Chapter 8: Holy $#%&?!

Our visitor was dressed in robes of white – which, while simple, were pristine. A gold cord was tied about his middle as a belt. His light brown hair was wavy, framing his face. And he was radiant! His entire being seemed to shimmer and shine with the light of God – so much so that even Clarity with her lack of vision commented, “So bright!” And if that wasn’t enough to prove he was an angel, the enormous wings – stretching from his shoulders to the ground, made of snow-white feathers – were a definite giveaway.

*Great,* I muttered sarcastically to myself. *Only Jesse would screw up a summoning so badly that we get an angel instead of a demon.*

The angel spoke first. The rest of the group, dumbfounded, stood frozen in place as a huge grin lit up his face even more (if such a thing were even possible) and he exclaimed, “Priestess! It is so wonderful to see you again!”

I turned just in time to catch a look of panic cross Emer’s face. Before she could react further the angel was suddenly there, kneeling before her, taking her hand in his. “You are just as lovely as ever,” he remarked, earnestly beaming up at her.

Shock quickly melted into horror. “Oh God, not another admirer,” she practically moaned.

Clarity threw her a skeptical look. “Is there anyone who is *not* madly in love with you?” she demanded. Emer blushed furiously.

From over in the grass outside the circle, we heard a growl. Jesse, as he pulled himself up from the ground, muttered in a tired voice, “Get your hands off her, Gabriel.”

*Gabriel?* I frowned. Slowly, a fuzzy memory started to surface. *Ah,* I breathed in recollection. *THAT Gabriel.*

Meanwhile, I could see the eyes of both girls go wide at this revelation. I could practically hear their silent screams: *Gabriel the archangel?!* They both turned to me for confirmation.

“It is a long story,” I admitted. Truth be told, I’d completely forgotten about him.

But Gabriel wasn’t paying attention to the three of us. He was frowning in Jesse’s direction, eyes narrowed. From his knees, he’d shifted into an almost protective crouch in front of Emer. “Please tell me you are not still spending time with this… demon.” He practically spat the last word.

Emer gave a tight smile. “Worse. I’m married to him.” She held up her left hand. A small (but definitively real) diamond sparkled from her ring finger, dazzling in the archangel’s heavenly light.

For a moment, I thought Gabriel’s eyes just might pop out of his head. Surprise was replaced by rage, and suddenly he was yelling with his finger outstretched in Jesse’s direction, “DEFILER!” He started forward, preparing to fight.

Jesse raised an eyebrow as he finished dusting off the dirt. “Seriously?” Then, uncharacteristically calm, he walked over to Emer’s side, and added, “Dude, the last time we fought, I kicked your –”

Emer elbowed him before he could finish his sentence. “Hey now, we talked about the language thing,” she reprimanded quietly.

Gabriel’s anger had faded, revealing the truth of Jesse’s statement. Then his nostrils flared once more as he looked Jesse up and down. “But you are human now! You will not win again!”

Jesse – still strangely calm – merely replied, “Exactly. And I believe there are rules that prevent you from messing with humans without permission.” His demeanor was so confident and serene that I had no doubt he was right.

Gabriel sighed, defeated. Having accepted the fact that Emer was now permanently off the market, he finally spared a glance at the rest of us. “No introductions needed here, I see,” he remarked, nodding at me, “except for one.” His eyes came to rest on Clarity.

Clarity, having never been in the presence of an angel before, made as if to bow. Gabriel frowned and immediately informed her, “I am not God. You should not worship me.” She stopped and stood there uncertainly, as Gabriel leaned forward and continued to study her. Finally, his eyes widened slightly, and he stepped back. “You have a rare gift,” he told her. “Use it wisely, or it will lead to ruin.” Clarity nodded gravely.

Jesse cleared his throat. “If we’re done catching up, you can go now. We have work to do.”