

UNWAVERING RESOLVE

by

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A smooth-featured, near-perfect yet pale face was looking into the starlit night sky from amidst locks of long, silk-like black hair. The face was without masculine features but nevertheless it belonged to a male. The sapphire-blue eyes reflected the light of the full moon which by now filled most of the sky and made the landscape bathe in light like the sun did at noon, only this light was pale, white and somehow, cold. A warm smile filled with enthusiasm curved along the soft lips of that beautiful face. The face belonged to an angel, a one with black wings. Clothed in black this figure was like a statue in the white glow, standing there and absorbing the light. Wind embraced the black-winged angel standing on a sharp mountain cliff and for him the embrace was friendly and welcoming, no matter how cold the breeze. The night and the wind, these were his best friends upon this hapless world in which a year had passed since his fall. Frost was on its way and already was winning over Withering – the dead leaves upon the ground were frozen stiff and the clouds hung heavily with weight of snow soon to fall upon this world, creating an entirely new one, a white one. The trees below were naked and ugly without their colourful clothes. Of the coldness and decay the angel cared not, his reasons for enthusiasm were too warm to be frozen by this early Frost. The end of the search was drawing close.

Of all the fallen this one was closest to him. During the search he had met several others, some out of curiosity and some by coincidence while following traces and seeking clues. Most of the others were pursuing hateful goals, vengeful goals and meetings with them had been grim yet not violent – the fallen ones shared the same pain and thus they shared respect beyond all words and gestures. While he despised their goals and they despised his, the recognition of one's right for any pursuit, no matter how malicious or naïve, was far stronger than any despise. Thus every parting had been peaceful and the most kind of souls had advised him towards finding others.

All this was past now for only one dark angel was left. The one he had chosen to be the end of the search, this hard road he had chosen to follow mere months after the fall. He knew where to find this one, what he was now missing was courage. Fallen angels are among the most strong-willed souls in existence due to their unwavering, firm and absolute resolve during the soul-

forging pain of the fall. However the courage he needed was different and now, so close to end the search, he still found himself lacking such bravery. Beyond all the enthusiastic feelings this uncertainty troubled his mind greatly. The smiling face turned back into dead-serious pondering and he landed down, sitting down on the edge of the cliff. The hard rock was chilling due to the coming Frost but he ignored such irrelevant feelings. Already his mind was set – whether or not he found the courage, the night following the next day would be the time for the reunion.

Day broke and passed and the angel still found himself lacking. By the end of the day he was certain that no such courage could ever exist in his heart or his soul. Slowly he stood up. His body was mostly covered by clothes, a loose black and soft shirt with wide sleeves and a heavy leather skirt which covered all of his legs including feet. The time had come and it had to be done so he could finally release himself from the angelic world.

Another black-winged one was walking on a forest path. Dead leaves rustled beneath her graceful feet. Her skin was milk-like, soft and so near-white that in the moonlight its whiteness challenged the clouds of heaven or the snow soon to fall. Her well-formed legs were left entirely visible by the linen clothe she wore below the waist, sweeping ground from both sides. Above her waist she wore a sleeveless shirt, tight to highlight her fair features yet not absolutely form-fitting. All of her clothes were black just like her wings and made of the finest silk. Her face was near-white like her skin and a beautiful face it was. This was the way angels were, beautiful beyond mortal physics, so near to perfect as anything could ever be. In her grey eyes shone absolute resolve, a pursuit for her agenda. Her hair was pitch black and straight and no attempt had been made to restrain it. No mortal could ever hope to resist such divine appearance but the black wings, no matter how gorgeously beautiful they were, sent all mortals fleeing in horror. The reputation bared by the darkest of wings was darker still than their colour. This angel's agenda was no reason for terror though; near-unparalleled curiosity was the reason that had had her cast away from the realm of clouds. Her resolve to find the truth was a source of courage for her during the fall and now she was here, upon this cold world that never felt like home.

She was returning now to the abandoned forested temple which she called home. It was in a good enough shape to actually be called a building and not just a piece of beat-down ruins. While she was walking with light steps which would have been completely silent had it not been for the rustling leaves she heard another sound. This sound was a voice, a soft and handsome voice, speaking words in heavenly rhymes. The words that reached her ears were: “A dead landscape this, and bitter-sweet I find this season. Yet one must die in order to reach rebirth and the peak of its beauty. A long time has passed and dead you once were to me but now look, here I find your rebirth among this decayed view.”

She recognised the voice. All those rhythmic words they struck at her mightily with delight rivalled by no joy she had ever felt during all these decades. His name rose quickly from the dusty corners of her mind but the name he pushed aside gently – names are lost to fallen ones. She turned around, her face still showing the signs of this pleasant shock and she smiled with warmth that could have banished the coming Frost, clearing the way for early Awakening. “Then why have you not already embraced me, why spend time on words. The four decades, so long have they been, like eternity.” Her voice was melodic and pleasant like whispering of the wind of early Withering. With these words she threw herself towards him, spreading out her arms and wings to welcome her past beloved.

He accepted the embrace, closing her gently yet tightly in his arms. Their wings gently felt each other, with feathers intertwining. Her hands were tied around his neck and within a blink of an eye she planted a soft kiss upon his cheek, then, slowly moved her lips towards his ear. With a silent and soft, ever so melodic voice she whispered “If wondering you were whether I’d still love you, in vain was your doubt. I’d love you tenfold now had I not loved you completely back then.”

Here was all the warmth and love he was unable to find in this world. How much he wanted to raise his fingers to touch her soft cheek which would still feel familiar. To allow his lips venture upon hers to find comfort and softness they had not tasted for aeons. To slowly open the soft gates guarding her mouth, to find all the lost years and to communicate of love with tempting

movements of tongues. To release her of all restraints her clothes laid upon her and to allow her to set him free of such chains. To feel all of her body with his hands quietly - slithering like a snake in paradise. To lay down with her and to have their bodies entwine in lust and pleasure beyond mortal imagination. And through her most gentle touch and the passions he felt growing like Awakening flowers under her skin he knew he could have everything his passionate mind envisioned and yet she'd wait for more. Doubtlessly she felt his passion too.

The courage he was lacking should have now come in. Should he give in to his passions he would find happiness that would last forever and beyond eternity but at the expense of his resolve. Drawing mental strength from this resolve he slowly retreated from the unearthly embrace. Every inch he furthered himself wounded his heart deeply and left it longing but his decision did not waver. While withdrawing unwillingly he looked into her eyes. All the strength there once were was now turning into hopeless weeping. Her hands still refused to release his neck from their loving embrace. As she started to collapse her arms lost strength and loosened the gentle hold finally forgetting it completely. Her world was shattering like a palace of glass shot with a single stone, going down, piece by piece and upon the impact the pieces shattered even more.

“Farewell is what I came to say.” he said softly “My resolve still has a grip on me and a tight grip that is. Thus leave I must but hear my promise – one day I will have seen enough of this world and that day I shall return with love tenfold even though complete it is even now.”

She stood up slowly, swaying and laid her eyes upon his sad but beautiful face. Trails of black tears were painted upon her cheeks but already she was gathering the broken shards deep inside. She recognised his resolve and could do nothing but look upon with it in awe. His eyes reflected the same feelings as hers did, he merely, plainly hid it. She spoke, her voice was still broken yet not without its fairness “Farewell is then what we say. My own agenda calls upon me still but would you not stay for a while, so much would I like to converse with you. How come you're here now?”

“To converse I wished as well. Let us not speak here though, a more comfortable place would truly lighten our hearts.” he answered with the expression on his face turning from serious sadness into a tiny smile that held just a little bit of grief any more.

She turned her back and took a few steps, down the leaf-covered path into the direction she was going before all this happened. “Then follow, this path leads to a place I call home even though nothing feels like home there.” she said with the melody making its way back to her words.

By the time they reached the forested temple they both were all together again with only tiniest shards missing. These shards would never return – missing them meant remembering the short moment of weakness they had felt. They also meant hope that one day that moment would return only this time there would be no fences or walls between them. They entered the temple and sat down upon the vine-covered altar made of stone. The symbols once carved there were no longer visible as they had worn out due to passing of time and thus it was that no one could tell for whom it was this temple was dedicated for. The two angels neither cared of this for they already had suffered the wrath of one god. What another one’s would be to them?

“Why are you here now?” she asked and her melodic voice echoed around the empty stone hall creating a chorus of beautiful voices.

“Four decades it was since your fall. All that time I grieved though the grief faded slowly. The first decade I wept and caressed my wounds. There upon the edge from wherein you can see down I were and there during the second decade my curiosity toward the mortal race of humans started to bloom. The third decade I watched them and to my anguish I found them suffering. The fourth decade slowly opened my eyes to the reason of their misfortune and it was this reason that got me cast out. Our Lord, God, was the reason and did nothing to help those poor souls.” these words he spoke in rhymes and his first words joined the last echoes of her last ones, adding colour to the chorus and made it perfect. “And here I am now, I went through the soul-forge and found myself in this world of mortals where pain hides the beauty of their hearts and souls. It is this beauty I seek to draw out to sunlight for all to see.”

“It indeed is a fair cause you pursue. My cause you know and much have I learned here. In this world they worship other gods as equals while in our home, the nightmare heaven, they

are to be addressed mere spirits inferior to God. The truth is all opposite, most of these other gods are older and superior to heaven's and heaven itself is but a rebellious realm." this she explained and still their voices were echoing around. For a moment they paused just to listen to the music and melody of their voices, surprised by its harmony.

As the echoes faded they spoke more, exchanging experiences, sharing pains and joys with latter ones being far rarer. The moon was making its escape from among the stars as he stood up from the altar and walked away. His footsteps were accompanied by the last echoes of their voices that now said "Farewell" over and over again.

As he left the temple his heart was calm again. The search was over now and the world of angels was put aside in favour of the mortal one, to wait its turn. He spread his wings to welcome the wind once again, then rose from the ground to greet the breaking dawn. With strong flapping movements he ascended further and picked a destination: anywhere.

The wind carried a single black feather through the doorway. It flew across the hall towards the altar and landed lightly upon a cream-white hand. A pair of grey eyes, once again full of not only burning resolve but also delightful joy, set their gaze upon the feather. A warm smile was formed on the perfect lips of the owner of those eyes as the hand pressed the feather against her breast. Then the eyes closed and the angel allowed herself to dream.