

Chapter 1

Tears fall across Bobby's cheeks. They run in rivers as he begs the dark twisted figure dangling the man over the deep black and red crevasse, to let him live. Bobby swings back and forth in the man's grip, across the back of the shoulder of Bobby's neatly pressed tuxedo.

"Walter, listen I don't know what this is about just please let me go."

"That's fully my intention Bobby. To let you go. Straight down the pit where you belong." Says the sharply dressed man with a crooked smile across his face, with his free hand the man fumbles for a cigarette from his vest pocket. Bringing it to his mouth he places it in between his teeth then taps the edge of the tube bringing forth a small collection of smoke and embers, as the stick burns to life. "You know I would have thought the rumors would have at least gotten to you by now. I sincerely hoped that for Gloria you would have rethought your actions. But no you just had to go through with it all and now it's gonna cost you Bobby boy. It's my job to collect souls. And well your soul fits perfectly right with the others I have placed down this pit. I really am good at what I do Bobby. Hell! I had to be, for me to last this long on surface detail. "

"What are you the devil?" Cries Bobby as he tries to keep reaching up to grab the spindly arm of Walter.

"Me the devil? Nah, the boss never does the dirty work these days. He likes to contract out to people like me." Walter chuckles as he takes a puff of his smoke. "On the bright side, you're giving me the chance to get one of these in. Gloria and Chucky never let me smoke these much. Heck the side job makes it hard as well. But hey when one opens a crack to hell, to claim a soul who is going to stop you from getting a bit of enjoyment out of things."

“Walter, stop this now! It’s against the rules and you know it.” An unshaven man in a disheveled mess of a suit walks up and snaps his fingers as the crack begins to shut. Next to him is a fairly over weight ill looking man in a tuxedo that looks at least a size too small for him, and the two men are followed by the flow of white as my dress shimmers across the freshly mowed lawn of the Purgatory country club. I walk up to Walter, as the crack reseals. Quickly I take my white gloved hand and place it across the clean shaven jaw of Walter, as he drops Bobby onto the solid ground. Bobby is still panicked and is quick to crawl away towards my awaiting legs where he latches on tightly in case the earth reopens.

“What the heck are you doing Walter? You said you had no problem with Bobby weeks ago and now all of a sudden you’re here causing trouble and threatening to toss him down to hell. You’re after my fiancée on my wedding day. You want to take him down to add to your tally for what?” I give Walter a stern look as he calmly grasps his cigarette and rolls it in between his nimble fingers. Before he turns to face me with his trademark wide toothed grin of friendliness, which had signed away so many souls in my own lifetime.

“You’re in the wrong here this time Sweetie. Your boy Bobby here has been lying to yah for some time. Haven’t you Bobby boy.” I watch as he shifts his gaze towards Bobby who quickly shuffles about to try and avoid the quick look from the devil laying claim to his soul.

“This is a breach of protocol Walter. You know the rules. Both sides can claim souls during the judgment but only when the soul’s time is up. Yet here you are again trying to manipulate the playing field.” States the unshaven man I have come to trust as my angel at my side over the years.

“Manipulate, I am manipulating. Article fifty seven sub clause C. While the judgment is being held both sides are allowed to temp and work to free souls on a path that will grant them ether eternal damnation or peace. You may not be trying to collect a quota as you’re at the bottom of your jobs ladder, but I have to keep my position to keep living the good life up here.” Walter proclaims with skill and experience.

“I will not have you two causing this pissing match on my daughter’s wedding. Family curse be damned I want to give my little girl a tiny bit of joy before you two tear away at her souls placement in the world like you all did with her mother.” I watch as Dad pushes Walter aside causing Walter to almost drop his cigarette from his hand.

“Dad it’s okay. Today is just another day after all. And I should know better than to expect a man who has been there all my life to treat my hopes with just a shred of respect. Enjoy your cigarette Walter, because you’re no longer invited to the wedding!” I snap back at him as I grasp Bobby’s arm and begin to pull him up from his tight grip on my dress.

“Fine then, if that’s the way you want it you deserve each other.” I watch as Walter throws his hands in the air and tosses his still lit cigarette away. “But keep this in mind sweetie. I have my reasons to go after your beloved’s soul. He belongs to me and I always collect my souls.” I watch as the clean cut man slicks his hair back as he makes his way down the road towards his parked car. As a little bit of regret hits my stomach I help Bobby to his feet and start to brush him off.

“Sorry about that Honey you’re okay. Walter is only messing with you...” Before I can finish comforting him Bobby slaps my hands away.

“He is the devil, an honest hand to god devil! And you’re just okay with that. For god sake woman what the hell am I getting into marrying you?” Bobby begins to back away when dad moves in and places his hand on Bobby’s uncomfortable shoulder.

“Look son, I have been where you are. Of course I got to say Walter never threatened me like that, and he does have a point. If you will end up there or not you have to have done something to get him to act that way towards you.”

“I am curious as well.” Charles scratches his chin as he questions the situation. “I have worked with Walter before. He is right about him being able to tell which way you’re headed. I haven’t spent as much time around you as he has but I do sense your hiding something from us.”

“Let it go you two or I will have to have you two uninvited as well. Bobby is just freaked out after the scare Walter gave him. Listen Honey, I know I should have told you the story about my family before now and perhaps it’s still best before we get married. That you hear the whole reason why Walter and Charles are here.” I take Bobby’s hand and walk him to a nearby bench where the two of us sit.

“It all started four centuries ago...”