A MATCH MADE IN HELL

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For Kelsey and Charis



There's a five-minute window, in between living and dying, that I can't quite recall.

I remember the beach. I remember so much alcohol running down my throat I snorted some out of my nose. People laughed at me. Noah was furious with my behaviour, so I stormed off and climbed the steep, winding path to the top of the cliff, Sasha's hand in mine. We were giggling, shouting obscenities and feeling completely, utterly invincible. Free. I remember peering over the edge.

I remember Sasha screaming my name.

What I don't recall is falling. Maybe a brief moment, right at the start, where it felt like flying, the wind sharp against my ears as it whistled past my head.

Ending up in this strange limbo, surrounded by nothing but grey mist, doesn't imply a successful landing.

Although my heart still beats a slow, steady rhythm, one that matches the rise and fall of my chest, it doesn't feel the same. It's a habit, purely mechanical, no blood rushing through my veins or air filling my lungs. I hold my breath for practice. It's fun for the first few minutes, but then I kind of miss breathing,

so I suck in a mouthful of nothing in case it does enough to kick-start the rest of me back to life.

It doesn't. If anything, I keep getting paler.

That can't be a good sign.

I clutch the ripped ends of my dress, balling the fabric between my fists, wanting to tear it off. It smells like sun cream and vodka and regret. That trip to the beach was supposed to be one last hurrah, my final chance to let Bad Decision Willow make an appearance before I became Responsible Willow forever. The job application destined to change my life was already filled out.

And now it'll never be submitted, all thanks to one crumbling piece of rock.

It's not fair. There has to be a way out of this. I'm not in any pain; that must count for something. Maybe my injuries weren't life-threatening and my body is being worked on by doctors right now. All I need to do is find a way back to it and I'll wake, like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, all shiny and new and ready to send that application at last.

Something scuffles up ahead.

My heart – my utterly useless heart – flips in my chest. 'Hello?'

Nobody answers. The scuffling continues.

'Hello?' I risk a step forward, my feet slapping against what feels like damp stone. 'Is someone there?'

Please be someone nice. A medical professional would be ideal.

There's a hiss of a match being struck, and a light shines in the distance, illuminating the domed walls of a dark, rocky

tunnel. I move towards that beacon like a ship heading to a lighthouse, if the ship was both confused and slightly stressed about what it might find at the end of the sea.

The match lighter shuffles close enough for me to see its face.

A whimper escapes my throat.

Oh fuck. Oh *fuck*. I stumble back, desperate to get away, I *have* to get away, but I slip, algae sending my feet flying out from under me. My tail bone cracks against stone and – fuck. That hurt. And I felt it.

So the whole not-feeling-pain thing lasted all of five minutes. Well, isn't that wonderful? Isn't that swell? There are now zero upsides to being here, and there's a demon standing in front of me.

I don't know what else to call it. It might pass for human at a quick glance, but a closer look reveals its features are almost fox-like; with bright orange eyes and a nose that's a touch too long. Its nostrils emit little puffs of smoke, causing the candle in its hand to flicker wildly. Aside from a snakeskin loincloth for the sake of its modesty, the rest of its leathery red skin – the same colour as sealing wax on an ancient envelope – is on full display from the top of its bald head to the tips of its four-toed feet.

All it needs is a pair of horns to complete the cliché.

I let out a high-pitched, humourless laugh, because the alternative is to scream *this can't be happening*.

This isn't a waiting room. There isn't a doctor trying to save my life. I'm dead. I'm dead, and I'm in . . .

'I don't understand,' I whisper.

But I do.

Because unless the world has got things very, very backwards, creatures like this don't exist anywhere good.

No. *No*. I press a shaking hand to my mouth. The demon remains silent, like it's waiting for me to catch up with the obvious, but I can fill that silence just fine – or rather, *she* can. Mum. Imagining what she'd say is all too easy.

What did you think would happen, Willow?

Where did you think you'd end up?

That's not the point. I had a plan. I was going to fix everything; become the kind of person who wouldn't end up in *Hell* of all places. I just needed a little more time.

Time I need to get back.

The demon shifts on its feet, and my gaze snaps up. Its eyes glow when they meet mine, a simmering fire threatening to burn a hole all the way to my soul, but I refuse to look away. Showing fear won't get me what I want.

Convincing it there's been a mistake might.

Lying to a demon may not be the smartest thing I've ever done, but excuse me if I'm all out of bright ideas straight after dying. Besides, I do have one useful tool at my disposal – Mum always said I should be more like her, and this is my chance to shine. Mimicking her very best customer-complaint voice, I say, 'I think there's been an administration error. I'm not supposed to be dead.'

No response.

'Are you listening to me?' She's definitely said *that* before. 'I shouldn't be here.'

Nothing.

I try one final line, clicking my fingers for added effect. 'If

you can't help, get me a manager. Someone who knows what they're doing.'

This is usually the point an underpaid shop assistant escapes to the back while my face burns with embarrassment, but clearly my imitation skills aren't up to scratch because the demon makes no move to find me any assistance, and somehow my cheeks still end up warm.

I swallow a fresh wave of panic. My ankle is beginning to throb. The back of my head feels like it's been split open. The longer I'm here, the more solid everything seems. Maybe, right at the beginning, that had been my window for escape, but I was too busy recalling my final moments to take the chance while it was there.

'Please.' My voice shakes this time, all traces of Mum gone, leaving me and my fear trembling in her wake. 'I have to go back.'

Finally, the demon acknowledges I've spoken, waving a hand and beckoning me to follow it into the gloom. It hasn't shown any sign it's sympathetic to my plight, so I doubt it plans on leading me anywhere I want to go.

But if this demon won't listen to me, I'll find one who will.

With fresh resolve, I attempt to stand. My legs aren't inclined to agree with my brain on this one, wobbling like jelly as I clamber upright. The demon huffs. Rude. I'm trying my best, despite the algae situation. Would shoes be out of the question? I was wearing an excellent pair of sandals when I died.

I echo the demon's huff, just to let it know that I'm as dissatisfied by this arrangement as it is, before taking several unsteady steps and following it into the depths of Hell.



The demon leads me out of the darkness into a cavern lit with sconces that flicker in a phantom wind. The walls are damp, with rivulets of water trickling through cracks in emerald-green stone. Moss sprouts from various orifices. There's enough light for me to take in the large body of water filling three quarters of the cave – around the size of a football pitch – so dark it's almost black, like an oil spill.

On the water is what looks like a Viking ship, with an elongated prow that ends with a snake's head carved into the wood. A figure cloaked in black stands to the side of the sail, a skeletal hand appearing from its sleeve and crooking a finger.

I can't imagine that thing will listen to what I have to say either.

My feet trip over themselves as they try to go backwards and forwards at once. I don't want to go to the oarsman. I don't want to go back to the dark tunnel.

I'm only twenty-one; I don't want to be dead at all.

I wipe my nose with the back of my hand, wishing they had the decency to offer tissues, as the demon forces me across a line shimmering on the ground. Immediately, the cavern brightens,

revealing it's not just me heading for that boat. Not by a long shot. There's a cluster of (presumably dead) humans standing on a rocky shore, each with a demon companion of their own.

The demons are dressed in a mixture of loincloths and togas, some made of snakeskin and others of fur, but no matter how much they conceal it's hard to avoid their less-than-human attributes. Several have the same leathery skin as the one by my side, while others glisten with reptilian scales in a myriad of blues and greens. The one nearest to me sports a tail made of bone and shaggy, shoulder-length hair that reminds me of a lion's mane. Ginger curls are scattered over his bare chest.

'Let go of me!' shouts a man in a ripped suit. 'You can't do this. Don't you know who I am?'

I, for one, have no idea who he is, but I admire the sentiment all the same. At least he's doing something. The rest of the dead – ranging from a teenager in a scuffed motorcycle jacket to an old woman in a hospital gown – keep their heads down as they board the ship without argument. If they're trying to avoid attention, it doesn't work. Demons hiss as they pass, their beady eyes tracking the humans' movements like they're lizards sizing up prey. The teenager audibly whimpers as he ascends the gangplank.

At least his presence gives me much-needed evidence in my quest to prove they're capable of an administration oversight, because this boy doesn't even look old enough to *ride* a motorbike. How can he have had the time to do something worthy of belonging here? Ripped-suit guy clearly agrees with me, because when I reach the end of the queue, he's still complaining loudly while trying to tug his jacket from the lion-haired demon's grasp.

'Where am I?' he says. 'What's happening?'

The fact he's wrestling with a demon seems like answer enough, but he looks around anyway, like he won't believe it's real until someone produces a 'Welcome to Hell' sign and shoves it in his face.

Then his sleeve tears off in the demon's hand.

He freezes. The demon freezes. *I* freeze. If he was going to make a break for it, now would be his chance. My breath catches as I wait to see what happens – if he succeeds, I can follow in his footsteps.

The demon turns a fraction, its upper lip curling to reveal pointed teeth stained the same shade of copper as his hair. And still the man doesn't move.

'Run,' I hiss.

He does. He gets all of a metre before the demon springs; silver flashes as claws burst from its knuckles, and then those claws are sinking into the man's shoulders. He screams, trying to shake it off. The demon digs in with a snarl.

Fuck. Okay. In retrospect, encouraging him to run may have been another not-so-smart idea. My belly lurches as I watch them tussle, whereas the spectating demons grin like they've been gifted a free subscription to their favourite sports channel.

The demon tosses the man in the water.

He doesn't make a splash. He just gets sucked under. The demons point and jeer as bubbles pop on the surface, the only sign something's happened at all. I stare at the fluid, waiting for him to reappear, gasping for air he doesn't need.

But the man doesn't emerge.

I don't know what that means for him. If breathing isn't a necessity, can you still drown? Is it possible to be more dead than dead? All I know is I'd much prefer to be dead and walking than sink into those depths forever. I look away from the water, ignoring the guilty churning in my gut – the man was in trouble before I urged him to run; his unfortunate end was *not* my fault – and stare at the boat, digging my nails into my palms. I'll need to be extra careful about the next person I plead my case to.

I take a deep breath. Careful. I can do careful. Maybe.

My legs tremble as I climb the gangplank. The boat reeks of decay, floorboards so soft with damp I'm petrified my foot might sink through when I step aboard. Barnacles cling to the mast, but these must be demons too, because they're far too active. They swarm around the wood, scurrying like white spiders newly hatched from their eggs.

Shuddering, I avoid sitting anywhere near them and settle next to a woman who's quietly sobbing. I can't say I blame her. Weirdly, the sound's almost soothing. Her tears are so undeniably human; a reminder not everyone here is a monster.

The vessel rocks as the demons join us – I avoid making eye contact with the lion-haired one – and the cloaked figure dips an oar in the water. We glide smoothly over the liquid towards a pitch-black tunnel.

As we pass under the arch, I fight the urge to hold on to the stranger next to me, curling my fingers around my seat instead, gripping it with such force I'm afraid it might splinter between my hands.

And then there's nothing.

There's the boat, and everyone on it, but around us is just . . . empty.

The darkness presses on me like a weight slamming against my shoulders. Every now and then there's the faint slosh of liquid as the oar spurs us forward, but it's not enough to drown out my thoughts now I've got no distraction from them.

You're throwing your life away.

Those were Mum's last words to me. Words I've replayed over and over since her death, promising myself – promising *her* – I'd be better from now on. My chest tightens. I was so close to making her proud. If only I'd paid attention to the drop below I'd still be at the top of the cliff right now; I wouldn't have –

One choked cry manages to escape my throat before I swallow the rest and stash them away.

My palms are clammy by the time the tunnel opens into another cave. Water tinged with a violet light cascades down the walls, crashing into the rock below. Spray buffets my face as we dock. The lion-haired demon disembarks first, leaping from the side of the boat and bounding up a gloomy corridor in the distance (at this point, I can only assume every corridor is going to be gloomy).

The demons escort us up that same corridor and into another large cavern. Maybe this is the part where someone confirms where we are, as if it wasn't obvious. What language do demons speak anyway? Something guttural like *gurh ragh urgh*.

At the far end of the room, a carving of a snake's head protrudes from the rock, twin fangs dropping from its mouth. A throne is nestled between them, skulls lining its base.

I gulp.

Well, if I want to speak to a manager, I guess that throne's owner is exactly who I need.

Marching over there probably doesn't fit in with the dictionary definition of *careful* though, so I move with the rest of the humans to stand elbow to elbow in the centre of the room. It doesn't make me feel any less alone, not with the noticeable absence at my side. Sasha and I met the first day of high school and have been inseparable ever since; she even applied to the same universities as me so we could move from Guildford to London together.

I'm not used to navigating new surroundings without her, and now I'm in a room full of demons where my only potential allies are a bunch of dead strangers. For the first time in my life, I don't wish I was taller – being five foot five allows me to shrink into the crowd, at least a little. I'd be invisible if it weren't for the way my red hair glows like a distress flare in the dark.

A winged demon standing near the throne clears its throat. It turns out I was right about the way they speak: it *is* low, and rough, and guttural, but I'm able to understand every word when it says, 'Kneel for King Sathanas.'

The demons drop immediately.

My fellow passengers and I follow a little more slowly. We're unsure what – or who – we're kneeling for.

But I have a fairly good idea.

With my head bowed in faux deference, I peer through the curtain of hair draped over my eyes in order to study him when he enters. King Sathanas. The Devil. It must be. I wonder

what he'll look like. Bigger than the rest, probably. Scalier. Extra horns. Holding a pitchfork, perhaps. A wooden door to the side of the throne swings open, and my stomach swoops at the sound of footsteps, brisk and sure and growing closer. I steel my shoulders, bracing myself for whatever atrocity those footsteps belong to.

But when the figure walks out, I have to fight to hold back a gasp. Because it's not a demon at all.

It's a man.



He gives us a quick glance before settling himself on his throne, planting one leather boot on the ground and crossing his other leg over his knee. A click of his fingers has one of the demons scurrying to his side. I risk raising my head to get a better view, needing to decide if asking for his help is going to get me thrown in the river.

He's not that much older than me. That probably doesn't mean much, not here, but it's the first thing I notice. He's not that scary, either. While the sleeves of his white shirt bunch over his biceps, he's nowhere near as beefy as the demons towering over him. They should be able to rip his head off easily.

But they don't.

There must be something else to him. Some other power he has. And if I can't see it, that makes him all the more dangerous. He's also kind of rude, because we're still kneeling, and it's starting to hurt.

He runs a hand through short jet-black hair. 'How many?' Despite his voice being nowhere near as deep as the demon's, it still feels like the room rumbles when he speaks.

'Five thousand in the last hour, Your Highness,' the demon says.

'She has been busy.' King Sathanas clucks his tongue. 'Does she send anyone to Elysium these days?'

I frown. There were only around fifty on the boat with me. Where are the rest?

'I suppose I should be grateful only one boat has caused trouble today.' He waves the demon away before addressing us directly. 'I don't usually have the pleasure of meeting new arrivals, but I wanted to make sure none of you were inspired by that man fighting back by the river. It's funny, how quickly the fires of rebellion can spread.' He smiles. 'And how easily they can be quashed.'

I clench my jaw. He can try and quash my rebellion all he likes, but I refuse to let myself feel threatened by a man in tight trousers.

'The soul of today's revolutionary will be taken into the Void to think about his actions. He'll float, aware of everything and able to interact with nothing, where his only company will be his worst memories replaying in his head.'

I shiver. Okay, maybe I feel a *little* threatened.

'I would suggest you don't try and find out what other punishments are available here in Asphodel.' Sathanas slumps in his seat, resting his chin on his fist, like speaking to us is a chore he could do without. Well, I, for one, didn't ask him to. All we got was threats and no answers.

Apart from a name. Asphodel. It certainly rhymes with Hell.

'Direct them to their rooms,' Sathanas orders the demons. He waves a hand in our direction. 'You may rise.'

How gracious of him. I resist the urge to roll my eyes as

we stand in unison. I exchange a glance with the woman next to me – she's the one who spent the boat trip crying – and although neither of us dares speak, the question on her face is evident. It's the same as mine. *What now?*

I need a plan. At this point, I don't know if escape is an option, or if I'm hoping for a miracle that doesn't exist, but I need to exhaust all possibilities before I'm introduced to one of these unnamed punishments or, worse, this *Void*. I've got far too many memories I'd rather not repeat.

Demons watch us with hungry expressions, tracking our movements, forked tongues flicking out to swipe drool from their lips. Sathanas remains on his throne, looking bored, as a demon murmurs in his ear.

Frustrated by my lack of options, I turn to the woman and whisper, 'Do you know why you're here? Do you think they might've made a mistake?'

If they *have* made a mistake with her, maybe they'll let her go and I can follow them all the way to the exit.

Her eyes glisten with a fresh onslaught of tears. 'I was sick. I don't . . .' She hiccups. 'I don't remember.'

'You don't need to remember how you died,' I press. 'I just need you to tell me if you think you belong here. Because if you don't, maybe there's some exception where –'

She starts to cry again, louder and louder, her high-pitched sobs quickly rising into a crescendo that's hard to ignore. Demons are turning to stare. *Sathanas* is turning to stare.

Oops.

He unfolds himself from the throne in one elegant movement and descends from the podium. His footsteps are feather-light

as he prowls towards us with an unnatural grace. The crowd parts to let him through. I shuffle with them, wanting to get as much distance between me and the situation as possible.

It's not far enough. By the time he reaches the woman, he's still too close; I catch the scent of peppermint as he stops directly in front of her. It's easier, now, to imagine why the demons might bow to him. There's a sense of power rippling from his body, one I can't see but I can *feel*, like he's humming with magic. The woman trembles at the sight of him, retreating until she's pressed against the wall. Sathanas cocks his head to one side. 'Is there a problem?'

Well, duh. Of course there's a problem. I doubt she's the first person to work out she's in Hell and start crying. The king's face is a mask, as stony as the serpent guarding his seat, but, just like his magic, his displeasure is palpable.

He strokes a knuckle down her cheek, collecting a tear on his skin. 'Tell me,' he says. 'Tell me what's wrong.'

His voice is soft, gentle, like he's coaxing all her secrets from her. She sways on the spot, lost in his gaze. Maybe hypnotism is his special skill. But then she opens her mouth and vomits on his feet, so maybe not. His facade doesn't break, not even when he shakes yellow lumps from his shoe. A winged demon with brown feathers flies forward to wipe off the rest.

Another demon whispers, '*Tartarus*.'

Sathanas shakes his head. 'Take her to Glacantrum,' he instructs. 'A year or two there, and perhaps she'll be more inclined to accept my hospitality.'

I can't help but raise my eyebrows. I wouldn't call waking in a dark cave, being shoved on a boat and forced to kneel before him *hospitality*.

There's more muttering among the demons, as though this punishment will not suffice. Despite this, the winged vomit-cleaner follows the order, grabbing hold of the woman who, of course, begins to scream. Sathanas doesn't so much as blink as she lashes out, trying to scratch him, the demon, anyone she can get her hands on. She kicks and punches and wails as the demon scoops her into its arms, but she may as well be hitting a solid wall for all the good it does. A slight bend of its knee, one swoosh of its wings, and they're flying away.

That's two people punished since my arrival. My gut churns with the idea I might be next.

'Perhaps I should elaborate,' Sathanas says to the crowd. 'Welcome to Asphodel. Your home, should you choose to accept it, and all the pleasantries it has to offer.'

I have no idea what pleasantries he's referring to. As far as I can tell, it doesn't even have central heating.

'Fail to accept and the consequences will be . . . unpleasant. Complaints are not tolerated. Escape attempts even less so.'

My ears prick at this. That implies there *could* be a way to escape, if I can find it.

'Do I make myself clear?' Sathanas continues.

Everyone, including me, nods. As if we'd do anything else.

'Then off you go,' he says. 'Explore. Do what you like. Don't bother me, don't antagonise the demons, and don't go into the Old Tunnels.'

I've never wanted to go in a tunnel more.

Two demons shove open a pair of doors to our rear, and dazzling light bursts from the corridor presumably leading to the rest of Asphodel. I squint, surprised to see that much

light here at all. It's like leaving a cinema on a summer's day, when the sunshine is almost blinding in its intensity after being in the dark for so long. The walls of the corridor are painted gold, and the crowd surges towards the glow like a swarm of fireflies.

I'm about to join them when it hits me.

We won't be the only humans inside. Countless boats will have arrived before ours. There's no light at the end of that tunnel, just millennia of dead waiting to say hello.

Which means there's a chance she's here.

Mum.

Shit. Shit. I can't see her. I already have her voice ringing in my ears; I don't need to witness her disappointment first-hand too. If we're ever reunited, it has to be after I've fulfilled all the promises I made after she died.

Sathanas stands close by, watching the crowd straggle through the doors, the demons following in their wake. I bite my lip to avoid making the kind of noise that would have me sent to Glacantrum, wherever that is. As though sensing my stare, he turns his head, and I gasp as I experience the full force of his attention.

Again, it's obvious why he's the one in charge. Because there's something entirely different about him, about how piercingly amber his eyes are. His skin is unblemished, practically glowing, and I'm hyper-aware of every imperfection I have in comparison. I cross my arms and scowl at him. I may be a lowly little human with too many freckles and a poor skincare regime, but I refuse to behave like one. His gaze dips to a rip in my sundress, and for a moment I swear shadows lick up his arm, coiling like snakes over his shirt, but then I blink and they disappear.

'Is there something you need?' he enquires.

Well, let's see, Mr Scary-Devil-Man: to not be dead would be ideal, but I'd settle for a map with a big, glowing arrow marked 'Exit' at a pinch. How much of that can I ask for before you send one of your minions after me?

I take the safer option of shaking my head.

He quirks a brow. It's the first real expression I've seen cross his face, and it makes him look normal, like he's a bog-standard human and not the King of Hell.

I wonder if he did it on purpose, to get me to lower my guard.

'Please,' he says, half goading, half mocking. 'Enlighten me. What is it you want to say?'

Like that woman enlightened him, he means? Although I'm pretty sure I'm not about to chuck up on his shoes, I don't think word vomit is going to endear me to him any more than her physical puke did. Apparently, my mouth isn't listening to my brain though, because I can't stop myself from saying, 'You told us not to complain, so . . .'

'Ah.' He slides his hands into his pockets. 'So you have a complaint?'

Fuck's sake. What is wrong with me? Going through those doors is becoming a lot more appealing; at least a conversation with my mother wouldn't result in me meeting yet another sticky end.

'I'd love to hear it,' he goes on, offering me a wicked smile. 'I'll make you a deal. Whatever you say in the next minute, you won't be punished for.'

'And I'm supposed to believe that?'

He shrugs. 'Clock's ticking.'

Bastard isn't even wearing a watch. 'I don't make deals with the Devil.'

'Is that what I am?' His eyes gleam. Maybe it's the light, but they look more golden than before, like living flames are dancing across his pupils.

'You tell me,' I say, willing him to slip up, divulge something. He can call this place Asphodel all he likes; the demons running round are a clear giveaway we're not anywhere pleasant.

He reveals nothing. Instead, he takes a step towards me, one small pace that makes me want to make a big retreat. I force myself to stand my ground. I refuse to let him intimidate me, no matter what powers he possesses, or how many Glacantrums he could send me to.

'I'll tell you what I think about you,' he says. 'You think this is all one giant mistake. That you don't belong here. That you're a good person and you don't deserve what awaits you beyond those doors.'

I ball my fists, wanting to scream that he's got me all wrong. A good person wouldn't have been the reason their father walked out the front door and never came home. A good person wouldn't have driven their boyfriend into ignoring their calls for days. A good person wouldn't have forced their mother to get into –

I inhale sharply. Focus, Willow.

This might be where I belong, but he doesn't need to know that.

'Do you want to know what happened to the last person who asked for my help?'

'Not really.' The cool smile I bestow on him is as much a lie as my words.

'Hm.' He matches my icy expression before looking me up and down again, a hunter assessing the best way to cage his prey. 'Well, don't let me keep you.'

Fuck. My chin trembles as the trap closes. If I pretend he's right about me, maybe I'll get the answers I seek and be sprung free – or maybe he'll twist the key and lock me in for good.

He doesn't give me a chance to figure out which option he's offering. He's walking away now, heading towards the door he first emerged from, taking all of his knowledge and stupid guesses with him, abandoning me to whatever fate lies at the end of that golden corridor.

A fate I can't accept. Not until I've tried everything.

'Wait.'

He turns at the sound of my voice.

We stare at one another from across the chamber. It's just the two of us left in here now, and I'm sure he must be able to hear the way my breaths are too loud, too fast, giving away the nerves my bravado tries to hide. Heat thunders through me. No complaints. No bothering him. Those were the rules. My minute's up, if that deal was even real.

I daren't risk asking anything outright, but maybe I can play into his assumptions about me. I got here somehow; perhaps I can get out the same way.

'How does it get decided?' I ask. 'Who goes where? If somebody did . . . have a complaint. Who would be to blame?'

The corners of his mouth lift. 'Well, that would be down to the Sorter.'

I nod, like his words make any kind of sense. Sathanas jerks his head towards the corridor behind me.

'Third door on the right.' He winks. 'Just for having the nerve to ask.'