is now on.'

The General wiped his face with his hands in disbelief.

'I'm sorry my friend. You know I had no choice,' he sighed before taking his leave. Hector nodded yet was visibly upset.

As soon as the Mayor left, the General walked to his drinks cabinet and poured himself a large drink to steady his nerves. The alcohol didn't help in the slightest, not even the following drink that chased the first to his stomach. Damn this rule and damn those who made these decisions, he thought. Somewhere in his gut he knew this day was going to come but it didn't hurt any less.



A few hours had passed and the skies started to become darker as the sun set. Hector had remained in his seat staring at the opposite wall for most of the time, contemplating every situation, each one

destroying him equally. He finally brought himself to stand up; pushing himself up from the chair he walked to the door, opening it slowly. How would he tell his children what was to come?

Closing his eyes, he walked outside. The streets were almost empty, except for the guards and a few townfolk. He carried on in silence, even ignoring those who called his name. As he walked up to his house he saw Sebastian at the window in the kitchen. He could tell he was preparing that evening's meal and, with a sigh, the General continued on inside.

'It shouldn't be too much longer father,' Sebastian called, without looking up from the chopping board as he diced vegetables. 'Eve isn't home yet so you have time before we need to sit down.'

Hector watched silently as the various pots and pans bubbled away on the stove. The smell of home was a simple one within this family and it was agreed that it was Sebastian's cooking that created this feeling. Sebastian was young, only twenty three and level headed with it. He took his father's heart which was the gel that held the trio together since his mother had passed away. Even despite the stubborn arguments his sister and father used to have, he was always the rational one who made them see sense.

These thoughts caught Hector's attention. Time, he thought, went too quickly as a parent. While he had busied himself making sure the streets of Fourhe were safe he had missed his children growing up. The pain of his wife's loss was too great. Things just didn't seem right babying them and wiping their tears while he could not grieve. They were youngsters, old enough to be self sufficient, right?

Right. Still, that didn't make it any better. Now time had run out.

'Are you okay father?' Sebastian spoke putting a pot into the sink. 'Does it smell that bad?' He joked.

'No,' Hector replied. 'It smells fine.'

And he was right.

There was a pause before Hector confessed. 'Son, come sit down, I need to tell you something...'

Sebastian grabbed a cloth and wiped his hands before sitting down at the table. 'What is it father?'

Hector paced around the table, taking in deep breaths. 'Have you heard they wish to have a sacrifice for Limit tomorrow?'

His son sighed looking at him. 'Yes...'

'They want it to be Eve,' Hector came out with it quickly. He stopped and looked at his son whose expression turned to one of utter confusion as he jumped up from his seat.

'Wh-what?!' Sebastian screamed out. 'You cannot be serious! *Father!*'

Hector shouted back, louder than his son. '*Do you think I had a choice Sebastian?!*'

Sebastian recoiled back and shook his head to try and clear it. 'Eve...she cannot be the Chosen! After everything we have been through with mother, we cannot lose her too!'

'There is no choice Sebastian, if there was then I would stop this from happening. My back is to the wall,' Hector spoke solemnly.

'That's absurd! You didn't even *try* to argue!' Sebastian spat, slamming his hands on the table. 'I bet you just let them walk over you!'

Hector didn't know what angered him more; that his son was so outspoken or that he was actually right. He did not argue for the life of his daughter. A few disillusioned objections but never a firm no.

'You have no right to say such things!' Hector roared. 'Remember your place boy!'

'Or you'll do what father?' Sebastian spoke, standing up cracking his knuckles. 'I'm awfully big to hit nowadays. Then again that was your solution to everything!'

Something had boiled over in Sebastian. He was never like this. Sure he had done his time in service like every other young man so he knew his way with a sword but how could he even contemplate threatening his father?

The standoff was broken when the pair became aware of a clattering on the floor behind them. As they each turned, Eve stood in the doorway, bags of linen scattered on the floor. The brunette girl shook her head in despair. She had heard everything, every single word. She was scared. Eve's hazel eyes filled with tears. 'No...' she mumbled, before running off into the night.

Sebastian called out after his sister, halted by his father who ordered him to stay in his place. For Hector felt it was he who should find his daughter and explain all this to her in person.

Despite the streets being veiled with the darkness of night, small lit lanterns lined each road, spreading candlelight for Hector, who ran aimlessly, calling for his daughter. He paused, reaching the town square, condensing breath lingering in the air. His only daughter...he couldn't imagine what must be going through her head at this time. Each time he spun around to decide in which direction to run, he paused whilst trying his best to imagine how Eve would think. She was a smart girl, kind and forgiving, one of faith.

With that Hector looked at the building ahead and approached, it was the district Church.

The heavy oak doors crashed open, sealing the cold night air as they closed behind Hector who advanced past the pews. Hardly anybody was inside. The candles in their holders danced and steadied gradually. Hector walked to the front pews, to the small woman who clasped her hands tightly together whispering a prayer over and over. She rocked back and forth before Hector's hand on her shoulder steadied her. 'My little girl,' Hector spoke gruffly. 'I am so sorry.'

Eve took a deep breath and looked ahead. She sighed deeply as tears ran down her face.

'You said to Sebastian...there is no choice,' Eve mumbled, her crying becoming more intense. 'I have to die to save the village...like those sacrifices...before...me!'

The woman glanced at the stained window glass before her; she stared in awe at the image of a great angelic warrior. Hector bit his lip, turning away from the state his daughter was in. He sat down beside her, grabbing her shoulders so she was facing him. 'If there was another way...!' Hector gritted his teeth as tears started to form in his eyes. '...I would stop this Eve!'

'I know you would father,' Eve smiled, patting his hand. 'I just never thought I would be one of the Chosen,' Eve turned back to face the alter and the large stained glass windows that towered high up the wall, flanking the stone statue of a woman in-between.

'I envy *Her*,' Eve spoke, wringing her hands. 'The Holy Sorceress. Whatever plan *She* has in store for us all. It would be nice if *She* told us who it involved and all of the details,' Eve sighed longingly. 'I believe dad,' she muttered, resting her head on the seat. 'I believe that what I do will be right and it is necessary to do so. Maybe I didn't believe enough though? Maybe I'm being punished for being a bad daughter?'

Hector interrupted. 'My dear,' he said shaking her shoulders gently. 'You are the best daughter a man like I could have ever wished for. Such a heart you have, such a spirit you possess,' Hector wiped the tears from her cheeks. 'You will be well received in Heaven my dear child,' Hector spoke, showing obvious signs of preventing himself from crying further. 'You will accompanied by the bravest of the brave on your ascension, *Her* loyal Angels. Your reward will be the gift of everlasting peace. It is one I envy, Eve.'

Hector sighed, reminiscing about his years of service. Times were changing and an old war horse like him wasn't needed in this day and age. People wanted the younger in charge, the more foolhardy, to be icons for the people. He had no more fight left in this scarred body of his. Too many wars, he thought.

Was it all for nought? He missed his child's upbringing for service. A sword in his hand instead of a rattle or a bottle. Yes, she would find peace and long before him. A father was never meant to outlive his offspring. Hector's eyes looked heavy, the waning years seemingly all too apparent now. 'Promise me you'll escort this old fool to Heaven when I pass away? Your beautiful face will be a welcome sight,' Hector muttered.

Eve gripped her hulk of a father tightly, sobbing as she did so.

'Oh dad...' She cried. 'Please teach me to be strong through all this. Please be by my side for as long as you can.'

'We both will,' Hector cradled his daughter's head from side to side. 'Your brother and I. May *She* watch over your journey Eve and may *Her* Angels protect you from suffering.'

And there in the sanctuary of the Church Hector made his promise, under the visage of the Holy Sorceress.



Hector was, of course, true to his word. Every preparation that Eve went through, Sebastian and her father accompanied her. Sometimes all they could do was wait outside as the process resided in a deeply sacred part of the main temple. Other times, they were there to hold her hand as she cried, branded with markings that were tattooed onto her body. Through these necessities Eve tried to remain strong like her father had taught her; always keep your pride, always believe that despite the pain, these things must be done. The woman faltered once or twice but how could she not? Still, when the time finally came, Eve was ready to face her fate. Eve was prepared.

Her family, however, were not.



The procession could have been mistaken for being one of celebration, like that of a wedding of sorts. People lined the streets, each catching a glimpse of the plethora of white robed figures making their way along the main roads. Banners adorned with scriptures and symbols followed proudly. The air was a mix of chanting from offering bearing monks and ceremonial bells that chimed in the wind.

The public watched in awe as Eve was carried throughout the streets on a seat covered with exotic furs. Flower petals fell on the cobbled stones in front as the monks advanced, led by Lady Katsuro's entourage and then the high Priestess herself. Katsuro made no eye contact, cast no individual a cursory glance for she was too absorbed with her journey.

Eve herself did not speak, nor smile. Her immaculate make up and exotic head dress which frilled out behind her caused the public to mumble amongst themselves. Never had there been a Chosen as decorated as this one. Sacrificial beads hung around her neck, sprigs of rare plants tied to her outfit. Everybody began to ask why this one should be any more special than the rest.

Eve was special, and her father, who sat inside his house draining his tankard once more, knew this all too well. He angrily wiped the foam from his beard hoping the alcohol would drown out the noise of Sebastian pacing the floor.

'I still say you should join me,' Hector stated before belching. Sebastian looked less than impressed.

'This is how the first drink with my father should be?' He muttered. 'Why are we letting this happen anyway?'

Hector shook his head.

'I wish I knew son. I guess we're letting it happen because we have no choice.'

'This is Eve though!' Sebastian protested.

'And what of the Eves before her?' Hector boomed. 'Someone else's daughter, someone else's sister and we never paid them any attention did we? We watched them get carried to their death like all the others. We are equally to blame.'

Hector tried to shake the last drops of ale from a bottle before tossing it across the table.

'We could change things father. Nobody else would have to go through heartache again,' Sebastian was young and somewhat foolish. He had not lived through the years of religious oppression like his father.

'Slay the beast? Don't make me laugh Sebastian. It's suicide.'

'And have you seen Limit?'

'No but I heard the stories of what he does.'

'He will do those things to your daughter. At the very least we could save her! Run away and make a new life for ourselves! A fresh start!' Sebastian threw his arms out elated at the prospect. 'We could do what none of the others had!' His father watched in astonishment before breaking the silence.

'You're talking crap, son,' Hector replied bluntly.

'Maybe so, but a man like you would know where the guards line the temple path so we could avoid them,' Sebastian spoke circling his father. 'A man in your position would know the times the guards changed, how armed they are. We could sneak in and escape with Eve. We could save her.'

'And go where?'

'Anywhere. Somewhere South maybe, anywhere but here. Nothing keeps us here father, not since mother died. We could vanish.'

Hector mulled over this thought. 'Vanish?' He repeated.

'Without a trace.' His son replied with an immense grin.

This was pure madness Hector thought. This went against everything he knew but then again giving up his daughter went against every paternal instinct he had. In the old man's mind these two ideals cancelled each other out but, as he stared at his broadsword in the rack by the front door, it was becoming a lot more inviting.



Eve and the army of holy men had made it to the shrine. It was seemingly desolate and abandoned. Nobody dared approach it in an attempt to clean the building. The thick forestry that lined the final few hundred feet had become overgrown, entwining the sandstone structure with vines.

'We have arrived,' Lady Katsuro announced, her hands aloft. 'From this moment we shall carry out the Holy Sorceress's bidding to lull this monster to sleep.'

There was a wave of bowing through the robed heads and chanting to the Holy Sorceress.

Eve said nothing. Her seat was placed on the floor and her hand taken in Lady Katsuro's own.

'There my child,' Katsuro whispered, accompanying the woman to the large gilded doors. 'There is no reason to be afraid. You will be watched over and protected on your great adventure. Fear not, lest you be lost in the void and never find your way, doomed to walk this land as one of the Forgotten. Have faith.'

The doors heaved open, hinges squeaking from the rust.

The two women looked at one another. Eve nodded slowly, never showing a hint of emotion.

'Fulfil your purpose Eve Franz,' Lady Katsuro whispered before leading her inside.

The temple was dark and empty. There was an eerie silence as the priestess led Eve through to the stone slab standing at the far end of the chamber. Eve looked around herself, taking in the morbid surroundings. As the women stopped and turned to face each other, the Priestess took the decorative head piece off of Eve's head carefully and placed it on the floor.

Katsuro then called out and a priest walked in quickly holding a cup in his hands.

As soon as he handed the cup to his superior, he bowed and left. Eve took in a breath to prepare herself for her fate. The Priestess then took hold of Eve's throat suddenly and held the cup to her lips, making her drink the liquid. Eve choked as the solution flowed down her throat.

As Katsuro let go, Eve staggered backwards, swallowing the herbed drink once more as she gasped for breath. Before she had time to respond Katsuro pulled her to the edge of the slab. 'This is the place where the demon will arrive, fulfil your fate as a Chosen!' Katsuro spoke, as the concoction started to make Eve feel drowsy.

Eve pulled herself up and led down again quickly, her eyes dropping as she did so.

Lady Katsuro bound Eve's wrists to the slab so she was unable to escape. Katsuro then neatened Eve's hair and clothing so it was perfectly in place before she left, picking up the headpiece as she did so. Not once did the Priestess look back at the girl she knew was going to die. To Katsuro, it was simply a job that she was doing in order to serve the higher power. Emotions did not come into the equation.



Eve groaned as her mind fought against the herbs that had begun to daze her, she felt weaker as each moment passed unable to comprehend exactly where she was. The woman's head then fell to the side and her cheek touched the cold slab beneath her. She swallowed and took a deep breath as her eyes focused in the darkness that surrounded her. Something or someone was in the room with her; there was no doubt that she could feel it. Was it Sebastian, or her father? Had they come to take her home?

As Eve's eyes began to focus she noticed that it was neither member of her family but a small figure shrouded in white robes slowly approaching her, its steps ever so delicate with each footfall.

Eve's head started to pound which made her lift it straight and close her eyes as she tried to block the pain. Within moments she felt the presence of the unknown figure beside her. Eve dared not look and in sudden panic she tightened her eyes shut. Her breath quickened and she prayed for someone to come and rescue her.

Eve then felt a soft touch upon her forehead and delicate fingers run across her skin. She felt her body relax as the figure's hand then lay flat upon her forehead; Eve found herself with a sense of contentment and her eyes slowly opened. Eve's eyes focused as she looked upon a girl who was no older than sixteen. The mysterious girl's eyes were clear blue and strands of blonde hair fell around her face and the rest was covered by the hood she wore. Eve looked in awe at the beauty of the girl before her.

'Are you also a prisoner here?' She spoke softly; her manner nothing less than perfect.

Eve failed to speak a word and a tear started to trickle down her cheek. The mystical girl ran a finger down Eve's chin and wiped the tear away from her. 'I hope you will be set free, just as I will be when my Guardians come for me.'

'Y...your Guardians?' Eve tried to speak. 'Who...who are you?'

The girl went to speak only to suddenly look around in fright. Her hood fell down, making some of her long blonde hair fall around her shoulders. She then looked at the ceiling as she brought a trembling hand to her mouth gasping in fear. 'He is coming!'

Eve examined the girl closely for a moment, noticing an angel wing symbol on the girl's bracelet which hung from her wrist. She frowned as she started to feel more disorientated. Eve then remembered the symbol from the temples in her village, the winged symbol being that of the Angels of Heaven. As Eve's mind started to tire her eyelids dropped and her body became limper than before. She could just make out the girl run from her side and disappear.

Shortly after the girl had disappeared Eve heard thunderous pounding from above and dust from the ceiling above her fall onto her body. She heard the monster approach, and her heart started to race. A shrieking howl rang through the temple indicating the demon was fast approaching the sacrificial chambers.

'Eve!' A voice called out to her, she opened her eyes slowly and saw her brother tugging at the bands around her wrists. 'Oh Eve, I am so sorry!'

'S...Sebastian?' Eve spoke slowly, her brother quickly untied her wrists and pulled her up. 'What...what are you doing here? Limit...he...'

Hector quickly came into view, helping his daughter on her feet so she was leaning onto his and Sebastian's shoulder.

'Eve we are correcting a mistake, you do not belong here.'

'What are you saying?' Eve stammered. 'You cannot be here, it is forbidden!'

The gruff old man placed the tip of his sword on the floor as he looked away.

'The only thing wrong here was that I was convinced I had to sacrifice one of the two things in my life which makes it worthwhile,' Hector sighed.

Sebastian helped his sister making sure she was steady.

'Are they following us father?' Sebastian called. His father peered between the crack in the doorway down the path that led into the town. 'It looks like nobody noticed. We're in the clear,' Hector muttered.

Suddenly the group heard a girl's voice scream the Spirit's name loudly above them, her word echoed throughout the chambers. Then they heard her screech in agony above them as if she was being tortured. They looked in unison. Eve looked astonished. 'That...girl,' she started. Her brother and father looked to Eve. 'There was a girl here!'

Her words were silenced by a large echoing boom. Dust separated from the grooves between the ceiling tiles. The walls shook with the vibration. There was a sound of something dragging that echoed over the floor above. Everyone held their breath.

'No...!' Sebastian hissed, looking in shock at his father. 'We were so close.'

The room shook violently once more. Eve placed her hands to her mouth, shaking her head. Tears of panic began to stream down her cheeks. 'You woke him!' She squealed. 'You've killed us all...!' As she moved back Eve tripped and sprawled underneath the staircase, hugging her knees. Every large thud caused her to curl up tighter. Every vibration chilled her to the core.

Sebastian hardly had time to react. The large gilded staircase shook with each pounding fall. He tried to prepare himself for the horrors his mind had cooked up. The nightmares. The late night stories when a child. The details hammered into him by the Sunday teachings by the priests. The thuds had no origin and came from all around, shaking the floor beneath their feet.

His father gripped the hilt of his weapon and prepared himself. His armour had seen better days for he was more suited to giving orders to those beneath him. This man's fighting days were over. The only thing that fuelled him now was bravery and courage.

As the tall ceremonial doors began to heave at the top of the stairwell, the decorated red and gold symbols shimmered. Between them emerged a taut clawed hand. It was terrible in appearance and from behind the door a snorting, rasping sound began to intensify.

The doors exploded outward, causing the men to jump back in fear. Limit let out a mighty roar, the sheer pitch enough to deafen them for a moment. He stood over fifteen feet tall. Grey skin stretched thin over muscle and bone. His tattered wings flexed wide and firm. The skull was pointed, beaked, his sunken yellow eyes almost dancing in anger in their sockets.

He walked like a chicken, firm footfalls, his talons clicking into the stone work as he advanced slowly. Each time he hissed he bore rows of razor sharp teeth. That lopping tongue flicked and slicked over those teeth, preparing them for their next feast. Only this foul monster, Limit, was keen to spy, that on the alter where his meal should be, lay nothing but empty shackles.

Hector's first instinct was to recoil but as Sebastian retreated beside him the only thoughts in his mind were of daughter and son. As Limit's roar dwindled, from inside his snowy white whiskers he shouted

loud, holding his sword aloft to show this monster that he was not afraid, and it would not take his loved ones. Sebastian, caught by surprise at this burst of enthusiasm followed suit.

Limit was not amused. He walked slowly down the stairwell, his tail twitching behind him, wheezing breaths, snorting through his cavernous nostrils in disgust. He approached; Eve flinched under her hiding place which was dangerously close to the men who stood defiant. With what could be only described as a look of disgust, the monster bowed his head and sniffed them.

Sebastian gritted his teeth, despite the tip of his sword shaking in hesitation. His father noticed keeping his weapon steady as best he could. Sadly Limit was more than aware of this. Limit could smell the fear over them; he relished it, breathing it in like some intoxicating scent. He chirped loudly, tossing his head back making the pair flinch and yelp in surprise.

The shock was enough for Hector to lash out with his blade, nicking Limit's hand ever so lightly. It was something of an accident, one instantly regretted. Sebastian took a moment to realise what had just happened then attempted to follow suit. In response Limit batted Sebastian aside and slammed his talons into Hector's chest, pinning him to the hallway wall. The brickwork had cracks creeping outward from the pressure Limit administered, snorting at the man who dared attack him. Hector had begun to struggle for breath and, in one defiant move spat a glob of blood onto Limit's forehead.

Sebastian, somewhat concussed, watched helplessly as the creature broke his father's ribcage with a twitch then removed his weapons, letting the old man slump to the ground in a clatter.

With that Limit's anger swelled. There was no sacrifice. There was only these two who had been sent to kill him. Men had broken this treaty between them to murder him and for this they must be punished. Limit screamed before storming through the front doors. They exploded from the hinges, ripping the masonry with them in a massive plume of dust. He beat his wings and took to the skies to administer his retribution.

Safe, Eve emerged from the carnage, trembling and scared out of her mind. She sobbed silently, walking around to her father's corpse. She looked at Sebastian who lay dazed still, trying to focus on his sister. Her cries became deep outbursts, the grief too hard to bear any more.

'This is all my fault!' Eve shouted. 'I caused all this! All because I denied my fate! All because you wanted to free me!' She screamed at her brother, 'I didn't have a choice! Have you seen what has

happened?!' Eve pulled away her father's dagger from his feet and took a firm grip. 'All I had to do was die. All he needed was my blood!' Her palm flexed around the blades hilt. 'You came to correct a wrong, so now it's my turn!' Eve bawled, now hysterical. With her outburst the woman plunged the weapon deep into her heart. Feeling the steel slide through and pierce the organ. Sebastian tried to cry out, still winded from the blow Limit had given him.

With this action Eve believed she could put right all that had gone wrong, her eyes closed before hitting the ground.

It was several moments before Sebastian regained his strength. He had almost blanked out the death around him. Somehow it all seemed too traumatic to register. The only thing in his head, causing him to move his body was the thought of revenge. This curse had hung over the town for too long. This curse, this creature, had to be eradicated. With a final look at his father's body, Sebastian limped outside and proceeded to finish the job he had reluctantly started.

## Part 2 - Divine Intervention

The dust had hardly begun to settle within the shrine. The blood spray was still vivid and haunting the moment as the rubble and brickwork lay scattered.

From the debris a brightly armour clad foot fell on the tiles, tapping as its owner thought. Evermore Angel, one of the legendary Guardians of the Holy Sorceress had been watching the events unfold with his comrades. They had come to carry out their job of protection as only they could, to provide a sword and shield for those deemed worthy. Were the prayers of the town to be answered?

'I hate it when we're late,' Evermore sighed, surveying the torn out entrance and the corpse of the man who lay at his feet with the Chosen, dead only a few feet away.

'Well how about next time instead of just saying we should do something, how about we actually take action? We could have saved these people. Too late for that now,' from the dust emerged a second man, his black hair tied in a ponytail. Dark crossed his arms, glancing to Evermore beside.' Maybe I should call the shots,' he glared.

As the two men walked forward another took a bold step forward and stood beside Dark Angel. He flicked a long strand of his fringe to the side and grimaced. 'If you were in charge I doubt you would have saved this poor guy from getting every bone in his body broken. You're not that good Dark; even you have your limits,' Largi smiled a little only to receive a hard pat on the back from the large man who stood behind.

'That's not at all funny,' Siesmic boomed in a low voice, his large axe swung over one shoulder with piercing eyes. 'You should not make fun of the dead.'

'Oh come on Siesmic stop being so serious!' Largi protested.

Another figure nodded, Laguna, who agreed with his comrade's statement. He brushed his fingers over the blood that seeped between the tiles feeling it between his fingers as he rubbed. 'He's right. Be more serious about this Largi. It's not the time to be joking.'

Largi felt deflated, pouting at everyone who met his glance.

'Oh they're really a tight knit team,' Dark scoffed to Evermore. 'Real brothers in arms.'

Evermore sighed annoyance at the situation before looking across at the stairwell. 'Dark, go and see if our girl is alright.'

With the order Dark paced quickly over to the steps, jumping them two at a time, glancing around to be sure of his surroundings. He called her name, pushing a door open softly with his finger tips. The room was dim from the lack of light; around him there were many tables that were filled with precious artefacts and jewels. The walls were cramped with paintings and hanging weapons. Suddenly an item crashed onto the floor indicating to the Guardian that the girl he was looking for was in the room. He weaved past the many tables to where the cloaked figure that had approached Eve was huddled in the corner out of sight.

The Angel bent down in front of her and placed a hand on hers. 'Your highness?'

Dark placed his other hand under her hood and placed it on her cheek. 'Kiddo...'

The girl whimpered and her body was clearly shaking. Dark bowed his head and he whispered to her gently. 'We are all here, we won't be long I promise...I ask for you to wait here, don't move alright?'

The young woman nodded. The poor girl was too frightened to have not done what she had been told. He tilted her chin towards him, examining the cut across her cheek which was still red and angry, and his eyes narrowed. Dark pushed himself up and walked away, glancing at the girl a few times before leaving through the door.

'Did you find her?' Evermore called as Dark walked down the stairwell. The Angel nodded in acknowledgement but remained silent. 'Well?' Evermore called in frustration. 'Is she safe?! Is she unharmed?!'

The others watched too as Dark strolled right past Evermore heading to the entrance. He pulled at the hilt of his lance which he swung from over his back. 'She is harmed,' Dark spoke flatly.

The other Angels glared like a thousand lightning strikes in the room. They all reached for their weapons and proceeded to accompany Dark outside, a fierce determined look in his eyes, nothing but anger on his features.

The piercing light shone over the Angels as they began to jog through the dusty path down the hillside overlooking the town. Evermore sprinted beside Dark, not saying a word but focusing on the winged mass that arced in the sky and swooped down out of sight among the sea of roofs.

In the town, Limit smashed horrifically through the side of a building, tearing the brickwork out with him, causing it to collapse. He screamed a ghastly cry as the inhabitants ran for their lives, some crushed with flying mortar. He beat his terrible wings and rose up, flying over to the market then dived, crashing through the stalls and throwing the contents everywhere. Limit was on the rampage colliding through the town clock that stood proudly as a beacon for the locals only for it to be launched into the town hall, the side of the building sliding onto the ground.

The screams were deafening. People were being slaughtered with no remorse. Every swoop Limit made, he gouged and clawed anybody unlucky enough to be within his reach. Children. Women. Men. Young. Old. It didn't matter. To him, blood was blood.

Slamming into the side of another building, Limit dug his claws into the masonry and roared in anger once more. In one movement he pulled away, tearing the roof behind him and bringing it down over a series of alleyways that people had tried to cower in.



'Lady Katsuro!' One of the priests called from the temple, watching the carnage unfurl out of the window. 'We must get you to safety! You cannot be harmed!' He ran, his white robes flowing behind him, gathering up her possessions in bags as she patiently began to walk to the front door.

'That ghastly creature,' Lady Katsuro cursed. 'If only they had heeded my warnings! This is all on their heads!' Katsuro began ranting as she changed her shoes. The glass windows around the doorframe shook violently as the priests who flanked the Priestess cried out, for through the glass the shadow which fell over them got bigger.

Limit crashed into the hallway, pulling the ceiling down with him. He reached out to brace his landing, skewering the priests unfortunate enough to be in his way with his talons. The others fled back inside, bar the Priestess who stood horrified at the gargoyle who towered above her. Limit snorted, eying her up with his yellow sunken orb, examining the woman. Then with an almighty scream he grabbed and threw her

into the wall smashing down the wall and crushing her on impact. What was left of the Priestess was scattered onto the floor, the shocked expression still etched on her face.

From their view Limit had risen again and was flying tandem. The Angels were running as fast as they could to intercept him, each at arms and wings unfurled.

'Laguna, Largi, take the left flank!' Dark called, staring at the beast that soared and dived once more. Two of the Angels broke off and ran through the back streets to get into position. 'Siesmic, follow us up.' He added.

The large Angel nodded gruffly and slowed his chase. 'Evermore - you're with me,' Dark exclaimed. With that Dark and Evermore leapt in a single almighty bound into the sky and landed, still running across the tiled rooftops, not reducing in speed one bit.

They held their weapons tighter, catching sight of Limit as he circled the innocent once again. The pair ran and jumped over the gaps in the roofs, making their way around to the Spirit. 'Are you sure you can keep up with me this time?' Dark scoffed.

Evermore growled. 'Don't slow me down like before and we won't have a problem. We only have an issue when you get too ahead of yourself and jeopardise the rest of us,' Evermore's blonde fringe blew violently as he held his sword to his side; Limit drew almost close enough to be attacked, his feet still pacing over the roof tiles.

'No,' Dark spat. 'We only have a problem when you don't pull your *weight!*' He called out, kicking from the rooftop and launching himself in tandem with his cohort at Limit who spun around in the air and screamed.

With no time to defend, Dark pierced the upper of Limit's left wing, gouging the flesh which spurted a crimson trail as he sailed past. Evermore swiped, missing the opposite wing but hacking a chunk from the Limit's right arm causing Limit to holler in pain. Before he could react Largi and Laguna launched from opposite Dark and Evermore's attack and took their shots. Largi caught Limit's tail which lashed violently out, placing his hand on it as it flicked towards him and vaulting over in mid air, Laguna slicing Limit's leg which tried to kick out at the attackers. As all four Angels sailed through the air they slammed onto the rooftops, turned and bared their arms. Limit screamed in defiance despite being in obvious pain.

Limit noticed there were only the four ahead of him but more than four had attacked him in the past so in question Limit turned to look behind him, only for Siesmic to have his axe drawn back and heading right towards him. With an almighty crack around the side of the head by the flat of the Angel's axe, Limit crashed violently into the side of a house, tore through it on his behind and crashed into another before skidding to a halt. Siesmic landed beside Laguna who nodded and patted his friends back and then they turned their attention to the rubble below that had already begun to stir.

'Oh he's going to be angry...' Laguna smiled, knocking his fist against Largi's own in triumph.

'That he will,' Dark Angel agreed, taking stance. 'But I think we can make him angrier.'

Dark leapt down from the roof and landed heavily in the street, bracing himself with a hand. As he rose the few people still in the vicinity fled for their lives.

The rubble stirred gently then spewed outward as Limit burst upward before landing firmly on the brickwork. Limit shook off the daze, flapping his wings violently whilst shaking his head side to side. It was inconceivable that he could have been hurt by them. It was outrageous! This outrage sent the monster launching forward in a stampede. With not a bat of an eyelid Dark darted aside, Limit skidding before razing his sharp tail up the wall and demolishing the roof into pieces with a flick. The other Angels leapt aside, keeping a constant perimeter from their high vantage points. Limit charged once again, his opponent moving later this time, sending the beast sprawling into the wall. 'You never were too bright!' Evermore shouted, watching Limit turn and snort, 'Just a mindless animal! A wild beast!' He shouted.

This was enough to launch Limit into a frenzy. In a whirlwind of swiping talons Limits melee caught Dark on the back foot. Dark instantly spun and thrust his lance over and over, blocking every strike in a shower of sparks. The whipping tail struck Dark aside, knocking him onto his front and rolling him over and over on the cobblestones.

Evermore couldn't help but scoff, rubbing his chin. 'Dark's taking too long. Why does he have to show off? This isn't a game, idiot!' He paced over the roof, observing the fight.

Dark jumped straight to his feet and began an exchange with Limit, ducking and weaving, swiping the tip of his weapon over Limit's skin as it got close. The cracks echoed into the air over and over again, Dark rolling and jumping aside to find any vantage point he could.

Evermore glared once again. 'This is boring me now,' he growled. 'Siesmic!' he called, deliberately making sure Dark could hear.

Dark himself was quick to protest.

'I've got this in hand!' Dark shouted back.

'I don't believe you!' Evermore called back, walking beside the large Angel who lowered his axe and flexed his fingers. 'Expose his shoulder for me,' their Captain ordered.

On command Siesmic's chanted quickly and threw his arms out, the thick muscles bulging as his energy flowed through them. Between the pair on the ground the street erupted violently, a swelling forcing them both onto their backs.

'Perfect,' Evermore purred. He fell from the roof top and gouged his perfect blade deep into Limit's shoulder. The scream that flowed from the monster's throat was almost deafening but Evermore gritted his teeth together chanting in almost unintelligible pieces - but they were more than enough. A brilliant trail of white light flowed down the sword and spewed outward causing a violent cascade of steam into the air. Evermore was launched outward, his sword sliding cleanly from the wound. Limit hunched over, clawing at the wound in a deafening howl.

Evermore looked at his partner who picked himself up.

'I said I had it under control,' Dark scowled.

'And I didn't believe you,' Evermore sharply replied. 'We have a job to do. We're not taking any chances this time.' Evermore spoke, watching Limit prop himself up against a wall, shaking in fear.

From the alleyway behind Limit a lone figure scabbled over the wreckage and crossed from the shadows into the light. Largi stared in disbelief as Sebastian ran to attack Limit in blind revenge. The Angel instinctively leapt off the roof to save him.

For Limit this was perfect. His beady eyes flicked around in their sockets taking it all in. Dark and Evermore were shouting at each other. Largi was wide open in the air. Siesmic and Laguna were unsure what to do and this runt behind him thought he could *sneak up* behind him?

His talons eased into the ground, breaking the tiles into pieces. These warriors were nothing divided. They didn't stand a chance separate. Limit growled in a fraction of a second as Largi landed, scooped up Sebastian before launching into the air.

The pair did not get far however. The hairs on Dark's neck began to stand on end at the wave of energy which roared around them within that minute moment. This opening was all Limit needed. This moment. This chance would turn all this into his advantage.

A blade of lightning burst outward from Limit's frame, sparkling wildly, blowing apart the building he lay against, feigning weakness.

Laguna rolled out of the way of the arc which narrowly missed him but did not miss its intended target. The air pressure was enough to throw everyone back but catching the brunt of the blast Largi was thrown upward with Sebastian, sailing through the air and crashing into the rooftop of a nearby church.

The lumber rained down in slow motion around Limit who grinned in triumph, picking himself up and throwing his arms out. As Laguna and Siesmic shielded themselves from the debris Limit crawled up the wall and vaulted between them. Neither Angel had time to properly defend themselves. Tiles splintered viciously as Limit charged into Siesmic and trampled him down through the roof rafters. Shriek filled the air as the monster spun back on itself and caught Laguna's gaze.

'Bastard!' Laguna Angel yelled, drawing his katana and holding it the level of his eyes. They charged and clashed, neither scoring a blow. Laguna ricocheted into the sky with the enemy launching to intercept. The aerial exchange launched Laguna at high speed into the church belfry. The bell rung aloud as Laguna bounded off of its surface, hurriedly rolling out of the way before Limit pursued with an almighty crash. He peeled the wall away and crawled inside.

As their eyes clashed, Laguna flicked his ponytail whilst catching his breath. There was no warning, just like before, aside from the air that started filling with static.

'Your damn *dawdling!*' Evermore coughed relentlessly as he pulled himself up through the rubble and hardcore that had entombed the pair of them in the street, 'Why are you even a part of us if all you do is let us down? You should follow orders, not give them! If you had just listened...!'

'Shut up!' Dark roared from underneath the debris beside Evermore, 'Will you just be quiet for once?' The frustration was showing as Dark hoisted and tipped the wall that was trapping him over with a howl. Fully emerging, the pair hunched over and shook the mortar from their hair.

'No matter what I do you're always on my back!' Dark shouted and he pushed Evermore back firmly. 'It's been like that ever since I was made one of the Troupe! Don't you think this pitiful initiation process has run its course Evermore? The others don't treat me with such contempt!'

Evermore glared from beneath his dusty blonde fringe.

'Who ever said this was an initiation?' He spoke. 'You have a job to do and you'll let us down just like those who've gone before you – so this is what you're going to do newcomer...' Evermore took grip of his broadsword and placed the flat over his own shoulder. 'You're going to realise the scope of your job, just like the rest of us. Even Largi who is over sympathetic with these mortals understand this. Every day you will wake consumed with the severity of what we accomplish because if you slip up just one little bit, this death and destruction you see around you? That's just the beginning of a nightmare which you could cause for all of us,' Evermore snarled whilst standing toe to toe with his comrade. 'Get me, boy?'

The belfry exploded in a shower of sparks down the street as a lightning strike tore it to pieces. Amidst the wreckage that sprayed outward into the streets the pair could make out Laguna who was flung unconscious and downward.

In an unspoken truce the pair took off, their glorious wings beating towards the emanating victory roar that vibrated through the air. They soared with weapons brandished, to the creature that wallowed in the rubble he had just created. Of course Limit spied the pair who sped side by side to confront him. The demon could not have a clearer shot. The pair were so close together that a single lightning blow would blow them both out of the sky and, with each of the Angels incapacitated, he could then dismember them at his leisure.

Limit's tongue caressed his vile row of fangs at this prospect.

'Ready?' Evermore spoke through the wind to Dark who held his lance out straight under his arm. His cohort nodded.

'I hope you're right...' Dark mumbled.

Limit roared, an almighty blast of lightning parting the cloud in the sky and striking the ground. However, in the instant the lightning fell, Dark and Evermore pulled apart, pulling away just enough for the strike to miss the pair of them. In the time the Angels took to reach Limit, the demon was too surprised to react, or defend and as such Evermore was free to do his worst.

The first sound that replaced the monsters victory cry was the gouging of his putrid flesh.

This was followed by the breaking of his brittle ribs, two of them as the blade pushed onward into Limit's chest.

The impact was so great Limit staggered backward, his head held back in shock. He stumbled over the rubble beneath his feet, a whimper coursing through his throat. Atop the ruined bell tower Limit was dealt an almighty blow.

Limit's talons penetrated the structure to keep his balance.

As his eyes opened he was met by the second Angel, a split second from administering his attack – a look of hate on his face that rivalled Limit's own.

Again the skin was penetrated and again bones splintered. This time the lance went through Limit's collar, driven as hard as possible by Dark. The strike did so with such velocity that despite scrabbling with his feet, Limit was sent straight over the edge of the bell tower, both Angels driving him down with their combined weight.

Evermore grinned to his partner who did not look once up, anticipating the moment they would all hit the ground. Droplets of emerald tinted ooze smeared over their armour in the descent.

Upon impact, no matter how hard the Angels had braced themselves, they were thrown from their weapons which Limit ripped from his body as he lie wheezing and tossed them away.

Evermore was the first to his feet, heavily concussed and unable to stand straight. He attempted to lunge forward to finish Limit off only to fall into a heap on the floor struggling for breath.

Despite landing on the rubble of the tower, sustaining a broken collar bone and ribs, Limit was far from mortally wounded. His rasping breath could be heard amongst the dust cloud as he lied limply on the ground.

Dark wiped the blood from his eye from the new gash that ran red down his face. He had been winded and somehow managed to find his lance that Limit had removed, still covered in the creature's wicked blood. His intentions were the same as Evermore's – to finish this once and for all, to end Limit's life and raising his lance above his head with as much strength he could muster Dark stood between Limit's legs and thrust down.

The lance and Dark himself was caught between Limit's large toes as the downed monster kicked his leg back then forward, crushing the Angel violently against the opposite wall.

Dark slumped face first into the ground, unable to move.

Limit, who limply kicked himself onto his stomach, rose as best he could. The Angels would regroup soon as he was in no position to carry on this fight. No, for Limit it would be best if he hid again. He would need to vanish, wait to be summoned once more instead of being at the mercy of human intervention. If they had just done what he commanded all those years ago and not tried to control him, things would have been so different. *She* would be his.

Still the blood was spilt, and that in itself was a prize worth the beating Limit had suffered this day. It was a thrill to have taken so many lives once again, the rush was intoxicating.

Yet retreat was all he could do now. As Limit limped into the falling cloud of dust he vanished in the winding streets, from there he vanished into the forests and then the mountain ranges that littered the continent. He had escaped.

He would heal with time and with that time foster a greater hatred for those who intercepted him. The Angels would suffer for this defeat brought upon him, and they would pay dearly.

That, however, would be for another time. This costly fight was over.



Largi winced and groaned, screwed his eyes up as a gloved hand patted his cheek a couple of times, each time firmer than the last. 'Hey,' the owner called. 'Are you awake?'

Largi groaned again, lower in tone than before, trying to open his eyes despite the pounding headache that had taken residence in his cranium. Opening his eyes wasn't the best of things to do in his disorientated state as when the blurs formed an image, Largi yelped, finding himself upside down and staring at the flimsy decking of the church loft. He concluded it was flimsy as the force of the fallen tiles which the pair had crashed through and tore straight through it, allowing him to see into the church beneath some eighty foot down. 'Hold tight, we're going to get you onto your feet,' Laguna spoke.

It was lucky that his armour had become entangled in the shattered beams holding him dangling whilst unconscious. Laguna pulled the beams aside and caught Largi by the hand before putting him feet first onto the loft decking. The battered Angel rubbed his forehead, checking his scorched body for any severe injury, only to look at the others who were in much worse shape. They all sat against the wall, heads back in thought, wounds now bandaged with not a word between them.

They all sat opposite another man, Sebastian, who had survived the fall and suffered a broken arm. He sat mirrored to the others, but hunched forward with his hair around his face. Largi patted his brothers in arms on their shoulder pads as he passed, taking a seat beside Evermore who had now stopped his pouting, wincing at the touch.

'Well, at least I saved your behind,' Largi said, trying to look under Sebastian's hair while on all fours. 'They should have put me in charge and the fatality rate would be nil.'

Siesmic sighed. 'Always with the jokes...'

'Leave him be...'

Dark said, looking out the small box window at the end of the room. The sun was beginning to set, orange hues washing the clouds above.

Nobody expected Sebastian to respond but even if his response was predictable it still surprised the others. 'What difference does it make?' He mumbled bitterly, drawing crude stick figures in the dust with his finger. 'They're all dead anyway.'

There was a pause.

'You could rebuild?' Largi replied. 'People need a hero in a time like this. You tried to stop that thing. That has to count for something.'

'It's not home anymore,' Sebastian spoke, exposing his tear stained cheeks. 'The people I grew up with and loved are dead. Any survivors have scattered now with the story of what happened here. Nobody would return. I would be alone burying the dead.' He spoke flatly.

The other Angels had risen to their feet and begun walking to the stairwell. Largi noticed and jogged after, looking back on Sebastian who hung his head forward again.

'We can't leave him here. He has nothing!' Largi protested.

'And what do you suggest,' Evermore rasped. 'Take him with us? Keep him as a pet?'

'No, I...'

Siesmic placed a large hand on Largi's head, almost encompassing it. 'We were here to do a job my friend. That job is done. We cannot busy ourselves with matters that are beneath us. It would not be fair on those who died this day,' he spoke, as always the voice of reason.

'We owe him something!' Largi protested.

'We've given him a chance my friend, a chance to move on. He would have died today if you hadn't been there. That in itself is interfering with what happens down here. We cannot tell him what to do; it is not our place to dictate his future,' Siesmic sighed looking at the others who had descended down the stairwell. 'What happens now is down to him,' he spoke before leading his friend before him. 'Come. Have you forgotten the reason why we are here in the first place?'



Dark took a deep breath as he walked through the door into the room where he had told the girl to wait for him. He was exhausted and he paced around the tables to the far end of the room. He looked down to see her still curled up in a ball, he half smiled in relief and spoke her name softly. She looked up; her brilliant blue eyes looked at him in awe. 'Has he gone now?'

Dark Angel bent down and took her hand. 'It is safe to take you home,' he smiled as he watched her sigh in relief, and suddenly dive into him in an embrace. Dark quickly winced at the pain in his chest from her leaning against him, but despite the pain he held her close to him, feeling her pounding heart. What a feeling this was to hold his young Sorceress once more after all this time they had been apart.

The young woman looked back at Dark and smiled. 'Thank you my Angel,' her velvet tones so elegant. They both stood up and he did not let go of her hand as they walked out of the room. As soon as they came to the top of the stairwell the girl looked up and saw the Angel Troupe at the entrance. She gasped and quickly let go of Dark's hand and started to sprint down the steps. *Evermore!* She cried out.

Each Angel looked at the girl as her hood came down and her brilliant blonde hair flowed out and flew behind her as she raced to her Captain. Evermore bent down and caught her in his arms, grabbing hold of the girl tightly. 'Papa...' She whispered.

Evermore closed his eyes and held her to him. 'It's alright,' Evermore spoke sternly. 'You are safe now.'

Dark sighed as he watched the affection between them, bowing his head he walked down the steps with heavy footfalls. All the Angels then gathered around Evermore and their Sorceress. Evermore pulled her back a little and looked at her saddened expression, pushing her hair back from her face. 'Let's get you home, everyone is waiting. The Elders and the General have all been so worried.'

Each of the Angels smiled and kicked the wreckage of the doors aside as the young woman held Evermore's hand tightly. The Troupe left Limit's domain, knowing full well they would come in contact with him once again, but for the time being this victory would more than suffice.

The next time they met, the Angels vowed together, he would not escape again.



A special thank you to all our family and friends (a special mention to Nik and Pete) who have been supporting us on our writing journey over the last few years! We have finally finished our final manuscript for our first book *Fusion 2.1*

*Hunt for the Phoenix* and everyone have been absolute stars – we salute you for putting up with having such passionate writers in your lives!

Chris and Emma - February 2010

### **Details and Credits**

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