

CHAPTER 11 - CAPTIVE

The fiery ball that Mota had started had grown bigger and bigger like a whirlpool of death as Adriel, Chesum and a few angels watched in horror. All their hate and malice poured in, the inferno made of hundreds of thousands of angels towered over them bringing darkness and fear. Adriel stepped forward again but Chesum restrained him.

“No, we can do nothing.”

“Do nothing?” Adriel looked around wildly, a sudden weakness coming over him, tears falling freely. “God, where are you?”

The ball of fire suddenly spun upwards for a split second and then blasted southwards through the entrance of clouds towards the temple of God.

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Gabriel took in his surroundings as they journeyed towards the main gate of the heavenly city. Around the streets made of gold, were crystal panels standing like tall cellos, crafted to reflect the light of God around the city. The wounded angel watched as the crystal panels worked to convert the bright light into majestic color mutations, mixed together, bursting forth into amazing color renditions.

The colored lights revolved through spiral sockets set into the top of the gigantic beams, casting off a luster on the gold pathways. The crystal itself received the light of God from the throne room and worked the light through golden pipes interconnected in a triangulated array. Gabriel managed a smile. He would soon find refuge until he regained his strength. Then, he felt Bael turning away.

"Where are you taking me?" Gabriel asked. "This is not the way."

"Yes Gabriel, it is necessary."

"I don't understand. Are we not heading towards the gate anymore?"

"Not any more" Bael had turned and was now heading towards the east to Elama.

Gabriel became tense as Bael smiled cheekily.

"You lied to us." Gabriel said slowly realizing they had been tricked.

Bael almost laughed in delight. "You honor me. Indeed, I played my role perfectly."

"You foul lying spirit."

"Obviously you're in no condition for a little bit of genius. From what I have seen so far, Lucifer will win and I simply cannot be on the losing side. So yes, I have chosen a side."

Gabriel's mind spun knowing he was too weak to fight. He had to fight with every bit of his remaining grace but the angel simply waited as he was carried towards the city of the forge angels into the waiting and eager arms of evil. Gabriel could do nothing except bide his time and wait for an opportunity to strike.

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Narad was no feeble fighter and Tessa had to use every bit of craft he knew to withstand the angel. Ducking deftly to the left to dodge Narad's jab, Tessa swung his

sword, which Narad parried; then the angel struck again and again with his trident, jabbing aggressively, bearing down heavily on Tessa seeking a winning blow.

Tessa's sword sparked with each clash, his eyes lit up with grim determination. He would not fall.

"Weak angel. You are weak," Narad said, leaning forward, poised to strike again.

"I will defeat you, evil angel!" Tessa shouted, "This is God's kingdom."

"Then you agree there is no room for weakness in his kingdom."

"Pity, you will not be missed."

"Really?" Narad retorted proudly, spinning his trident "We shall see." Tessa waited for the blow but Narad was quicker than he had anticipated.

The angel fired his darts and at the same instant, threw his trident at Tessa. Unable to dodge the avalanche, Tessa quickly flung his sword as a dart pierced his arm. Narad had made his move and now he had the advantage.

Tessa struck out through the flame and hit Narad on the chest. The enemy angel spluttered like a rag doll and hit the gate of the Chamber of secrets. Tessa was upon him in an instant, pounding away with his fists to his victory. Tessa stomped on the fallen angel.

Narad lay in a fetal position as Tessa proceeded through the underground channels behind the hall of secrets towards the crystal city of the Seraphs. This was his city and he knew every shortcut. At the end of the channel, the path spread out into a dazzling

landscape, rich in jewels and glowing in a myriad of colorful streaks of light.

Stretched before him was an ocean of crystal, amethyst and jasper. The citadel of the seraphim was immense and beautiful. Tessa paused to think. He had to decide whether to head back to Michael or see how far Myesmoth had proceeded. He chose the latter.

The gate stood strong as Tessa approached slowly, weapons drawn. The once busy city seemed sullen and intimidatingly quiet. The creatures were nowhere to be seen, and where the seraphim with their golden harps would have welcomed his arrival, his own city was like a silent trap waiting to suck him in. Suddenly, a light burst blasted through the gate and it swung open.

"Ahh, welcome guardian of the little ones."

The dazzling light had masked Baeshedith as the familiar angel stepped forward through the entrance to the crystal city, smiling with his arms spread invitingly. "And Oh, I see you are hurt."

Tessa stood his ground, his mind racing, wondering where the angel they feared was. "This is not your place Baeshedith. Why are you here?"

"Overstating the obvious are we? You have your quarters in this city. I was merely visiting."

"I know whose side you're on. You are my enemy."

Baeshedith smiled, hate filling his face. "I wouldn't want to be my enemy considering the friends I've been making."

Tessa swayed on his feet as thud after thud, the ground under him shook. Tessa knew it was folly to stand and fight. Baeshedith he could take easily, but this renowned angel who created the weapons of war would crush him fairly easily. Tessa pointed his sword at Baeshedith. "You will rue this war and suffer the consequences of your rebellion."

Baeshedith threw his head back and laughed. "We cannot lose. You will bow before us and serve us. Look to my left."

Tessa could see Myesmoth's frame appearing in the far off distance. Behind him were more angels, uncountable, a legion of legions led by Astaroth and Myesmoth inching towards the gate at a brisk rate. Tessa spun around and shot off like a dart as Myesmoth roared a mighty war cry in the distance. Baeshedith sped after him quickly attempting to match the fleeing angel's pace.

Not too long after, Myesmoth emerged through the gates and chased after Tessa, the angelic forces following persistently after him in the direction of the rear of Michael's army.



Michael watched as more enemy arrows struck Raphael's ranks.

"Lemuel! Lemuel!" Michael shouted.

One of the guardian angels of the throne room shouted with despair etching in his voice. "Yes? Captain Michael!"

"We must give aid to Raphael or they will soon be defeated!"

“What must we do?”

"We need a shield to cover Raphael's forces from Elzebur's arrows."

"I will go!" Lemuel's long hair was like a triangulate of lighting sparks. His eyes were like tiny slits plugged into a slimly built face. In his right hand, he held a huge battle-axe, a weapon that seemed heavier than he could carry.

"Go then" Michael said and turned to his left. "I will defend the temple of God."

Lemuel suddenly stopped and gasped." Captain, look to the west!" He shouted.

Sure enough, an angel in the far distance was hurtling towards them. Michael cringed visibly. Behind the lone figure, a much bigger angel pursued and then legions upon legions followed.

"Seems like Tessa. It's an ambush!" Michael shouted springing into action. "This must end now."

"What do you mean?" Lemuel asked.

"I must find the one who started this madness, the source of this insanity. I know now what must be done."

"Well how do you intend to find him?"

"That will be easy. I need to speak to him in person."

"What you speak of in itself is madness. You will willingly surrender to the enemy?"

"That is the only way I can get close enough to contend with Lucifer. I need to delay or restrain him long enough to get angels positioned within the outer court. We simply cannot allow them take to our most hallowed place."

"That is not a good plan in my opinion." Lemuel said.

Michael looked around, seeing that they were in danger of being surrounded. The archangel grabbed Lemuel's arm and looked into his eyes with a deep urgency. He did not need to speak. Lemuel face went from despair to a strange calm.

"I understand, captain. I will hold the gate for as long as I can. God speed."

As Tessa joined them, still being pursued by the gigantic Myesmoth with Astaroth's host of angels and their choice weapons of power, Lemuel's forces sped towards the front of the gate of the outer court to hold and defend it. Their backs turned in that moment, no one noticed Baeshedith slip into their ranks.

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A distance from the battle at Raphael's fields, Lucifer stood with a few of his closest captains in the fields of Elama. He was filled with excitement. Brooding over a crystal map forged with light, the great angel smiled lustily, scrutinizing the map. Around him, his warriors brought reports of the progress of the war.

"We have taken most of the cities that have most value to our cause," Mescuriel, one of Lucifer's warlords proclaimed. "Soon we will take the fields and then advance on the throne."

"Do we have all the gates?" Lucifer asked as Mescuriel cringed visibly.

“Not all yet. We are still waiting on more reports. But, the center, it will cave soon. The only place of intense resistance held by Raphael will soon fall.”

Lucifer glowed happily and then assumed a more serious look, studying the map.

“My move, Michael, what's yours?” He grimaced, lost in calculated thought.

The map seemed alive with tiny replicas of the battling angels. Across the terrain of Heaven, he could witness his plan set into motion from his strategic position. His angels were positioned in a fine array of brute strength, itching to go into battle.

"Looks like we are gaining ground!" Mescuriel was slightly giddy as he peered over Lucifer's shoulder at the map. Lucifer did not respond. Instead, he focused on a tiny spec moving at great speed toward them over the throngs of angels lined ahead of them. Mescuriel turned to observe Lucifer's face. "Bad news? Lord Lucifer?"

"Be quiet, angel, be quiet." It was a grim chide from the huge captain of the hosts of enemy angels. "I have to think."

Mealiel, the wiry watcher angel of the watery ways of Heaven, emerged behind Mescuriel and stood on Lucifer's left, bowing low in greeting.

“Master, the main gate of Heaven is ours. Ashfalon and I took it. He is very eager to please...” Mealiel paused when he saw what Lucifer was looking at. On the map, a strange speck of light continued at great speed towards their position. “Shall our angels shoot him down?” He asked.

"Yes!" Mescuriel let out a screech, which turned into a squeal of pain as Lucifer burst into a torrent of fire and hit him in his mid-section.

"Nobody move! I think know who it is."

The angels stood uneasily, watching as the fiery light traveled at great speed far above their tall tridents and spears towards Lucifer. Mescuriel stood to his feet slowly, his eyes filled with hatred and fear. Shamed yet proud, he took his place slowly, moving his hand close to the hilt of his sword as the great light moved towards them.

Mealiel stood still, waiting and watching. "I can't make out who it is or what it is," he said. Over a hundred thousand of his forces watched tensely as the light began to descend.

Lucifer waited, a sneer on his face. "Calm yourselves." Lucifer said curtly. "It is going according to my plan."

Lucifer looked around at the hundreds of thousands of angels that had joined his rebellion. They were poised and ready for his command, willing to battle for every inch of the great city. *Let the great light come; let Him.* They needed Him to get out of His Holy place. Lucifer smiled.

"Yes, I am here!" He shouted. The light was within a few hundred miles. Lucifer's forces parted quickly as it descended. "Get ready!" Lucifer muttered quickly.

The light hit the ground forcibly, sending some angels tottering from the shock. Its glory faded slowly, revealing a familiar face. Lucifer's face suddenly expressed a look of disappointment as he recognized the intruder.

"Michael," Lucifer sneered with disdain. "It is only you. We were expecting someone more important."

Michael rose up as the light waves bubbled about him, spiraling like wisps of fire. Michael stood tall among the enemy angels but it would take the unimaginable to defeat the mighty angels standing around Lucifer.

“Have you come to join my army?” Lucifer chuckled drily. “Foolish archangel. It is by my mercy that you were not shredded with a thousand fiery arrows of my servants. Had I known it was you, I might have commanded them to shoot.”

Michael spread his arms, his face emotionless. “Thank you for your mercy, brother. I have come to reason with you. To talk.”



With Michael on his mission, the war at the column of trees and the river flowing from the throne room was a conundrum of fighting angels - sparing, shouting, and lashing out. A variety of weapons had been unleashed across the once beautiful terrain. The angels loyal to God appeared besieged in their effort to maintain a defense of the highway to the temple of God. Tessa sped over the ranks of angels who stood at the ready waiting for the advancing Myesmoth.

"How many do you reckon we have left?" Tessa yelled over the noise to Lemuel. Myesmoth was gaining quickly.

“A few tens of thousands still fight but with Myesmoth, we are surely outnumbered. My force is still ten thousand strong, sworn to the defense of the throne room. Lemuel’s face suddenly lit up.

"Let's get inside and shut the gate. That will keep them out and buy us valuable

time while Michael is away."

"Yes!" Tessa nodded. "But we must do so now! They are almost upon us."

"But what about Gabriel?" Lemuel said quickly.

"Brother, we either do this or stay here and be defeated. We have no choice. Gabriel will retreat when he deems it necessary."

"You are right." Lemuel looked up at the tower. "Zuriel!" He shouted. "Open the gate!"

Zuriel poked his head outside the window of the tower.

"Captains orders. He said not to open."

"I am captain in his absence and I have no time for cheap arguments. Open up!" Zuriel and Lemuel stared at each other for a moment and then Zuriel bowed slightly.

"As you command."

The gate sprang open and Lemuel gave the order. Immediately, his force of ten thousand dashed quickly into the outer court and stood in a fine array, weapons drawn.

Lemuel looked up at the tower at the gate of the outer court and yelled.

"Zuriel. Lock it down!" Zuriel appeared at the window again and nodded.

"As you wish."

Immediately, a fiery sheet of light spun across the top of the tower, creating a secure covering over the outer court. From their new position, the angels gathered in their

ranks waiting for what seemed like a delayed but inevitable defeat.

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Michael eyed the visual map of the war for a brief moment and then met Lucifer's gaze. "I must speak to you. Alone," He said, as Lucifer smiled brashly, enjoying every moment of their exchange.

"Why? You stand before my host and all the power and might of the ones who believe in my rule. You are beyond the realm of your safety. We have taken most of the domains that matter to Heaven and now press to crush the weak force you positioned outside the temple. Tell me, Michael, are you here for a share of our spoils or simply here to perish?"

Mescuriel took a half-step forward, weapon drawn, as Mealiel and a few dozen poised to attack. Michael understood now that his crazy plan depended solely on Lucifer's pride. He had to feed it.

"I must speak to you alone. A proposal. You know that you cannot enter the courts of the temple. Not with the gate shut."

Lucifer took a quick look at the map, scowled and then threw his head back and laughed, music bursting through the pipes laden in his wings. His captains laughed as well; only Mealiel kept full watch, trailing every move as Michael stepped closer to Lucifer and forced a half smile on his face.

"Like I said, I have a deal that will end this war and you will have what you have been scheming for without further destruction. However, I insist that we discuss this

alone." Michael waited as the angel of music contemplated his request. If the order to attack him was given, he would be overpowered and easily defeated but Michael kept a calm face even as his insides burned with anticipation and dread. Lucifer smiled.

"Your bravery makes me dizzy with delight. We do not need to vanquish every enemy angel so I will listen to you. Come then, but no tricks. Lest you end up like him."

"Like who?" Michael's puzzled look followed Lucifer's pointed finger, as his captains parted ways and then his eyes widened with horror and shock. Strung between the pillars of the guardian's post at the top of the flight of steps of the field of Elama was an angel, his arms strung in fiery chains, his body bruised all over. Michael's voice broke.

"Gabriel."

Mealiel chuckled, moving quickly behind Michael in case the captain lost his mind and attacked them. Mescuriel ran up the short stairway and poked Gabriel's mutilated body with his trident. Gabriel screamed in pain, his body contorting as Bael and Ashfalon emerged on both sides of the pillars bowing low to Lucifer.

"You have done well, Bael." Lucifer said slapping his hands together gleefully.

"Thank you my lord." Bael said. "But it was your plan. We are amazed at your wisdom, lord." Lucifer spread his arms wide enjoying the worship he was receiving.

A tear trailed Michael's face but he quickly wiped it off as his eyes met Gabriel's. The captive angel had a pained look on his face. Michael felt great grief knowing that Gabriel would be confused about what he was doing, seemingly thick in the counsel of the enemy. Surely he would wonder if he had turned against God. However, there was

simply no way to answer his questions. He had to take out their leader. The one who had started it all. Michael took a few steps up the steps and stopped. *Stay strong Gabriel. It will soon be over*, Michael thought to himself. He had to stay true to his plan.

Michael's eyes never left those of Gabriel as he spoke. "Well then, no tricks. Shall we?"

"Come then. Let us talk as you have requested." Lucifer responded stepping beside Michael on the steps of the guardian's post.

Michael put a hand on Lucifer's shoulder. "Wait. No weapons."

Lucifer turned gloating. "Are you afraid? You are scared you will meet the same fate? Very well, no weapons."

The archangels pulled out their weapons as Bael and Ashfalon stepped down to receive them. Ashfalon reached for Michael's war sword and their hands touched briefly. Their eyes met for a moment as Michael released his weapon to the angel, wondering if he had found an unlikely ally deep in the enemy's ranks. He decided not to count on it. Mealiel stepped up pulling out a sack with gold rims. "Here, put them all here." Michael looked down again, feeling the walls closing down on him.

Lucifer clapped heartily. "Good. Now all the formalities have been completed, I am keen to hear your proposition of surrender."

Michael put his right hand on Lucifer's shoulder as the angel put his hand on his, their eyes never leaving each other. Their wings spread out as the other angels stood back. A ring of fire formed around them as energy built up around them and then the two

angels blasted upwards above the field of Elama, a distance from the angels camped beneath them.

Below, Ashfalon and Bael resumed their positions beside Gabriel as their eyes followed the trail of light trailing the two archangels. Ashfalon looked around quickly, observing that all the angels were looking upward; even Mealiel who was carrying the sack filled with weapons maintained his gaze on the trail of light. Ashfalon edged closer to Gabriel, his mind racing wildly, and poked Gabriel in the side. The wounded angel groaned loudly. Mealiel did not break his gaze but a few angels did.

“Be quiet Gabriel. Stop whining,” Mescuriel teased.

Above them, they could see the two angels discussing animatedly but none of them could hear what Michael or Lucifer were discussing. Gabriel groaned again, louder, distracting the angels around him.

This time Mealiel peeled his myriad of eyes slowly away to observe Gabriel.

“What do you want? Gabriel? Some fresh water from the fountains of heaven to quench your thirst?” He taunted as some angels laughed.

“Or some manna to restore your strength?” Mescuriel taunted.

“Tell us Gabriel, we are your humble servants.” Mealiel laughed wickedly moving menacingly towards the wounded angel.

As the angels taunted Gabriel, most of them became distracted and did not notice immediately that Michael had attacked Lucifer.

