

1395

David threw himself to the ground and yanked the Cainite holding him down with him. Gold light crashed overhead, ripping through Cainite bodies and crashing against the blackstone pulpit. The pulpit withstood the crashing beam of light, but it tore through flesh like an explosion, burning and crashing at the same time. Loud, but not ear-splitting loud, the temple rumbled with the impact, and Cainites fell over each other. More than a few screamed out as they were stabbed, falling onto weapons, or weapons falling onto them.

"What the hell?" Greg yelled, and he climbed back up, too. Janette had thrown herself his way and pushed him down.

Janette didn't have a head anymore.

Greg pushed the woman's corpse off him, eyes wide with rage. Not surprise. Rage.

"You brought them here!?" he yelled, straight down at David. "That woman was right! I should have killed you on sight!"

The mystery woman?

"I--"

White feathers filled the enormous room, movement above, fast and blinding with gold light. The clang of metal filled the cathedral, echoing against the metal-like mineral, and Cainites screamed and roared as they broke into a riot. They were fighting something else, in the archway, and with weapons held high, whoever was in there couldn't fly past. But one already had, and they hovered in the cathedral, radiant armor of silver and gold almost glowing as it reflected the red light of the braziers.

"Unmarked ones," the angel said, "surrender your lives." A man glared down at them through his helmet, the t-slit of its front too dark to see anything within, except the glaring, beautiful blue sapphire eyes of the angel within. **ŴŴŴ.NcV&L(w)0r@cOm**

The angel didn't get to continue. Cainites flowed through the huge room, and they looked up at their new target with wide, hungry eyes.

"Angel!" they yelled. "Angel! Kill! Eat!" **Wtw.m0v&IworM.cOm**

The angel turned to face the swarm, but he was too high to hit. Except, not really. A couple dozen feet in the air was as high as the angel could hover freely, and he had to be careful of all the hanging braziers and chains. Combined with the inner balcony that circled the immense room filling up with Cainites pouring up from the ground floor, he wasn't safe.

Fighting continued on outside, dozens of the Cainites having run out to fight another angel, but there were plenty left inside to chase the angel threatening their leader. They threw their swords, daggers, and axes, somehow finding the strength to chuck the ridiculously heavy weapons at the angel. Pointless. The angel dodged around most, and knocked others aside with his shield or wings, angled just right to avoid anything sharp hitting his wings' arms.

It was beautiful. David stared up at the gorgeous creature of grace and power, how he dove left and right around the hanging chains, and how he turned his sword to aim at the Cainites on the balcony like a scene from a movie. Carnage followed. Body parts already littered the ground around David, and a rain of new ones joined them as the angel dove onto the balcony. Heads, arms, some legs, they fell around him onto the Cainites, and it wasn't long before blood drenched everything.

The angel blocked an imbued weapon, causing a cloud of fire to erupt through the upper half of the cathedral, and the angel laughed. Ice ran down David's spine. Angels weren't supposed to laugh, not like that.

"What have you done!?" Greg pushed past other Cainites and through the growing mess of gore before reaching down and grabbing David by the shoulders. He'd dropped his knife.

Even if he hadn't, the jolt that ran between them would have made him drop it. Every muscle in David's body flexed and unflexed as magical electricity coursed through his skin, into his spine, and up into his brain. As it did, electriclty flowed through him, back out into Greg. The knowledge repertoire put there by his sister entered Greg, each rune shining in David's skull for a second, letting him know it was being copied and pasted into someone else.

Greg's information didn't send any new runes to David, but lit up a path between them. Runes clicked into place, or rather, the chains that connected them lit up, and his mind automatically knew how to re-arrange them to create a working system. Like, making his own custom circuit board.

If you wanted to imbue a weapon with the power of hellfire, you needed to sacrifice a soul. When you sacrificed a soul, you basically triggered a fission explosion of the components by smashing them together against the special anvil. Resonance went one way, essence went the other, and the soul that bound and controlled them dispersed into the ether. Not destroyed, but gone, leaving behind the remains of an explosion of the two components, free to destroy everything they touched, but trapped in the weapon.

And David could trigger that explosion. Trigger it, and contain it in a weapon. And sync it with... someone else's... existence? Like a cable with a specific connector?

"The fuck was that?" Greg asked. "What is--"

The cathedral rumbled. The ground shook. The Cainites all released a gasp, and soon tumbled as the hellquake ripped the ground out from under them. It cracked, and tossed bits of blackstone into the air. Not good not good. **Wtw.tw.n0v&W0Om.cOm**

David and Greg went down again, each on their knees, and others joined them as the floor split apart. The amber vein that cut along the floor broke, and lava oozed from what almost looked like a glass coating. It didn't flow fast, but it did flow, trickling down along the black floor in all directions, some flowing down into the giant crack growing in the cathedral, while more flowed toward the Cainites.

It only got worse. The crack grew, and the rumbling doubled until the braziers above clinked against each other. The angel above them jumped off the balcony, or fell off, and landed on their feet with the harsh clank of metal boots. Beside the pulpit, he was only a dozen feet away from Greg and David, and he bolted for them, wings spread.

He got two feet before a host of limbs got between Greg and the angel, and threw themselves at the winged man. Their weapons came down, crashed against the angel's shield, and were thrown back. The angel struck out with his sword, but one Cainite blocked it with his own, got knocked back, but also knocked the angel's sword back. An opening, and the Cainites took advantage. They brought their weapons down, and only the angel's wings sending him back were enough to stop him from getting hit by huge, heavy axes and swords. He'd made especially sure to avoid a glowing red axe.

So, angels weren't unstoppable warriors of destruction. Even dripping from head to toe in the blood of his victims, something about the knowledge the angel was afraid to get hit painted him in a new light. He wasn't invulnerable. Just a single second of fighting on the defense gave the Cainites the morale boost they needed, and they threw themselves at him. They jumped over the tiny lines of lava that ran along the floor, but not all of them were so lucky, and they fell, screaming, as chunks of their feet burned to a crisp in seconds.

David knew better than to breathe in through his nose.

Three of them swung sword and axe down toward the angel's head, but the angel blocked with his shield, its edges lined with gold and silver, its face a mirror sheen. Cainite superhuman strength forced the angel to root his footing wide, but they weren't strong enough to knock him back or over, even as a wave of fire exploded over his shield from the imbued axe. The angel shoved his shield back in retaliation, Cainite weapons went up, and the angel swiped his sword horizontally. Their torsos fell off their legs. **Wtw.n0v&tw0rm.cOm**

Just a couple months ago, the sight of humans dying, having their guts literally fall out of open chest cavities, bodies cut in half at the hip, would have scarred David for life. It was just another Tuesday at this point. He blocked out the sounds they made as best he could, and refocused his attention on the bigger problem. Where were his girls, and what the fuck did he do about Greg?

"Enough!" The angel swung his sword out, forcing the Cainites back. His wings erupted in a gold light, and the glow poured down through his body into his sword. He swung it again, and an arc of light shot out from the weapon through the crowd, cutting them apart with the same cruel indifference as his beam attack moments before. They didn't cut apart so much as get blown apart, and again a rain of gore filled the room.