

FUTILE FANTASY CREATIONS PRESENT...

Silly Shorts

This Angel Malarkey

Les Dennis Comprehensive School, Amberston, England.

Tuesday the 15th of May 2018.

Having just finished her maths class, Nikki Palmer, aged fourteen, headed out of her classroom then hurried down the corridor. Her eyes depicted a deep anguish. Gravely concerned, her friend, Louise hurried out after then watched her rush away with a deeply troubled expression on her face.

LOUISE: You okay, Nikki?

(Nikki yelled back with more than a hint of a whimper.)

NIKKI: Toilet.

(Louise looked enlightened then shrugged to herself.)

LOUISE: Yeah... I can't help you with that.

(She then sauntered back into her classroom to collect her bag. In the meantime, Nikki reached the end of the corridor, before bounding down a flight of stairs, two at time.

Moments later, she emerged at the bottom of the stairs and raced out into another corridor. Having done so, however, she immediately caught the attention of a male teacher who was strolling down the corridor behind her.)

TEACHER: No running in the halls, young lady!

(Nikki whimpered as she scrambled forwards.)

NIKKI: I'm gonna wet myself if I don't!

TEACHER: Then what are you waiting for? Ignore me and charge, woman!

NIKKI: Thank you, sir.

(With that, she put her head down then sprinted into the girl's toilets. Having almost flattened a girl who'd been walking out at the time, she apologised profusely then charged into a cubicle. The rapid rustling of clothes ensued, followed a long, satisfied groan of relief. Her hell was at an end.)

NIKKI: Too close.

(A minute or so later, once she'd finished going about her business, she exited the cubicle before washing her hands and checking herself out in the mirror. Satisfied she looked perfect, she nodded to herself then headed out of the door. Looking forward to returning to her friends, she then raced back down the corridor and bounded up the flight of stairs again. Upon stepping out into the upstairs corridor, however, she was immediately swarmed upon by four girls from the year above her. Before she could even consider fleeing, she was hemmed in against the window, with a pillar to her right side. She was going nowhere.)

NIKKI: Um... hello.

(The biggest of the girls stepped forward and spoke to her in an aggressive, wannabe gangster tone; the favoured voice of silly English youths who wish to sound tough.)

ANGIE: Shut your fat mouth, bitch!

(Her friend then chimed in.)

LIZZIE: In it!

ANGIE: Yeah; see you get it.

LIZZIE: I *totally* get it, sister.

ANGIE: Sweet.

(She then glowered at Nikki.)

ANGIE: Why is you buzzing about the school, thinking you're all that, eh?

(Nikki blinked at her in bewilderment. Having an IQ above forty, she had no idea what Angie was talking about.)

NIKKI: What?

ANGIE: What is you? Deaf like Jeff?

NIKKI: Who's Jeff?

ANGIE: This one's got a gob on it, girls.

NIKKI: I have?

LIZZIE: Yeah. And we're gonna close it!

NIKKI: Um...

(She grimaced.)

NIKKI: Did I do something wrong?

ANGIE: Did you do something wrong? Get a load of her, girls. Acting all fucking innocent like.

(One hundred percent certain that was indeed innocent, Nikki grimaced.)

NIKKI: Am I *not* innocent then?

ANGIE: No. You is guilty of thinking you're all that! Swanning about the school like Princess Bling.

LIZZIE: Who does you think you is? Going about with your glossy hair and sparkly uniform.

ANGIE: She thinks she's a model.

LIZZIE: A proper, like, fascist.

ANGIE: What? Fascist?

LIZZIE: Yeah. Someone who's into clothes and shit.

ANGIE: That's a fashionista.

LIZZIE: Right. Yeah, that.

ANGIE: I hear you. That's 'cause she's up herself, in it. Always neatly groomed and getting top marks. We hate bitches like that.

LIZZIE: Yeah!

(Nikki stared at her in bewilderment.)

NIKKI: You're angry because I brush my hair and get good grades?

LIZZIE: Yeah!

NIKKI: Don't *you* brush your hair then?

ANGIE: Damn. This girl's got some brass, in it?

(She nodded.)

ANGIE: What say we take her down a peg or two?

LIZZIE: Love it. You aint gonna be so well fucking groomed when *we're* done with you, bitch.

(Angie and Lizzie then pounced on her while their two friends kept a lookout. Lizzie started by grabbing her hair, while Angie started by slapping her face. Naturally, Nikki was terrified.)

NIKKI: Stop it! Why are you doing this to me???

ANGIE: Shut up and take your medicine, bitch!

NIKKI: Medicine?

ANGIE: To cure you of being up yourself.

NIKKI: I'm *not* up... ouch! That's hurts!

LIZZIE: Yeah? Then how do you like this?

(She then yanked her hair back and kicked her.)

ANGIE: Love it!

(She then punched her in the stomach.)

ANGIE: She's not so fucking mouthy now.

(Just then, an embittered male voice rose up from behind them.)

HARRY: Enough!

(At once, Angie, Lizzie and her two friends all spun to face him. Dressed in their school's uniform, the boy was standing akimbo, glowering at them menacingly. Grateful for the reprieve, Nikki just collapsed to the floor, heavily winded. Angie watched her collapse then glowered at her friends.)

ANGIE: I thought you two were keeping a lookout.

(One of the other two girls held out her palms.)

KATIE: We was, in it. He seemed to spring from nowhere.

ANGIE: Right...

(She then glowered at the boy.)

ANGIE: Move along, shit face, or you is next. You hear me?

LIZZIE: And who the hell are you, anyway?

ANGIE: Right? I've never seen *you* before.

KATIE: Me either. And I'd have remembered.

(She exhaled.)

KATIE: He's dreamy.

ANGIE: He's a twat. Sling it, arse face, we is in the middle of some shit.

HARRY: Oh, you're in the shit alright.

LIZZIE: What?

HARRY: Let her go or suffer the consequences.

ANGIE: Consequences? Yeah, right. Behave.

(She then turned and trod on Nikki's hand.)

NIKKI: Ow! Ow!!!

HARRY: Well... you can't say I didn't warn you.

(With that, he strode up to Angie, grabbed her by the shoulders then threw her out of the window. Glass went everywhere and her screams echoed around the school. Needless to say, her friends were terrified.)

LIZZIE: You're a psychopath.

HARRY: You spotted that, did you?

(He beamed.)

HARRY: So, who wants to go flying next?

(At once, the three girls all fled down the corridor in a blind panic. Watching them go, Harry smiled then called out to them.)

HARRY: Touch my girlfriend again and I'll kill the lot of you!!!

LIZZIE: Understood; in it!!!

(The three of them then vanished from sight. Left behind, Harry smiled then glanced down at Nikki.)

HARRY: Come on. Up you get.

(Nikki was in tears.)

NIKKI: I think she broke my hand.

HARRY: No, she didn't.

(He then lifted her up by her shoulders until she was upright.)

HARRY: In fact, the pain's already subsided, hasn't it?

NIKKI: It's...

(She grimaced.)

NIKKI: Oh, my god; it has.

HARRY: Perfect.

(He then stepped back.)

HARRY: There you go. Job done. They won't pick on *you* again. Not now they think you have a psychotic boyfriend.

NIKKI: Yeah...

(She blushed.)

NIKKI: Was that your subtle way of asking me out?

HARRY: No.

(He then about turned turn and walked away, making sure to glance over his shoulder as he did so.)

HARRY: Keep being excellent, Nikki. Good things await you if you do.

(Nikki stepped forwards.)

NIKKI: Wait!

(She looked at her feet nervously.)

NIKKI: You saved me... and I'd like to... you know... thank you properly. So like... do you have a phone number?

(She then glanced up, only to see he'd gone. At once, she raced to the nearest corner.)

NIKKI: I said...

(She then fell silent. He was nowhere to be seen.)

NIKKI: Aw.

Up on the school roof at this time, Harry was sitting with his legs dangling over the ledge, scribbling in a small notepad. He'd transformed into an ethereal form so he could no longer be seen by the naked eye then teleported himself up there. Feeling somewhat pleased with himself, he exhaled joyfully.

HARRY: Another satisfied customer. Saved her arse then healed her injuries. This angel malarkey is a piece of piss.

(Just then, the entire world started to warp. At once, his shoulders slumped. He knew exactly what was happening and exactly what was to come.)

HARRY: Aw, crap.

(In the blinking of an eye, he then found himself sitting on a small white wooden chair in a glowing white chapel. There were no other furnishings. The only thing in the room with him, was a white-haired gentleman, glowering down at him with his arms folded.)

HARRY: Um... alright, Stan?

(Stan shook his head at him.)

STAN: For fuck sake, Harry. Am I alright? Am I alright???

(He sneered.)

STAN: Did you even read the file before starting that last mission???

HARRY: Of course, I did. Pretty much.

STAN: Pretty much???

HARRY: Yeah. It said I had to stop Nikki Palmer from being bullied at school, which I successfully did. I went there at exactly the time and date it said the bullying started and nipped it in the bud!

(Stan furrowed his brow.)

STAN: You didn't nip it in the bud at all!

HARRY: I'm sure I did. Only an idiot would come back for more after I threw them out of an upstairs window!

STAN: Newsflash, Harry. Angie *is* an idiot!

HARRY: Oh.

STAN: Yes, oh!

(He gave an exasperated sigh.)

STAN: You fucked that up so badly, I don't even know where to begin.

(He stood tall.)

STAN: Actually, yes I do. Let's start with that! The fact you threw her out of the fucking window!!!

HARRY: What was wrong with that?

STAN: You threw a schoolgirl out of a window, Harry!

HARRY: Shouldn't I have?

STAN: No!!! She's a child!!!

(He shook his fist.)

STAN: The angel handbook quite clearly states, you do *not* use scare tactics on a child!

HARRY: Right...

STAN: You have *read* the handbook, haven't you?

(Harry smiled innocently then lied through his teeth.)

HARRY: Um... of course...

STAN: Then you know. And you know *why*! What you teach someone as a *child* forms the basis of how they see the world. And if you teach a child a lesson using fear and violence, all they learn is that fear and violence is a good way to solve their issues!

HARRY: Yeah, right. What a load of bollocks. Who told you that?

STAN: God did!!!

HARRY: Fuck.

(He winced fearfully.)

HARRY: I can't really argue with that then.

STAN: No. You can't!

(He sighed.)

STAN: Look, seeing as you're quite obviously *struggling* with the protocol around scare tactics, I'll go over it with you one last time.

HARRY: You don't have to...

STAN: I said I'll go over it with you one last time!

(Harry hung his head sheepishly.)

HARRY: Right. You're the boss.

STAN: God is the boss!!! I'm just passing on his words!!!

HARRY: Right. Sorry.

STAN: Shut up!

HARRY: Right.

STAN: Now listen. Angels *can't* physically hurt humans. We can render them unconscious as a last resort if the situation requires, but we *can't* do them any *permanent* damage.

HARRY: I know!

STAN: Shut it!

(He furrowed his brow.)

STAN: If you were to push a bloke in front of a train, he'd just bounce back onto the platform unharmed. That makes it a handy device for scaring a bad person straight if the mission requires it. An *adult* person! And *only* if the mission requires it!!!

HARRY: Right...

STAN: I mean it. Only if the mission requires it. Like rendering someone unconscious, it's a last resort. A trick you have up your sleeve if the situation gets desperate. It's not the go-to, default tactic. An angel's job is to finesse change, not force it.

HARRY: Gotcha.

STAN: Good. Remember it.

HARRY: I will.

STAN: Make sure you do. You're not an angel of justice.

HARRY: It'd be cool if I was.

STAN: But you're not! There's no such thing.

(He sighed.)

STAN: You're in the destiny protection department. When a good person who's destined to do positive things gets side-tracked by negative influences, your job is to finesse change and get them back on track. That's all! God didn't give you wings and send you down there to beat up bullies and punch politicians.

HARRY: I've never punched...

STAN: Don't answer back!

HARRY: Oh. Right...

STAN: Twat.

(Harry grimaced bitterly.)

HARRY: Mate, don't you think you're being unfair here?

STAN: Unfair???

HARRY: Yeah! I may have strayed from protocol slightly, but...

STAN: Slightly? You abandoned it altogether!

HARRY: Even so. At the end of the day, I achieved my goal. I stopped the bullying and scared that girl into reflecting on her bad behaviour. The perfect result.

STAN: Yeah? Really? That's your take, is it?

HARRY: It is, yes.

STAN: That you stopped the bullying; job done?

HARRY: Correct.

STAN: I see.

(He smiled.)

STAN: That's an *interesting* take. Unfortunately for you, it has one minor flaw.

HARRY: And what's that?

STAN: Every single word of it was complete and utter bollocks.

HARRY: What?

STAN: You didn't *stop* the bullying at all, did you?

HARRY: Didn't I?

STAN: No!

(He shook his head.)

STAN: Listen, Harry, this is what happens next. Angie will get up off the ground, amazed that she's unharmed. Then she'll go home and tell her brother that Nikki Palmer's boyfriend threw her out of an upstairs window. Her brother is going to go ballistic.

HARRY: Yeah, but he's never gonna find me, is he? And if he does, humans can't harm angels anyway. So I don't see what the problem is.

STAN: Then shut up and let me *tell you* what the problem is. Her brother is a psychopath and he's the leader of a gang. He's stabbed six people already. And he's gonna come for Nikki to get back at *you*.

HARRY: Shit.

STAN: Yeah. Shit.

(He shook his head.)

STAN: Why didn't you read the case file, you prick? Nikki is destined to succeed and do good things in the future. And despite her IQ, so is Angie. The trouble is, her brother is leading her astray. The way things were heading, Nikki was likely to quit school which would ruin her future, and Angie was heading for jail. *That* was what you were supposed to change.

HARRY: Fuck.

(He sucked his teeth anxiously.)

HARRY: So I changed nothing?

STAN: Oh, you did. Angie is still destined for jail, but thanks to your intervention, Nikki is now going to get fatally stabbed on her way to school tomorrow.

HARRY: Shit.

STAN: Yeah. Nice work, you dumb cunt.

HARRY: Stan...

STAN: You're such a...

HARRY: Easy, mate. I'm new to all this angel malarkey!

(Stan flapped angrily.)

STAN: Stop referring to the holy calling as angel malarkey!!!

HARRY: Jesus Christ, calm down!

STAN: And leave Jesus out of it!!!

HARRY: Right. Yeah. That was poor form.

STAN: You're a poor angel!

HARRY: Fair comment.

STAN: Thank you.

(He nodded.)

STAN: Look. Get back to the mortal plain and do it right. Read the fucking file and manipulate things properly.

HARRY: Will do.

STAN: Good.

(He glanced at his watch.)

STAN: I'm gonna send you back six hours after you left, okay? It's getting dark. Have dinner, read the file then figure out how you're gonna do it! Stop Angie's brother from ruining those two girl's lives!

HARRY: Understood.

STAN: Good. Now go!

(He nodded.)

STAN: And no more fuck ups!

(He then wafted his arm at him. At once, the world reappeared beneath Harry's legs. He was back on the ledge from where he'd been summoned but it was now almost dark.)

HARRY: Hmm... I'm guessing school's over for the day.

(He then jumped over the edge, sprouted wings and took off into the sky.)

Having flown across the brightly lit town, Harry came in to land in an alleyway behind a supermarket. Having stowed his wings, he nodded to himself then strode straight through a nearby wall, like a ghost. He'd entered The Angel's Rest; a retreat for ambassadors of the heavenly realm to unwind after a hard day's trying to stop mankind from destroying itself.

Glancing across the wooden tables and chairs that were basking under the orange lights, he sighed to himself then headed for the bar. There was nobody in there that he knew. Resigned to having a drink alone, he stepped up to the bar then nodded to the barman.

HARRY: I'll have a whisky when you're ready, please, mate.

(The barman smiled.)

BARMAN: I'm always ready for you, Harry.

HARRY: Legend.

BARMAN: I know this to be true.

(He then held up an empty glass and watched as it filled with whisky, conjured from the ether.)

HARRY: I love that. Whisky straight from then heavens. I'll never get tired of seeing that.

BARMAN: Oh, you will.

HARRY: Will I?

BARMAN: Yeah. Everyone's fascinated at first, but after a while the novelty wears off.

HARRY: I'm not sure it ever will for me, mate. I've been doing this angel malarkey for three months and it's as exciting now as it was the first time.

BARMAN: I see.

(He smirked.)

BARMAN: Perhaps you're a simpleton. They're easily pleased by the same old things, day after day. So are teenagers, come to think of it.

HARRY: Ah, see, that'd make sense. I managed to pass for a teenager today.

BARMAN: Of course, you did. You're an angel, you can appear exactly how you want to appear.

HARRY: I know, but I didn't change myself one bit. I just went as me and passed.

BARMAN: I see.

(He nodded.)

BARMAN: In that case, you're a cunt.

(They laughed together then the barman headed away. Left behind, sitting on a bar stool, Harry admired his fine single malt then took a refreshing sip. Having exhaled with delight at the taste, he then glanced along the bar. The chap in the seat next to him looked as if his entire world had just fallen apart. Curious as to what might make an angel feel so down, he grimaced to himself then spoke up.)

HARRY: You alright there, mate?

(The man looked back at him then sighed.)

ALFIE: Yeah, I'm fine. I'm just having a bit of a sulk, that's all. I'll get over it.

HARRY: Right.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Rough day, was it?

ALFIE: Rough? No. It was just shit.

(He shook his head.)

ALFIE: I didn't complete a single task today

HARRY: So? That's common, isn't it? I didn't complete any today either.

ALFIE: And what department are you in?

HARRY: Destiny protection.

ALFIE: Then it probably *is* normal for you. I, however, I'm in the cupid department.

HARRY: Oh.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: What's that?

ALFIE: I make people fall in love. Not *any* two people, obviously. Those with compatible auras. The right pairings create positive energy, you see?

HARRY: Thus diminishing Satan's influence.

ALFIE: Exactly.

(He shook his head.)

ALFIE: Until today, I'd breezed through it, loving every second. My job is literally to make people happy. But today... for the first time, I didn't create a single couple. And I've been doing this shit for two years.

HARRY: Aw, relax, mate. We all have off days.

ALFIE: This was more than an off day, mate. I usually complete twenty or thirty tasks a day. So to suddenly slump to nil is a big fucking deal.

(He puffed out.)

ALFIE: Trouble is, the girl I was *meant* to find love for this morning had an orange aura.

HARRY: And that's bad, is it?

ALFIE: Not on it's own, no. But it does making finding her a partner quite the challenge. A challenge I failed to meet.

(He turned to face to Harry then leant forwards slightly.)

ALFIE: It's simple stuff normally. If my client has a yellow aura, I have to find someone with a purple aura. That makes them a match. I'll then contrive to make them pass one another, so I can shoot them both with the same arrow. Job done. Light blue auras match with light red auras and deep blue ones match with deep red ones, and so forth. I read the colour of their aura, find their match and bingo. Simple stuff.

(His shoulders slumped.)

ALFIE: Then she came along. A woman with an orange aura. The rarest aura of them all. And they can only be matched with *other people* with orange auras.

HARRY: And you couldn't find any?

ALFIE: I found one. Nice bloke, actually.

HARRY: Then what's the problem?

ALFIE: He was nice.

HARRY: And?

ALFIE: He was very, very nice.

HARRY: I don't follow.

ALFIE: Gay! He was gay. So he was no bloody use to me, was he?

HARRY: Gotcha. Tough break, mate.

ALFIE: Yeah, it was shit. I wasted a whole day searching for a straight man with an orange aura and got nothing. Now I have to do it all over again tomorrow.

HARRY: Ouch. That sucks.

(He smiled.)

HARRY: Here's hoping you have better luck tomorrow.

ALFIE: Cheers.

(They then took a swig of their drinks.)

HARRY: Damn, that's a fine whisky.

ALFIE: Heavenly, you might say.

(He nodded.)

ALFIE: Anyway, that's my story. What about you? How was your day?

(Harry nodded.)

HARRY: Yeah, it was... nah, it was shit.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: I got a bollocking from the department head. I think he forgets I'm new to this angel malarkey.

ALFIE: What did he bollock you for?

HARRY: I stopped a girl being bullied.

ALFIE: But that's a good thing surely.

HARRY: Not really, no. As a result of my intervention, she's going to get stabbed in the morning.

ALFIE: Shit.

HARRY: Yeah. So, I've got to stop *that* happening, of course. Then I have to set the bully on the right path again. Something like that, anyway. I haven't read the file yet.

(Alfie was astonished.)

ALFIE: What? You haven't read the file? You acted without reading the file?

HARRY: I *skimmed* it.

ALFIE: Damn, dude; rule number one; you always read the case file.

HARRY: Where does it say that?

ALFIE: In the angel handbook.

HARRY: Oh, yeah. That.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: I haven't read that either.

ALFIE: Are you serious?

HARRY: Well...

ALFIE: Mate, you need to wise up. If you *continue* to half-arse your job, you'll end up getting relegated to the sandman division.

HARRY: The what?

ALFIE: The sandman division, as mentioned in the handbook.

HARRY: Yeah... that doesn't help me much right now.

ALFIE: The dreams department. Flying around, night to night, putting dreams and aspirations in people's heads.

(Harry blinked at him.)

HARRY: And that's bad, is it? Only it sounds ridiculously rewarding.

ALFIE: It isn't. It's the *least* rewarding job an angel can be given. That's why being sent there is seen as a punishment.

(Harry scratched his head in bewilderment.)

HARRY: You're gonna have to explain that one to me, mate.

ALFIE: Fine. Imagine. Imagine gifting someone the idea to take up baking. Filling them with the aspiration to become a baker. The best baker. To make cakes fit for a god.

HARRY: Awesome.

ALFIE: No, it isn't.

HARRY: No?

ALFIE: No! The heavenly realm control ninety five percent of all the world's spirituality, but Satan controls ninety-five percent of its wealth. The system humans live under is therefore under his control.

HARRY: Okay...

ALFIE: So the baker you inspired will go to college and rack up massive debts. Then he'll leave college and try to get a loan to start a bakery business. No chance. He has no collateral. He's already in debt, remember? So he'll go to work for someone else in the hope he can make enough to pay off his debt and start his own bakery one day. But he never will. He'll never get paid enough as a baker to even pay off his college debt, never mind start his own business. All your baking dream has done, is set him on the path to working like a dog for shit money and no reward.

HARRY: Well that sucks.

ALFIE: Yeah, but what can you do? God says dreams and aspirations are important. All they really do, however, is sell people false hope which will inevitably lead to a lifetime of sadness and unfulfillment. Misery.

(He sighed despondently.)

ALFIE: The world has gone to shit. Utter shit. It's a load of wank and I hate it.

(Harry puffed out then shook his head.)

HARRY: I see. Right. Well... this was a mistake. After a shit day, I was looking forward to an evening of laughter and fun conversation. Apparently, I came to the wrong place.

(The barman scowled at him.)

BARMAN: You came to the *right* place.

(He nodded.)

BARMAN: You just spoke to the wrong person.

ALFIE: Seriously? Is talking to me that boring?

HARRY: It's not boring, no. It's depressing.

ALFIE: How? All I said was you need to buck up your ideas or you'll end up in the sandman division, then I explained why that's a bad thing.

(The barman nodded.)

BARMAN: Which in Alfie's defence, he shouldn't have had to do. You should know these things, Harry.

HARRY: Don't you start.

(He rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Look, let's start over. Yes, I will read all the relevant material pertaining to being an angel. Message received. Now let's try to enjoy our evening, shall we?

ALFIE: That's not a bad idea, actually.

HARRY: Good man.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: There was a teacher at that school today with a massive set of knockers.

ALFIE: I'm listening.

BARMAN: You've got my attention too.

HARRY: Excellent.

The following morning at 06.55, Harry found himself sitting on the porch roof above Nikki's front door in his non-corporeal form. Invisible to anyone other than his fellow angels, he was staring up at the sky, passing the time by musing to himself.

HARRY: That handbook was an enlightening read. At least the six pages I *got* through were eye-opening. If the other four hundred pages are equally as riveting, it's gonna be fun reading that through.

(He bit his lip.)

HARRY: I probably shouldn't have started at the beginning though. I should have started by reading the section about my own department first.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Still... no regrets. At least I learned a few things. Very little about destiny protection, but I'll get round to it.

(Just then, he heard the front door of the house open up beneath him.)

HARRY: A-ha.

(The sound of Nikki's voice then rose into the air.)

NIKKI: Bye, mum!

(She growled.)

NIKKI: No, *your* skirt is too short!!!

(She then slammed the door and stomped down the pathway.)

NIKKI: Stupid mums. Who'd have 'em?

(Harry could only roll his eyes.)

HARRY: Teenagers.

(He then zoomed down to her side. His job now was too protect her then find a way to stop Angie and her brother from targeting her. And it had to be done in a way that motivated Angie to turn her life around. Satisfied that he knew exactly how to get the job done, however, Harry wasn't even remotely worried. Strolling at Nikki's side as she headed off down the road, knowing she was entirely oblivious to his presence, he exhaled then glanced all around himself.)

HARRY: Come on, stabby boy. Show yourself.

(Just then, he heard the sound of footsteps racing up behind him. At once, a devilish smirk crossed his lips. Sure enough, Angie's brother, Gary was charging at Nikki with a large bowie knife in his hand.)

HARRY: Nope. Not today, sunshine.

(He then paced forwards, grabbed Gary's arm and teleported away with him. In the blinking of an eye, Gary found himself dangling above a live volcano, grasping Harry's arm with all the strength he could muster. Flapping his wings furiously to keep them both airborne, Harry stared down at the terrified, wannabe gangster and snarled.)

HARRY: Now listen here, you...

(In fear for his life, Gary cut over him in a frantic, terrified voice.)

GARY: Don't drop me!!!

HARRY: Mate...

GARY: What the hell's going on??? Help me!!!

HARRY: Help you?

GARY: Save me!!! Please!!!

HARRY: Save you? Why would I do that? I'm your executioner! Executioners don't save people; quite the opposite.

(He beamed with fiendish delight.)

HARRY: Allow me to demonstrate.

(He then reverted to ethereal form and allowed Gary to plummet towards the lava within the volcano. He screamed in terror all the way down. Because angels were unable to harm humans, however, he vanished before entering the lava and materialised safely at the foot of the volcano. Crying and whimpering, he looked all about himself in terror then fell to his knees, too weak to stand. Two seconds later, he flinched in fear then crawled backwards, gaping and sobbing. Harry was pacing towards him menacingly.)

GARY: Leave me alone!!! Go away!!!

HARRY: Mate...

GARY: I mean it!!!

HARRY: Oh, you mean it, do you? Is that meant to scare me? Only, I can tell you now, I have absolutely no fear of mortals whatsoever, especially ones who've literally just pissed their pants.

(Gary stop crawling and burst into tears.)

GARY: Who the hell are you??? And why are you doing this to me, Bro?

HARRY: Two most excellent questions. I'll start with the latter. I'm doing this because you tried to kill an innocent fourteen year old girl!

GARY: It was an accident!

(Harry couldn't help but chuckle.)

HARRY: An accident? Are you fucking serious, mate?

GARY: I...

HARRY: No! Shut up! Shut up and let me answer your *other* question.

GARY: Um... yes... sir.

HARRY: Thank you.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: I'll tell you who I am, matey. I'm the angel of justice.

(Gary whimpered.)

GARY: What?

HARRY: You heard. The angel of justice! And I saw what you were about to do to that poor girl and figured it'd make more sense if *you* were the one to die today.

GARY: But...

HARRY: Let me finish!

(He sighed.)

HARRY: I was looking forward to watching you burn, but no such luck. You ended up here. You know what that means?

(Gary's bottom lip quivered.)

GARY: No.

HARRY: It means the big man upstairs has decided to give you a second chance.

GARY: He has?

HARRY: Unfortunately, yes. You get to live another day.

(Gary burst into tears again.)

GARY: Thank you. Thank you, so much.

HARRY: Don't thank me! *I* wanted you to die. Unfortunately god thinks you're worth saving. He's the one who gave you a second chance.

(He smirked then leant forwards.)

HARRY: Make the most of it, because he doesn't give third chances.

GARY: Yes, sir. I will. Thank you, sir.

HARRY: Turn your life around! And make sure your sister turns hers around too.

GARY: I will! I will!

HARRY: And stay away from Nikki Palmer!!!

GARY: You have my word, in it!

HARRY: Good. Make sure you keep it.

(He then grimaced at the pathetic sight of Gary whimpering and sobbing on the ground before him.)

HARRY: Look at you. Fucking pitiful. Twats like you bound down the street thinking you're the dog's bollocks, don't you? Only *you* matter and you can hurt who you like. But when it's *your* turn to see your life flashing before your eyes, look what you turn into.

GARY: Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.

HARRY: Oh, shut up. Just admit your pathetic and I'll take you home.

(Gary's lips quivered.)

GARY: I'm... I'm pathetic.

HARRY: I agree.

(He rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Now, come on.

(With that, he grabbed him by the collar then teleported him away again. Almost instantaneously, Gary found himself sitting on the path outside Nikki's house.

Bewildered and scared, he could barely bring himself to stand. Standing over him, having reverted to his non-corporeal form, Harry watched him tremble then allowed himself a smug grin.)

HARRY: Nice. Job done, I reckon. Stan will be pleased.

(In that very moment, the world started to warp before his eyes.)

HARRY: A-ha. Here we go. He obviously wants to congratulate me on a job well done. Bring it on. I do love a bit of kudos.

(The world then vanished and Harry found himself, once again, sitting on a white chair in an otherwise white temple. As expected, Stan was the only other angel there. He didn't exactly look like he was about to shower Harry with kudos, however.)

STAN: And you're back.

(Harry looked up and smiled arrogantly.)

HARRY: Back and better than ever, my friend. That last case? Nailed it!

STAN: Oh, did you?

HARRY: Yup. And you know I did. That's why you've brought me here.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Well? Get on with it then. Tell me how awesome I am.

(Stan sighed.)

STAN: Harry?

HARRY: Yes, mate?

STAN: What are the rules in regard to an angel revealing his or her identity?

(Harry gave him a baffled glance.)

HARRY: Do so sparingly, obviously.

STAN: Right...

(His shoulders slumped.)

STAN: Did you even read the handbook?

HARRY: Of course, I did.

STAN: Then where the fuck did you get that answer from?

HARRY: Um... what?

STAN: Do so sparingly??? Where the fuck does it say that???

HARRY: Well... you know... on a page.

STAN: No, it bloody doesn't!

(He shook his fist.)

STAN: You absolute fuckwit!

(Harry sat back and gave Stan a suspicious glance.)

HARRY: Wait a bloody minute... you didn't bring me here to shower me with kudos at all, did you???

STAN: Shower you with kudos??? Why the hell would I do that???

HARRY: Because of my awesome work in solving the Nikki Palmer case!

STAN: Awesome work??? Awesome? It was shit, forbidden work which I now have to undo!

HARRY: Undo???

STAN: Yes! Undo! Reset time back to a few minutes before you're almighty screw up!

HARRY: What almighty screw up???

STAN: Seriously???

(He growled.)

STAN: Page one of the handbook, Harry! Second fucking line!

HARRY: Page one? That's the index.

STAN: Index???

(He growled furiously.)

STAN: There isn't a fucking index, you useless bell end!

HARRY: Easy!

STAN: Page one is a numbered list...

HARRY: Like an index!

STAN: But it's *not* an index, you lip-wobbling clown! It's the sacred list of angel commandants. The things you *can* do and *can't* do. And the very second one quite clearly states that under no circumstance can you reveal the existence of angels! To any-fucking-body!!!

(Harry glanced at him uneasily then grimaced.)

HARRY: Whoops.

STAN: Yes, fucking whoops.

HARRY: Yeah...

(He sucked his teeth.)

HARRY: Maybe it's time I read that handbook properly.

(He flinched.)

HARRY: I mean again!

STAN: No, you don't! You've never read it, have you?

HARRY: I have. Briefly. I read six pages last night.

STAN: And what page are you up to?

(Harry shrunk in his seat.)

HARRY: Page seven. I skipped the first one because I thought it was an index.

STAN: You...

(He gave an exasperated sigh then started to pace.)

STAN: You total prick. God doesn't like it when we mess with the flow of time, but you've left me no choice.

HARRY: Yeah... um... sorry about that.

STAN: Save it. I don't want apologies, I want results!

(He snarled.)

STAN: Get down there and do the mission again. Properly this time. Reveal nothing.

HARRY: Right. Yeah. That's fair.

STAN: Don't interrupt!

(He stopped pacing and glowered at him.)

STAN: You know what, Harry? If it was up to me, I'd reverse time back to before I handed you this case then gave it someone else. Unfortunately, it isn't, so I've got no choice but to leave it *your* less than capable hands.

HARRY: Less than capable?

STAN: That's right!

(He scoffed at him bitterly.)

STAN: Fucking worthless gonad.

HARRY: Steady on. There's no need for that. I'm new to all this...

(Stan snarled.)

STAN: If you say *all this angel malarkey* again, so help me, I'll punch you in the face!

HARRY: Right. Um... no... I wasn't gong to say that.

STAN: Don't lie to me, fuck flaps!!!

(Harry leant back and grimaced.)

HARRY: Damn. I've never seen you *this* angry before.

STAN: I've never *been* this angry before. Ever! And I'm fourteen *hundred* years old!

HARRY: And looking well for it, might I add.

STAN: Don't suck up to me, bollock breath.

HARRY: Right...

(Stan shook his head.)

STAN: You know you can only make that mistake once, right?

HARRY: What mistake?

STAN: Revealing yourself to a human!!!

(He sighed.)

STAN: If it happens a second time, it's game over. Angel status revoked. You'll be sent back to earth as a human. And if god's pissed off at you, you need to be worried. He'll send you somewhere shit like a war zone, a region hit by famine or Milton Keynes.

(Harry shuddered.)

HARRY: No! Nobody deserves Milton Keynes.

STAN: Actually, some people do.

HARRY: Good point. People are shit.

STAN: Yes, well, that's a different conversation entirely.

(He stood tall.)

STAN: Listen, Harry, wake the fuck up, will you? You've got so much potential. You could be a top angel one day. Don't let it go to waste. I'd hate to see you throw it all away and end up being reborn in Milton Keynes, purely because you didn't try. Stop fucking half-arsing everything!

(Harry nodded solemnly.)

HARRY: Fair comment.

(He puffed out.)

HARRY: So I need to get my arse back down there, do I?

STAN: Yes, you do. Do the mission properly.

HARRY: Gotcha.

(He sucked his teeth.)

HARRY: It won't be easy though. He's gonna charge at the poor girl with a knife and I can't even injure him.

STAN: That's...

HARRY: Or can I?

STAN: No!

(He sighed heavily.)

STAN: You can't physically harm humans! You just can't. It's impossible.

HARRY: But I *can* throw them about.

STAN: If it stops dark things from happening, yes.

HARRY: Like when I threw that bully out of the window. Stopped her and nobody got hurt.

STAN: Yes, well...

(He grimaced.)

STAN: That's not going to score very well on your performance review, is it?

HARRY: How come?

(Stan eyeballed him sarcastically.)

STAN: Ooh, good question. I wonder. Why *would* god and the elders look down on the tactic of throwing schoolgirls through windows? It truly is a mystery.

(Harry sighed.)

HARRY: That was sarcasm, wasn't it?

STAN: What gave it away?

HARRY: The blatant sarcasm.

STAN: Correct.

(He sighed.)

STAN: Look, in future, try to remember that subtly is the key. An angel's mission should end with the human subjects not even realising a third party has interfered.

HARRY: Hmm...

STAN: Throwing a girl out of an upstairs window then introducing yourself as our client's boyfriend was *not* the subtly required.

HARRY: I see.

(Stan offered him a consoling smile.)

STAN: You're a joke right now, Harry, but... I still have hope. You returned that suicidal fellow's will to live a few weeks ago without any trouble whatsoever. It was perfect. So I know you have it in you.

HARRY: Oh. Okay.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: You thought that was perfect, did you? All I did was move a photo of his daughter's face where he could see it.

STAN: And it worked. His love for the girl made him realise life *was* worth living.

HARRY: I know that, it's just... it was a bit shit. Way too easy. I didn't even do anything.

STAN: No, you did what you *had* to do and you did it well. And subtly. As *expected* of an angel. The trouble with you is, you want every job to be heroic and action packed.

Well, being an angel isn't always that.

HARRY: I see.

STAN: Good. Make sure you *do* see.

(He nodded.)

STAN: Okay then. I'm gonna send you back now. Go to Nikki Palmer's porch again.

HARRY: Will do.

STAN: And whatever you do, do it right! You're three months into a year long trial and so far, you've been a massive disappointment.

HARRY: Come of it. I haven't been that bad.

STAN: Yes, you have! I've called you in nine times.

HARRY: Which isn't that many, in the grand scheme of things.

STAN: On the contrary, it's appalling. The most I've called someone else in is five times. And he's been doing the job for three fucking centuries.

HARRY: What???

STAN: Exactly!

(He nodded.)

STAN: Now get your act together, fuckwit. We're going again!

A few seconds later, Harry returned to the mortal realm and immediately teleported himself back to Nikki's porch. Determined to get it right this time, he nodded firmly then snarled to reaffirm himself.

HARRY: Right. This time... I can do this.

(He bit his lip.)

HARRY: I'm not sure how though. Scaring that dickhead straight was the only plan I could come up with.

(He then glanced upwards thoughtfully.)

HARRY: Unless...

(Just then, he heard the front door of the house open up beneath him.)

NIKKI: Bye, mum!

(She growled.)

NIKKI: No, *your* skirt is too short!!!

(She then slammed the door and stomped down the pathway.)

NIKKI: Stupid mums. Who'd have 'em?

(Harry nodded then zoomed to the end of her pathway.)

HARRY: Right. Let's get this shit done.

(He watched Nikki pass him as she headed off to school then transformed into his corporeal form.)

HARRY: No bugger's getting stabbed on my watch. Not today.

(Just then, he heard the sound of footsteps racing up behind him. Once again, Angie's brother, Gary was charging towards Nikki with a large bowie knife in his hand.)

HARRY: Nope.

(He then charged at Gary and punched him full in the face. At once, he thundered to the floor unconscious and dropped his knife.)

HARRY: That's him dealt with.

(He then turned and glanced towards Nikki. Having heard the commotion, she'd stopped walked and was staring at him agog.)

NIKKI: It's you. Hello again.

HARRY: Yeah.

(He gave her a friendly thumbs up.)

HARRY: Of you go then. You hurry off to school while I sort this out.

NIKKI: Hmm...

(She then paced up to him and thrust her phone at him demandingly.)

NIKKI: Here.

HARRY: What?

NIKKI: Your phone number.

HARRY: I don't...

NIKKI: Just give. It's obvious you like me. You helped me at school yesterday and now you're hanging around my house. So just give me your number.

(Harry scratched his head.)

HARRY: Yeah, that's...

(Just then, Angie came zooming around the corner in a panic. With much in the way of distress in her eyes, she slid down at her brother's side and whimpered fearfully.)

ANGIE: Is he dead?

HARRY: Alas, no.

(Angie snarled.)

ANGIE: Did you do this?

HARRY: I'm delighted to report that I did.

ANGIE: For *that* bitch?

(She nodded at Nikki.)

HARRY: Actually...

ANGIE: Fuck you!!!

(She then scooped up the knife and started to charge towards Nikki. At once, Nikki's eyes bulged and she raced off down the street.)

HARRY: Well... that complicates things.

(He then shrugged.)

HARRY: But not really.

(With that, he teleported to Angie's side then punched her in the face, knocking her out cold.)

HARRY: There you go. That's the siblings safely out of Nikki's way, now I just need to convince them to change their ways.

(He then knelt down at Angie's side, placed a hand on her arm then teleported her over to her brother. Looking forward to getting on with the next stage of the plan, he then teleported them both away.)

Ten minutes later, when Gary came to, he found himself tied to a chair in an abandoned warehouse. His sister was in a chair next to his, whimpering and sobbing. Infuriated, he glanced up and growled.

GARY: What the fuck is this???

(He then spotted Harry sitting crossed legged on a chair opposite. Trying to look cool, he was leaning back with one elbow resting on the arm of the chair while he stroked his chin with his other hand.)

HARRY: You're awake then.

GARY: I don't know who the fuck you are, but I'm gonna beat you until your bollocks are no longer round!!!

HARRY: I doubt it, mate.

(He then sat forward.)

HARRY: You're weak, son. Capturing you wasn't even a challenge.

GARY: You must have blind-sided me.

HARRY: You blind-sided yourself, son. I was standing right there when you charged at Nikki Palmer and you didn't even see me.

GARY: You...

HARRY: Ten out of ten for being focussed on your murderous task though. Sadly for you, however, I'll have to deduct all ten of them on the grounds that you failed spectacularly.

(Gary snarled.)

GARY: Who the fuck *are* you?

HARRY: Just a friend. *You* can call me Harry.

GARY: A friend? Of who? That Nikki girl?

HARRY: And your sister.

ANGIE: The fuck you are!

HARRY: I am. You just haven't realised it yet.

(He then sat back and smiled.)

HARRY: Anyway, I digress. Here you both are, tied up in front of me. Angie and Gary...

(His expression then turned blank. Having not read the file properly, he had no idea what their surname was.)

HARRY: Fuck.

(He flinched.)

HARRY: I mean Angie and Gary... local wrong'uns.

GARY: We know who the fuck *we* are. Who the fuck are *you*, in it?

HARRY: I already told you that. I'm a friend.

ANGIE: Of Nikki's! He's certainly not a friend of *mine*!

(She sneered.)

ANGIE: He's the one who threw me out of that window.

GARY: Cunt!

ANGIE: Right? He seems to fancy himself as her guardian angel or something.

(Harry scoffed.)

HARRY: Angel? Angel? Don't be bloody ridiculous. Angel's don't even exist.

(He then offered the heavens a wink in the hope that Stan was watching. And indeed Stan *was* watching. From his lofty perch above, he rolled his eyes disdainfully.)

STAN: He's such a bell end.

(Blissfully unaware of Stan's scorn, Harry climbed from his seat then placed his hands on his hips menacingly.)

HARRY: Now, listen here, you pair of cunts. Leave Nikki Palmer alone!

GARY: Or what?

HARRY: Or you'll regret it.

GARY: Why? What the fuck are *you* gonna do?

HARRY: Hurt you, of course. Not you, Angie. Just Gary here. Threatening a child is wrong, unfortunately.

(He rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Why? Do you think I can't?

GARY: Yes.

HARRY: Wrong.

(He gestured to a bag in the corner.)

HARRY: I've got sharp objects in that bag. And you're tied to a chair. If I wanted to hurt you, I could.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: But violence is not the answer!

(He then winked at the heavens again. Entirely oblivious to the fact that Stan had replied to his wink with a one-fingered salute, he then folded his arms.)

HARRY: So, *this* time I'm gonna let you go.

ANGIE: Go on then!

HARRY: On one condition!

ANGIE: Denied!

GARY: Humour him, Angie.

ANGIE: Oh, fine.

HARRY: Stay away from Nikki.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: And Gary, kick your sister out of the gang and make her focus on school.

ANGIE: That's two conditions!

GARY: Yeah! You can't count, Bruv!

HARRY: Yes, I can!

GARY: Clearly not!

HARRY: Fuck off. I was awesome at maths when I was alive.

GARY: What?

ANGIE: Eh?

GARY: When you were alive?

HARRY: Um...

(He flinched.)

HARRY: Live! When I was live. A live agent. Serving in the SAS.

ANGIE: He's lying, isn't he?

GARY: Like a politician explaining why there's a photo of him with a fish in one hand and his cock in the other.

HARRY: Fuck off, you two. Why would you doubt I was in the military?

GARY: I'm not. I'm doubting you were in the SAS!

ANGIE: Yeah!

HARRY: Oh, like it even matters! All I'm saying is, stay the fuck away from Nikki.

GARY: Why, what's it to you?

HARRY: She's my...

(Suddenly remembering that he couldn't refer to her as his client or his charge, he grimaced uncomfortably.)

HARRY: Um... you know... she's...

ANGIE: Your girlfriend.

HARRY: No!

ANGIE: You said she was yesterday.

HARRY: Shit.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Fine. Let's call her that. Not that it matters.

ANGIE: Oh, it does. She's fourteen!

GARY: And *you're* old enough to have served in the military, man.

HARRY: Um...

GARY: Paedo alert, in it!

ANGIE: Paedo!!!

(The two then started to sing *paedo* at him repeatedly, as if it were a football chant.)

ANGIE: Paedo, paedo...

HARRY: Stop that!

GARY: Paedo, paedo...

HARRY: Enough!!!

ANGIE: Paedo, paedo...

HARRY: Pack it in will you???

GARY: Paedo, paedo...

(As the chant continued, Harry's shoulders slumped.)

HARRY: They're not listening.

(His brow then furrowed over.)

HARRY: I'll go and buy a chainsaw. *That'll* make them pay attention.

(He took one step away however then froze.)

HARRY: Right. Yeah. No scaring a child straight.

GARY: Paedo, paedo...

HARRY: Fuck off, I'm trying to think!

(An enlightened expression then crossed his brow.)

HARRY: Harry, you're a genius.

(He then paced over to Angie.)

HARRY: Wait there, Gary. I'll be back in a minute.

(With that, he grabbed Angie's chair and proceeded to drag her towards the door in it.)

ANGIE: What are you doing???

GARY: Leave her alone!!!

ANGIE: Help!!!

GARY: Hey!!!

(Frantically thrashing around in his chair, Gary was absolutely furious.)

GARY: If you touch one fucking hair on her head, you're a dead man! A dead man!!!

ANGIE: Stop it!!! Let me go!!!

HARRY: In a minute!!!

(With that, he dragged her out the door and continued away with her until they were out of earshot of the warehouse.)

HARRY: Relax. I've got no intention of harming you, Angie. You're in no danger whatsoever.

(Angie glanced at him in bewilderment.)

ANGIE: Then why bring me here?

HARRY: Because you were gonna stab Nikki!

ANGIE: Then why would you let me go again?

HARRY: Stop asking questions.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Look. The bottom line is, that gang is going to ruin your life. Just quit. Don't let that brother of yours drag you down with him!

ANGIE: But... he's my brother.

HARRY: I realise that. That's why I said don't let that *brother of yours* drag you down, rather than don't let that *aardvark* of yours drag you down.

ANGIE: Aardvark?

HARRY: Never mind that! Just stop trying to act hard and behave!

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: Now wait there for a minute. I just need to have a quick word with your brother alone.

ANGIE: Wait here? I'm tied to a chair, you twat. What else am I gonna do?

HARRY: Rethink your gobby attitude?

ANGIE: No, I'm good.

HARRY: Actually, you're not. And that's why you're here.

(He then strode back into the warehouse and stepped before Gary's seat.)

HARRY: Answer me. Will you leave Nikki Palmer alone?

GARY: I'll do whatever my little sister asks, you cunt.

HARRY: So you'll continue to go after Nikki?

GARY: If she wants me to.

HARRY: Right...

(He smirked.)

HARRY: Bad answer.

(He then paced behind Gary's chair and teleported away. Five seconds later, he reappeared again with a chainsaw in his hand.)

GARY: Hey! Where did you go??? Hey!

HARRY: I'm still here!

GARY: Right.

HARRY: I just had to collect something I left behind the chair.

(He then marched in front of Gary with a chainsaw in his hands, smirking devilishly.)

HARRY: Say goodbye to your knees, Gareth!

GARY: Yeah, right.

(Harry just smirked again then turned the chainsaw on. At once, Gary's demeanour changed and he screamed in terror.)

GARY: You win! You're the better man!!! Nikki's out of bounds!!!

(Harry allowed the chainsaw to stop then tipped his head towards him.)

HARRY: Sorry? What was that?

GARY: I said you win!!!

(He whimpered.)

GARY: Please. I'm sorry.

(Harry glanced at the wet patch in Gary's trousers and grinned.)

HARRY: Yes, yes you are.

GARY: I swear I'll change my ways.

HARRY: Good lad. And what about your sister?

GARY: I'll change *her* ways too.

HARRY: No more gang life for both of you, right?

GARY: I swear!!! Please, just... I'm sorry.

(He whimpered.)

GARY: Please let me go.

HARRY: No.

GARY: Please!!!

HARRY: Angie can let you go.

(With that, he strode to the warehouse door then paced through it with his chainsaw over his shoulder.)

HARRY: Nice.

(He then paced up to Angie's chair and proceed to untie her.)

ANGIE: What happened to my brother?

(She shrieked.)

ANGIE: And why do you have a chainsaw???

HARRY: To make him listen.

(He smiled.)

HARRY: But if there's a next time, I'll use it to make him scream. Make sure he knows that.

(He then pulled her ropes away.)

HARRY: Now go. Go and untie him.

(Angie instantly charged towards the warehouse.)

HARRY: Live in peace from now on, Angela!

(He exhaled then spoke under his breath.)

HARRY: And god bless you.

(With that, he paced away feeling extremely pleased with himself. He didn't get very far however, before a familiar warping occurred.)

HARRY: Seriously? What did I do wrong now???

(He then vanished into the ether.)

A few seconds later, Harry once again found himself sitting on the white chair in the sacred white temple. More than a little fed up, he sighed then glanced up at the scowling Stan.

HARRY: What's wrong this time???

STAN: What's wrong this time, he says.

(He shook his head.)

STAN: Let's see if you can guess.

(Harry grimaced in bewilderment for a moment then looked at his shoulder and started to blush.)

HARRY: It's the chainsaw, isn't it?

STAN: Actually, no. Though put it down before you hurt yourself.

(Harry placed the chainsaw on the ground then glanced up at him.)

HARRY: Well? Go on then. Why am I here? What did I do wrong this time?

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Nothing, that's what! I didn't try to scare the child straight. And I'm *allowed* to knock someone out if they're about to stab someone. There was fuck all wrong with my efforts this time. That was a flawless execution. So why *am* I here?

STAN: You're here, Harry, because you don't fucking listen!

HARRY: What?

(Stan growled at him.)

STAN: Very funny!

HARRY: What? No. I mean, what are you on about?

STAN: Oh.

(He sneered.)

STAN: The fact you don't listen.

HARRY: Yes, I do!

STAN: Oh, really? Then how come not five minutes after I lectured you about not scaring a child, you knocked one out and tied her to a fucking chair?

(Harry gave him a condescending glance.)

HARRY: What other choice was there?

STAN: The choice *not* to do that!

HARRY: Mate, after I knocked her out, she was flat out on the pavement. I wasn't gonna leave her there, now was I?

STAN: No, but you could have teleported her anywhere. Why take her to warehouse and tie her to a chair??? She must have been terrified when she came to!

HARRY: Wrong. The first thing I did was tell her she was perfectly safe and that I was gonna let her go.

STAN: And did she believe you?

(Harry grimaced.)

HARRY: Well, no. But in my defence, I *was* going to hammer home the point, but then her brother came to and I had to focus on him instead.

STAN: Leaving her sitting there, scared witless in the seat next to him.

(He shook his head.)

STAN: You're fucking useless, you are.

HARRY: Stan...

(He sighed.)

HARRY: I did the best I could, mate. I'm trying really hard here.

STAN: Are you?

HARRY: Yes.

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: It's just hard you know? I'm new to all this angel...

(Stan interrupted angrily.)

STAN: Go on! Say malarkey!

(He pounded his fist.)

STAN: Make my day. I dare you.

HARRY: I wasn't even gonna say... that word. I was just reminding you that I'm still inexperienced when it comes to all this angel... palaver.

STAN: Harry.

HARRY: What?

STAN: Stop making excuses.

HARRY: I'm not!

STAN: You are. You fucking are. There's only one reason why this mission is giving you so much grief.

(He leant forward and snarled at him.)

STAN: You haven't read the angel handbook and you didn't read the case file, despite me hammering home how important those things were from day one!!!

HARRY: Right... well... I suppose there's something in that. But in my defence...

(He then flinched.)

HARRY: Wait. What do you mean, this case is *giving* me so much grief? You mean this case *gave* me so much grief, surely. Past tense. It's over. Case closed! That Gary fella pissed himself in terror. Cried and vowed to turn over a new leaf.

STAN: And do you think he will?

HARRY: I do, yes!

STAN: Wrong!

(He clenched his fists bitterly.)

STAN: And you'd have known it was wrong if you'd read the case file. Gary is a violent thug, beyond any hope of salvation. He'll never change his ways, as it clearly stated in the fucking file.

HARRY: Maybe the file was wrong.

STAN: It wasn't!

(He snarled.)

STAN: As I shall now explain. Nikki Palmer is now destined to die in a house fire.

Tonight!

HARRY: What???

STAN: Angry at being humiliated by you. Made to face his mortality, even; he decides to take it out on your girlfriend.

HARRY: She's not my girlfriend!

STAN: *He* doesn't know that!!!

(He gave a deep, exasperated sigh.)

STAN: This evening, he's going to gather his entire gang together. There's about sixty of the bastards. And tonight they're gonna go to the Palmer household, beat up Nikki's parents then set fire to the house. With everyone in it!!!

(Harry slumped in his seat.)

HARRY: Fuck.

STAN: Yes, fuck.

HARRY: The more I try to resolve this thing, the harder it gets.

STAN: Because you didn't read the fucking case file.

HARRY: Stan...

STAN: Don't Stan me, shit face. I'm sick of the sight of you and I'm going to send you back now.

HARRY: But...

STAN: You've got all afternoon to plan how you're going to stop them. Use it wisely. Come up with something permanent. What we in the trade call a solution, rather than a temporary fucking reprieve.

(He shook his fist.)

STAN: But know this. If the outcome *doesn't* involve Nikki Palmer being free of gangs and bullies forever, you've failed! And if Angie *doesn't* turn over a new leaf, you've failed!!! Also, if either of them are traumatised, again you've failed.

HARRY: Fine. Just let me ask...

STAN: No!

(He nodded.)

STAN: Now fuck off!

(He then flailed his arm in Harry's direction to dismiss him to the mortal realm again.)

STAN: Prick.

Somewhat deflated by his failings, upon arriving back in the human world, Harry sprouted his wings then flew over to the local park. It was his go-to place when he needed somewhere peaceful to think things over. And right now, he had a lot on his mind. He simply couldn't get his head around how everything he'd done to help Nikki had backfired so badly. To say it was getting him down would be quite the

understatement. And to make matters worse, he had no idea what to do next. The problem had escalated to the point where a peaceful resolution felt nigh on impossible. He wasn't about to give up hope, however. Even if there was the tiniest sliver of a chance that he could turn things around, he was going to take it. He just needed to figure out a way. And so, upon reaching the park, he glided down to his favourite bench then took a seat. Resolved to staying there until he'd thought of a solution to the problem, he sat back and took a deep breath. As deflated as he felt, it wasn't going to stop him from trying.

HARRY: Right... Harry, mate... think, son. Think long and hard. We've a whole gang coming for the poor girl now.

(He then flinched in bewilderment. Alfie, the angel from the cupid department, had just sat down at his side.)

HARRY: Alfie? What are you doing here?

ALFIE: A good morning to you too.

HARRY: Right, yeah. Morning, Alfie. Obviously. Now why are you here?

(Alfie smiled at him.)

ALFIE: I'm here, Harry, because not two minutes ago, I closed my last case whilst sitting on this very bench.

(He shrugged.)

ALFIE: I had started to leave, then I saw you flying down, so I thought I'd come back and say hello.

HARRY: Right.

(Alfie exhaled.)

ALFIE: That orange aura case is officially done and dusted.

HARRY: Well, that's great. Well done.

ALFIE: Thank you. I tell you...

HARRY: Now if you don't mind, I've come here to think about...

ALFIE: Yeah, I'm not sad that's behind me.

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: That orange aura nightmare.

HARRY: Right. Yeah. I'm happy for you, mate; I really am. But right now I need some alone time to...

ALFIE: I changed tactics, you see.

HARRY: Mate...

ALFIE: Rather than hunting across town, I went to the shopping centre and just sat there. Patiently waiting. Biding my time.

(He grimaced.)

ALFIE: It was as boring as fuck, but after an hour or so had passed, the straight bloke with an orange aura that I so badly needed, breezed straight past me.

HARRY: That's great. Now...

ALFIE: *Now*, of course, I need a way to get them both together so I could shoot them with the same arrow.

HARRY: Mate, can you...

ALFIE: Then it dawned on me.

(He smirked knowingly.)

ALFIE: He was actually heading *out* of the shopping centre. Towards the park! This park; where my client goes jogging every morning. There was a high chance they'd pass each other without me even having to intervene. I just need to find the right place to shoot from.

(He exhaled.)

ALFIE: This bench.

HARRY: Alfie, can you just...

ALFIE: Everything was in place, but as you can imagine, the *hard* work still needed to be done.

(He raised a conceited eyebrow.)

ALFIE: You should have seen me. Crouching here like a seasoned veteran, waiting to strike. Unmoving and stoic; focussed to the hilt.

HARRY: Great. You can tell me all about it *later*.

ALFIE: The wait was a tense one, but did I crack under the pressure? No, sir; I did not. I remained unyielding and steadfast; barely blinking as they headed towards one another.

HARRY: Sweet.

(He rolled his eyes. Alfie was quite clearly going to tell his story, no matter how much he asked him not to, so all he could do was wait for him to finish.)

ALFIE: I was focussed like a hawk; staring down the arrow, using the tip as a sight. My head turning to and fro; looking at him, then looking at her. Gauging and calculating the precise time they'd pass one another. And then, bang. My moment arrived. I didn't waver or falter like a fool; I released the arrow then rejoiced as it passed through them both in the blinking of an eye. Perfect, it was. At that very moment, they both felt the urge to bid one another a good morning and a conversation began. A new love was born.

(He exhaled.)

ALFIE: Some of my finest work.

(He smiled.)

ALFIE: They're still chatting now, look.

(He then nodded towards where a young couple were conversing on the path ahead of them.)

ALFIE: Their auras will change colour now. Orange means they're lonely, bitter about it and blame the other sex entirely. But now they've found each other, their misery is over.

(He beamed.)

ALFIE: Don't you just love being an angel?

HARRY: Not right now, I don't; no.

ALFIE: What?

(He looked enlightened.)

ALFIE: Oh, that's right. *Your* thing. How's that going?

HARRY: I'll let my joyous and carefree smile answer that.

ALFIE: What smile?

(He grimaced.)

ALFIE: Right. Gotcha. Going poorly, is it?

HARRY: Poorly? It's like trying to clean felt pen off a wall with a dirty sock. The harder I work, the bigger the mess becomes.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: But that's my problem, not yours. A problem I need to think long and hard about, so you if you wouldn't mind...

ALFIE: Of course, I wouldn't mind.

HARRY: Oh. Thanks, Alfie.

ALFIE: Don't be silly. I don't mind helping at all.

HARRY: Helping?

(He sighed heavily.)

HARRY: No, mate. No. I was asking if you wouldn't mind giving me some alone time.

ALFIE: Oh. What for?

HARRY: To think, obviously!

ALFIE: Ah. Gotcha.

(He nodded.)

ALFIE: Understood.

(He then climbed to his feet.)

ALFIE: If you change your mind and want to consult someone, just give me a shout. I'll be in the park for a while anyway. My next job is also here.

(He shrugged.)

ALFIE: The park is an excellent place to find love, my friend. If only I'd known that when I was alive.

(He then headed away. Having watched him go, Harry rolled his eyes then sat back.)

HARRY: Okay, Harry. Think! How do I stop a gang from burning down a house? No, wait. Nikki should be my priority, not her house. I'll have to make sure she's out when it happens.

(He bit his lip.)

HARRY: But then again, if her house burns down, she might be traumatised. Her future will be ruined; and that's exactly what I need to prevent. I should focus on the house.

(His shoulders then slumped.)

HARRY: Or should I? I don't fucking know!

(His head dropped.)

HARRY: This is too hard. I'm gonna some help with this one.

(Just then, Alfie sprung back onto the scene.)

ALFIE: A-ha! I knew it!

HARRY: Alfie?

ALFIE: At your service, my friend.

(He sat down on the bench then nodded.)

ALFIE: Come on then, let's hear it. What's the dilemma? Tell me everything. Two heads are better than one, after all.

(Harry looked uncertain.)

HARRY: Am I *allowed* to tell you everything? We're in different departments.

ALFIE: Wow. You really *didn't* read the handbook, did you? Angels always help each other out.

HARRY: Oh. Okay.

ALFIE: So? What's the issue?

(Harry puffed out.)

HARRY: There's a girl called Nikki, and I have to stop her being bullied.

ALFIE: Oh. By whom?

HARRY: A girl called Angie. She'd gone down a dark path because her brother's a bad influence.

ALFIE: I see.

HARRY: So, naturally, I started by turning up when Nikki got bullied for the first time, so I could put an end to it.

(Alfie flinched.)

ALFIE: Sorry, what? You turned up when the bullying *started*?

HARRY: Yeah. Why?

ALFIE: You didn't intervene beforehand to *prevent* it?

(Harry stared right through him.)

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: Surely your job was to stop Angie from *becoming* a bully rather than waiting until she was about *begin* her reign of terror.

HARRY: Um...

ALFIE: Or was it?

(He winced.)

ALFIE: I may have jumped in there with knowing all the facts.

(Eager to exonerate himself, Harry nodded firmly and pretended to take offence.)

HARRY: Yes. Yes, you did. Bloody check. Like I didn't do my due diligence.

ALFIE: Sorry. Of course you did your due diligence.

HARRY: Damn right I did.

ALFIE: So what you *meant* to tell me was, you *started* by investigating the girl's brother.

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: What with *him* being the source of all the trouble, where else would you start?

(Harry stared at him blankly for a moment then mumbled his way into a lie in order to make himself look better.)

HARRY: Yeah... I... yeah... I did all that shit obviously. But it was clear he was a hopeless case.

ALFIE: Gotcha.

(Just then, Stan appeared on the bench in between them.)

HARRY: Stan???

ALFIE: Stan???

(Harry sat forwards to glance at Alfie.)

HARRY: Wait. You know him too?

ALFIE: He's my supervisor.

HARRY: Really?

(He glanced at Stan.)

HARRY: You supervise both of us?

STAN: And more! I'm the head several departments. Overseeing hundreds and hundreds of angels.

(He sneered.)

STAN: Of which, you're the most useless.

HARRY: Right.

STAN: Why? You didn't think I existed just to oversee *you*, did you?

HARRY: Um...

STAN: That would be ridiculous. I mean, what would be the point? What would be the point in me sitting up in heaven, doing nothing all day except watching *you* make a bollocks of everything? It'd be a completely pointless role. It'd make far more sense for *me* to do the job myself if I had nothing else to do all day, for fuck sake.

HARRY: Right. Makes sense.

STAN: It does, yes, now shut up.

(He gestured to Alfie.)

STAN: I just came to say this. Listen to this man; he speaks sense. Everything he said about due diligence and going to the source of the problem, was dead-on. That's exactly what an angel *should* do. Clearly, unlike you, he *does* have a clue what he's doing.

(He nodded.)

STAN: So hear him out, pay attention and take what he says under serious consideration.

(He ruffled his neck.)

STAN: I shall now take my leave.

(With that, he vanished into the ether, leaving his two subordinates more than a little stunned.)

HARRY: Did he really come down to the mortal realm just to nag me again?

ALFIE: Did he really come down to this mortal realm just to compliment me?

HARRY: Sorry, what?

ALFIE: What? I was miles away... did you say something?

HARRY: Not really, no.

ALFIE: Oh, me either.

(Then shared an uncomfortable glance then Harry sighed.)

HARRY: Go on then, what's your advice for tonight?

ALFIE: Why? What's happening tonight?

HARRY: My mission!

ALFIE: Oh.

(He shrugged.)

ALFIE: I have no idea, you didn't explain things *that* far.

HARRY: I didn't?

(He gasped.)

HARRY: I didn't, did I?

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Well, it's like this...

ALFIE: Wait!

(He then took a cigarette out of his pocket and lit up.)

ALFIE: Tell me while I take a fag break.

HARRY: Fine.

(He sighed then began to relate his tale of woe. Leaving no detail unspoken, he explained every element and aspect of the how the case had gone so far. Listening intently, Alfie nodded away as he puffed on his cigarette. Such was Harry's attention to detail, however, by the time he'd finished his explanation, Alfie was half way through smoking a second one.)

HARRY: And that's how things stand. Tonight could well be a disaster that ruins the lives all concerned. Now how the fuck am I meant to get myself out a jam that tight?

Tell me that? Even give me your silliest ideas, because right now, I'll be fucked if *I* know what to do about it.

ALFIE: Hmm...

(He sighed.)

ALFIE: You found yourself in quite the quandary there, mate.

HARRY: And then some.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: So? What do you reckon?

ALFIE: Well... it really is quite the pickle, but there might just be a way.

HARRY: Oh? Go for it, mate. I'm all ears.

ALFIE: Okay.

(He nodded knowingly.)

ALFIE: Seduce Angie!

HARRY: What? She's fifteen!

ALFIE: I know, but think about it. If she falls in love with you, she'll be putty in your hands. If you ask her to, she'll stop bullying this Nikki girl right away. Also, having your love, might change her perspective on life altogether. She might well go on to be a better person.

(Harry grimaced at him uneasily.)

HARRY: Um... Alfie...

ALFIE: Makes sense, doesn't it? In fact, it's perfect. Go, Harry.

(He nodded sternly.)

ALFIE: Go and charm that girl's knickers off. Who cares if it's immoral, she'll be legal soon anyway.

(In that moment, Stan appeared in between them again. Not even offering them time to be shocked by his sudden arrival, he stared hard at Harry and spoke in no uncertain terms.)

STAN: Forget what I said earlier, Harry. Ignore this bloke, he's an even bigger idiot than you are!

(He then glowered at Alfie.)

STAN: Get back to work, go on! Go and create love with that bow of yours. And don't *ever* let me catch you giving people advice again.

(Alfie whimpered.)

ALFIE: Right. Sorry. Bye!

(He then upped and charged into the trees nearby.)

STAN: Yeah, you'd better run.

(He then turned to face Harry.)

STAN: Don't do what *he* said. God would cast you straight into deepest pits of hell without a second thought if you did that.

HARRY: Oh, I know. That was *never* an option.

STAN: Good. I'm glad you realise that. There may be hope for you yet.

(He nodded.)

STAN: Not much of it, but still.

(He then vanished into the ether again. Left behind, Harry grimaced.)

HARRY: Well, that's one positive, I guess.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Whatever I come up with, no matter how rubbish, won't be the *worst* idea I've heard today.

(He then sat back and bit his lip.)

HARRY: Okay... let me take stock. One. I have to protect Nikki from physical harm and emotional trauma. Two. I need to make Angie turn her back on the thug lifestyle and fly right. Three. I need to stop a mob of sixty thugs burning down a house, because if I don't, the entire mission will be a complete failure. Nikki will grow up traumatised, Angie will turn further to the darkness and I'll be reborn in Milton Keynes.

(He then burst into tears.)

HARRY: Why Milton Keynes???

(His head hung low.)

HARRY: I'm doomed. How can one bloke stop sixty...

(He then bit his lip and raised his head slightly.)

HARRY: Unless...

(Just then, he noticed a packet of cigarettes on the bench next to him.)

HARRY: Alfie left his...

(He snarled.)

HARRY: Focus on the case, you tit!

(He mused to himself as he pondered a potential solution in his mind.)

HARRY: It's a bit desperate, but it might just work.

(He then glanced at the cigarettes again.)

HARRY: I'd better give them back to him.

(With that, he picked them up then headed towards the trees that Alfie had sprinted among.)

HARRY: He did say his next case was in the park, so he might still be here.

Having strode into the clump of trees that Alfie had hurriedly taken refuge in, Harry glanced around then nodded to himself. He could quite clearly see Alfie's footwear beneath a thick bush. With a smirk, he paced up to the bush then spoke up, playfully.

HARRY: Seriously, Alfie? Crouching in a bush next to the playground? Are you *trying* to get arrested, mate?

(Alfie's voice quietly rose up from the foliage.)

ALFIE: Just a minute, Harry.

HARRY: Right.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: What are you doing anyway?

ALFIE: I'll tell you in a minute.

HARRY: Right. Not having a shit, are you? Only, this is a public park, mate.

ALFIE: No. Now shush; I'll be with you in a minute.

(Harry raised an enquiring eyebrow.)

HARRY: Hmm... I'm curious now. What *are* you doing in there?

ALFIE: Just a sec.

(Harry grimaced.)

HARRY: You'd better not be bashing one out.

ALFIE: Of course not. Now be quiet for a sec, will you?

(Harry bit his lip then sighed.)

HARRY: No. I can't just wait it out. I've got to know. What the hell are you up to?

(He then stepped forwards into the bush. Having done so, however, he tripped over a protruding tree root and stumbled forwards. Unable to stop himself, he staggered forwards then knocked the crouching Alfie off balance.)

HARRY: Fuck!

ALFIE: Hey!!!

(Having been on his haunches, poised and ready to fire off an arrow, Alfie didn't have either of his arms free and was in no position to steady himself. As a result, he toppled over onto his back, accidentally releasing the arrow as soon as his rear thudded into the dirt. All he could do then was watch in horror as the arrow shot through Harry then flew off across the town somewhere.)

ALFIE: No!!!

HARRY: Dude! You shot me!!!

ALFIE: You knocked me over!!!

HARRY: And that makes it okay to shoot me???

ALFIE: It wasn't intentional!!! You knocked me over and I accidentally let go off the arrow when I landed!

(He furrowed his brow.)

ALFIE: What the fuck did you push me over for?

HARRY: I didn't mean to. I tripped on a root.

ALFIE: You prick!

HARRY: Easy!

ALFIE: No. Bollocks. Why the fuck were you in this bush anyway?

(Harry furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: I was doing you a favour!

(He held out the cigarette packet.)

HARRY: I was returning these!

(Alfie looked at the packet then glanced up at Harry.)

ALFIE: They're not *mine*.

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: That's not my brand.

HARRY: Then...

(He opened the packet and peered inside.)

HARRY: Right. False alarm. It's an empty packet.

(Alfie scrambled to his feet angrily.)

ALFIE: False alarm?

HARRY: Yeah, I was mistaken.

ALFIE: I don't believe you, mate! You ruined my shot just to hand me an empty cigarette packet that was never mine in the first place!

HARRY: Well...

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: Yeah.

(He then shrugged.)

HARRY: Sorry about that. It's not the end of the world though. You can just have another go.

ALFIE: Actually, Harry, no. I can't. Before I do anything else, I need to find out what the fuck happened to my arrow. If that hits the wrong person...

(He gulped.)

HARRY: If it hits the wrong person, what?

ALFIE: I went through *you*, Harry!!!

HARRY: Yeah, but Angels are immune. Aren't we? I mean, surely.

(Alfie furrowed his brow.)

ALFIE: We are, yes, but...

(He sighed.)

ALFIE: Let me explain this to you in simple terms, mate. Simple terms that an *idiot* who never bothered to read the handbook can understand. You won't fall in love with whoever the arrow hits, because yes, you're immune.

(He growled.)

ALFIE: Whoever it hits, however, *won't* be immune! They'll fall in love with you! And it could literally hit anyone.

HARRY: Anyone?

ALFIE: Any-fucking-one! Be it a schoolboy or an old lady. Age or gender is irrelevant. It won't matter. They'll be in love with you. And if it's a straight bloke, god help him. He'll be repulsed by you sexually, yet head over heels at the same time. Disgusted yet misty-eyed and unable to resist you. That'd be a living hell!

HARRY: Ah. Hmm...

ALFIE: In fact, it won't be a picnic for *whoever* it hits! You're not available! It'll be a one-sided unrequited love, that could well end up ruining any chance of happiness they ever had!

(He shook his fist.)

ALFIE: So my job now is to find the poor fucker and make them fall in love with a person they *should* be in love with! Cheers, you cock.

(He growled.)

ALFIE: Like I didn't have enough to do!

HARRY: Yeah...

(He scratched behind his head.)

HARRY: Sorry about that. Um... I'll just return to the bench, I think.

ALFIE: Yeah, you fucking do that!

HARRY: Right.

ALFIE: Thanks for coming.

HARRY: And you're sure...

ALFIE: I don't smoke them ones!!!

HARRY: Gotcha.

(Alfie groaned despairingly.)

ALFIE: Depending how far it flew, it could take *ages* to find out who that fucking arrow hit. Twat!

(Just then, Stan appeared in between them. Without even bothering to say hello, he immediately launched into Harry with a series of slaps to the head. All Harry could do was cower and back away.)

HARRY: Hey! Stop!!! Easy, Stan!!! What are you doing???

(Stan relented his assault then shook his fist.)

STAN: Seriously, Harry? Is cocking up *your own* fucking cases really so unfulfilling, you have to cock up Alfie's as well?

HARRY: I tripped!

STAN: I know. While trying to give him someone else's empty cigarette packet!!!

HARRY: Yeah...

(He offered him an apologetic smile.)

HARRY: Bit unfortunate that.

ALFIE: Unfortunate? It was a fucking disaster!

STAN: Yeah! For *both* of you.

ALFIE: *Both* of us? How is it a disaster for *him*? *I'm* the poor fucker who's gonna have to fix things. It's not unfortunate for *him* at all.

(He grimaced.)

ALFIE: Unless it was the final straw and you're about to banish him from heaven for being a cock.

STAN: Alfie?

ALFIE: Sir?

STAN: Stop talking.

ALFIE: Right.

(Stan then glowered at Harry.)

STAN: How many spanners do you have to throw in the works before you solve your case, Harry? Six? Seven? A hundred and twelve? How many?

HARRY: What do you mean?

STAN: That arrow!

HARRY: What about it?

STAN: Guess who it hit!

(Harry looked at him blankly for a moment then winced.)

HARRY: It was Nikki Palmer, wasn't it?

STAN: Close, but no.

HARRY: Oh, god! Not Angie, was it?

STAN: No!

ALFIE: Who was it then? I need to get over there and remedy the situation.

STAN: I'll tell you who it was, Alfie.

(He growled at Harry.)

STAN: Nikki Palmer's mum!

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: And where does she live? I need to...

STAN: Harry can show you when I'm done shouting at him.

ALFIE: Right.

STAN: Harry!

HARRY: Um... yes, boss?

STAN: Do you know what destiny is saying *now*?

HARRY: No, but I fear it's not *good*.

STAN: How very astute of you.

(He shook his fist.)

STAN: Nikki's mum saw you outside her house this morning. She didn't think much of it at the time, of course. In fact, she *would* have forgotten about you entirely by this

evening, had that arrow not struck her. Now she's head over heels in love with you. So much so, she's currently on the phone to her husband, informing him that their marriage is over and she loves someone else.

(He sneered.)

STAN: The divorce is going to be unpleasant. Spiteful even. Both parents are going to use their children as weapons *against* each other. As a result, Nikki's going to lose all the stability in her life, go off the rails and end up being a bitter and miserable young lady. Her bright future destroyed.

(He growled.)

STAN: A bright future that was *what*?

HARRY: Um...

(He winced.)

HARRY: Looking... likely?

STAN: No, you tit! Wrong answer! The answer I was *looking* for is, her bright future was *your* responsibility! Yours!!! I'd also have accepted that her bright future was the entire point of your mission!!!

(He groaned in defeat.)

STAN: Go and help Alfie sort it. See to it that her parents end up in the same place, so Alfie can shoot them and reinstate their love.

HARRY: But I still need to plan how to stop that thug from burning down their house!

STAN: You can do that afterwards! Now go!

(He nodded.)

STAN: And while you're doing that, I'm going to fill out a request form, asking god for permission to beat you into the middle of next fucking week!

(He then vanished once again. Left behind, Harry scratched his head then glanced away.)

HARRY: He is not a happy chappy.

ALFIE: He's not the only one, Harry!

HARRY: Yeah...

(He nodded.)

HARRY: I owe you as whisky or two, don't I?

ALFIE: You owe me an entire fucking distillery!

HARRY: Yeah... that's fair.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Let's get over to the Palmer household then. If we can fix it quickly, we can go to the bar from there and I'll ply you with as much whisky as you need.

ALFIE: No, Harry. Once we're done at the Palmer household, *you* need to go back to planning your mission. Stan literally just told you that.

HARRY: Right...

ALFIE: As for plying me with as much whisky as I need... are you taking the piss?

HARRY: I just wanted to get you a few drinks by way of an apology, that's all.

ALFIE: I can get my own, Harry! They're free!

HARRY: Yeah...

(He blushed.)

HARRY: But the gesture meant *something*, right?

(Alfie just shook his head.)

ALFIE: Just show me where the Palmer family live, will you?

HARRY: Right. That I can do.
(He allowed his wings to sprout then nodded firmly.)
HARRY: Follow me.

A short while later, Harry came in to land outside the Palmer household. Alfie landed just behind him a few seconds later. Not about to waste any further time, Harry pointed to the house then nodded.

HARRY: That's the place.

ALFIE: Right. Let's get in there then.

(Just then, an angry gentleman strode past them. With a face like thunder, he scowled his way along the path then turned and marched down the driveway towards Nikki's front door.)

MIKE: I'm gonna kill her!!! How can she love somebody else???

(Harry and Alfie shared a troubled glance.)

HARRY: That must be Nikki's dad.

ALFIE: And he's on the warpath. We need to get in there before it turns ugly.

HARRY: Agreed!

(With that, they both teleported away. A split second later, they remerged in the Palmer's living room; still invisible to human eyes. The husband, Mike, had yet to reach the living room, but his wife, Cathy was most definitely expecting him. Pacing up and down in front of the window, she was frantically mumbling to affirm herself before his arrival.)

CATHY: A clean break. It's best for both of us. And best for the kids. But mostly me. Wait; that sounds selfish.

(Harry smirked.)

HARRY: You think?

(Alfie shook his head at him.)

ALFIE: The stress and obvious emotional turmoil your cockup has caused amuses you, does it?

HARRY: Um... no.

(He glanced away innocently. His attention was swiftly returned to matters in the room, however, when Mike burst in with a furious expression on his face.)

MIKE: Someone else???

CATHY: I...

MIKE: Someone else???

CATHY: Yes!!!

MIKE: Who???

(Cathy grimaced then scratched her head.)

CATHY: I don't know.

MIKE: What???

CATHY: We've never met!

(She stood tall.)

CATHY: But I know what's in my heart!

MIKE: What???

(He gave her a deeply suspicious glance.)

MIKE: Have you been drinking, woman???

CATHY: Of course not. You know damned well I haven't touched a drop since your mother's funeral!

(She winced.)

CATHY: The last thing your family needed that day was me, dancing on a table and singing about how delighted I was that she was dead. And that's what alcohol can do to a person. So, no; never again.

(She nodded defiantly.)

CATHY: I'm stone cold sober and I mean every word. I love someone else!

MIKE: Someone you've never even met!!! How is that even a thing???

(Having seen more than enough, Harry leant towards Alfie.)

HARRY: Do you stuff, mate.

ALFIE: Wait. This is getting interesting.

MIKE: I can't believe you'd throw away everything we had for a complete stranger.

CATHY: Right? I'm as surprised as you are.

MIKE: What?

CATHY: It was all so sudden. It happened just before I rung *you*, actually. I just knew that I loved him!

(She grimaced.)

CATHY: Which was weird, because I loved *you* when you went out this morning.

MIKE: But now you don't???

CATHY: No! I'm *fond* of you. Appreciative even. But my love lies elsewhere!

(Harry rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Alfie, can you just...

ALFIE: Shush. I'm enjoying this.

MIKE: Cathy, you're talking nonsense. It's not even *possible* to love someone you've never even met, is it?

CATHY: Yes, it is. I *know* it is. Because I *do* love him.

MIKE: No, that's bollocks. If you love someone else, there's no way he's a stranger! You just don't want to admit who it *really* is!!!

(He gasped.)

MIKE: Not my brother, is it?

CATHY: No, you tit. It's a dreamy looking guy who was standing outside the house earlier. I saw him for all of two seconds, but even then I knew... actually, I didn't give him a second thought at the time, but now...

MIKE: Cathy!!!

CATHY: What?

MIKE: What this *really* about???

CATHY: I want a divorce!!!

(She then burst into tears. As she did so, Harry growled at Alfie.)

HARRY: Do your fucking job.

ALFIE: In a minute!

HARRY: No, you cock; they're suffering. Just bloody fix it.

ALFIE: Patience.

HARRY: Fix it, Alfie. Or I swear, I'll follow you around all day, deliberately knocking you over, every time you line up a shot.

(Alfie flinched.)

ALFIE: You wouldn't!

HARRY: I fucking would. You're messing with *my* case right now, so *I'll* mess with *yours*. All of them! I mean it! If you don't fix this before one of them says something they can't take back, Nikki's life could be ruined! And my mission will be fucked beyond salvation.

(Alfie sighed with frustration.)

ALFIE: Fine. Cunt. I knew befriending you was a mistake.

(With that, he stomped into place and raised his bow at the bickering couple.)

MIKE: This is bullshit, Cathy! How can you fall out of love with someone that fast???

CATHY: I don't know, I just...

(Just then, Alfie unleashed an arrow through the pair of them. In an instant, Cathy loved her husband with all her heart again; just as she had that very morning. As a result, she ended up stumbling on her words.)

CATHY: I just, I just...

(Her eyes then bulged in horror at the sight before her. The man she loved more than anything else in the world, was standing right in front of her; his heart quite visibly broken because of *her* cruel words. Desperate to fix the mess she'd caused, she gasped then stepped forwards.)

CATHY: I lied!

MIKE: What???

CATHY: I love *you*!!!

MIKE: Then why say you didn't???

CATHY: Because...

(Unable to give him an honest answer on the grounds that she had no idea what had happened, Cathy could only grimace and try to offer up a comforting lie.)

CATHY: Um...

(She blushed.)

CATHY: April fool?

MIKE: It's May!!!

CATHY: Right...

(She flinched.)

CATHY: Yeah, but if I'd said it in April, you'd have *known* it was an April fool.

MIKE: Don't. That's the oldest excuse in the book. Just tell me the truth.

CATHY: Shit.

(She sighed.)

CATHY: Fine. The truth is... I don't *know* what happened.

MIKE: Yes, you do! *Tell* me!

(Quick to realise that the truth would be virtually impossible for him to believe, Cathy sighed then offered him a more believable lie instead.)

CATHY: Fine. It's just that... I've missed you.

MIKE: What?

CATHY: You've been working really long hours and haven't had any time for me. I know it's not your fault, but still... I felt neglected. Because I love you and I wanted your attention.

(She then winced with embarrassment. She was well aware that what she'd said was ridiculous, but if it worked, she was happy to stand by it.)

CATHY: Sorry.

(Mike gave a stifled laugh.)

MIKE: Don't be sorry. You're right. I haven't made enough time for you lately. I'm the one who should be sorry. I love you, babe.

CATHY: I love you too, with all my heart.

(Alfie exhaled.)

ALFIE: Aw.

HARRY: Cock.

(He then flinched at the sight of Cathy and Mike's faces slamming into one another as they embarked on what could only be referred to as an extremely horny kiss.)

HARRY: Bloody hell!

MIKE: I have to have you right now!

CATHY: And I have to let you!!!

(Clothes then shot across the room as they proceeded to ravage one another.)

HARRY: I think it's fair to say, that's our cue to leave.

ALFIE: I beg to differ.

HARRY: Excuse me?

ALFIE: Now it's *really* getting interesting!

HARRY: Mate! No. We should definitely go away and let them enjoy their intimacy alone. And besides, we've got worked to do *elsewhere*.

ALFIE: No, *you*'ve got work elsewhere. This *is* my work!

HARRY: Voyeurism?

ALFIE: Love!

HARRY: That's not love. That unadulterated, carnal lust.

ALFIE: *Born* out of love.

HARRY: If you say so. Come on, let's get out of here.

ALFIE: *You* get out of here! I'm gonna stay and enjoy the fruits of my labour.

HARRY: Fine.

(He about turned then paused.)

HARRY: Not gonna bash one out, are you?

ALFIE: Stopping asking me that! And no! Don't be ridiculous!

HARRY: Good.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Look, are you coming or not?

ALFIE: No.

(He sighed.)

ALFIE: Just leave me alone. I'm not hurting anyone, am I? They can't see me *or* hear me! They have no idea I'm even here.

HARRY: Well...

(Just then, the sounds of Mike and Cathy squealing and gasping rose to deeply uncomfortably levels. Cathy was flat on her back on the sofa and Mike was going to town on her like a jackhammer.)

HARRY: Blimey! *They* didn't hang around, did they?

ALFIE: And it was awesome. They cut straight to the good bit!

HARRY: Wow. You're such a pervert.

ALFIE: No, I'm not. I told you, I'm just making the most of this opportunity to witness the results of my hard work.

HARRY: So you're not hanging around because you're aroused then?

ALFIE: Of course not.

HARRY: Then how come you're drooling?

(Alfie wiped his mouth.)

ALFIE: I'm not.

HARRY: And is that a bulge...

ALFIE: Just go if you're going!

HARRY: Fine. You coming?

ALFIE: No!

HARRY: Fair enough.

(He smiled then walked away.)

HARRY: Just remember; Stan watches everything we do!

(Alfie gasped.)

ALFIE: Wait for me.

(He then strode to Harry's side.)

ALFIE: That's enough research for one day, I think.

HARRY: Right...

(He smirked.)

HARRY: Who do you think you're kidding?

(The two of them then ghosted through the wall, into the front garden. Once there, they stopped to face one another.)

HARRY: Right then. Thanks for resolving that for me.

ALFIE: I resolved it for *me*.

HARRY: Either way. Thanks.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Now I'd better get off and figure out how to stop this house from being burnt down tonight.

ALFIE: Yes, you had. Any ideas on that score, by the way?

HARRY: Actually, I have *the seed* of an idea in mind, but I'm not *entirely* sure how to execute it. The details are *still* a bit fuzzy. I may need some help with that.

ALFIE: Well, you know where to find me...

HARRY: Cheers, mate. I might take you up on that.

ALFIE: Let me finish! You know where to find me, so I'm telling you in advance not to go there if you need help. Because you won't get it.

HARRY: Mate...

ALFIE: I'm not your mate!

(She seethed.)

ALFIE: In the last half an hour, you've got me in the shit with Stan, made a bollocks of my shot then nagged me into leaving a perfectly entertaining sex show... why do you hate me, Harry? Why?

HARRY: Mate, the thing with Stan was all down to bad luck.

ALFIE: No. It was all down to the fact that *you* didn't read your case file in the first place.

(He furrowed his brow.)

ALFIE: You simpleminded fuckwit!

HARRY: Steady on, Alfie, it was a mistake, okay? A rookie mistake. As you well know, I'm new to all this angel malarkey.

ALFIE: Nobody's *that* new.

HARRY: I...

ALFIE: Read the case file in future! I can't believe you've even needed telling! It's so fucking obvious, an inanimate object could have worked it out.

(She shook his head.)

ALFIE: I'm going. Good luck with your mission. For Nikki's sake. Not yours.

(He then teleported away. Left behind, Harry sucked his teeth.)

HARRY: He is *not* a happy bunny.

(He then shrugged it off and walked away.)

HARRY: Oh, well, back to the bench. If I can pull off my plan, Stan will give a sainthood, I reckon.

(He nodded to himself.)

HARRY: It's daring and it's devious, but by golly it's brilliant.

That afternoon, in the living room of number Eighty-Six, Chesney Gardens, the local police chief was relaxing with a cup of coffee. Enjoying some quiet time before his shift at the police station that evening, he was watching television in his underpants and vest. Little did he know, however, Harry was sitting in the armchair at his side. Watching him sip on his coffee, he nodded to himself then pulled a small container from his pocket. His seed of an idea had grown into a plan which he was now in the throes of executing.

HARRY: Right, let's get you to take a nice long nap, shall we, Chief?

(He then tipped the container and poured a sugar-like sedative onto his palm before climbing to his feet. With focus etched on his face, he then crept towards the police chief.)

HARRY: Come on, matey. Put the cup down, so I can add a little spice to it.

(He watched as the chief took a sip then started to lower his cup towards the coffee table.)

HARRY: Okay, we're in business.

(Halfway through putting it down, however, he sat back again and took another sip.)

HARRY: And we're out of business again almost immediately.

(He chuckled to himself.)

HARRY: I've seen vegan cafes stay in business longer than that.

(He then puffed out to refocus himself.)

HARRY: Okay. Now, come on, copper. Put the cup down for me, there's a good lad.

(The chief started to do just that, but once again, returned the cup to his lips almost immediately. Harry growled.)

HARRY: Oh, for fuck's sake, just let me spike your fucking coffee!

(He rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Indecisive cunt.

(He then paused for thought.)

HARRY: Wait. Maybe that's how he drinks his coffee. Maybe he *never* puts it down.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: Hmm... time for plan B then.

(With that, he teleported outside and rung the doorbell, allowing himself a devious smirk as he did so.)

HARRY: There's a good copper. Now put the cup down and come to the door.

(Having allowed himself a devious chuckle, he then teleported back inside. Upon arriving, however, he stared down at the coffee table then sighed in defeat. The chief was heading for the front door, but his coffee was nowhere to be seen.)

HARRY: What the fuck? He took it with him! Why? Is the cup glued to his hand or something? Who does that???

(He groaned despondently, when suddenly an idea sprung into his mind and he stood to attention.)

HARRY: A-ha! Where there's confusion, there's opportunity!

(He then teleported to the door where the chief was glanced up and down the street with a deeply furrowed brow.)

CHIEF: What the hell? Someone dared to prank *me*??? I'm the chief of police, damn it!

(He then glanced up and down the road again, scowling deeply in the hope he could spot the culprit. As he did so, Harry grinned with glee then sprinkled the sugary substance into his coffee.)

HARRY: Perfect.

CHIEF: Think that's clever do you???

(Harry's hair stood on end.)

HARRY: What?

(The chief glanced up and down the street again.)

CHIEF: Well, you won't think you're so clever when *I* catch you!!!

HARRY: Oh, you were talking to... gotcha. Of course you were. *You* can't even see me.

(The chief growled then went back into his house. Harry followed him with a spring in his step.)

HARRY: That's it, chief. You put your feet up and finish your coffee. You earned it, after all.

(He then watched on with empty eyes as the chief paced into the kitchen, poured his coffee down the sink then headed for the door again.)

CHIEF: I'd better start getting ready for work, I suppose.

(With that, he headed to the stairs then proceeded to bound up them two at the time.

Standing at the foot of the stairs, Harry could only sigh dejectedly.)

HARRY: Not making this easy for me, are you?

(He then trudged up the stairs after him. Moments later, he paced into the chief's bedroom then shrieked and averted his gaze. The chief had dispensed with his underwear and was posing in front of a full length mirror; revelling in his own reflection.)

CHIEF: Yes. That's the stuff. Despite the ravages of time, I *still* have the fine physique I had when I was twenty; more than half a lifetime ago. Maybe *that's* why they made me chief. As a physical specimen, I'm a practically a god. Who else would the men want to lead them?

(He patted his chest proudly.)

CHIEF: It could *only* be me. I'm aesthetically immaculate, my police skills are second to none and let's be honest, who can compete with *this*!

(He then stood straight-on to the mirror and started to flip his penis up and down with his hand.)

CHIEF: I've got more inches than the rest of the force combined.

(He then started to chuckle.)

CHIEF: What a ridiculous exaggeration.

(He nodded.)

CHIEF: But still, it *is* a thing of beauty.

(He glanced up at the ceiling.)

CHIEF: Maybe I should treat it to a five knuckle shuffle before I go.

(Harry was mortified.)

HARRY: No!!! Don't you fucking dare!!!

CHIEF: I've definitely got time for one.

HARRY: No!!!

CHIEF: Fuck it. Why not?

(He then headed for his bedside cabinet and pulled out a magazine.)

CHIEF: This one ought to do it. I do like the brunette on page sixteen.

(Harry whimpered.)

HARRY: This plan is *not* going to plan, and that's not what I planned. I need a *new* plan. I also need to stop saying plan.

(He winced as the chief lay on the bed and started to flick through his magazine.)

HARRY: Quick!!! A plan! I need a plan!!! Stop saying plan! But I really *need* a new... strategy.

CHIEF: A-ha! There she is. Look at the jugs on that!!!

HARRY: Aw, crap.

(He stood there dithering when all of a sudden, an opportunity arose. As he stared lustfully at the page in his magazine, the chief allowed his mouth to fall open and he licked his lips.)

HARRY: Chance!!!

(At once, Harry zoomed across the room then delved into his pocket for his container. Having poured some of the sedative onto his palm, he then leant forwards to deliver it. As he did so, however, the chief sucked in his lips and closed his eyes.)

HARRY: Why???

(Harry flinched then glanced down the bed. At once, he turned his head away.)

HARRY: Right... you've started.

(He shuddered.)

HARRY: Aw, crap. *He's* bashing one out and *I'm* stuck here until he opens his...

CHIEF: What I'd give for five minutes in the sack with...

(The chief then proceeded to cough. Halfway through his sentence, he'd felt a sensation reminiscent to someone ramming a pile of sugar down his throat. As he sat there spluttering, Harry puffed out then stood tall.)

HARRY: People who talk dirty to *themselves* are fucking weird. But thanks for being that guy, chief.

(He then nodded with satisfaction. As soon as the chief has started to speak, he'd swung his hand at the chief's face and slammed the sedative down his throat. He hadn't hesitated, even for a moment.)

HARRY: That was good work. I've spared myself a lot of misery there.

(As his coughing fit came to a halt, the chief sat up slightly and grimaced.)

CHIEF: What was that? And why do I feel weird all of a sudden?

(He then tipped his head back and glanced up at the ceiling. In that moment, his speech became slurred and his eyes started to half close.)

CHIEF: Well, that's odd. Why is my lampshade a camel? And why is it dancing?

(He then flopped onto the bed and closed his eyes.)

CHIEF: There'd better not be a shark in my wardrobe.

(He then proceeded to snore. Watching on, Harry couldn't help but giggle.)

HARRY: Don't worry, chief. Ikea stopped giving *them* away with every purchase quite some time ago. The lawsuits were getting ridiculous.

(He then nodded sternly.)

HARRY: Okay, that's step one. Now for step two; the fun part.

(With that, he closed his eyes then transformed himself into the spitting image of the police chief. Right down to his uniform and identity tag, he was very much an effigy of the man himself.)

HARRY: Perfect.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Now I just need to get into character. Looking like him is *good*, but I need to *become* him.

(With that, he flexed his arms then ruffled his neck. Having prepared himself, he then proceeded to march up and down the room. His plan was to capture the police chief's essence; to perfect his mannerisms and quirks. Alas, his sense of humour very quickly got the better of him. Unable to resist, he ended up pacing to and fro, doing a corny impersonation of a police officer from dramas about Victorian London.)

HARRY: Hello, hello, hello. What's all this then? Cor blimey, governor. I was proceeding in an orderly manner down the Waltham Road when I happened across a suspicious looking fellow wearing a balaclava and carrying a bag marked "swag".

(He then furrowed his brow and his voice returned to normal.)

HARRY: For fuck sake, Harry. This isn't the time for pissing about, mate.

(He then puffed out and tried again. Hoping to capture the chief's mannerisms perfectly, he strode back and forth confidently, before pacing up to the mirror and offering it a respectful nod.)

HARRY: Good evening, gentlemen. I'm...

(His shoulders slumped.)

HARRY: Apparently, I don't know my own name.

(He then scrutinised his identity tag closely.)

HARRY: Right. Try again.

(He trod the spot for a moment in order to ready himself, then he began.)

HARRY: Good evening, gentlemen. I'm Chief Constable Wade. It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Mistakes were made, but everyone in the force is determined to take steps to ensure it never happens again.

(He then growled under his breath.)

HARRY: At least that's what you said after I got run over and killed by a police car.

(He shook his head.)

HARRY: I can't believe nobody got sacked for that.

(He then shrugged it off.)

HARRY: Still... what's done is done. It's no good griping about.
(He then stood tall and nodded.)
HARRY: I've got work to do!

One hour later, now fully visible to human eyes, Harry strode into the local police station with a furrow on his brow. He was a man on a mission and he very much looked like one. To that end, he stepped up to the staff only doors then thudded straight into them.

HARRY: What the fuck?

(Snarling, he then proceeded to rattle the door.)

HARRY: It's locked!

(He growled then raised his voice.)

HARRY: Who's in charge here???

(A nervous female voice then rose up from behind the counter.)

FEMALE OFFICER: Um... you are, sir?

HARRY: What?

(He flinched.)

HARRY: Oh, yeah! I mean, that's right. I'm in charge, now let me in!

FEMALE OFFICER: Use the code, sir.

HARRY: *You* use the code!!!

FEMALE OFFICER: What? Oh. Right. Sorry, sir.

(She then hurried from behind the counter and typed the code into the door panel.)

FEMALE OFFICER: Sorry, sir. I'm new to reception. I didn't realise it was my job to let you in.

HARRY: Well... now you know. I'm extremely up myself and consider myself too good to open my own doors.

FEMALE OFFICER: Very well, sir. It's open now.

HARRY: Good.

(He then glanced away innocently.)

HARRY: There are no *other* coded doors, are there?

FEMALE OFFICER: No, sir.

HARRY: Correct.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: I was testing you. Good work, sergeant.

FEMALE OFFICER: I'm merely a constable, sir.

HARRY: Not for long, if you keep up the good work.

FEMALE OFFICER: Oh. Thank you.

HARRY: Excellent. I shall now proceed in an orderly manner, into the police station.

(He then paced through the door.)

HARRY: And don't feel bad about having to be told to open the door. The fact is a mistake was made, but as a policewoman, I'm sure you'll take steps to ensure it doesn't happen again.

(He then passed through the door, leaving the constable blinking in bewilderment. Once he was safely on the other side, he nodded then mumbled under his breath.)

HARRY: Steps were taken to ensure it won't happen again? Of course it won't. I'm already dead. You can't kill me twice. Cunts.

(He then shook his head.)

HARRY: Stop it, Harry. You can't let your disdain for the police ruin the mission. Just focus. You're doing this for Nikki Palmer.

(With that, he put his head down and strode down the corridor.)

HARRY: Now I have to find my office. Or more importantly, my secretary. She'll know what to do.

(In that very moment, a female police officer strode up to his side.)

ALICE: Afternoon, sir.

HARRY: Hello... um... you.

ALICE: We've got a lot on today, so perhaps we should head straight to your office.

HARRY: First things first... you.

ALICE: You?

HARRY: Yes.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: I need to speak to my secretary, as soon as possible.

ALICE: You haven't got a secretary, sir.

HARRY: In that case I won't.

(He winced.)

HARRY: I mean... why not?

ALICE: Because you have an assistant.

HARRY: And what's *his* name?

(Alice furrowed her brow.)

ALICE: It's a she. Her name's Alice Duvall.

HARRY: And where can I find this Alice Duvall?

(Alice blinked at him nervously.)

ALICE: Are you okay, sir?

HARRY: Yes. Why?

ALICE: *I'm* Alice Duvall.

HARRY: Correct.

(Realising how ridiculous he sounded, he grimaced with embarrassment then offered her a smile.)

HARRY: Forgive me. I'm in a jovial mood. I'm only playing around.

ALICE: I see.

(She smiled.)

ALICE: It's a side of you I've never seen before, but I have to say I like it.

HARRY: Excellent. But that's enough pussyfooting around; there's work to be done.

(He nodded forcefully.)

HARRY: Alice!

ALICE: Sir?

HARRY: Round up the men!

ALICE: Which men?

HARRY: Policemen.

ALICE: Yeah, but which ones.

HARRY: The ones who do police work.

ALICE: They all...

HARRY: I've had a tip about a gang attacking a residential household later. I need a squad to come with me and give them a sound thrashing.
ALICE: You mean deter them, surely.
HARRY: Of course. You know the drill.
ALICE: In that case, you need to speak to Sergeant Lewis. I'll send him to your office.
HARRY: Excellent.
(He nodded.)
HARRY: Lead me there and you can call him once we arrive.
ALICE: Yes, sir.
(She then paced away. Drawing a sigh of relief, Harry paced after her.)
HARRY: So far, so good.

A short while later, Harry found himself sitting in the police chief's chair, impatiently awaiting the arrival of Sergeant Lewis. Tapping his fingers together, he growled then mumbled under his breath.
HARRY: Hurry up, you stupid sergeant.
(He then shook his head.)
HARRY: Idiots.
(Starting to get bored, he puffed out then proceeded to drum on the desk. Within ten seconds, however, he was bored of that too. He then decided to occupy himself by spinning round and round on the chief's chair. Unfortunately for him, the sergeant he'd been waiting for then strode through the door without knocking.)
SERGEANT: You wanted to see me, sir?
(More than a little startled, Harry shrieked, his arms flew up in the air then he tumbled off the chair. Feeling quite the fool, he righted himself, fixed his chair then sat down.)
HARRY: I did, yes. Please. Take a seat.
(Sergeant Lewis nodded then sat down opposite his desk.)
HARRY: Right. The thing is, captain...
SERGEANT: Sergeant, sir. We don't *have* police captains in this country.
HARRY: Correct.
(He nodded.)
HARRY: The thing is, sergeant, I've been tipped off that a gang plans to attack a residential household this evening with a view to burning it down and killing an innocent family.
SERGEANT: Good lord.
(He bit his lip.)
SERGEANT: And how reliable is this tip?
HARRY: Infallible.
SERGEANT: And you're sure, are you? If so, *how* sure?
HARRY: Like god told me himself.
SERGEANT: I see. And who gave you this tip?
HARRY: A confidential informant.
SERGEANT: Yours? Or...
HARRY: Oh, it goes way above me, my friend. *Way* above!
SERGEANT: Wow. Like, government level?

HARRY: You don't need to know!

SERGEANT: Right. Yes. Sorry, sir.

(He nodded.)

SERGEANT: And which address are they targeting?

HARRY: Eighty-six, Chesney Gardens.

(The sergeant gasped.)

SERGEANT: That's *your* house!

HARRY: What?

SERGEANT: That's your house, sir.

HARRY: Oh. I mean, correct.

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: I misspoke. It was number Seventeen, Cortina Drive.

SERGEANT: Okay. And why is it being targeted?

HARRY: Why do you need to know that?

SERGEANT: For the report, sir. You know that.

HARRY: I do, yes. Correct again.

(He sat up and nodded.)

HARRY: The gang leader's sister tried to bully a girl at school, but that girl was saved by a handsome and debonair hero. Now the gang leader wants to burn the girl's house down to take revenge on the hero.

SERGEANT: Really?

(He grimaced.)

SERGEANT: That makes no sense.

HARRY: Yes, it does, you liar!

SERGEANT: But it doesn't! Surely he'd seek revenge on the so-called handsome hero.

HARRY: Less of the *so-called*, you.

(He sat forwards.)

HARRY: The gang leader *thinks* the hero is the girl's boyfriend. Mistakenly so, but nevertheless. He plans to punish the girl as a message to her boyfriend.

SERGEANT: Right. Now it makes sense.

HARRY: Excellent. I knew you'd get there eventually.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: We need to protect the family at all costs, captain.

SERGEANT: Sergeant.

HARRY: Whatever your name is!

SERGEANT: Name?

HARRY: Look. Stop shilly-shallying, will you? We need to get this arranged as soon as possible! How many men can you take?

SERGEANT: As many as *you* allocate me, sir.

HARRY: Take all of them.

SERGEANT: All of them?

HARRY: Every last one.

SERGEANT: Even those on other important duties?

HARRY: *Especially* those on other important duties!

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: I mean, yes.

SERGEANT: But, sir, I don't understand.

HARRY: Why? What's wrong? Did I give the order in French or something?

SERGEANT: No, sir. It's just that those other important duties were all projects of your own creation; and up until now you've worked hard to keep those officers *assigned* to those tasks.

HARRY: Yes, but they can take the night off from doing those things. Tonight the police have one job. Protect the house in Chesney Gardens.

SERGEANT: Cortina Drive.

HARRY: Correct. See? You *were* paying attention.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Now round up the men then let me know when you're done.

SERGEANT: They're all just a single radio message away, sir.

HARRY: Excellent. Then you're almost done.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: I'll get going too. I'll meet you in the car park.

SERGEANT: What? You're coming too, sir?

HARRY: Absolutely. Only a coward would send his men into battle and refuse to accompany them.

SERGEANT: Right...

(He grimaced.)

SERGEANT: So... my report... who shall I put down as the leader of this task, sir?

HARRY: That would be me. Chief Inspector Walsh.

(The sergeant blinked at him in bewilderment. After a brief, nervous pause, he then looked Harry in the eyes and grimaced uneasily.)

SERGEANT: Are you okay, sir?

HARRY: Yes. Why?

SERGEANT: It's just that... you really don't seem yourself today, sir.

HARRY: Oh? And what makes you say that?

SERGEANT: Well, for one, you're name's Chief Constable Wade.

HARRY: That's right. It is. Now write it down then get moving. Assembled all the men and send them to Chesney... Cortina Drive forthwith.

(The sergeant sighed.)

SERGEANT: Yes, sir.

(He glanced to him enquiringly.)

SERGEANT: Full riot gear?

HARRY: What?

SERGEANT: Riot gear. You said a gang is coming...

HARRY: Riot gear, batons, tasers, whatever you need. Just don't kill anyone. As a man who believes in the sanctity of life, I refuse to authorise lethal force.

SERGEANT: You don't have that power anyway, sir.

HARRY: And that's *why* I refuse to authorise it.

(He climbed from his seat then nodded sternly.)

HARRY: Let's get this done right and with the minimum of fuss, Sergeant. I don't particularly *enjoy* telling the media that mistakes were made but we're taking steps to ensure it doesn't happen again.

(He snarled then mumbled under his breath.)

HARRY: Wankers.

(He then flinched, before glancing at the sergeant.)

HARRY: Sorry, just mumbling to myself. An incident in the past. One I *really* need to get over. But the point is, no more mistakes. And don't run over any innocent bystanders on the way.

SERGEANT: I don't plan to.

HARRY: Excellent.

(He grumbled under his breath.)

HARRY: Makes a change.

(He then shook it off and headed for the door.)

HARRY: I'll be in the car park, remember. Now hurry.

(He snarled.)

HARRY: That gang need taking down a peg or two.

(He then paced out of the room.)

HARRY: Perfect. He didn't suspect a thing.

(He then headed down to the car park. The sergeant, however, remained in his office, scratching his head in bewilderment. Starting to feel more than a little concerned, he then reached for the phone and dialled an internal number. An impatient man at the best of times, he then sat there grumbling under his breath.)

SERGEANT: Answer it, answer it, answer it...

(A woman's voice then rose up from the receiver.)

CAROL: Doctor Woodley speaking.

SERGEANT: Carol?

CAROL: Oh, hello, sergeant.

(She then spoke in a sympathetic tone.)

CAROL: Is this about your on-going erectile issues?

SERGEANT: No! And never speak of it again!

(He ruffled his neck.)

SERGEANT: Until my appointment next week.

(He then sat up.)

SERGEANT: I'm calling because I think the chief constable has either got a head injury or he's lost his marbles.

CAROL: Oh, my. What makes you think that?

SERGEANT: He forgot his own name.

CAROL: I see. It's not a good sign, but it's not exactly concrete evidence of a head injury either.

SERGEANT: No? He's also commissioned a task that requires us to fight a street gang and he wants to come with us.

CAROL: But he's a quivering coward!

SERGEANT: Exactly.

CAROL: I'll request an urgent medical exam right away.

SERGEANT: If you would.

CAROL: Of course.

SERGEANT: Thank you, Carol. See you next week.

CAROL: Bye now.

(He then ended the call.)

SERGEANT: I'd better keep a close eye on him this evening.
(He then headed for the door.)

Two hours later, Harry found himself sitting in a police van on the way to Nikki's house in Cortina Drive. Looking forward to helping the police fight off Gary's gang, he was staring straight ahead, smiling gleefully at his own thoughts. In his fantasy, the gang would be defeated and Gary would lose his place as the leader. Angie would be so disappointed in him, she'd lose all respect for him and stop following his evil ways. This would lead her to apologising to Nikki and the two of them becoming friends. He'd then return to Stan and be showered with Kudos on a job well done. Thinking it over, he started to giggle excitedly. This didn't sit well with the ten officers in the police van with him. Every single one was staring in his direction with their jaws on the floor. Their normally stuffy chief was definitely not himself. That fact was very much hammered home when he stopped laughing to himself, a few seconds later and glanced down the van.

HARRY: Don't think twice about using your weapons tonight, boys. Just get stuck in. That bunch of wankers need a damn good thrashing.

(He then started to pound his fist whilst smirking with fiendish delight.)

HARRY: This job has been a thorn in my side, but tonight, with this plan, my hell will be over!

(The female police officer in the seat next to him, gave him a nervous glance.)

ERICA: Hell, sir?

(Harry flinched then glanced at her closely.)

HARRY: You're a woman!

ERICA: I realise that, sir. The midwife informed my parents of that fact when I was born and they kindly passed the news on to me.

HARRY: Right. Sarcasm. I love it.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: And you're okay with taking part in a beating, are you?

ERICA: A beating?

HARRY: Uh-huh.

ERICA: You mean... riot control, right?

HARRY: Sure. If you like.

ERICA: I'm trained for it, yes. Being a woman doesn't make me incapable, you know?

HARRY: Oh, I know. Women are capable of terrible, terrible things.

ERICA: Excuse me?

HARRY: I'm just saying, this world is a lot more equal than people realise. Women can be just as violent and horrible as blokes. I was just surprised the police *let* you come.

You know, being a bunch of backward thinking Neanderthals, and all that.

ERICA: I wouldn't have said the police were like that at all!

HARRY: No? Wait until you get run over and killed by one.

ERICA: What?

HARRY: Just saying. They might promote equality on the *outside*, but I think we all know it's an old-school, boys club still.

ERICA: Well... I don't know about that.

HARRY: I do. They're cunts. But then again, I might be letting my personal biases cloud my judgment. Ignore me. You'll do great, officer.

ERICA: Thank you, sir.

HARRY: Taser some cunts for *me*!

ERICA: Um...

HARRY: And I'll batter some with my baton for *you*.

(Erica gulped.)

ERICA: Um... sir... you *are* familiar with the protocols for this kind of job, aren't you?

HARRY: What?

(He glanced away innocently.)

HARRY: Of course I am. They don't just make anybody the chief, you know?

ERICA: Right. Well, that's a relief. Only, for a minute it sounded like you were planning to go there and batter them all. That'd be police brutality.

(Harry furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: So is running over an innocent bystander, but that never stopped you.

ERICA: Sorry?

HARRY: Nothing. Just thinking out loud.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Listen. Amy, is it?

ERICA: I didn't tell you my name.

HARRY: Right.

ERICA: It's Constable Mortimer.

(Harry stared right through her.)

ERICA: Erica!

HARRY: Ah! That's better.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Listen, Erica, we're going up against a gang.

ERICA: I know, sir.

HARRY: There's going to be violence.

ERICA: And our job is to stop it.

HARRY: Yeah, but our job *isn't* to stand there and take a beating.

ERICA: Oh, I know, it's just...

HARRY: They're going to attack us. *That's* a given. So we need to be ready to fight back and win.

ERICA: And by win, you mean?

HARRY: If anyone is going to get hurt it should be them. That's what I mean. Why do you think we've got eight minibuses?

ERICA: I did wonder.

HARRY: So we can out number them. Thus, giving *us* the upper hand. And hopefully teach them a valuable lesson.

ERICA: And what lesson is that?

HARRY: If you're gonna be a twat, the police and gonna give you a whooping. It's the only language these cunts understand.

(Erica shuddered.)

ERICA: You're making me nervous, sir.

HARRY: Don't be. What I'm saying is perfectly logical. By outnumbering them, we're minimising the chance of any of *us* getting injured. And that's important because, the violent thugs we'll be fighting *are* going to try to injure us.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Remember that. We're the good guys; not the *stupid* guys. Good guys keep the streets safe by teaching bad guys a lesson. Stupid guys stand there like lemons while thugs throw bricks and bottles at them.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Fuck that. We're gonna give them a beating they'll never forget and hopefully that'll set them on the straight and narrow. Think of it as working towards the greater good.

ERICA: Right... well... that makes sense... I guess. I'm just worried about reprimands further down the line.

HARRY: Don't be. You're just following your superior's orders.

ERICA: Yeah... that excuse didn't work for the Nazi's and I'm pretty sure...

HARRY: We're not Nazis, Amy!

ERICA: Erica!

HARRY: Correct.

(He nodded again.)

HARRY: But my point stands. We're not Nazi's!

(He raised a knowing eyebrow.)

HARRY: We're pigs.

(Erica looked at him in astonishment for a moment then cracked a smile.)

ERICA: You're teasing me, aren't you?

HARRY: What?

ERICA: Pranking me.

HARRY: Um...

ERICA: It's my birthday; of course you are. I should have known *somebody* was going to do it today.

HARRY: Erica...

ERICA: So what's the plan, really? To secure the area around the house then prevent the gang from approaching, I assume.

HARRY: Well...

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: *You* can if you like.

(His brow then furrowed deeply.)

HARRY: *I'm* going to batter the fuckers into the middle of next week.

A short while later, as the van continued on through the streets of Amberston, the police officer in the driver's seat called over his shoulder.

OFFICER: We're approaching Cortina Drive, sir!

HARRY: Sweet!

(He glanced out of the window urgently.)

HARRY: Ah. Cool. It's quiet.

OFFICER: For now, sir, but I can see a gathering of about fifty youths at the *far end* of the street.

HARRY: That'll be our quarry!

OFFICER: Quarry?

HARRY: The cunts we've come to batter.

OFFICER: You mean *keep at bay*, surely.

HARRY: Don't you start. I've heard enough of that cautious bollocks from Amy here.

ERICA: Erica!

HARRY: Yeah!

(He gave her a baffled glance.)

HARRY: Why do I keep thinking you're name's Amy?

ERICA: I don't know, sir.

HARRY: Right.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Anyway, no harm done.

ERICA: Right...

(Just then, the officer called out from the driver's seat again.)

DRIVER: I'm just pulling over now, sir.

HARRY: Good lad!

(He then glowered down the minibus.)

HARRY: Right, coppers, it's your time to shine. Do me proud, boys!

(Another female officer glowered at him.)

KERRY: We're not *all* boys!

HARRY: Right. Good point.

(He rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Do me proud, people!

(He furrowed his brow at Kerry.)

HARRY: Happy?

KERRY: Yes, sir.

HARRY: Excellent. Then crime is no more. Your pedantic whinge has saved the town. Huzzah!

KERRY: Mean!

HARRY: That's Captain Mean to you!

ERICA: You're a chief, not a captain. There *are* no captains.

HARRY: Nobody cares!

(Just then, the minibus came to a halt and the driver glanced over his shoulder.)

OFFICER: Okay! We're here! What's the plan, sir? Secure the area around the house then...

(Like the rest of the officers in the van, he then leant back and gasped in astonishment. As soon he'd realised the van had stopped, Harry had thrown the backdoor open and charged. Like a man possessed he was now rampaging towards the assembled gang with his baton aloft; roaring like a berserker on the warpath.)

OFFICER: What the fuck is he doing???

ERICA: He's a loony!!!

OFFICER: Hmm...

(He sighed.)

OFFICER: Yes, but he's *our* loony, unfortunately, so...

(He nodded.)

OFFICER: Let's go!!!

(In that moment, the minibus emptied. Desperate to catch up to their leader, every single officer sprinted after him with everything he or she could muster. The same applied to the officers from all the *other* minibuses. At the head of the throng of the officers, the sergeant was bounding forth, grimacing desperately. He had no idea that the chief was in fact an angel, therefore impervious to harm from humans. He thought he was just an ordinary man in the midst of a breakdown, and fully expected him to get himself killed. He also feared that the murder may well be justified. From the way he was snarling forth, it was clear to one and all that, not only was he going to *start* the violence, he was going to start it by delivering blows to the head, which could well be fatal. Harry, of course, had no desire to kill them whatsoever. As an angel, he *couldn't* kill them even if he wanted to. Oblivious to this fact, however, the chasing officers were right to be fearful.)

SERGEANT: I'm not gonna lie, chaps. This is bad; this is *very* bad!!!

(He then watched on in horror as the gang began their counter charge. Having spotted the police running towards them, they hadn't even hesitated. Following Gary's instructions, they'd put their heads down and bounded towards them, wielding knives, chains and bats.)

SERGEANT: He's gonna be dead before we even reach halfway!!!

(Much to his astonishment, however, as soon as the man he thought was his chief, reached the oncoming thugs, he set about battering his way through them like a veteran swordsman from the days of the samurai. The thugs would converge on him, then fly off again as if they'd exploded away from him.)

SERGEANT: What the hell am I seeing right now? Since when was he that strong???

ERICA: I don't know.

(In this moment, Harry was having the time of his life. These young hooligans were terrible human beings. He hated terrible human beings. Rendering them unconscious therefore, was bringing him much in the way of joy.)

HARRY: Whack on the head for you. A punch in the face for you. Low blow! Sorry, mate, but you looked like you could *use* a swift kick in the nuts, and I'm an obliging fella if nothing else.

(He then glanced down at where a thug had just plunged a machete into his stomach.)

THUG: Gotcha!

HARRY: No, mate. You just *wish* you had.

(He then yanked the machete out of himself and snapped it over his knee.)

THUG: What the fuck???

HARRY: I'm a tough bugger.

(He then head-butted him to render him unconscious. Another facet of an angel's arsenal was that they were inordinately strong. They could muster *unlimited* strength if their mission so demanded it. Before now, they'd been known to shove buses to one side and pull up trees; one even managed to hold back an avalanche. This gang of pathetic, snarling delinquents didn't have a hope in hell of defeating him. The police, of course, we're not privileged to this information. Most of them thought he was simply a fantastic fighter and he'd hidden that fact from his subordinates. The sergeant, however, feared

his strength was a side effect of his breakdown. As such, when the police finally caught up and started tasing and arresting the gang members that Harry hadn't got round to yet, the sergeant aimed his taser squarely at Harry.)

SERGEANT: Forgive me, chief. It's for your own good.

(With that, he fired his taser and unleashed a high level of voltage into Harry's body. He then stood there dumbfounded as Harry pulled the taser out of his side and scowled at him.)

HARRY: Who's side are you on???

SERGEANT: How did you...

HARRY: Bloody shooting *me*!!! Pay attention, you blind bastard!

SERGEANT: But...

(He flinched.)

SERGEANT: How the hell did you do that? That was enough volts to bring down a horse!

HARRY: *You're* a horse!

SERGEANT: What?

HARRY: Cunt. *I'm* not the enemy...

(He then coshed Gary over the head and knocked him out.)

HARRY: He's the enemy!

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: Arrest him good and proper, Sergeant! This is the cunt who started it.

SERGEANT: Um... sir?

HARRY: What?

SERGEANT: With all due respect, sir... *you're* the one who started it.

HARRY: No, mate. I *ended* it.

(He then glanced around at where the gang members were either groaning in agony on the ground or out cold.)

HARRY: And now, my work here is done. The Palmer household has been saved!

(He rubbed his hands together gleefully.)

HARRY: I'll be at home if you need me. Fast asleep in bed.

(He then strode away. Astonished by the move, the sergeant called out to him.)

SERGEANT: Paperwork, sir! This all needs to put in a report! A really weird report! And you've got a lot of explaining to do!

HARRY: Chiefs don't have to explain themselves, sergeant!

SERGEANT: They do! Especially when there's an incident involving sixty or so injured and unconscious youths!

HARRY: I'm sure you can handle it!

SERGEANT: Then you're wrong! A report is an explanation! And I haven't got a hope in hell of explaining *this* mess!

HARRY: Mess?

SERGEANT: Look at it!!!

(Harry glanced over his shoulder.)

HARRY: Mess? All *I* see is success.

(He then paced into some trees and clenched a triumphant fist.)

HARRY: Perfect. I saved Nikki's house and the fight happened far enough from her door for her not to be traumatised by it. Stan's gonna be over the fucking moon!

(He then spotted the world beginning to warp before him.)

HARRY: Here we go. My commendation awaits.

Almost instantaneously, Harry vanished from the world then reappeared in the holy white temple. Feeling rather chuffed with himself, he exhaled then glanced up at Stan with a smug grin on his face.

HARRY: Well?

(He nodded knowingly.)

HARRY: And you thought I was incompetent.

(As he sat there grinning, however, he noticed Stan staring right through him with the eyes of a man long past the point of despair. At once, Harry's grin evaporated and he sighed in defeat.)

HARRY: Aw, crap.

(Stan just shook his head.)

STAN: Oh, Harry...

HARRY: Um... yes?

STAN: What *have* you done?

(Harry gulped nervously.)

HARRY: Stopped a gang from burning down Nikki's house?

(He sighed.)

HARRY: At least that's what I *thought* I'd done, but judging by your demeanour I'm starting to think that might not be the case.

(Stan nodded ruefully.)

STAN: No, no; credit where credit's due. You did do that.

HARRY: Right...

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: And yet for some reason, you're not dancing the fandango and singing my praises. So it doesn't take a genius to figure out that something went *very* wrong.

STAN: Correct.

HARRY: It went very wrong *indeed*, in fact. Normally when I make a mistake you scold me like an overbearing parent, but this time, you look like you're on the verge of losing the will to live.

(He whimpered.)

HARRY: How bad is it???

STAN: It's hard to put into words, mate.

(He sighed.)

STAN: I'll show you instead.

HARRY: Right...

(Stan nodded to a stained glass window to his right.)

STAN: See that window?

HARRY: The rectangular one?

STAN: Yeah. Ever wondered why it's such a mundane shape?

HARRY: Well... now I am.

STAN: It's because it's a screen, Harry.

HARRY: Oh.

STAN: A screen through which I can show you the consequences of your actions this evening. Wanna see?

HARRY: I don't know. Do I?

STAN: I think you *need* to, son.

(He then nodded towards the window and clapped his hands. In that moment, images of flames from a rampaging fire appeared on the screen. Staring at it, Harry was aghast.)

HARRY: I thought you said they *didn't* burn down her house!

STAN: They didn't.

(Harry scratched his head.)

HARRY: Then what am I looking at exactly?

(His eyes then bulged in terror.)

HARRY: Wait! *This* is the consequences of my actions??? You're going to have me cast into the eternal flames of hell? How bad was my fuck up???

(Stan furrowed his brow. At last his anger was finally beginning to surface.)

STAN: Those aren't the eternal flames of hell, you cock.

HARRY: Oh? Then what are they?

STAN: You'll see! I just need to zoom out.

(He focussed hard on the screen and the image in the window did indeed zoom out.)

STAN: See it now?

HARRY: Not quite.

STAN: Then allow me to narrate. That, you feeble excuse for an angel, that fire that's so fierce you thought it was actually footage of hell, is in fact, Amberston Shopping Centre tomorrow night!!!

(Harry's jaw dropped and he stared at the screen in silent dismay. Struggling to imagine how such a consequence could have arisen from his evening's work, he gaped for a moment then threw out his palms in bewilderment.)

HARRY: How is that *my* doing? I *stopped* a fire, Stan. And I haven't been anywhere near the bleeding shopping centre!

(Stan glanced upwards and scoffed.)

STAN: How is it *his* doing, he says.

(He clicked his fingers to end the footage then sat himself down on the ground, angrily.)

STAN: Forgive me, fuck face. I don't *normally* sit when we hold these meetings, but we're going to here for a while, it seems. There's a lot to get through.

HARRY: I see...

STAN: Shut up!

HARRY: Right...

STAN: I'll *tell* you how it's your doing, you tit! Have you ever heard of a thing called CCTV footage?

HARRY: Well, yeah.

STAN: And mobile phones?

HARRY: Of course.

STAN: Then you must know that, every incident, no matter how minor seems to end up being caught on camera these days.

HARRY: Yeah...

(Stan shook his head.)

STAN: Do you know what the camera's caught tonight, Harry?

HARRY: Um...

STAN: No. Not um! They caught a deranged idiot of a police chief charging into a group of youths and setting about them like Bruce Lee on a fucking mission!!!

HARRY: Yeah, that was me.

STAN: I know!!!

(He growled.)

STAN: You complete cunt!

HARRY: Easy! I did it for a reason. They were there to burn Nikki's house down!

STAN: Yes! *I* know that! And *you* know that! That's not what the cameras saw though, is it?

HARRY: Well...

STAN: What the cameras saw was a psychotic police chief, charging into the group of young lads who'd done fuck all wrong. That's what the cameras saw!!!

HARRY: Yeah, but we *both* know...

STAN: Shut up! What *we* know is irrelevant! I'm talking about the consequence for the mortal realm! They don't know what *we* know. They only know what they saw! Police brutality! Unprovoked police brutality!!! About which, the youth of Amberston will be up in arms!!!

HARRY: Oh.

STAN: Tomorrow, Harry, you pointless turd, in every classroom; and I mean schools *and* colleges; kids are going to start planning a protest. And social media is a powerful medium! As a result, tomorrow evening thousands of the buggers are going to converge on the police station. And you can guess how that's going to end, can't you?

HARRY: Um...

(He winced.)

HARRY: Peacefully?

STAN: Peacefully??? Fucking peacefully? Is that what you got from watching those images, is it? The protestors peacefully burning down the shopping centre???

HARRY: Right. Yeah... I see. They're going to riot, aren't they?

STAN: Like French people when the price of petrol goes up!!!

HARRY: Fuck!

STAN: Yes. Fuck! And it gets worse!

HARRY: How???

STAN: The police are going to have to deal with the fucking riots, that's how. And who's going to lead them???

HARRY: Their chief!

STAN: Wrong! *He's* going to be undergoing urgent psychiatric treatment!

HARRY: What the fuck for?

STAN: Because *he* was the one caught on film, whaling on those youths like an overenthusiastic extra from a hooligan movie!!!

HARRY: Fuck. I didn't think of that!

STAN: Evidently! And to make matters worse, he has no recollection of the incident.

HARRY: Well, he wouldn't, would he? He wasn't there! It was me!

STAN: I know that, you fucking bell end! Unfortunately, there's almost a hundred police officers who'll testify that it *was* him! His career is finished! And that's the least of his

worries. The lawsuits are going to cripple him! If he ever gets out of the lunatic asylum, that is. Swearing blind that it wasn't him, really isn't helping his case!

(Harry cringed.)

HARRY: Oh, fuck me; that's really bad.

STAN: It is, yes. The police have a riot to deal with and no fucking chief. And how many business owners are going to lose everything in the fires? It's going to be chaos, you cunt. You've ruined the lives of thousands of innocent townsfolk!!!

(He then shook his head before glowering at Harry and mocking him sarcastically.)

STAN: But yes, you stopped them from burning down Nikki Palmer's house. Well done.

HARRY: Right.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: I feel that compliment may have lacked for sincerity somewhat.

STAN: How astute of you.

(He sighed.)

STAN: The only *good* thing to come out of this is that Gary *isn't* going to bother going after Nikki anymore. He's going to focus his efforts of attacking the police instead!

HARRY: I see. Well...

(He offered him a nervous grin then foolishly attempted to push his luck.)

HARRY: I mean... that being the case, you *could* argue that I did a good job.

STAN: What??? Fucking what???

HARRY: Nikki Palmer is my charge, Stan! And Gary's no longer going to try to stab her. *And* I stopped her house from being burnt down.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: So if you filter out all the *collateral* damage, I actually achieved my goal.

STAN: Wow! Fucking wow!

HARRY: What?

STAN: Why aren't I punching you in the face, right now? Why? What's wrong with me?

HARRY: Easy. I know I fucked up, mate, but you can't deny that I've done right by Nikki. It's just the *rest* of the town I've screwed over.

(He winced.)

HARRY: And now I've said it out loud, I realise how awful it sounds. Why *aren't* you punching me in the face?

STAN: Good fucking question!

(He snarled.)

STAN: And let's examine your sentiments, shall we? You've done right by Nikki Palmer, have you?

HARRY: Haven't I?

STAN: Let's see, shall we? When did you last see her?

HARRY: This morning.

STAN: And what was she doing?

HARRY: Walking to school.

STAN: Wrong!!!

HARRY: What? No...

STAN: She ran all the way there! Crying!!!

HARRY: How come?

STAN: Because Angie picked up a knife and charged at her, you fucking idiot!!!

HARRY: Oh!

STAN: You didn't notice???

HARRY: Of course I did. I just...

(He winced.)

HARRY: I thought she'd be fine. A little shaken up, but... fine.

(Stan gave him a condescending glance.)

STAN: The girl who tried to bully her the day before, charged at her with murderous eyes and a knife in her hand, and you thought she'd be *a little shaken up*?

HARRY: Well...

STAN: Like water off a duck's back?

HARRY: Stan...

STAN: You thought she'd scoff and say, what's a little murderous intent between classmates?

HARRY: That's not...

STAN: Since when did the look of bloodlust in a knife-wielding maniac's eyes ever bother anyone? I'm being silly. Is that what you thought???

HARRY: No.

STAN: It is, isn't it?

HARRY: Well...

STAN: That poor girl spent her entire day trembling in the staff room and she's going to flatly refuse to go to school tomorrow. Thus beginning her decline. The poor thing's traumatised!

HARRY: No! That's exactly what I was trying to prevent!

STAN: I know that, you prick!

(Harry's shoulder's slumped.)

HARRY: I wish I'd known that earlier.

(He flinched.)

HARRY: In fact, why didn't you *tell* me that when I saw you this morning?

STAN: Because, Harry, I made the mistake of crediting you with a modicum of intelligence. I thought that anyone with a brain worthy of the name would realise that the poor girl who got charged at with a knife, might well be scared. Was that wrong of me?

HARRY: Um...

(He furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: I'm doomed no matter how I answer that, aren't I?

STAN: Yes!

HARRY: Than I shall abstain.

STAN: Don't get all bolshie with me, you wanker. You're in no position to do anything right now other than grovel.

(Harry pouted.)

HARRY: Fine.

STAN: You're a fucking embarrassment, you are.

(He sighed.)

STAN: God is not impressed!

HARRY: No. I dare say he isn't.

STAN: He's had to send extra angels down to the mortal realm to calm the angry, rebellious youth. Hopefully they can end the riots without bloodshed.

HARRY: Yeah...

(He sighed.)

HARRY: What do I do now, Stan?

STAN: Read the case file!

HARRY: Right.

STAN: And make things right with Nikki. Angie is still after her, even if Gary isn't!

HARRY: Fuck!

STAN: And seeing as the chief of police, namely *you*, told his fellow officers that the mob was going to attack Nikki's house, you also need to find a way to help Nikki's dad explain that fact to the police. And possibly the media! Why did the chief of police, during his breakdown, tell the rest of the force a mob was going to attack number Seventeen, Cortina Drive? People are going to suspect her father was up to something and that's going to traumatise young Nikki ever further.

HARRY: Right.

(He groaned.)

HARRY: Where do I even start?

STAN: Read the fucking case file!

HARRY: Right. I should have known you'd say that!

STAN: It's important! Read it then, I dunno, maybe consult some other angels. Good ones. Competent ones. Ones who aren't completely hopeless bell ends like you.

HARRY: Right...

STAN: And don't fuck it up. You're skating on thin ice right now, shit face. I mean it. Any more gargantuan cock ups like tonight and that'll be it for you.

HARRY: Reborn in Milton Keynes, huh?

STAN: If you're lucky. Screw up like *that* again and you *will* end up being cast into the eternal flames of Hades.

(He mused to himself.)

STAN: If Satan asks why you hate it so much, you can tell him you're new to all this burning in hell malarkey.

HARRY: Mate...

STAN: What?

HARRY: That's not funny.

STAN: You're not funny!

(He snarled.)

STAN: Now fuck off back to the mortal realm; I'm sick of the sight of you.

(He then wafted his arm and banished Harry back to world of the living.)

At eleven o'clock that evening, Harry found himself propping up the bar at The Angel's Rest with a sour expression on his face. Feeling like both his entire worlds, mortal and heavenly, were very much against him, he couldn't even *force* a smile. Instead, he just sat there, staring into his glass and grouching to himself.

HARRY: What's the fucking point? My life was shit and now my afterlife's going exactly the same way. I achieved nothing when I was alive and it's the same now I'm dead!

(He sighed.)

HARRY: It's been shit since day one. Orphaned as a toddler, raised by wankers then run over and killed in my early twenties. And now *this* bollocks. Getting shouted and a belittled by Stan every fucking day.

(He furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: Stan. Fucking Stan. That cunt expects miracles. I was a young man when that pig run me over, for fuck sake. Twenty two. Barely any life experience. What in my premature death made him think all this angel malarkey would be easy for me? Wanker.

(He shook his head.)

HARRY: Yes, I should have read the file. I know that now. But come on. I'm a fucking newbie. Newbies make mistakes. Shouting at me like I'm the devil incarnate. Fuck off.

(He groaned then swirled his drink around in his glass.)

HARRY: I shouldn't be here. I just shouldn't. I should be out there in the world, living out my mortal life in peace. But no. I had to get run over and killed. On the fucking path of all places! By a fucking policeman!

(He sighed.)

HARRY: I never did have much luck.

(Just then, the barman paced up to him wearing a friendly smile.)

BARMAN: Harry. Harry, mate?

(Harry glanced up at him.)

HARRY: What?

BARMAN: Can you fuck off somewhere else, please? Your grouching is unsettling all my other customers.

(Harry furrowed his brow then glanced over his shoulder. Sure enough, at least twenty other patrons were scowling in his direction. Having made sure to scowl back at them, Harry then returned his focus to the barman.)

HARRY: Anyone would think they've never seen a bloke drowning his sorrows before.

BARMAN: You drowning your sorrows isn't the issue, Harry. It's the fact you're *also* drowning everyone else's joy.

HARRY: Hardly.

BARMAN: Mate, it was cheerful in here before. People were laughing and joking together. There was a happy vibe in the air! Then you walked in and killed it stone dead. Honest to god, I haven't seen a jovial atmosphere vanish *that* quickly since someone accidentally put UB40 on the jukebox!

HARRY: Fine. If that's how you feel, I'll take my business elsewhere.

BARMAN: You won't. You'll have to *pay* for your drinks if you go elsewhere.

HARRY: Fuck. I'll stay here then.

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: You'll just have to put up with me.

(The barman sighed.)

BARMAN: Mate, all I'm saying is, if you want to sulk and pout, go and do it in a booth. At the back! Right at the back! Or better still, find a mate to talk to. You and that Alfie fella seemed to hit it off. Why don't you talk it over with him? In a booth! At the back!

(Harry shook his head.)

HARRY: Nah. I can't burden Alfie anymore than I already have.

BARMAN: But you're okay with burdening *me*?

HARRY: *Burdening* you?

BARMAN: Yes! You've turned my bar into a fucking morgue! I already explained that once.

(He pointed towards the back of the bar.)

BARMAN: Sod off over there, will you?

HARRY: Why should I?

BARMAN: Because I won't serve you any more whisky if you stay here.

(Harry ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: Well, if that's how you feel... I'll be at the back.

BARMAN: Right at the back!

(He then slid him another class of whisky.)

BARMAN: And take that with you. It'll save you from coming back here and turning the wine sour with that face of yours.

HARRY: Fine.

(With that, he grabbed his two whisky glasses than stomped his way towards the back of the bar.)

BARMAN: Further!

HARRY: I know!

(He then stomped onwards until he reached a darkened booth at the very back.)

HARRY: Happy?

BARMAN: Happier than you, you miserable bastard!

HARRY: Right...

(He sneered.)

HARRY: I'll remember this when you're feeling down, mate! *I* can be a complete cunt too. And I will be! Let's see how *you* like it!

BARMAN: Just sit down and shut up!!!

HARRY: Fine.

(He then slid into the booth and glowered at the barman again.)

HARRY: At least I know who my friends are now! And guess what? You're not one of them! Prick!

(He nodded defiantly.)

HARRY: That told him.

(He folded his arms bitterly then ran his eyes across the booth.)

HARRY: Sending me back here. It's dark and shit.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Like my mood. He was right to send me back here, he really was.

(He then sat back.)

HARRY: You need to perk up, Harry. This mission is hard enough without you losing the plot and sulking like a little girl.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: And when I say *hard enough*... it could well be *too* hard now. I've really fucked this one. That poor Nikki...

(Just then, Alfie appeared at the side of the booth with a female friend at his side.)

ALFIE: Harry?

(Harry glanced up.)

HARRY: Right. You come to tell me to shut up an' all, have you?

ALFIE: No, mate. I've come to see if I can cheer you up.

HARRY: Yeah?

ALFIE: Yeah.

HARRY: Ambitious.

ALFIE: Probably, but...

(He gestured to the female angel at his side.)

ALFIE: Celeste here insisted that I try.

CELESTE: Guilty.

ALFIE: She's from the spiritual welfare department, you see? And you know what they're like.

(Harry glanced straight through him.)

HARRY: Do I?

ALFIE: You should. It's all written in the handbook.

(He then looked enlightened.)

ALFIE: Right. Never mind.

(He smiled at Celeste.)

ALFIE: It's her job to lift people's spirits in a time of crisis. Apparently there's going to be a pretty nasty event in town tomorrow and she's been sent here with a dozen others to give hope to the downhearted.

HARRY: I see.

(He forced a smile.)

HARRY: Nice to meet you, Celeste. I'm Harry.

CELESTE: I know. Your photo was in the case file. And your name came up a lot.

ALFIE: What? What's this?

(Celeste gave him an apologetic smile.)

CELESTE: Your friend here is the catalyst for the forthcoming tragedy.

ALFIE: Holy shit.

CELESTE: Indeed, but let's not judge him harshly.

HARRY: Let's not judge me *at all*!

CELESTE: Quite right. That's not our job.

(She smiled.)

CELESTE: Anyway...

(She then slid herself into the booth. Alfie quickly followed suit. Watching him slide up next to her, Harry couldn't help but smirk. Celeste was a pretty girl and he was quite clearly hoping he could woo her.)

HARRY: So... how do you two know each other?

CELESTE: We don't really. We just met. In here. About an hour ago.

ALFIE: Yeah... you know how I like to meet new people, so when I saw her sitting at a table all by herself, I asked if I could join her, that's all.

HARRY: Gotcha.

ALFIE: You know how it is, Harry. I chat to everyone, me.

(He then looked to Celeste with the wide-eyes of a man terrified of scaring away a potential new girlfriend.)

ALFIE: I certainly wasn't hitting on you.

(He ruffled his neck.)

ALFIE: I had no ulterior motive whatsoever.

CELESTE: That's the third time you've told me that.

ALFIE: Um...

(He started to sweat.)

ALFIE: I just want to be clear. That I'm a nice bloke.

CELESTE: I see.

(Amused by Alfie's behaviour, Harry managed to crack a smile. In that moment, a large chunk of the dark cloud over his head started to lift. Heartened by it, he decided to return the favour.)

HARRY: Yeah, he's a good bloke, our Alfie. Top geezer.

CELESTE: Oh?

HARRY: One of the nicest fellas I've ever met. I'm amazed he hasn't got a girlfriend actually. You'd think the ladies would be fighting over him.

(Celeste smiled.)

CELESTE: That's nice to hear. You clearly think the world of him.

HARRY: Absolutely. He's a top bloke.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: He must be. He wouldn't be trying to cheer me up otherwise. After what happened today, most blokes would have disowned me.

(Alfie nodded arrogantly for a moment then sighed.)

ALFIE: No. Bollocks. I'm not gonna pretend. Sorry, Harry. Truth be told, I *was* going to blank you tonight, but Celeste talked me out of it.

HARRY: Right.

ALFIE: It's just that... today...

HARRY: I know, mate. You don't have to explain. In your shoes, I'd have blanked me an' all. Sorry about today.

ALFIE: Nah. Forget it.

(Celeste smiled.)

CELESTE: How lovely. This is what I live to see. Camaraderie. Friendship. Forgiveness.

ALFIE: Yeah... forgiveness...

HARRY: You're a bigger man than I am, Alfie. *I* wouldn't have forgiven me.

ALFIE: I *haven't* forgiven you.

(He sighed.)

ALFIE: But I'm not going to hold a grudge either. You're still a mate.

HARRY: I'll take it.

ALFIE: Cool.

(Celeste exhaled then looked to Harry.)

CELESTE: So. You've had a really, really bad day, haven't you?

HARRY: Yeah, I...

CELESTE: I read all about it in the case file.

(She sucked her teeth.)

CELESTE: A riot. Ouchies.

ALFIE: Holy shit! Seriously?

HARRY: Yup. You heard the girl.

ALFIE: How??? When??? I mean... what the fuck?

HARRY: How, you say?

(He palmed his forehead.)

HARRY: I carried out the world's most elaborate plan and it backfired, that's how. As for when, the riot is tomorrow night.

ALFIE: Damn.

HARRY: Yeah...

(He winced.)

HARRY: I thought my plan would bring a curtain down on young Nikki's misery. But no. It made everything infinitely worse.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Actually, that's a lie. I did manage to stop that gang from burning the poor girl's house down.

ALFIE: Well, that's good then. Last time I saw you, *that* was what you were stuck on. How to stop a gang from burning down her house.

HARRY: Yeah, I solved that problem, thankfully.

(He cringed.)

HARRY: But the upshot is, half the bloody town is going to be aflame by tomorrow night.

ALFIE: Yeah, that's a pretty lousy upshot.

HARRY: Lousy? It's disastrous!

(He sighed.)

HARRY: And you know the worst part?

ALFIE: Worse than the forthcoming riots?

HARRY: All me to rephrase. You know the *second* worst part? I did what I did in order to stop poor Nikki from being traumatised. But according to Stan, she's already traumatised from an incident this morning which I failed to take seriously.

(Alfie cringed.)

ALFIE: Mate... that's... I don't know what to say.

HARRY: There's not much you *can* say, Alfie. The whole thing is seriously fucked up. My plan involved physically impersonating the chief of police. And thanks to me, *he's* now in a special facility undergoing psychiatric treatment. And Nikki's father is going to come under scrutiny in the next few weeks for his involvement with a gang. A gang he knows bugger all about.

ALFIE: And that was all a by-product of your elaborate plan was it?

HARRY: Yeah. Apart from Nikki being traumatised. *That* happened earlier.

ALFIE: Shit.

(He then forced a smile.)

ALFIE: But look on the bright side. If her house *had* burnt down, she'd have been even *more* traumatised.

HARRY: Yeah, well... there is that, I suppose.

(He shook his head briefly then sat up slightly.)

HARRY: Actually, allow me to upgrade my list of the worst parts.

ALFIE: Really? There's more.

HARRY: Yup. And *this* worst part enters the chart at number one.

ALFIE: Wow. I'm almost afraid to ask.

HARRY: Yes, well, luckily you won't have to, because I'm about to volunteer the information on my own accord.

(He winced again.)

HARRY: I read the file before I came here.

ALFIE: Well, it's about bloody time.

HARRY: Yeah...

(He buried his face in his palm.)

HARRY: Guess what.

ALFIE: I daren't.

HARRY: It had instructions on the final page. Simple instructions on how to get the job done. I just had to befriend the brother of Nikki's bully in a bar. During the conversation, all I had to do was tell him how I got arrested for being in a gang, leaving nobody to take care of my mother. Apparently, that would have struck a chord with him. He loves his mum; like most people who think they're hard. He'd have told his sister to get good grades so she can look after their mum if anything happens to *him*. That would have ended it, according to the file.

ALFIE: Right. Well. I hate to sound like a broken record, but that's why you always read the file, mate.

HARRY: Yeah. Lesson learned.

(Celeste sighed.)

CELESTE: It's terrible. Truly terrible. I read all about your efforts in *my* case file and I gasped so many times, my friend thought I was having respiratory problems.

(She then smiled warmly.)

CELESTE: But dwelling isn't going to help, is it? You need to focus on what you're going to do next.

HARRY: Yeah... can I add *that* to my list of worst parts? I don't know *what* I'm gonna do.

ALFIE: I'm not surprised.

HARRY: Yeah...

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Look... guys? If you have any suggestions, I'm all ears.

ALFIE: I have none.

HARRY: Great.

ALFIE: If I was in your shoes, I'd hand in my wings and prepare myself to be reborn in Milton Keynes, to be honest.

HARRY: I'd rather not, thanks.

ALFIE: Oh, I know. But it *is* an option. And option you might want to consider before things get even worse and you end up being reborn in Luton.

HARRY: Never gonna happen.

(He furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: If there is a way to fix this mess, I'm going to find it.

CELESTE: That's the spirit.

HARRY: Thank you.

(He nodded defiantly.)

HARRY: I just need to stop a riot, protect the people of the town from fire, make Gary wise up and end Nikki's trauma.

(His shoulders slumped.)

HARRY: I need a miracle.

(Celeste nodded to her own thoughts.)

CELESTE: Yup. Uh-huh. I see it now.

HARRY: What?

CELESTE: I did wonder how one person could get himself into such a mess, and now I know.

ALFIE: It's because he didn't read the case file.

CELESTE: Yes, but now he *has*, and he *still* doesn't get it.

HARRY: Excuse me?

CELESTE: Who says you need to stop the riots and keep people safe from fires?

HARRY: Well...

CELESTE: I'm willing to bet *Stan* didn't tell you that.

HARRY: Actually...

(He then paused and stared straight ahead.)

HARRY: Now you mention it... I'm not sure he did.

CELESTE: *I'm* sure he *didn't*. Ending the riots is *my* job; along with the rest of my crew. And saving people from fires is the job of guardian angels. *You're* not a guardian angel.

HARRY: Well... no.

CELESTE: You literally need to focus on the same goal you had at the start. Keeping your charge on target to become a good person.

(She shrugged.)

CELESTE: Okay, the parameters of the case have changed; you've made things a million times harder. But the mission remains the same. That young girl should be your only concern.

(Harry stared through her in bewilderment.)

HARRY: Um... Celeste...

CELESTE: What? Am I wrong?

(She sighed.)

CELESTE: You're not the *only* angel in town, Harry. It's not down to *you* to clean up every single mess.

HARRY: But they're messes *I* made!

CELESTE: Wow. You really *didn't* read the handbook, did you?

HARRY: Don't you start.

CELESTE: We're assigned a task by those above us and our *only* duty is to *fulfil* that task. Nothing else! If there are consequences to what we do, then so be it. The handbook couldn't be clearer on that.

HARRY: Yeah... there's been consequences alright.

CELESTE: There always are. And very often for a reason.

(She nodded.)

CELESTE: For example, I lifted a young man's spirits once; pulled him out of the doldrums when he was having dark thoughts about slashing his wrists. He received a new lease of life and went out to meet his friends instead. He got run over and killed by

an ice cream van along the way. It made me wonder why I bothered. He wouldn't have been there if *I* hadn't intervened.

HARRY: Crikey. What a waste of time!

CELESTE: That's what I said. At the time, I was mortified. But I realise now, it was simply his time. *I* was only there to stop his mother from having to find him.

HARRY: Oh.

CELESTE: It was a small mercy god granted her.

(She sat back and picked up her drink.)

CELESTE: We're here merely to *steer* god's divine plan in the right direction, Harry. We're not here to fix the world and its problems. If you get assigned a task there's a reason behind it. One you might not like or understand, but you can be assured that whatever it is, is for the common good. So you just do your job and the rest will eventually fall into place, courtesy of god's will.

(Harry pondered her words for a moment then sat up.)

HARRY: So, he made you cheer that fella up and forget about suicide, only to kill him anyway, because it was his time?

CELESTE: Yes!

HARRY: So the *consequences* of your actions were all part of god's plan?

CELESTE: That's right.

(Harry's face lit up.)

HARRY: Then maybe, the consequences of *my* actions are part of his plan too.

CELESTE: Um...

HARRY: God *wants* the fires!

CELESTE: No, that...

HARRY: And the riots are all part of his divine plan!

CELESTE: No. The riots are the result of an outrageous cockup from an angel who didn't bother reading his case file. If the riots *were* part of god's plan, I wouldn't have been sent down to tidy up after you, now would I?

(Harry stared at her for a moment then sighed.)

HARRY: So it's not god's plan?

CELESTE: No!

(Harry furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: Then why bother telling me that story??? That was just mean!

CELESTE: No, it wasn't!

HARRY: Yes, it was! It didn't serve any purpose other to build my hopes up then kick me in the bollocks.

CELESTE: Nonsense! That's not why I told you about it.

ALFIE: She was telling you about consequences!

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: Stop trying to *fix* everything and just focus on the task god gave you. That was the point of her story.

HARRY: Oh. So...

ALFIE: You need to stop that girl bullying Nikki and lift Nikki's spirits again. That's it. The riots aren't yours to fix.

CELESTE: Exactly.

HARRY: Right. So...

(He raised a questioning finger.)

HARRY: But *Stan* kept making me *fix* my mistakes. If it's not *my* responsibility, why did...

CELESTE: *Did* he tell you tell you fix *all* your mistakes? Or did he angrily show you the *consequence* of your mistakes then update you as to how they affect your mission? Keeping Nikki on the right track.

HARRY: Oh... that's... he just shouted at me a lot!

CELESTE: He didn't tell you to end the riots though, did he?

HARRY: Well...

CELESTE: He just pointed them out to you then updated you on how your charge is doing, didn't he?

(Harry stared at her emptily for a moment then his jaw dropped.)

HARRY: I've been focussing on the wrong things, haven't I?

ALFIE: Yup!

CELESTE: Uh-huh.

HARRY: I need to focus on Nikki, don't I?

CELESTE: Yes, you do.

ALFIE: What she said.

HARRY: I see.

(He then sat forwards.)

HARRY: How do I do that exactly? She's going to refuse to go to school, so I won't see her out an about. And I don't want to sneak into her house; she's scared enough.

CELESTE: Try speaking to the bully then.

HARRY: And saying what exactly?

CELESTE: What the file *told* you to say in the first place!!!

(Harry stared through her for a moment then glanced away.)

HARRY: Right. Yeah. I knew that.

CELESTE: Yeah...

(She looked to Alfie and smiled.)

CELESTE: Your friend is an idiot.

HARRY: Easy! I'm not an idiot, thank you very much; I'm just new to all this...

CELESTE: Thinking?

HARRY: Angel malarkey!

CELESTE: Yeah, right.

(She then climbed to her feet.)

CELESTE: Now, if you'll excuse me... I came over to see if you really were as dumb as people are saying, and my curiosity has been sated.

HARRY: That's a bit harsh.

(He then shook his head as he watched Alfie slide from the booth in order to let Celeste out.)

CELESTE: Harsh, huh? Sometimes facts *are* harsh.

(She then looked to Alfie.)

CELESTE: You coming with me or staying with your idiot friend?

(She then winked at him.)

CELESTE: Choose wisely, Alfie. I'm in the mood for love.

(She then sauntered away, leaving Alfie gaping with frustration.)

ALFIE: Aw, crap. Now what do I do? Honour my friendship with you or go and get myself a leg-over? Help me out here, Harry! Bro or Ho? What does the man code say? (Harry allowed himself a stifled chuckle.)

HARRY: The man code, Alfie, says that a mate who cock blocks is not a mate at all.

ALFIE: Eh? What's that in English?

HARRY: Go and fill your boots, son.

ALFIE: What with?

HARRY: No. No way. I flatly refuse to believe you're that innocent!

ALFIE: Harry...

(He then looked enlightened.)

ALFIE: Oh. Right. *That* kind of boot filler!

HARRY: Yup.

ALFIE: Harry? You're a fucking diamond, you are!

(He then charged away in pursuit of Celeste. Left behind, Harry chuckled some more then sat back.)

HARRY: That Celeste was rude, but fair play to her. She made a good point. I *should* revert to the original plan. I'll disguise myself as a former gang-loving bell end then go and speak to that Gary on his own level.

(He nodded knowingly.)

HARRY: Yeah. That just might work. At least it might stop Angie from picking on Nikki.

(He paused to think over his own words then nodded again.)

HARRY: Then I'll just have to focus on lifting Nikki out of her darkness.

(A man reinvigorated and ready to face the world again, he climbed to his feet.)

HARRY: And there's no time like the present.

(He then remembered that Gary would most definitely still be unconscious, at which point he sat down again.)

HARRY: Or indeed, the future. Tomorrow it is.

(He swigged back the rest of his whisky then yelled across the bar.)

HARRY: Barman!!!

BARMAN: No!

HARRY: Fuck!

The following morning, at just gone eleven o'clock, Gary emerged from his house then proceeded to head up the road, performing his well-rehearsed strut. He was very much under the illusion that this gait made him intimidating to one and all. The fact that it actually made him look like a complete and utter buffoon, incapable of controlling his shoulder muscles, was entirely lost on him. As far as he was concerned, the fact that he and so many of his hangers-on walked the same way, was proof that it was indeed the walk of a gangster; something he very much considered himself to be.

As he headed along the street, Gary had no idea that Harry was actually walking at this side in his ethereal form, mimicking his walk. He planned to befriend Gary and convince him that he also used to belong to a gang. In order to make it convincing, he needed to perfect the kind of walk that self-proclaimed hard men preferred. Copying it, however,

was not easy. It was such a ridiculous walk, the temptation to mock it was proving virtually impossible to resist. As a result, when Gary reached his destination, The Baron's Arms pub, Harry ended up walking on, performing a silly walk that involved throwing his arms around like a child pretending to be a tree in a school play.

HARRY: I is well 'ard, in it. Look at me, Bro! I is having permanent muscle spasms. (He chuckled to himself then glanced to one side. A double-take ensued.)

HARRY: Where the fuck did he...

(At this point, he spotted Gary bounding into the pub.)

HARRY: Right...

(He nodded to himself.)

HARRY: Let's get this shit done.

(With that, he strode into the pub doorway, transformed into a thuggish looking fellow that was visible to human eyes then headed into the pub. Eager to maintain the impression of a former gangster, he made his way forth, mimicking Gary's walking style to the best of his ability. It was, however, safe to say that he hadn't quite perfected it. Being early, there were only three customers in there. Two old men were seated just beneath the window and Gary was propping up the bar. All three of them were grimacing at him uncomfortably. Having convinced himself they were merely intimidated by his impersonation of a gangster, however, Harry kept on going until he reached the bar. He then unleashed his wannabe gangster voice.)

HARRY: I's having a pint of Guinness, you get me, Barman?

(The barman nodded.)

BARMAN: Certainly, mate.

(He then grabbed a glass and proceeded to pour.)

BARMAN: In the military, were you?

HARRY: What?

BARMAN: Is that how you got your limp? Injured in action?

HARRY: Limp?

BARMAN: Right. Sorry. That was insensitive.

HARRY: Well...

BARMAN: How you got your limp is none of my business. I just glad I noticed that it *was* one. Initially, I thought you were dancing and I was gonna throw you out.

HARRY: Dancing? Mate...

(The barman winced.)

BARMAN: Jesus Christ, I need to start learning when to keep my gob shut.

(He then offered him a nervous smile.)

BARMAN: I tell you what, this one's on the house. But only if you promise not to bring your army buddies over to kick my head in.

(Harry nodded.)

HARRY: It's a deal. Um... bro.

BARMAN: Cool.

(Harry nodded with satisfaction. Receiving a free beer was a superb way to start that day as far as he was concerned. Upon remembering that he had no money and couldn't have paid for it anyway, he then drew a sigh of relief and spoke in his normal voice.)

HARRY: Lucky break.

BARMAN: What?

(Harry flinched then broke into his wannabe gangster voice again.)

HARRY: Lucky, in it.

BARMAN: What is?

HARRY: Free beer, man.

BARMAN: It's not free. It's on the condition that a gang of former squaddies don't come round and smash my pub up.

HARRY: You has got my word, in it.

BARMAN: And that's good enough for me.

(The barman then slid him a poorly poured pint of Guinness. It was fifty percent beer, fifty percent froth.)

HARRY: What's dat f'ing?

BARMAN: Free.

HARRY: You make a strong argument.

(He then climbed up on his barstool, before turning and nodding towards the two old men as a friendly greeting. Ready to begin his task for real, he then glanced towards Gary.)

HARRY: How's it going, Bruv?

(Gary glanced at him coldly.)

GARY: Like chatting up strange men in bars, do you?

HARRY: Simmer down, Bro. I was just being polite. That's basic bar etiquette where I come from.

GARY: And where's dat? Rural Essex a hundred years ago?

HARRY: No, mate. The streets, in it. I is from the streets!

GARY: What... like... Sesame Street?

HARRY: No, Bro.

GARY: Step off, you Muppet.

(Harry smirked.)

HARRY: Interesting.

GARY: What is?

HARRY: You kind of remind me of me when I was your age.

GARY: Do I now?

HARRY: Yeah. I was a bell end too.

(Gary spun to face him.)

GARY: Hey!

HARRY: Just saying, man.

GARY: Yeah, and you want be careful who you is speaking to. My boys and I don't like trash jabbers; you get me?

HARRY: What?

(He flinched.)

HARRY: I mean... in it.

(He grinned.)

HARRY: So. You in a gang, then?

GARY: Who is you? The bacon?

HARRY: Bacon?

GARY: Police, you fucking twat.

HARRY: Gotcha. Nah, man.

(He leant forwards.)

HARRY: But now I know why you remind me of myself when I was younger. I was in a gang too, in it.

GARY: Is dat meant to impress me?

HARRY: No. Just saying. Why do you think I walk like I do?

GARY: I dunno. Maybe you fell down some stairs.

(The barman then chimed in.)

BARMAN: I'm sticking with a war wound.

(The two old men they had their say.)

CHARLIE: My guess is, you had a stroke!

BILLY: I'm gonna say you were in a car crash.

(He shrugged.)

BILLY: Possibly because you had a stroke while you were driving.

CHARLIE: Bingo. We have a winner.

(Harry furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: Fuck off, you lot. I walk like that because I'm a gangster.

CHARLIE: Sure you are.

BILLY: A gangster who had a stroke.

HARRY: No, you...

(He gave an exasperated sigh then looked to Gary.)

HARRY: Forget them two. Where were we?

GARY: *You* was chatting me up and *I* was texting my boys to come over and break some of your body parts.

HARRY: Is that so?

GARY: That *is* so. So I'd run if I was you. You've got about thirty seconds.

HARRY: Right...

(Knowing he had to be quick if he wanted to get his message across without being responsible for yet more violence, Harry nodded sternly.)

HARRY: Your mother must think you're a right twat.

GARY: Excuse me?

HARRY: Just saying. Mine does. Because *I* was in a gang, just like you. Ended up in jail, didn't I? As a result, she had nobody to look after her.

GARY: And I should care because?

HARRY: The same could happen to *your* mother. Um... in it.

GARY: Fuck you. That is like, none of your concern, man.

HARRY: Just giving you sound advice.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Because I used to be in a gang too...

CHARLIE: Before you had the stroke!

HARRY: Will you shut up about me having a stroke???

CHARLIE: Yeah, alright. Calm down, sonny boy.

HARRY: I'm calm!

(He then looked to Gary again.)

HARRY: Point is, you need to grow up. Or your mum will end up alone. Unless you have siblings.

GARY: I have. My mum will be fine. Now fuck off.

HARRY: Fair enough.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: I just hope you're like, wise enough to make sure your siblings stay out of trouble. Because if you *all* end up in jail, your mum will be gutted... in it.

GARY: I'm gonna gut *you* in a minute.

HARRY: Mate, just heed the warning. Keep your siblings away from gang life, okay? You won't regret it.

GARY: I've never regretted anything!

(He smirked.)

GARY: But *you're* about to.

(In that moment, four young men entered the bar with sharp blades in their hands. At the same time, Gary slid off his seat and pulled out his bowie knife. Now Harry had Gary in front of him and four thugs behind him. To Gary's mind, this meant they had him surrounded.)

GARY: Old men!

CHARLIE: Um... yes?

GARY: Go in the other bar!

BILLY: Sterling idea!

(The two of them fled through the far door. Once they'd vanished from sight, Gary then turned and grinned at Harry.)

GARY: Tell me. Has you ever been stabbed multiple times by multiple blades?

HARRY: Nope.

GARY: Me neither. Let me know what it's like.

BARMAN: Um... Gary...

GARY: What?

(The barman gulped then hurried away.)

BARMAN: I'll be in the other bar if you need me.

GARY: Wise.

(He then smirked a devilish smirk.)

GARY: Let's turn this mother into a tea bag, boys!

(He then paced towards Harry with his blade at the ready. At the same time, his band of foolish followers raced at Harry from behind. Far from intimidated, Harry could only roll his eyes. Using violence against him was futile gesture on a par with trying to hold back a volcano with a bucket of custard. An exercise that could only end in complete and utter failure, such as taking part in a Formula One race on a bicycle or representing Great Britain in the Eurovision Song Contest. Failure was guaranteed. His assailants weren't privileged to this information, however. They fully expected to take him down in two seconds flat; leaving him bleeding and dying on the carpet. Only too delighted to allow them that delusion on that grounds that he absolutely wasn't allowed to reveal his immortality, Harry just slid off his stool then took up a fighting stance; facing in the direction of Gary's four accomplices. In order to make them think he was an ordinary man, he figured it'd be best just to play along. He wasn't even going to *pretend* to be afraid, however. He'd never allow such morons *that* kind of satisfaction. Instead, he stood there and spoke in a cold, monotone voice, that oozed sarcasm with every syllable.)

HARRY: Oh, no. Men with knives. I'm so afraid. Whatever shall I do?

(He then strode forth towards them, just as Gary lunged at him from behind. Frustrated, he ended up stabbing Harry's stool instead. Greatly annoyed by it, he glowered at Harry then spoke through his teeth.)

GARY: You jammy...

(His jaw then fell open. Harry had knocked all four of his friends out with the same punch. They'd ran at him in a line, so he'd darted to one side to chin the one on the right. He'd then carried the punch on, knocking them down one after the other as his fist cruised along their line of chins. Suffice to say, Gary had never seen anything like it in all his life.)

GARY: What... what the...

(Harry turned to face him and smiled.)

HARRY: Are you gonna tell your siblings to quit the thug life or not?

GARY: Fuck you!

HARRY: I see.

(He sucked his teeth.)

HARRY: You know that was a bad answer, right?

GARY: Do I?

(Harry then raced towards him and picked him up by his neck, using just his left hand. Gary was unsurprisingly terrified and dropped his blade, purely out of fear.)

GARY: What the fuck? Who *are* you???

HARRY: Just some bloke.

GARY: Just some bloke who can pick me up by the neck with one hand!!!

HARRY: Not bad, is it? Especially when you consider I'm right-handed.

(Gary started to sob.)

GARY: This aint fair, man. Has this town been taken over by aliens or something? What's going on?

(He whimpered.)

GARY: First I got knocked out in one punch by some random girl's boyfriend. *Then* the police chief one-punched me. And now this. What the fuck, man?

(Not about to reveal that Gary's conqueror on both prior occasions was in fact himself, Harry just scoffed.)

HARRY: Maybe you're just weak.

GARY: Nah, it aint dat, mate. Some shit is definitely going down.

HARRY: Some shit *is* going down, correct.

(He smiled.)

HARRY: And the shit in question is you.

(He then cast him to the floor with all his might, knocking him out. He then stood there sighing to himself. How he wanted to beat Gary up and make him feel pain. Alas, all he could do was render him unconscious in one blow. Beating him up wouldn't have hurt him in the slightest.)

HARRY: They need to change the rules so that angels *can* hurt humans. A lot. And frequently.

(He then shrugged it off and headed out of the bar. Pondering over his efforts, he then headed away down the main road.)

HARRY: So, that was a waste of time. I said what needed to be said, but he's never gonna give up the gangster life and I doubt he'll let Angie leave it either.

(He then glanced skywards.)

HARRY: Or will he? The file did *say* that I should appeal to Gary, using his mother's loneliness as leverage. And I literally did that. So if the file was *right*...

(He bit his lip.)

HARRY: If. A lot's happened since the day I received that file. Maybe that's not relevant anymore. It might be the case that he *would* have freed Angie from the gang if I'd asked him to a few days ago. But I got there too late. Now he'll never let her quit.

(He then held out his palms.)

HARRY: But then again, of course... he might. He might *think* about what I said and wise up. I've sown the seed now, after all. So it *might* work.

(He nodded to himself.)

HARRY: I mean, Stan hasn't summoned me or anything, so *that's* a good sign. Yeah. I might just have cracked it. Maybe.

(He then raised an eyebrow and mused to himself.)

HARRY: Maybe isn't good enough though. I need to double down.

(He then nodded again.)

HARRY: Yup. I'll go and see Angie. If I can put the idea to quit the gang in *her* head as well, the prospect of a happy ending will be twice as likely, surely. Yup. That's what I'll do. Starting right now.

A short while later, now back to appearing as his usual self, Harry headed down the corridor of Nikki and Angie's school, very much on the lookout for the troubled teenager in question. Luckily, she wasn't hard to find. All he had to do was head to the blind spot beneath the science block stairs and sure enough, there she was, along with her friends, bullying yet another girl for the offence of being better looking than her.

ANGIE: What is it with bitches like her, man?

LIZZIE: Up themselves, in it!

(The bullied girl pouted through her tears.)

LEXI: No, I'm not.

ANGIE: Oh, you are!

KATIE: She *totally* is! You get me?

ANGIE: Keep a lookout, Katie!

KATIE: Ah, shit.

(Katie turned then flinched at the sight of Harry coming towards them.)

KATIE: Aw, crap, it's the psychopath!

(Not about to risk being thrown out of a window, Angie's friends immediately fled, leaving her standing there with a miffed expression on her face.)

ANGIE: So much for loyalty, in it.

LEXI: Um... can I go now?

ANGIE: No. You can stay here and do me a favour.

(She then pulled out a knife and held it to Lexi's throat, before swiftly turning to face Harry.)

ANGIE: If you even think about grabbing me again, this bitch's neck is getting sliced up like a cucumber; you know what I mean?

LEXI: Oh, my god!!!

(Her eyes then rolled upwards and she passed out. As a result, she slid down Angie, past the blade and landed safely in a heap on the floor.)

ANGIE: Right... that complicates things, in it?

HARRY: It doesn't have to. Just leave her alone.

ANGIE: *You* leave *me* alone!

HARRY: Fine. I have no intention of harming you anyway. I just want to talk.

(Angie glowered at him distrustfully.)

ANGIE: Talk about what?

HARRY: About what I said earlier.

ANGIE: About my brother?

HARRY: About you quitting the gang!

(Angie scoffed.)

ANGIE: And doing what instead?

(She scoffed even harder.)

ANGIE: Studying?

HARRY: You don't *have* to be study. I'm just asking you stop living your life like that.

(He then flinched)

HARRY: And to stop bullying Nikki!

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Stop bullying people full stop, actually. But mostly Nikki.

ANGIE: Why should I?

HARRY: Why wouldn't you?

(Angie shrugged matter-of-factly.)

ANGIE: Because I *enjoy* bullying stuck up bitches.

HARRY: I see.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: I'm going to stop you one way or another, you know that right?

ANGIE: Yeah? How?

(Harry furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: Shit. You weren't meant to ask me that.

ANGIE: Well, I have.

HARRY: Fine.

(He ruffled his neck indignantly.)

HARRY: If *you* bully *her*, *I'll* bully *you*!

ANGIE: Yeah? Well, the more *you* bully *me*, the more *I'll* bully *her*!

HARRY: Fuck. You've got an answer for everything.

ANGIE: That's right. So you might as well fuck off and leave.

HARRY: Fuck off *and* leave? That's the same thing twice.

ANGIE: Yeah. It means fuck off twice as far.

HARRY: Right...

(He sighed.)

HARRY: You're hard work, you are.

ANGIE: Whatever.

HARRY: Look, what can I do to convince you to stop being a knob and wise up?

ANGIE: You can stop calling me a knob for one.

HARRY: I...

(He sighed with frustration.)

HARRY: For fuck sake, help me out here. What do I need to do? I mean, what is it gonna take to make you realise you're heading in the wrong direction?

ANGIE: What are you on about?

HARRY: Angie...

(He gave an exasperated sigh.)

HARRY: What's it gonna take to get you to leave Nikki alone?

(Angie mused for a moment then nodded.)

ANGIE: Dump her!

HARRY: Dump her?

ANGIE: Nikki!

(Harry looked at her blankly for a moment then shrugged. Dumping Nikki would be the easiest task he'd ever been set. He wasn't even going out with her in the first place.)

HARRY: Fine. I'll dump her!

ANGIE: Okay. And date *me* instead!

HARRY: Agreed!

(He flinched.)

HARRY: Wait. What?

ANGIE: You heard. Dump her for me and I'll leave her alone.

(She beamed fiendishly.)

ANGIE: Knowing she's heartbroken is going to bring joy to my heart.

(Harry grimaced.)

HARRY: Um...

(Just as he was about to reject her proposal, however, something dawned on him. He could take her on a date and bend over backwards to make sure it was terrible and she'd never want to see him again. Delighted with that idea, he nodded sternly.)

HARRY: Fine. But you must abide by the agreement to leave her alone.

ANGIE: You have my word.

HARRY: And what's it worth?

ANGIE: I'm good for it.

HARRY: Okay then. You have a deal.

ANGIE: Sweet.

(She nodded.)

ANGIE: Meet me at the North Gate of Ashwood Park at nine o'clock.

HARRY: Fine.

ANGIE: And bring a condom.

(She then marched away, leaving Harry staring ahead of himself in sheer terror. For a good thirty seconds, long after Angie had left, he just stood there with a horrified expression on his face. Eventually, however, he managed to break his silence with a single, stuttered word.)

HARRY: C-c-condom?

(He shuddered from head to toe.)

HARRY: No, no, no, no. Hell's extremely hot this time of year. Fuck burning in there for all eternity!

(He then proceeded to chuckle nervously and delude himself that he'd misunderstood.)

HARRY: I'm being ridiculous. She must have said tandem. She wants to go on a romantic bike ride for two.

(Just then, Lexi's voice rose up from the ground.)

LEXI: No, she definitely said condom. She wants you to give her one.

(Harry frowned at her.)

HARRY: Do you kiss your mother with that mouth?

(Lexi pouted up at him with tears welling in her eyes.)

LEXI: No! My mother died last week!

HARRY: Shit.

(He groaned.)

HARRY: Just dump me in hell *now*, god. I can't even *pretend* I don't deserve it.

LEXI: Yes. You do.

(She then upped and stormed off, leaving a distraught Harry in her wake.)

HARRY: Sorry...

(His shoulders slumped.)

HARRY: Well, that's great, that is. I'm on a promise with a fucking fifteen year-old.

How did that happen? How the fuck did I let the conversation get *that* far away from me? Jesus Christ!

(He flinched.)

HARRY: Is great!

(He winced.)

HARRY: Sorry, god.

(He then slung his hands in his pocket and wandered away.)

HARRY: You're a ridiculous failure, Harry. Fucking ridiculous. We both know what's gonna happen now, don't we? I'll spurn her lusty advances, so she'll get stroppy because I didn't hold up my end of the bargain and she'll start bullying Nikki even harder!

(He then kicked a fire extinguisher.)

HARRY: Bollocks!

A short while later, Harry arrived back at The Angel's Rest. Fed up to the back teeth, he promptly strode to the bar then sat on a stool, staring into space. He wasn't alone with his thoughts for long, however. Having spotting him, the barman strode straight over.

BARMAN: Mood?

(Harry glanced at him in bewilderment.)

HARRY: Mood?

BARMAN: Yes! What mood are you in? Only, if you're gonna sit there growling and complaining again, you can fuck off outside and do it.

HARRY: Charming.

BARMAN: Answer the question. What mood are you in?

(Harry shrugged.)

HARRY: Reflective, I suppose. With a sombre tinge. I'm a tad pissed off. But don't worry, I'll keep my complaints to a minimum.

BARMAN: Make sure you do.

HARRY: Fine.

BARMAN: Whisky?

HARRY: Stupid question.

BARMAN: Stupid customer.

HARRY: Touché.

(The barman conjured him a whisky from the ether, then slid it under his nose.)

BARMAN: Here!

HARRY: Thanks.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: You know, mate, every time I think I've got this angel malarkey sussed, some other annoyance comes along and...

BARMAN: Get out!

HARRY: What?

BARMAN: No moaning!

(He nodded.)

BARMAN: After last night, your moaning allowance for the month is completely used up.

HARRY: Mate...

BARMAN: No, Harry. You whined so much last night, everyone else in the bar got so depressed they ended up ringing The bloody Samaritans!

HARRY: You exaggerate!

BARMAN: I embellish!

HARRY: Same thing!

BARMAN: No, it isn't! You're a whinging nuisance, Harry, and nobody wants to hear it, mate!

HARRY: Dude...

BARMAN: No, Harry! Fuck off; go on! You, my friend, are really bad for business!

HARRY: What business? This place is a freebie, supplied by the heavens. It's not a business!

BARMAN: It is! We're in the *business* of giving angels somewhere nice to go of an evening after a difficult day! And you, my friend, single-handedly turned it into a house of misery and gloom last night. Never again. Fuck off outside if you're gonna whine! I'm not having it.

(Harry glowered at him.)

HARRY: Fine! You be like that!

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: I accidentally made a sexual promise with a fifteen year old girl earlier, a sin punishable by eternal damnation, and I was *hoping* for a sympathetic ear from my friendly local publican, but I guess that's not gonna be happening, is it?

(He then attempted to slide off his stool only to be stopped dead in his tracks.)

BARMAN: Wait!!!

HARRY: Wait?

BARMAN: Yeah. This just got interesting.

(He then leant on the bar.)

BARMAN: Speak to me, valued customer.

HARRY: Valued customer? I was a whinging nuisance, a minute ago.

BARMAN: Yeah, but this is different.

HARRY: How?

BARMAN: *This* I want to hear about.

HARRY: Right...

(He sighed.)

HARRY: It's no big deal, really. This girl is bullying my client and I need her to stop doing it. So I asked her what I needed to do.

BARMAN: Wow.

HARRY: What?

BARMAN: You went to the person you're meant to be stopping and asked her how to do your job?

HARRY: Well... no. Not in so few words, no. I just got frustrated and said it flippantly. Kind of. What do I need to do to stop you from bullying Nikki.

BARMAN: Okay...

HARRY: She said I should dump Nikki and date *her* instead. Piece of piss, seeing as I'm not even *dating* Nikki.

BARMAN: Right...

HARRY: I figured it's just be a case of going on this date, acting like a dick and putting her off.

BARMAN: Go on.

HARRY: So she told me to meet her at nine and...

(He winced.)

HARRY: Bring a condom.

BARMAN: Ouch.

HARRY: Yeah...

BARMAN: So are you gonna?

HARRY: Fuck off, am I?

(He shuddered.)

HARRY: I'd end up downstairs in the same cell as Jimmy Savile, getting red hot pokers shoved up my arse every morning.

BARMAN: Yeah, probably.

(He grimaced.)

BARMAN: So what are you gonna do?

HARRY: Let her down gently. The problem is, there's a fair chance she'll be so pissed off, she'll start bullying my poor client even harder.

(He groaned despairingly.)

HARRY: I'm a disgrace to angel-kind.

BARMAN: Yeah...

(He shrugged.)

BARMAN: You can fuck off now.

HARRY: Excuse me?

BARMAN: That wasn't the thrilling anecdote I was hoping it'd be.

HARRY: Mate...

BARMAN: Harry, just leave. Get your head straight, finish your mission then come back and celebrate a job well done, okay? Until then, this bar is off limits.

HARRY: You're barring me?

BARMAN: Correct!

HARRY: You can't do that!

BARMAN: Can't I?

HARRY: No!

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: You can kick me out when you see me come in, but I'll just come back when you're off duty.

BARMAN: I'm *never* off duty.

HARRY: Shit.

BARMAN: And I can *block* entry just by wishing it so.

HARRY: Is that a fact?

BARMAN: That is *indeed* a fact.

HARRY: Then I shall consider myself barred.

BARMAN: Excellent.

(He flicked his wrist towards the door.)

BARMAN: Now bugger off.

HARRY: Fine. A good day to you, sir.

(He then strode towards the door.)

HARRY: It's a shit bar anyway!

BARMAN: It's a *great* bar and you love it here!

HARRY: Yeah?

(He sighed.)

HARRY: If only that wasn't true.

BARMAN: Yes, but it is.

(He then smiled a rueful smile.)

BARMAN: Before you go, Harry...

(Harry's reply couldn't have been grumpier.)

HARRY: What?

BARMAN: Word of advice. Don't look at your current dilemma as an adversity, look at it as an opportunity.

HARRY: To do what?

BARMAN: That's for *you* to decide.

(He then shrugged.)

BARMAN: But seeing as you have a date with this girl, you might want to use it as an opportunity to get to *know* her better. Or as time to work miracles with your wise words. Maybe even show her the error of her ways. I dunno. Think of something.

HARRY: Yeah... maybe.

(He then passed through the wall and headed away.)

Having spent the afternoon in the park, mulling over what to do next, Harry had come to startling conclusion. The barman had made a good point. He really could use their date as an opportunity to make Angie see sense. Unfortunately, the date was scheduled to clash with the riots that evening; riots he wanted to help put an end to. Despite being advised not to by Celeste, he felt he owed it to the townspeople to do what he could.

Having pondered *how* he could do both, he then resolved himself to bringing the date forward. And so, as early evening approached, he found himself marching towards Angie's house with a fiery determination in his step.

HARRY: Educate her to the error of her ways. I love it. That barman's a genius. And a bit of a cunt, if I'm being honest, but nevertheless... those were wise words.

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: I'll charm her into sorting her life out, but in an extremely non-sexual way. Once I'm finished she'll be wooed by my words but repulsed by me sexually.

(He scoffed at himself.)

HARRY: Well... not repulsed, obviously. I'm a good looking bloke. At least a nine, I reckon. Finding me repulsive just aint gonna happen. She's only a seven at best.

(He then scowled at himself.)

HARRY: What the hell am I saying?

(He nodded.)

HARRY: You can do it, Harry. Just take her out, imbue her with your wisdom, reject any advances she makes under the guise of getting her to respect herself then get out again. Piece of piss. She'll be fixed, Nikki will be free of bullying and will slowly get over her trauma... and best of all, I'll finally have this stupid bloody case behind me.

(He clenched his fists determinedly.)

HARRY: Yup. Perfect.

(He then grimaced.)

HARRY: I just need her to agree to meeting me earlier than arranged. She might refuse though. Or her mum might object to her going out with a boy. Or worse, her brother might answer the door. Yeah... this might well be trickier than expected.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: But still, I'll give it a go. What's the worst that can happen?

(He then glanced up, just in time to see Angie charging out of her front door. At once, he came to a standstill and furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: Where's she off to in such a hurry?

(He then gasped in horror. Angie had just raced out of her front gate, revealing the fact that she had a machete in each hand and a gun in her back pocket.)

HARRY: Why would...

(A snarl quickly enveloped his brow.)

HARRY: Gary!

(He gritted his teeth.)

HARRY: That fucker called her and asked her bring his weapons, didn't he? What I said to him earlier went in one ear and out of the other. Wanker.

(He growled then transformed into his non-corporeal form, before teleporting to Angie's side and racing along beside her. Extremely miffed about the situation, he growled to himself.)

HARRY: I need to stop her and disarm her. If she gets caught running about like that, her life will be ruined.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: I'll just have to knock her out and take the weapons off her, I guess. What else can I do?

(He sneered furiously.)

HARRY: That cunt Gary is really starting to piss me off. If only angels of justice were real. I'd apply to become one, just so I could lob him under a bus! End *his* life before he can destroy *hers*!

(He glanced upwards with a furrowed brow.)

HARRY: If you're listening, god; we need angels of justice to become a thing! Cunts like him give us all a headache and your world would be a lot better if he wasn't in it!

(He then looked to Angie again.)

HARRY: Okay...

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Sorry, Angie. I don't particularly enjoy knocking out fifteen year old girls but this for your own good.

(He then teleported in front of her and psyched himself up.)

HARRY: Okay, as soon as she passes, I'm doing it. Wallop. Problem solved.

(Much to his annoyance, however, before she could quite reach him, she swiftly darted down a short alleyway into an adjacent street.)

HARRY: Well, that's a kick in the bollocks.

(He rolled his eyes then teleported after her. Moments later, he arrived at the end of the alley and pounded his fist.)

HARRY: Sorry, Angie; this is going to hurt me a lot more than it'll hurt you. Mostly because you won't feel it.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: That said, I can't really knock you out and leave you by a dark alleyway, can I? That'd be asking for trouble.

(He then frowned with annoyance at himself.)

HARRY: What am, I talking about? I'll just teleport her somewhere safer. That's just common fucking sense, Harry. Get it together, mate.

(Unfortunately, he was so busy frowning with annoyance at himself, Angie arrived at the end of the alley then charged off towards the town centre before he could even begin to draw back his fist.)

HARRY: Fuck! Seriously, Harry; get it together, will you???

(Just then, the sound of sirens rose up into the air. Mortified, Harry glanced up and saw a fleet of police cars heading down the road towards them.)

HARRY: Fuck! She's armed and the police are coming. She's gonna get shot!

(Reacting swiftly, he teleported behind her, grabbed the gun from her back pocket then teleported onto a rooftop across the road. Once there, he pointed the gun into the air and proceeded to fire it.)

HARRY: Focus on *me*, you fuckers!!!

(Much to his bewilderment, however, rather than stopping and attempting to tackle him, the fleet of police cars suddenly picked up speed. Hightailing it out of the area as quickly as possible, the fleet of cars vanished from view in a matter of seconds. The threat to Angie had been averted. Harry, however, was far from impressed.)

HARRY: Seriously??? Call yourself a police force??? I discharged a fucking firearm!

It's your job to take me down! You cowardly bunch of cunts! You're supposed to run *to* crime, not run away from it!!!

(He shook his head.)

HARRY: Useless cunts.

(Just then, the world started to warp before his eyes. Fearing the worst, Harry could only wince.)

HARRY: What's wrong now, for fuck sake? All I did was stop a girl from getting herself shot by the police!

(A split second later, Harry once again found himself in the empty, white temple, seated on the only chair. As always, Stan was standing over him.)

HARRY: Seriously, Stan? What is it this time? I've been *trying* to do the mission like it says I should in the file, so what could the problem *possibly* be?

(Stan just stared down at him emptily.)

HARRY: Right... it's the gunshot, isn't it? The bullet came back down and killed someone, didn't it?

(Stan just continued to stare.)

HARRY: I'm right, aren't I? No! Wait... they wouldn't be hurt if *I* fired it.

(He winced.)

HARRY: It startled an old lady into having a fatal heart attack, didn't it?

(With no change in his facial expression, Stan then started to clap slowly and sarcastically.)

HARRY: Right... so it was that.

STAN: No, Harry. Nobody had a fatal heart attack. I wasn't applauding because you guessed correctly. I was applauding because you've just set a brand new standard for calamity. A standard no other angel will ever be able to compete with.

HARRY: Um...

STAN: I mean, we all knew you were a useless bell end; a disaster waiting to happen; you've proven that time and time again. But this time... mate... you've really gone and excelled yourself.

HARRY: Yeah... I feel like you're exaggerating, Stan.

STAN: Oh, do you now?

HARRY: Yeah. I was trying to go by the book. To convince Gary to let Angie get out of the gang, like I was supposed to in the first place. And I even doubled down by arranging a meeting with Angie in order to talk her into living a better life.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Well... we *actually* arranged a meeting to have sex, but that was never *my* intention! *I* was going to talk to her! To set her straight! What in all that was calamitous? Tell me!

STAN: The gunshot!

HARRY: Tell me less bluntly.

STAN: Okay.

(He gave him a patronising smile.)

STAN: It was the gunshot, Harry.

(He then patted him on the head.)

STAN: Better?

HARRY: Well, no. Try saying it *without* being condescending.

STAN: What's the point? You've got the message. It was the gunshot.

HARRY: Fine. What about it?

STAN: The police fled at high speed because of that.

HARRY: I know, right? Fucking cowards.

STAN: Actually, Harry, fleeing was their job.

HARRY: Since when?

STAN: Since they were assigned to escort the president of China!

HARRY: What?

STAN: You heard! That was his cavalcade you saw. They had no interest in Angie whatsoever! They just needed to get the Chinese president from A to B as safely as possible!

HARRY: Via Amberston?

STAN: That's right. He was on a state visit; heading from the airport to his hotel in London. MI6 had deemed Amberston the safest route.

(His shoulders slumped.)

STAN: Then *you* let loose with a firearm.

HARRY: Yeah, but that's because...

STAN: Let me finish!!!

(He furrowed his brow.)

STAN: *You* let loose with a firearm and now chaos is about to erupt.

HARRY: Um...

STAN: This is what happens next. Alerted to a potential assassination attempt, the police are now whizzing through town at a hundred miles per hour. And any second now...

(He raised a finger and glanced upwards.)

STAN: Ah! There it is.

(He then glowered at Harry again.)

STAN: The president's car was just hit by a lorry.

HARRY: Oh.

STAN: Don't say oh! At least be sorry!

HARRY: Right... sorry.

STAN: Not to me! The president! Or should I say former president; soon to be a guest here in the afterlife.

(Harry winced.)

HARRY: I killed the president of China?

STAN: That's right. And would you like to see the upshot?

(Harry hung his head sheepishly.)

HARRY: I don't think I would, no.

STAN: Well, tough shit. I'm gonna show you anyway.

(He smiled.)

STAN: You see, relations between the UK and China haven't exactly been great lately. Because the UK like playing the roll of the USA's faithful poodle, the Chinese don't trust them. In fact, the distrust is so great, it won't take long for the Chinese to start believing that the UK government had him killed on purpose.

(He then gestured for Harry to face the rectangular window that doubled as a viewing screen.)

STAN: And here's the upshot.

(An image of London then appeared on the map.)

HARRY: London?

STAN: Yeah. For now. But this time next week...

(The viewing screen then flashed a brilliant white and a mushroom cloud rose up from the centre of London. Unsurprisingly, Harry was mortified.)

HARRY: No!!!

STAN: Yup.

(He smiled.)

STAN: Let's look at it again, shall we?

HARRY: Let's not.

STAN: Oh, but I insist.

(He then nodded at the screen and it changed to an image of a cathedral.)

STAN: Ah, how quaint. St. Paul's Cathedral.

HARRY: Oh, boy...

STAN: It's stood there for centuries, you know? It's survived a whole host of terrorist plots in that time and even managed to stand strong during the blitz.

(He smiled ruefully.)

STAN: Then *you* happened! And...

(The screen turned into a brilliant white light again.)

STAN: There it goes. Cheerio, St. Paul's.

HARRY: But... but... all I did was...

STAN: Wait, there's more. You'll love this one.

HARRY: No, I won't!

STAN: But it's parliament. You succeeded where Guy Fawkes failed! Boom!!!

Westminster, no more!

(He smiled warmly then turned the screen off.)

STAN: But don't worry. It's not like in Terminator Two where the fiery heat rips the flesh from people's bones. Not in Central London anyway. People will just disintegrate, bones an' all.

HARRY: I think I'm gonna be sick!

STAN: Don't be. You've actually succeeded in your mission... in a way. Nikki won't have the *chance* to go off the rails now, because she'll be in London next week with her family. Right at the centre of the blast. So kudos on a job well done. As a special reward, I'll let you sweep up what's left of her, if you can find it.

HARRY: Stan...

STAN: Bring a dustpan and brush!

(Harry held his head in his hands.)

HARRY: How? How could it have gone so wrong?

STAN: You didn't read the file!

HARRY: Oh, fuck off with that!

STAN: Don't take that tone with me, you prick! You're a fucking liability you are!

You've just got an entire city obliterated!

(He shook his head angrily.)

STAN: You've destroyed London, for fuck sake. Even Hitler never managed that! Honestly, if you were around in the 1940's, he might have won the second world war.

(Harry sighed in dismay.)

HARRY: Ease off, will you, Stan? I'm devastated here, mate. Just do me a favour and stop being a cunt for five minutes!

STAN: I'll stop being a cunt when you stop being a walking fucking disaster!

HARRY: Mate...

STAN: What?

HARRY: How many are gonna die?

STAN: Actually...

HARRY: Don't sugar coat it. The exact number. Included those who die from the fallout.

STAN: Actually, Harry...

HARRY: Go on.

STAN: None!

HARRY: None?

STAN: That's right.

HARRY: None! How? You said Nikki was going to die; that's at least one.

STAN: Yeah...

(He folded his arms.)

STAN: I may have exaggerated.

(Harry's brow furrowed.)

HARRY: Excuse me?

(Stan leant forwards and scowled at him.)

STAN: I was *actually* showing you what *would* have happened if god hadn't dispatched the archangel and a dozen of his most trusted envoys to China to calm things down!

HARRY: Huh?

STAN: Mercifully, they'll manage to calm the Chinese down to the point where they'll simply impose economic sanctions.

(Harry drew a deep sigh of relief.)

HARRY: Oh, thank fuck!

(He then stood up furiously.)

HARRY: You scared the fuck out of me then!!!

(Stan stepping angrily into his face.)

STAN: Good!!! Do you realise the upshot of those economic sanctions? Do you???

HARRY: More expensive electrical goods?

STAN: No! You just turned the UK into Satan's fun-time theme park! He has his finger in every financial pie and he's going to exploit the economic uncertainty to the hilt.

There's going to be hardship in the UK the likes of which it hasn't seen since the nineteen-twenties!!! Because of *you*!!!

(He shook his head.)

STAN: Once he's finished in China, the archangel is going to come back and try to limit the damage, of course. And then he's going to come here and punch you in the face.

(He shook his fist.)

STAN: He exists to minimise the follies of mankind! He's not *meant* to be running around fixing the consequence of a moronic angel!!!

HARRY: Right.

(He gulped.)

HARRY: I'm fired, aren't I?

STAN: No! You're going to finish the job you were assigned.

(He nodded.)

STAN: *Then* you can be fired! But not before.

HARRY: Fine.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Being fired is the least I deserve.

(Stan nodded calmly.)

STAN: Sick of it, aren't you? Being an angel, I mean.

HARRY: Yes.

STAN: I see.

(He nodded.)

STAN: Then as a punishment, I'm going to keep you employed as one forever.

(Harry glowered at him.)

HARRY: You know what, Stan? You're a bad person.

STAN: And *you're* a salivating twat goblin.

HARRY: A what?

STAN: An idiot! An incompetent buffoon! A bumbling ball of ineptitude!

(He groaned despairingly.)

STAN: All you had to do was stop a schoolgirl from being bullied. That was it! A simple little task that I'd *normally* be afraid to assign to a five year-old for fear of insulting their intelligence! No task has ever *been* so simple! The file even told you how to do it, for fuck sake!

(He shook his head.)

STAN: And yet, here we are. Several days later. Has the bullying been stopped? No! On the contrary, it's escalated. Honestly, I'm lost for words, Harry!

(He furrowed his brow.)

STAN: In the process of trying to pull off this simplest of tasks, you've made the bullying worse, destroyed a police chief's life, razed a town to the ground and almost caused a nuclear war!!!

(He sighed.)

STAN: I've got half a mind to close this case and move on. You almost started World War Three, Harry! I'm not sure Nikki's worth all the grief!

(Harry gasped in horror.)

HARRY: How dare you?

STAN: Excuse me?

HARRY: She *is* worth it! *Every* human is worth it!

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Well... not *every* human. I wouldn't save the singer from Fine Young Cannibals if the file told me simply to turn the light on so he could see.

STAN: Yes, well, I wouldn't worry about that. He'll be taking the down escalator when the time comes. God is not a fan.

HARRY: Right. Well... that's good to know. But my point stands. Sort of! I should have said every *decent* human is worth the effort. And from what little I've seen Nikki seems decent enough to *me*.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: So I'm going to see to it that she's okay! Even if it kills me!

STAN: Yes, well, it's not *you* being killed that worries me. The entire population of Greater London, Harry!

HARRY: Oh, come off it. That was an outrageous bit of bad luck. What were the odds that the Chinese president being there when I fired the gun?

STAN: None...

(He sneered.)

STAN: If you'd read the file and completed the task two days ago.

HARRY: Stan...

STAN: It's true. You wouldn't have had to fire a gun at all!

(Harry gave an exasperated sigh.)

HARRY: Mate, I know I fucked up, but throwing it in my face every five seconds really isn't helping.

STAN: Annoys you, does it?

HARRY: Yes!

STAN: Then fuck off back down there and get the job done. Then I won't have to mention it ever again!

HARRY: Right...

(He gave him a suspicious glance.)

HARRY: You won't *have* to mention it, but will you?

STAN: Oh, I dare say it'll come up now and again. Eternity's a long time, Harry.

HARRY: Great.

STAN: Well, what did you expect? It was a monumental cock up!

HARRY: Well... yeah.

(Stan rolled his eyes.)

STAN: Go on. Piss off. I believe you have a date this evening.

HARRY: What?

(He flinched.)

HARRY: Oh, yeah. I forgot about that.

STAN: Then it's a good thing I'm here, isn't it?

HARRY: Yes...

STAN: Now get down there and make things right, for pity's sake.

(He growled.)

STAN: But if you even *think* of putting your hand up that girl's skirt, you'll burn in hell forever!

HARRY: I know!

STAN: Good! Make sure you do. Now bugger off!

(He then waved a dismissive arm in his direction. Moments later, Harry found himself back on the rooftop from whence he'd been summoned. The first thing he saw was a dozen police cars zooming past, en route to securing the scene of the Chinese president's accident. Watching them pass, he could only suck his teeth.)

HARRY: Right... yeah... so *that's* how it escalates so quickly. The old bill are going to be so busy with *this* incident, there'll be no police presence in town this evening to stop the protests from turning into a full scale riot.

(His shoulders instantly slumped.)

HARRY: And it's all down to me.

(He winced.)

HARRY: God must be wondering whose side I'm on.

(He then teleported away in dismay.)

At five to nine that evening, Harry found himself leaning against the moonlit North Gate to Ashwood Park. He'd spent the last hour or so *inside* the park, trying to formulate the exact words he'd use in order to set Angie back on the straight and narrow. Moderately pleased with what he'd come up with, he'd then headed to the gate, having changed into something more appropriate for a date. Satisfied that he looked the part, he then began the wait.

HARRY: She'd better not be late. I want to say my piece before I forget it.

(He scoffed at himself.)

HARRY: Obviously. I can't say it *after* I've forgotten it, can I?

(He then nodded sternly to psych himself up.)

HARRY: It'll be fine. I won't forget. I'm worried about nothing.

(He puffed out anxiously.)

HARRY: Hopefully she'll listen and I won't have to spend ages convincing her. I want to get to that riot and save people.

(He snarled.)

HARRY: Even though that cunt Celeste is gonna be there, belittling me with scoffs and scowls, I need to do my bit.

(Just then, he heard a female call out to him from twenty metres away.)

ANGIE: Hiya!

(Strutting towards him in a dress so short that it barely covered the basics, she offered him up a stunted wave. Harry quickly stood up straight then bowed.)

HARRY: Why the fuck am I bowing?

(He then stood tall again and saluted.)

HARRY: Welcome to...

(He growled at himself.)

HARRY: Now I'm saluting! What the fuck's that about?

(He puffed out then mumbled to himself.)

HARRY: Calm down. Don't let your nerves get the better of you.

(He flinched.)

HARRY: Wait a minute. Why am I nervous? It's not a *real* date, she's fifteen for fuck sake.

(He then looked enlighten.)

HARRY: And that's *why* I'm nervous. This is really creepy and I don't like it one bit.

(He then offered Angie up a smile.)

HARRY: Salutations.

ANGIE: What?

(Harry palmed his forehead.)

HARRY: I have no idea why I said that. I meant hello.

ANGIE: Right...

(She smiled.)

ANGIE: Let's go in the park.

(She then strode past him and through the gate.)

ANGIE: You brought a condom, I assume.

HARRY: There's one in my wallet.

ANGIE: Sweet. Should be a fun night then.

(Harry just smirked. He did indeed have a condom in his wallet. His wallet, however, was in a box of his personal affects on top of his grieving mother's wardrobe.)

HARRY: And hopefully a productive one.

ANGIE: What?

HARRY: Nothing.

ANGIE: Right.

(She smiled as they headed further into the darkened park together.)

ANGIE: So, do you take girls into the park at night often?

HARRY: No.

ANGIE: So this is a treat you concocted especially for me, is it?

HARRY: No. Coming to the park at night was *your* idea.

ANGIE: Right.

(She scowled at him.)

ANGIE: I *know* it was my idea! I was being... I dunno... like, cute or something, in it?

HARRY: Gotcha.

ANGIE: You seem nervous!

HARRY: Am I fuck!

ANGIE: What?

HARRY: What? I mean, no not really.

(Angie winked at him.)

ANGIE: You *should* be. I'm very good. And when I say good, I mean bad.

HARRY: Yeah...

ANGIE: So just chill out and enjoy it, bro.

HARRY: Right...

(Angie bit her lip.)

ANGIE: You're older than me.

HARRY: Yeah...

ANGIE: *Much* older than me. You were in the army.

HARRY: I suppose.

(Angie tutted playfully.)

ANGIE: Naughty. Taking an underage girl to the park for sex. Is that why you're so nervous?

(She chuckled.)

ANGIE: You could end up in jail.

(Harry scoffed then spoke without thinking.)

HARRY: I'd end up somewhere far worse than jail, Angie.

ANGIE: Oh?

(She looked enlightened.)

ANGIE: You mean hell, right?

(Fearing he'd been rumbled, Harry's hair stood on end.)

HARRY: Why would you say that?

ANGIE: Because I'm fifteen. Not legal. I'm assuming god wouldn't approve.

HARRY: Um...

ANGIE: Not that I believe in god.

(She scoffed.)

ANGIE: Like there's some all-powerful sky fairy up there.

HARRY: Oh. So when you said I'd end up in hell, you meant hell as a human understands it.

ANGIE: A human? What are you on about? Aren't *you* a human?

HARRY: Um... yes.

(He offered her a nervous smile.)

HARRY: Absolutely.

ANGIE: *Superhuman* from what I can gather.

HARRY: What?

ANGIE: Not many people are quick enough *or* strong enough to knock my *brother* out in one punch. And they wouldn't *dare* tie him up and threaten him with a chainsaw.

HARRY: Right.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: I just felt it needed doing.

ANGIE: Is that so?

HARRY: That is so. I'm just sorry that I dragged *you* into it.

(Angie smiled.)

ANGIE: Don't worry. I won't hold it against you.

HARRY: Thanks.

ANGIE: Gary does though.

(She then called out towards a darkened bush.)

ANGIE: He's all yours, bruv.

(Just then, Gary and seven of his friends emerged from the bush. All eight of them were pointing handguns at him.)

ANGIE: Good luck, Harry. I'm going to the protests.

HARRY: Right... so this was all a set up, was it?

ANGIE: Yeah.

(She shrugged.)

ANGIE: But you're getting what you came for.

(She then winked and headed away.)

ANGIE: Consider yourself fucked.

(As she headed off towards the gates, Gary stepped forwards and smirked.)

GARY: She's alright, my sister; know what I mean? She'd do anything for her big brother.

HARRY: How touching.

GARY: Right?

(He furrowed his brow.)

GARY: You might want to put your hands up, mate.

HARRY: No, I'm good.

GARY: Yeah. You are. That's the problem. Somehow you managed to knock me out without me even seeing it coming. You must have some serious skills, in it.

(He chuckled.)

GARY: But even *you* aren't a match for eight of *these* bad boys.

(He made an exhibition of waving his gun.)

GARY: Thirty-two calibre. Just enough to make you leak like a colostomy bag in a collision with a porcupine; you get me?

HARRY: Yeah... very colourful.

GARY: Colourful? Now you're being racist.

HARRY: Dude, we're both white.

GARY: Yeah, but *he* isn't.

(He pointed to the black lad next to him.)

HARRY: Yeah, but I wasn't talking to him.

GARY: Why? Because he's black?

HARRY: Oh, shut up.

GARY: Easy, bruv; I'm just having a laugh, in it.

(He smiled.)

GARY: I like to *entertain* my prey before I fill them with holes.

HARRY: How thoughtful of you.

GARY: What can I tell you? I'm a people pleaser, in it.

(He nodded.)

GARY: Now, would you like to die standing up or would you prefer to be kneeling?

HARRY: Neither. Dying is overrated.

GARY: Don't be so negative, Bruv. You might like it.

(He smiled.)

GARY: I know *I* will.

HARRY: You'll enjoy dying?

GARY: I mean, I'll enjoy *you* dying!

(He sneered.)

GARY: But then you knew that, didn't you?

HARRY: I did, yes.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Also, no you won't.

GARY: Won't what?

HARRY: Wow, you've got the memory of a goldfish. You won't enjoy seeing me die.

GARY: Yeah? And why's that?

HARRY: Because this is *not* my day to die, arse face.

(He then mumbled under his breath.)

HARRY: That day's *well* in the past.

GARY: What the fuck did you just mumble?

HARRY: What?

(Just then, an enlightened expression crossed his brow. In that moment he'd remembered the original instructions for his mission. Making the most of this opportunity, he shrugged then set about acting upon them.)

HARRY: Nothing important. I was just mumbling about how I'm gonna do your mum when you inevitably go to prison.

(Gary was livid.)

GARY: What did you say???

HARRY: You heard me.

(He beamed.)

HARRY: I'm looking forward to it, actually. I'll give her a right good seeing-to, via her backdoor probably; and there'll be nobody around to stop me.

GARY: You fucking...

HARRY: Because the way Angie's going, she'll probably be in the prison down the road. Leaving your dear old mum alone and vulnerable. Just I how I like my conquests.

(He smirked.)

HARRY: You really should kick Angie out of the gang, mate. Because if she's not around either, you mum's arse is mine.

(He grinned menacingly.)

HARRY: And I won't be bringing lubricant.

GARY: Nah. That's it, man. You're done.

(He then raised his weapon.)

GARY: Let him have it, boys!!!

(In that moment, all eight of them opened fire. Not about to give away his immortality, Harry instinctively played along. Pretending to be desperately dodging the bullets, he dived and rolled towards another set of bushes, keeping as low as possible.)

GARY: What the fuck, man? I could have sworn I got him with a headshot!

(One of his flunkies snarled.)

EDDIE: So could I.

(Gary growled.)

GARY: Just keep firing!!!

(He then watched as Harry dived into the thick bushes.)

GARY: Get after him!!!

(With that, they all charged into the bushes. Having just transformed into his non-corporeal form, Harry watched them bound past him and allowed himself a chuckle.)

HARRY: Idiots.

(He then headed out of the bushes and set off towards the town.)

HARRY: I'll go and see what I can about those riots now, I think.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Then tomorrow, I'll start shadowing Nikki, so I know that she's safe.

(Just then, Gary's furious voice rose up from the bushes behind him.)

GARY: Come on!!! Find the fucker! No cunt leaves this park until we do!!!

(Harry couldn't help but chuckle to himself.)

HARRY: In that case, you my friend, are in for a long and frustrating night.

(He then continued onwards, giggling.)

In the town centre, a short while later, now back in his corporeal form, Harry headed amongst of group of students. Wielding placards and demanding that the chief of the local police force be sent to prison, it was plain to see that there was a lot of tension and anger in the air. Hoping he could defuse it, he made his way to the front then stepped aside the ring leader. Having done so, he shouted at the top of his lungs.

HARRY: Boo!!! Down with the police!!! Murdering bastards!!!

(The lead protester, a music student who went by the name of Chopper, turned to face him and grimaced.)

CHOPPER: They murdered someone?

HARRY: What?

CHOPPER: I heard all the people they attacked survived!

HARRY: Right...

(Realising he'd allowed his personal grievance about his own death get the better of him, Harry winced.)

HARRY: Good point.

(He then yelled again.)

HARRY: Boo!!! Down with the police!!! Violent bastards!!!

CHOPPER: Much better.

(He smiled then offered Harry a handshake.)

CHOPPER: It's nice to meet you, by the way. The name's Chopper. Chopper Watson.

HARRY: Chopper?

CHOPPER: It's a nickname.

(He pouted sorrowfully.)

CHOPPER: My real name's Colin.

HARRY: You poor bastard.

CHOPPER: Tell me about it.

(Harry shook his hand then smiled.)

HARRY: I'm Harry by the way. Harry...

(Suddenly remembering that he wasn't allowed to use his surname in the mortal realm, on the grounds that it could be traced back to a dead person who looked just like him, he stuttered for a moment then said the first thing that came into his head.)

HARRY: Pecker!

CHOPPER: Really? Harry Pecker?

(Harry cringed.)

HARRY: Apparently so.

CHOPPER: I see.

(He chuckled.)

CHOPPER: Chopper and Pecker; I reckon you and I will get along really well.

(Harry chuckled.)

HARRY: Not according to the bible.

CHOPPER: Excuse me?

HARRY: You know, because it's homophobic.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: No wonder the twats who wrote it are burning in...

(He then remembered himself and gasped in horror.)

HARRY: Fuck.

CHOPPER: Burning in fuck?

HARRY: I misspoke.

CHOPPER: Right.

(He nodded.)

CHOPPER: Anyway, it was nice to meet you. As the organiser of this event, I have to go and make a speech now.

(He held up a megaphone.)

CHOPPER: Wish me luck.

HARRY: Right. Good luck. And, um... whatever you do, call for *peaceful* protest. Violence just undermines your cause.

CHOPPER: Absolutely. Of course, I will.

(With that, he nodded then stepped forward and climbed on top of a box. Having done so, he then put his megaphone to his lips and set to work.)

CHOPPER: Friends! Thank you for gathering in such numbers!

(Everybody cheered.)

CHOPPER: We're here tonight because twenty four hours ago, this town witnessed appalling acts of brutality by the police. Appalling brutality dished out to a group of innocent young men who were causing no trouble whatsoever!

(Harry didn't know whether to wince or growl at this point. As the one who'd committed the acts of brutality in question, he was highly embarrassed. At the same time, he knew that those so-called innocent young men were thugs who'd gathered to burn down an innocent family's house. Hearing them lauded as innocents made him angry.)

HARRY: Well said!

(He snarled to himself.)

HARRY: You're wrong, but you *said* it well.

CHOPPER: And so tonight, we must make our feelings known. The police are meant to protect us from harm and violence. Not make us victims of it!!!

HARRY: Now that I agree with.

(Just then, he felt an angry tapping on his shoulder. Instinctively, he turned around, only to see the snarling face of the angel, Celeste, staring back at him.)

CELESTE: What the hell are *you* doing here?

HARRY: I've come to help quell the violence.

CELESTE: And who asked you to do that???

HARRY: Nobody *asked*...

CELESTE: That's not your job! It's *my* job! *Your* job is to take care of your charge.

HARRY: Yeah, well...

CELESTE: I mean, do you even know where she is?

HARRY: At home... probably.

CELESTE: That's a no.

(She sighed with frustration.)

CELESTE: Look, just go away! You've caused *enough* trouble as it is!

HARRY: What trouble?

CELESTE: What do you mean, what trouble? You're the reason the protesters are here!!!

HARRY: Oh, yeah... *that* trouble.

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: I'm aware that this is all my doing, Celeste. You don't need to rub it in. Stan already did that. It's my fault, I know. And that's why I'm here. To make amends.

CELESTE: That's *not* your job!

HARRY: I know that! You literally just said as much!

CELESTE: Fuck off then!

(She snarled.)

CELESTE: This isn't your department, Harry! You don't know the first fucking thing about spiritual welfare, do you?

HARRY: Yes, I do.

CELESTE: Like what?

(Harry ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: Well... you take care of... you know... um... people's... spiritual welfare.

CELESTE: You literally just recited the *name* of my department. You don't have a clue how we operate, do you?

HARRY: I can learn!

CELESTE: No, you can't! You don't have the skillset! As such, you're literally going to be in the way.

HARRY: In the way?

CELESTE: Yes! And knowing what I know about you, I can see you trying to calm someone down and accidentally *doubling* their rage.

HARRY: Oh, come off it. I'm not *that* incompetent!

CELESTE: Your track record says you are!

HARRY: My track record is... um... deceptive.

CELESTE: No, it's not.

(She sighed.)

CELESTE: If you come across some guy hell bent on throwing a rock through a shop window, what are you gonna say?

HARRY: Well...

(He nodded to affirm his thinking.)

HARRY: I'll tell him it's *wrong* to punish an innocent shop owner for something the police did.

CELESTE: Wrong!

HARRY: What?

CELESTE: Nice work, Harry. He's now off to the police station to take it out on them instead. And inspired by your advice, which he pretty much took to mean he should *punish* the guilty party, he's upgraded from a rock to a Molotov cocktail!

HARRY: Oh, behave!

CELESTE: I am! That's how things escalate, you tit. He's an angry man! You didn't *quell* his anger though, you just told him to redirect it. Inspired him to focus his anger elsewhere. So off he'll go, and getting angrier and angrier by the second. I've seen a million times!

HARRY: No, that's...

CELESTE: I said I've seen it a million times! Are you calling me a liar?

HARRY: Well...

CELESTE: Please, Harry, just fuck off. The only way to calm these riots is to quell the anger in people's hearts. And you're not qualified!

(She scoffed.)

CELESTE: You're barely even qualified to do *your own* job. Now piss off and get your nose out of mine.

(Harry sighed with frustration.)

HARRY: Fine. You win. Just...

CELESTE: Just what?

HARRY: Tell me one thing and I'll be on my way.

CELESTE: Fine. What do you want to know?

(Harry looked into her eyes then gave her a knowing grin.)

HARRY: Did you and Alfie... you know... rock the headboard last night?

CELESTE: That's none of your business!

(She nodded.)

CELESTE: But yes. It was awesome. Now go away.

(She then strutted away through the crowd. Left behind, Harry sighed then shook his head.)

HARRY: Fuck it. I'll go. It makes *sense* not to get involved really. If I fuck up here, during another department's mission, Stan is gonna rip me a new one.

(He then about turned and eased his way through the protesters.)

HARRY: Why does this angel malarkey have to be so bloody complicated?

(He then edged onwards, through the tightly packed students until he finally emerged from the back of the pack. Delighted to have made it, he puffed out then glanced at his watch.)

HARRY: I might as well go to The Angel's Rest for a bit.

(He then groaned in defeat.)

HARRY: At least I would if I could. Stupid barman, going around barring me. What a wanker.

(He then glanced up and froze. Much to his dismay, Angie was staring back at him from roughly twenty feet away.)

HARRY: Fuck. That can't be good. She'll call her brother and he'll come here looking for me. With guns!

(He gulped.)

HARRY: Celeste was right. I shouldn't have come here.

(He then flinched at the sight of Angie reaching for her phone.)

HARRY: Nope!!!

(With that, he swiftly teleported over to her and swiped her phone from her hand.)

HARRY: Yoink!

ANGIE: Hey!!! That's mine!

HARRY: And you can have it back in the morning!

ANGIE: Give it to me!!!

(She then pulled a bewildered expression.)

ANGIE: Wait. How did you get over here so fast?

(Realising he'd teleported in public whilst in corporeal form, Harry gulped then glanced around himself. Mercifully, nobody was looking.)

HARRY: Phew.

(He flinched.)

HARRY: I mean, I'm supremely fit.

ANGIE: Whatever. Give me my phone, shit head!

HARRY: No. No, Angie. You tried to get me killed tonight. You set me up. So I'm confiscating your phone for the night. On paper it sounds like a pathetic attempt at revenge, but for a girl your age to go with her phone for twelve hours is going to be torture.

(Angie snarled at him.)

ANGIE: Give it back!

HARRY: Why? So you can phone your brother and tell him I'm here?

ANGIE: What I do with it is none of your concern!

HARRY: Really? You phoning someone so they can come and shoot me *isn't* my concern? Are you sure about that?

ANGIE: Just give me my phone.

HARRY: Fine.

(He smiled.)

HARRY: In the morning.

ANGIE: You rotten...

HARRY: What? Is it wrong of me to prevent you from trying to get me shot?

ANGIE: Yes!

(She glowered at him bitterly.)

ANGIE: You really need to be shot.

HARRY: Well, maybe so, but it's not happening *tonight*, sweet cheeks. Your brother is still in the park and you've got no way of contacting him.

ANGIE: Really? You've never heard of a payphone?

HARRY: Shit.

(He flinched.)

HARRY: But have you memorised his number?

ANGIE: Fuck.

HARRY: A-ha!

(Angie sighed.)

ANGIE: Fine.

(She then glowered at him coldly.)

ANGIE: I'll just have to walk over there and tell him in person then.

(She then started to head away. As she did so, Harry sucked his teeth anxiously.)

HARRY: I forgot she could do that.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: If I let her.

(He then hastened after her. Well aware that he'd probably follow her Angie had started to run. Not about to let her go, Harry remained on her heels as she charged into the shopping centre, past a series of shops then darted through a staff only entrance. Not about to lose her, Harry zoomed forth then bounded through the doors after her. He was now in a quiet, empty corridor. Ahead of him was nothing but a series of doors. Angie was nowhere to be seen.)

HARRY: Like you can get away that easily.

(He then switched to ethereal form and headed straight through the first door. Seeing nobody inside, he then headed out and went through the door opposite. It was a storage closet that would have been empty but for one dining chair.)

HARRY: Nope.

(He then ghosted through the wall and into the cupboard next door. Angie was crouching down inside it, peering through the keyhole. Watching her, Harry smirked then ghosted back into the corridor again. Almost instantly he transformed back into corporeal form then entered the cupboard next door. Moments later, he re-emerged with the chair.)

HARRY: Where could she have got to?

(Chuckling to himself, he then approached the door to where Angie was hiding and used the chair to wedge the door handle so she couldn't get out. Satisfied with his efforts, he smiled then knocked on the door.)

HARRY: Are you in there, Angie?

(Angie held her breath and tried to remain as quiet as possible.)

HARRY: No?

(He smiled.)

HARRY: That's good then. Now I don't have to feel bad about jamming the door.

(Angie's eyes bulged but she remained silent.)

HARRY: Yeah, that's a relief. If she *was* in there, she'd be stuck in there all night.

(Angie's voice then rose up from inside the cupboard.)

ANGIE: You'd better not have...

(She then started frantically trying to turn the door handle.)

ANGIE: No!!! Open it!

HARRY: What for? You're not in there.

ANGIE: Yes, I am! Let me out.

HARRY: No, I'm good, thanks.

ANGIE: Let me out! I'm claustrophobic!

HARRY: Please. If you were claustrophobic, you wouldn't have gone in there.

ANGIE: I thought I could get out again! Please, let me out! I won't tell my brother where you are! I swear!!!

(She then burst into tears.)

HARRY: Angie, you're a liar.

ANGIE: I'm not!

HARRY: Wow. Seriously? You lead me into an ambush on the false premise of a date, literally half an hour ago!

ANGIE: But I'm not lying now. I'm really scared.

HARRY: You'll be fine. Like I said, someone's bound to find you in the morning. See you.

(He then strutted away, rubbing his hands together.)

HARRY: That nipped that nonsense in the bud.

(As he continued on his way, however, he started to feel uneasy.)

HARRY: Hmm...

(He then stopped and bit his lip.)

HARRY: If she really *is* claustrophobic, there's a chance she'll hyperventilate. Not to mention the fact she'll be traumatised.

(He mused to himself.)

HARRY: Which could be the exactly what she needs. A little humility.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Nah. She's lying about being claustrophobic, I'm sure of it. And she most definitely deserves the lesson in humility. Fuck it, I'll leave her in there.

(He then started to strut away again before quickly about turning and heading back towards the cupboard.)

HARRY: On seconds thoughts, locking her in a building that's about to be set on fire probably isn't a good idea.

(He then paced up to the door and sighed to himself.)

HARRY: I can't lock her in, but I can't let her run to her brother either. Which leaves me only one course of action.

(With that, he pulled the chair away from the door and swung it open. Angie instantly raced out of it, whimpering and sobbing.)

ANGIE: You total and utter...

HARRY: Bye!

(He then punched her in the face to render her unconscious. Having watched her plop to the ground, he could only sigh to himself.)

HARRY: Punching a girl in the face is never gonna sit right with me.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: But then again, she wouldn't have felt it; what with me being an angel an' all. And with that gob on her, she's probably gonna get punched a lot during her lifetime, so it *makes sense* to get her used to it, I suppose.

(He then bent down and scooped her up.)

HARRY: Come on, let's take you home.

(With that, he vanished into the ether with her. Moments later, he reappeared outside her house.)

HARRY: Okay...

(He glanced at the upstairs windows then grinned.)

HARRY: Well, that was easy.

(Through one of the windows he could see a poster of a boy band and a series of teddy bears.)

HARRY: That's definitely a girl's room and she's doesn't have any sisters, so...

(With that, he teleported in the room. Having done so, however, he was greeted by the sight of Angie's mum having raucous, kinky sex with her boyfriend. At once, his eyes bulged and he teleported into the room next door. At last, he'd achieved success. This was either Angie's room or Gary had a dark secret. He could see a plethora of girly outfits through the open wardrobe door and the dresser was awash with makeup containers.)

HARRY: Yup. This is the place.

(He then laid her down on the bed.)

HARRY: Sweet dreams, you annoying pain in the arse.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: I'll never get through to you, will I?

(And with a shake of the head, he teleported out again.)

Having left Angie asleep on her bed, Harry teleported back to his favourite bench in the park then transformed into his ethereal form. Having made himself comfortable, he sighed then glanced to the heavens.

HARRY: Can't you do something about that fucking Gary, lord?

(He shook his head then froze.)

HARRY: Wait. He did. He sent me.

(He furrowed his brow then tried again.)

HARRY: Do something sensible next time! What was the point in sending *me*?

(He lowered his head.)

HARRY: I'm fucking useless. This mission just goes sideways and backwards with *me* at the helm. I had one job tonight. Trying to talk Angie out of becoming a thug. And look how that turned out. I traumatised her by locking her in a cupboard then punched her in the face. God's not gonna like that.

(He grimaced skyward.)

HARRY: The fact she'd just tried to get me shot *isn't* going to garner me any sympathy either, is it?

(He sighed.)

HARRY: It certainly won't soften *Stan's* assessment of my evening. There's no way he's not gonna bring *this* one up. I'm not supposed to traumatise kids. And I'm certainly not supposed to keep knocking them out.

(He shook his head.)

HARRY: I'm not cut out for all this angel malarkey. What seems like the obvious next step to *me* just leads to a bloody calamity, every fucking time. It's pissing me off to the point where I think I'd *rather* be reborn in Milton Keynes than keep going through *this* bollocks.

(He gave a stifled laugh.)

HARRY: Keep Nikki Palmer safe and on the right path, it said. Nikki Palmer. Fuck sake. I've been working that girl's case for days and I've barely seen her. I've spent most of my time chasing Gary and Angie around while I try to fix a catalogue of my own fuck ups.

(He then started to chuckle.)

HARRY: And my old teacher said I'd never amount to anything. Well, look at me now, you cunt. I've achieved the title of the world's most useless angel in some considerable style. Within three months! And that's despite thousands of years worth of competition!

(He beamed arrogantly then raised a triumphant fist.)

HARRY: El numero uno!

(His entire body then slumped.)

HARRY: Being dead sucks. I can't even go the pub anymore. This job's no fun at all.

(Just then, Gary and three of his chums raced past.)

GARY: You two head for the lake. You come with me. We'll hunt through the bushes again. He's around here somewhere and nobody leaves until we've killed the cunt.

(The four of them then charged away. Watching them go, Harry couldn't help but chuckle.)

HARRY: I stand corrected. That *was* fun. Enjoy your evening, lads.

(Suddenly, Stan appeared at his side, giving him quite the start.)

HARRY: Cauliflower!!!

STAN: What?

HARRY: Sorry, you startled me.

STAN: So you yelled cauliflower?

HARRY: It's a common reaction!

STAN: No, it's...

(He shook his head.)

STAN: Never mind that, you've got work to do.

HARRY: Right after you bollock me for tonight's debacle, right?

STAN: No. Tonight's debacle was par for the course when you're involved. Bollocking you for it can wait.

(He stared into his eyes urgently.)

STAN: I need you to head to Nikki's house right now. Make sure you stay with her at all times until otherwise instructed.

HARRY: Oh. Okay. Why?

STAN: Just do it; she's in serious danger!

(He snarled.)

STAN: I mean it, Harry! Don't let her out of your sight!

(He then vanished again, leaving a baffled Harry in his wake.)

HARRY: What the fuck was that all about?

(An angry voice then echoed down to him from above.)

STAN: Now, you cunt!!!

HARRY: Shit!

(Somewhat flustered, he then teleported away. Moments later, he arrived in the Palmer household, standing on a large pot plant. Rueing his poor landing, he furrowed his brow then stepped down. Mercifully, in his ethereal form, he couldn't hurt the plant. Mightily relieved by that fact, he puffed out then glanced around. Nikki's parents and her younger brother were all watching the television. Nikki, however, was nowhere to be seen.)

HARRY: Fuck. If she's gone out, she could be anywhere.

(An angry voice then entered his head.)

STAN: She's a teenage girl! She's in her room, obviously! I wouldn't have told you to go to her house otherwise, you cock!

(Harry was not impressed.)

HARRY: Seriously, Stan? You're gonna micromanage me via telepathic insults now, are you?

STAN: That wasn't an insult. *This* is an insult...

HARRY: Don't bother!

(With that, he stomped away and ghosted through the living room door. A few moments later, once he'd ascended the stairs, he glanced about himself then nodded. Identifying Nikki's room was easy. There were four doors at the top of the landing, three were open and lost to the darkness. The fourth was closed and he could see light emanating from beneath it.)

HARRY: Yup. That's the one.

(He took one step forward, however, before freezing nervously.)

HARRY: But then again, it might be the khazi. I really don't fancy strolling in there, only to find her sitting on the bog, straining to unclog. I'll wait out here.

(Stan's voice then rose up once again.)

STAN: Just go, you prick.

HARRY: Stan...

STAN: Do you want a slap?

HARRY: Fine. I'm going, I'm going.

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: Though I'd like to put on my record my displeasure at being micromanaged.

STAN: Understood. And *I'd* like to put on record the fact you're a complete and utter...

HARRY: Understood!

(He then ghosted through the door and emerged inside Nikki's room.)

HARRY: Thank fuck. It's not the shitter.

(He then glanced across the room, starting with the bed. Nikki was sitting up, beneath the covers, quietly reading a book. The contrast between her behaviour and that of Angie was indeed stark. Angie was an angry young lady; wild in so many ways. Nikki was quite clearly anything but. Delighted to see it, Harry smiled then glanced around at the

rest of her room. All of her posters were of fish and dolphins. There was also a photo of Nikki and her parents in scuba gear. Intrigued, Harry stepped closer to take a look, when he noticed a pile of books on a shelf. They were all about sea life and marine biology. Many were on the subject of cleaning up the oceans. Observing them, Harry nodded to himself.)

HARRY: So that's why you're so important to the brass upstairs. You give a shit about the planet.

(He mused to himself.)

HARRY: You'll probably grow up to do great things as a marine biologist or something.

(He then turned and faced the bed, where Nikki was turning a page in her book.)

HARRY: What a good girl. When I was her age, all I wanted to do was join a band.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: And yet it never occurred to me to learn an instrument. No wonder my life didn't go anywhere. I had a head full of dreams, but the motivation of a sloth after an all night drinking binge.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: Still... that's good in a way. I was down to die at a young age, so striving would have been pointless.

(He then tilted his head to see what she was reading.)

HARRY: What's that say? The...

(His face then dropped.)

HARRY: Right. That sounds like porn to me.

(He furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: So much for her being a good girl.

(He then held up his palm to caution himself.)

HARRY: No, Harry, that's not fair. Everybody looks at porn. Even good people. It's natural to be curious, what with arousal being an instrument of pleasure, bestowed by god. Don't judge her, that's not right.

(He then started to twitch uncomfortably.)

HARRY: I used to read porn before bed. Then I'd...

(He scratched behind his ear.)

HARRY: I'd... do that.

(He then marched towards the door.)

HARRY: I'll wait outside until she falls asleep, I think.

(With that, he ghosted through the door, then nodded defiantly.)

HARRY: Yup. I'm not gonna hang around while she...

(He then jumped backwards, having been given quite a start. Stan had appeared right in front of him.)

STAN: What are you doing???

HARRY: Fuck sake, Stan. I almost had a heart attack and died again.

STAN: Harry, I asked you a question.

HARRY: Right.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: And what was it?

STAN: I asked what you're doing!

HARRY: Giving her some privacy, mate.

STAN: Oh, I see.

(He smiled.)

STAN: That's excellent then. Sorry, to trouble you.

HARRY: It's fine.

STAN: I was being facetious!

HARRY: Oh.

STAN: I didn't *tell* you to give her privacy! Your instruction was to stay with her at all times.

HARRY: But, Stan...

STAN: But Stan nothing! Get in there!

HARRY: Mate, no. I think she's about to...

(He grimaced then mimicked someone playing the guitar.)

STAN: She's about to belt out a tune on a banjo?

HARRY: No, you tit. She's about to... do what teenagers do.

STAN: Grunt and act all hard done by?

HARRY: No, you idiot. She's about to have a strum.

STAN: A strum?

HARRY: Yeah. She's about to partake in self-service!

STAN: What are you on about, you twat?

HARRY: She's gonna, you know... twang!

STAN: I'm gonna drown you if you don't...

HARRY: She's about to masturbate, Stan.

STAN: What?

HARRY: Masturbate. Flick the bean. Ring the devil's doorbell.

STAN: I know what masturbate means!

(He furrowed his brow.)

STAN: Why the hell would you think that?

HARRY: She was reading a dirty book!

STAN: Really?

HARRY: Yeah.

STAN: And you're sure, are you?

(Harry scoffed.)

HARRY: Of course I am. The *title* of the book gave it away. The Call of the Wild. If that's not about party girls getting up to outlandishly filthy things, then I don't know what is.

(Stan blinked at him through unimpressed eyes, before speaking up calmly.)

STAN: Harry.

HARRY: Yeah.

STAN: The Call of the Wild is a novel by Jack London. It's about sled dogs in the Yukon, during the gold rush. You ridiculous bell end!

(Harry looked to him uneasily then bit his lip.)

HARRY: Right... so... not about wild girls...

STAN: They don't even get a mention.

HARRY: And there's no raunchiness...

STAN: None.

HARRY: Right...

(He scratched his head sheepishly.)

HARRY: I should get back in there really, shouldn't I?

STAN: Yes, you should.

HARRY: Right.

STAN: But that can wait another thirty seconds. First I want to enlighten you to what a hopeless gimp you are.

HARRY: Actually, can we skip this part and...

STAN: No. No, we can't. *This* is what I came down here to tell you.

HARRY: You didn't come down just to shout at me for not being in her room?

STAN: No. The fact that I caught you, once again, failing to follow a simple instruction was just bad luck on your part.

HARRY: Right.

STAN: I came here to tell you *why* you have to be at Nikki's side from now on.

HARRY: Really? Only you didn't seem *interested* in telling me when you asked me why earlier. You just shouted at me to come here.

STAN: Yes. And you did. And now you're where you're needed, I can explain.

HARRY: Oh, okay.

STAN: You're here, Harry, because once again, your incompetence has plunged poor Nikki right in the shit.

HARRY: What? How?

STAN: I'm coming to that, you cockwomble.

(He rolled his eyes.)

STAN: Gary will come home this evening, enraged by his failure to shoot you.

HARRY: I make no apology for that.

STAN: Oh, but you should. You see, once Angie comes to, Gary is going to find out that while he was hunting high and low for you in the park getting more and more frustrated and angry by the second, you were in town, where you locked his sister in a cupboard then punched her in the face.

HARRY: Um...

STAN: He's gonna take the news extremely badly and take his rage out on young Nikki in there. His logic being, that if *you* won't die, Nikki has to.

HARRY: Fuck!

STAN: That's right. Fuck. As in, I'm Harry and I'm a fuckwit.

HARRY: Mate...

STAN: Seriously, Harry, why do you hate that poor girl?

HARRY: What do you mean?

STAN: Did Nikki harm you in some way when you were alive? Is that it?

HARRY: Stan, you're being ridiculous.

STAN: Am I? Only, everything you do to protect that poor kid seems to endanger her tenfold. It has to be personal.

HARRY: No, mate.

STAN: Fair enough. Then it must be because you're a cock, as I suspected.

HARRY: Wow. That's...

STAN: Just get in there, will you? And stay there all night.

HARRY: All night???

STAN: If you have to.

HARRY: But I *don't* have to, do I? In fact, that'd be extremely unproductive. It'd make *more* sense to just tell me when Gary plans to attack so I can...

STAN: You can do what?

HARRY: I can...

STAN: Go round there and knock him out again?

(Harry scratched behind his ear.)

HARRY: Well, yeah.

STAN: That solves nothing, you tit! When are you gonna learn that?

HARRY: Well...

STAN: You running around trying to intervene just makes things worse. Literally your only move is to render Gary and Angie unconscious. It doesn't work! In fact, it has the *opposite* effect! So from now on, you're on bodyguard duty. Full time. Waiting for the attack, so you can thwart it. Sorry, Harry, it has to be like that, because when you get *proactive* disaster follows.

(He nodded.)

STAN: No more. You're not to leave her side. That way you can't do any further damage.

(He then pointed at Nikki's door.)

STAN: Now get in there and *stay* in there!!!

HARRY: Right.

STAN: And I *mean* stay in there. Even if she decides to, how did you put it, make beans from the devil's ding dong.

(Harry grimaced.)

HARRY: I can assure you I didn't put it like *that*.

STAN: Oh, who cares? I died centuries ago; I'm not up-to-date with modern slang, am I?

(He rolled his eyes.)

STAN: The point is, stay by her side. No matter what.

HARRY: Even when she's on the shitter?

STAN: Even then! Now go!

(He then teleported away. Left behind, Harry could only sigh.)

HARRY: Right. Well, this is gonna suck.

(He then ghosted back into Nikki's room again.)

The following morning, Angie came down to breakfast with a bewildered expression on her face. Scratching her head, she entered the kitchen then stepped up to the kettle, grimacing uneasily. It was a discomfort that very quickly caught the attention of her mother and her brother, who were sitting at the kitchen table.

MOTHER: Are you alright, love?

(Angie whimpered.)

ANGIE: It wasn't my fault.

MOTHER: What wasn't?

GARY: Yeah, what wasn't?

(Angie glanced at them both nervously.)

ANGIE: Right... so... I don't do anything embarrassing last night then?

MOTHER: Not that I know of.

GARY: Why?

ANGIE: Well... I don't remember coming home last night.

(Her mother frowned.)

MOTHER: Were you drinking?

ANGIE: No!

MOTHER: Well, you'd better not have been smoking those turnips, or whatever they're called.

GARY: Weed?

MOTHER: Yeah, that.

GARY: Right. Where the hell did you get turnips from?

MOTHER: I don't know. The same place you two got those ridiculous voices from.

ANGIE: This is how kids talk nowadays, mum.

MOTHER: Sure.

(She sighed with disappointed.)

MOTHER: Hoodlum kids.

ANGIE: Don't start, mum. I just want to have a cup of tea.

MOTHER: There's *tea* here!

(She pointed to the teapot on the table. Angie was most surprised.)

ANGIE: Oh. You made a pot.

MOTHER: Of course, I did. I make one *every* morning. Have you only just noticed?

ANGIE: Well... yes, actually.

MOTHER: Really? How did you *think* I made tea? In a cup with a teabag?

(She scoffed.)

MOTHER: We're not a family of savages, Angie.

(She pouted.)

MOTHER: *Despite* you and your brother's best efforts to turn us into one.

GARY: Mum...

MOTHER: Don't. I don't want to hear it. I'm going to work.

(She then upped and headed out of the kitchen.)

ANGIE: What's eating her?

GARY: Time of the month probably, in it.

ANGIE: Hmm...

GARY: So how come you can't remember coming home? How stoned *were* you?

(Angie sat at the table and shrugged.)

ANGIE: I wasn't.

GARY: Oh?

ANGIE: I think it had something to do with that Harry person.

(Gary's nostrils flared.)

GARY: That cunt? I was searching for him in the park until two in the morning!

ANGIE: He wasn't there.

GARY: Well, I know that now, don't I?

ANGIE: He turned up in town about half an hour after *you* should have shot him.

(Gary winced.)

GARY: Yeah, well, let's not discuss that.

ANGIE: What happened? Did all eight of you miss?

GARY: We're not talking about *my* night, Angie! I want to know what happened to *you*!

ANGIE: Well, like I said, Harry turned up in town.

GARY: And you didn't think to ring me? You must have known I'd be looking for him.

ANGIE: I tried to, but he stole my phone.

GARY: Wanker.

ANGIE: Then he got really nasty, in it. I told him I was going to go to the park to tell you where to find him, so he locked me in a cupboard.

GARY: What??? You get claustrophobia!

ANGIE: I know. I was terrified.

GARY: How long were you in there for?

ANGIE: Not long. But I *thought* I was gonna be in there all night.

(She furrowed her brow.)

ANGIE: But he let me out shortly afterwards, just so he could punch me in the face.

(She sighed.)

ANGIE: I don't remember anything after that. I must have staggered home on autopilot or something.

GARY: I see.

(He then rose from the table with steam practically bellowing from his ears.)

GARY: Wanker! Cunt! Mother fucker! He stole my claustrophobic sister's phone then locked her in a fucking cupboard!

ANGIE: Then he punched me in the face!

GARY: Then he punched her in the face!

(He growled.)

GARY: Nah. Too much. That's it now. There's no way in hell *that's* gonna go unpunished! That fucker needs to learn a lesson.

(Angie's face lit up.)

ANGIE: You're gonna kill him?

GARY: Yeah, right. I've *tried* that. Nah, fuck that shit. This time I'm gonna hit him where it hurts!

(Angie beamed.)

ANGIE: In the balls!!!

GARY: Um... no...

(He gave her a sideways glance then resumed his angry rant.)

GARY: He's been a thorn in our sides, Angie. A proper pain in our arses. All to protect that Nikki bird at your school.

ANGIE: Bitch.

GARY: Well if *she's* his reason for doing all that then the answer's obvious. Let's take *away* his motivation.

ANGIE: Meaning?

GARY: Meaning I'm going back to my *original* plan.

(Angie grimaced.)

ANGIE: You're gonna kill Nikki?

GARY: That's *exactly* what I'm gonna do!

ANGIE: Um...

GARY: I know you don't agree with it, but I don't give a fuck anymore. He punched you in the face because of her and I aint having it. The way I see it, if *she's* not around, then *he's* got no reason to stick around either.

(He nodded.)

GARY: I'm finishing this once and for all.

ANGIE: But...

GARY: No, buts!

ANGIE: Gary, I don't care if you kill Harry. He threw me out of window then tied us to chairs inside that warehouse. He's horrible. But Nikki...

GARY: She's the *reason* you got thrown out of a window!

ANGIE: Well, yeah, but... she hasn't actually done anything to *me* personally.

GARY: No? How do you know she didn't *ask* him to tie us to chairs? How do you know she didn't ask him to punch you in the face?

ANGIE: Well...

GARY: You don't, do you?

(He nodded sternly.)

GARY: Nope. It ends here and it ends now.

(He ruffled his neck.)

GARY: Well... not here, obviously. Nikki isn't here. Oh, you know what I meant!

(He then stormed out of the door. Left behind, Angie could only whimper.)

ANGIE: Aw, crap. This is starting to get a little too much for me.

(She then hung her head and sighed.)

Some twenty minutes later, at the Palmer Household, Nikki was finishing up her breakfast at the kitchen table. Her father had already left for work, so Harry had helped himself to his chair. Nikki's younger brother was also at the table. Their mother was standing at the sink, doing some washing-up. Watching the two kids eat, Harry couldn't help but grin. Her brother scoffed his breakfast like he hadn't eaten in weeks. Nikki on the other hand, took tentative bites, almost as if she was scared her food had been laced with poison. The contrast was indeed stark.

HARRY: I doubt there's a prize for guessing who finishes first.

(Just then, their mother turned to face them and smiled.)

MOTHER: Have you got everything ready for school? You need to get going in a minute.

(Nikki's brother replied without looking up.)

BROTHER: Yes.

NIKKI: I got everything ready last night.

BROTHER: Nerd.

NIKKI: Shut up, you.

(She pushed her plate away.)

NIKKI: I can't eat any more.

MOTHER: You can't be full *already*. You've only had three slices of toast and a bowl of cereal.

NIKKI: Only?

(She smiled.)

NIKKI: It's more than enough, mum.

MOTHER: Fine.

(She nodded.)

MOTHER: As long as you're sure.

NIKKI: I am. If anything, it was way too much. As always.

MOTHER: Always?

NIKKI: You always make too much food, mum.

MOTHER: Well... maybe. But it's better than not making enough.

(Nikki's brother beamed.)

BROTHER: Hallelujah!

MOTHER: Your nan used to skimp on food and I hated it. You should never skimp.

(Nikki groaned.)

NIKKI: Oh, here we go.

MOTHER: And speaking of skimpy, your skirt is way too short!

NIKKI: *Your* skirt is way too short!

MOTHER: I'm wearing leggings!

NIKKI: Then we're *both* wrong. My skirt is fine. *Everyone* wears it like this.

BROTHER: Except the boys.

NIKKI: Shut up, pipsqueak,

(With that, she climbed to her feet, ruffled her neck then headed for the hallway.)

NIKKI: I'm going to school.

(Harry flinched then quickly hurried after her. He was resolved to being her bodyguard for the day and wasn't about to let her head off without him, even for a moment.)

HARRY: Not without me, you don't.

(He then raced out into the hallway where Nikki was sitting on the floor, pulling her shoes on.)

HARRY: I'm sticking to you like glue.

(He then grimaced.)

HARRY: Or not. I'd better check Gary's not outside, waiting in the bush with a gun. If he fires it while I'm *behind* you, it's game over.

(He then ghosted through the front door. As soon as he was outside, he then glanced up and down the street, before heading for some bushes at the end of the garden.)

HARRY: If you're in here, fuck-face, I'm gonna...

(He winced.)

HARRY: Knock you out again.

(He then snarled at himself.)

HARRY: Stan was right. That's literally my *only* tactic.

(Not about to let it get to him, he then shook his head to clear away any negative thoughts.)

HARRY: That's not true, actually. I can always disarm him, like I disarmed Angie.

(He bit his lip.)

HARRY: But then again, *she* left her gun where it was easy to snatch.

(He puffed out.)

HARRY: Doesn't matter. For now, I just need to keep her safe; no matter what. If that means knocking Gary out, so be it.

(He then resumed hunting the nearby foliage. After a solid minute, in which he ghosted around the entire front garden twice, he was satisfied that no ambush would be forthcoming. Yet. Not about to let his guard down, he then headed for the front door.)

HARRY: All clear, young lady. Out you come.

(He nodded defiantly.)

HARRY: Let's get you off to school safely, shall we?

(He then folded his arms.)

HARRY: Whenever you're ready.

(After a further minute of waiting, he then furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: Come on!

(More than a tad miffed, he then ghosted back into the hallway. There was no sign of Nikki whatsoever.)

HARRY: Right. She must have gone to the toilet or something.

(He then heard her mother speaking to her son in the kitchen.)

MOTHER: Your poor sister. It's not right, you know? Ever since she saw that thug with a knife the other day, she's been too scared to go out of the *front* door.

(In that moment, Harry's heart sunk. He'd tried to do the right thing. To exercise the utmost caution in the course of protecting his charge. In doing so, however, he'd inadvertently let her head out without him. Desperate to rectify the mistake, he instantly put his head down and zoomed through the house, before passing through the back garden and emerging beyond the back gate. He found himself in a wide alleyway, opposite a tall, wooden fence. Nikki was nowhere to be seen.)

HARRY: Fucking wank bubbles!!!

(He snarled then focussed hard.)

HARRY: School, school, school... this way!

(He then shot off down the alley in the direction of the school.)

HARRY: Bollocks! If anything happens to her, it's entirely my fucking fault. I don't want to live with a guilt like *that* hanging over me!

(Fearing the worst, he charged onwards to the end of the alley, chastising himself frantically. He then came to a thundering halt. From where he was standing, there were two routes she could have taken. She could have gone to the left, the route to school via the river bridge, or to the right, the route to school via the pedestrian subway.)

HARRY: Fuck! Which way?

(He whimpered.)

HARRY: Come on, god; help me out here! Give me a sign!!!

(He then stood there, blinking nonchalantly as the wind dropped and silence descended. It was the stillest the town had been all morning.)

HARRY: Right. Okay. I'll take that as a no, shall I?

(With a frustrated sigh, he then raced away to his right.)

HARRY: Thank fuck I'm fast! I'll run to the subway and if I haven't caught her up by then, I'll know she went the other way.

(With his head down, he bounded to the end of the road, then whizzed around the corner, determined to reach the subway as quickly as possible. He did so whilst chastising himself liberally.)

HARRY: How could I let this happen??? How? All I had to do was stay by her side, like Stan *told* me to! But no. I had to take my bodyguard role too seriously and hunt through the garden first, didn't I? Twat! That was *not* in my remit!

(He shook his head with annoyance.)

HARRY: I can't believe this. Why do I insist on making everything hard for myself? All I had to do was follow Stan's instructions. Stay with Nikki at all times. At all times! It

couldn't have been simpler! It just couldn't. Instead, I had to go all Kevin Costner in that film about a bodyguard.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: What was *that* called?

(An enlightened expression then crossed his brow.)

HARRY: That's it. The Bodyguard!

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: What a load of shit that was.

(With a snarl, he then raced around the corner and bounded towards the entrance to the subway.)

HARRY: Fuck! No sign! Unless she's...

(He growled.)

HARRY: No! There's no way she got this far; not without a fucking moped. I was going at angel speed, for pity's sake. She must have gone the other way.

(He then came to a screeching halt, before teleporting back to the end of the alley near Nikki's house.)

HARRY: Go!

(He then zoomed off to the left.)

HARRY: She'll be halfway *across* that bridge by now.

(He mused to himself.)

HARRY: Maybe I should teleport *there*.

(He then growled.)

HARRY: No, you cock. That'd be stupid. You could teleport there, only to find out Gary snatched her before she got there. Just... for once in your life... do it sensibly!

(He then zoomed forth even harder.)

HARRY: For fuck sake. Go faster, legs. Without me, she's a sitting duck, just waiting for *that* vengeful, murderous bastard to pick her off.

(He winced.)

HARRY: I just hope he woke up late or something, because I've given him a massive window of opportunity here. No wonder Stan thinks I'm a bell end.

(He then grimaced.)

HARRY: I'm not sure he has to vocalise that opinion so forcefully though. I mean, there is such a thing as tact and diplomacy.

(He then shook his head to clear his thoughts.)

HARRY: Concentrate, you prick. All that matters now is finding Nikki.

(Wearing a determined snarl, he then whizzed to the end of the street, before zooming forth around the corner. Grimacing to force as much speed in his legs as he could muster, he then bounded onwards to the next corner and sped around it. The bridge was now in sight.)

HARRY: Right! Now...

(His eyes then lit up. Roughly one hundred metres ahead, Nikki was strolling across the bridge without a care in the world. Smiling as she glanced through the railings at the river, one hundred and twenty feet below, she was very much at peace.)

HARRY: Thank fuck. *She's* there and there's no sign of that cunt, Gary. Result! Once I've caught her up, normal service can be resumed.

(He then slowed from a sprint to a moderately fast jog.)

HARRY: Okay. Lesson learned. Stick by her side, no matter what. I get it now. Right now she's safe and all I have to do is keep it that way.

(He glanced to the heavens.)

HARRY: Message received, loud and clear, God, me old mate.

(Unfortunately, he'd picked a terrible time to look away. As soon as he averted his gaze, Gary emerged from behind a pillar, halfway across the bridge. He was literally only two metres away from Nikki.)

GARY: Hello, Nikki.

NIKKI: What? Who are...

(Gary then charged at her, forcing her to scream in terror. Alerted by her scream, Harry swiftly glanced down the bridge. At one his eyes bulged.)

HARRY: No!!!

(He then teleported over to them immediately. Horrifyingly, he arrived just in time to see the soles of Nikki's shoes as she flew over the side of the bridge, courtesy of Gary's cowardly attack.)

HARRY: Fuck!!!

(Tumbling to a certain death, Nikki screamed in horror.)

NIKKI: No!!!

(Overcome with sheer and absolute terror, she then screamed for her mum. Excruciating pain, followed by the finality of death were now only milliseconds away. Her young life was about to be expunged and the fear that filled her heart went beyond imagination. Before she could quite hit the water, however, she plopped safely into Harry's arms. Without a moment's delay, he'd teleported beneath her, sprung his wings then zoomed in to catch her. Exposed as an angel to anyone who happened to be watching, including Gary, he then flew her towards the river bank. He did so with her staring at him in utter disbelief. She felt like she was dreaming. It was the only logical conclusion she could possibly reach. She'd been saved from certain death by an angel. This was the stuff of films; a far cry from the realities of life. It *had* to be a dream. Thinking it over as she stared at Harry with wide-eyes, she could only mumble in bewilderment.)

NIKKI: A dream?

(Harry just smiled at her.)

HARRY: Relax, Nikki.

NIKKI: I'm dreaming, aren't I?

HARRY: I'll explain once we've landed, love.

(He then brought them back down to earth at the side of the river and placed her down. At once, her legs gave way and she fell onto her backside.)

NIKKI: Ow.

HARRY: You alright?

(Nikki looked up at him through bewildered eyes.)

NIKKI: I'm... dreaming, aren't I?

(Harry retracted his wings then sat himself down in front of her.)

HARRY: No, actually. This is all very real.

NIKKI: But you're an angel.

HARRY: Yeah...

(He sat back to make himself comfortable.)

HARRY: Not a very good one though.

NIKKI: You are. You saved me.

HARRY: Yeah, but I'm also the one who put you in danger.

(Nikki bit her lip.)

NIKKI: What? I don't get it.

(She whimpered.)

NIKKI: I'm so confused right now.

(Harry released a sorrowful sigh.)

HARRY: Then allow me to explain. I might as well. You're not gonna remember it anyway.

NIKKI: I will. You saved me.

HARRY: No. You won't.

(He smiled.)

HARRY: See... angels aren't *supposed* to expose themselves.

(Nikki glanced at his groin then looked into his eyes again.)

NIKKI: You didn't.

HARRY: Not like that! I mean we're not supposed to reveal ourselves as angels.

NIKKI: Oh.

HARRY: So get your head out of the gutter.

NIKKI: But you said...

HARRY: Just let it go, okay? The point is, angels can't reveal their angelhood. And I have. That means time will be reset. That's what the people upstairs *do* when angels reveal themselves, you see?

(He nodded.)

HARRY: In this case, time will be reset to shortly before you were thrown off the bridge. Me swooping in to catch you therefore, won't ever happen.

NIKKI: Oh. So...

(She whimpered.)

NIKKI: It'll go back to *before* I was thrown?

(She gasped.)

NIKKI: Then I'm gonna be thrown off the bridge *again*!

(Harry raised his palm towards her.)

HARRY: No, you won't. You see, a competent angel will be sent to replace me. He'll have a plan, created by the elders which allows him to save you without you enduring the terror you just went through.

NIKKI: Oh.

(She bit her lip.)

NIKKI: I think I understand. I don't know. It's too much to take in right now. But...

HARRY: But?

NIKKI: Why can't *you* come and save me? Why do you have to be replaced?

(Harry gave a resigned sigh.)

HARRY: It's my second offence.

NIKKI: Second offence?

HARRY: Yeah. If you reveal yourself once, you get in trouble. Do it again and that's it. Your angel days are over.

(Nikki pouted.)

NIKKI: That's so sad. What will you do instead?

HARRY: I'll have to return to earth as a human, apparently. Reborn. *This* life will be over and I'll have to start on my next one. Possibly in Milton Keynes, depends how vengeful god is feeling.

NIKKI: I see. That's too mean.

HARRY: Nah. It could be worse. At least it's not Luton.

NIKKI: Well...

(She smiled.)

NIKKI: I think god is making a mistake. You're an awesome angel.

HARRY: Am I?

NIKKI: You're the most awesome angel *I've* ever met; put it that way.

(Harry gave a stifled laugh.)

HARRY: I guess I am.

(He smiled.)

HARRY: God chose wisely when he decided to look after you. You've just had a trauma like no other and all you care about is cheering *me* up.

NIKKI: Because you said I'd be safe. Another angel will come and make it so.

HARRY: Well... yeah...

NIKKI: Then you're the one who's suffering, not me.

HARRY: Wow. You're a really special young lady, you are.

NIKKI: I am, yes.

(She sat back and smiled.)

NIKKI: So that's why you wouldn't give me your phone number. I'm guessing angels don't *carry* phones.

HARRY: You guess correctly.

(Nikki chuckled then offered him a saddened pout.)

NIKKI: It's not fair that you have to be reborn. You're nice.

HARRY: It *is* fair, Nikki. I knew the rules. If I exposed myself...

(He shook his head.)

HARRY: Allow me to rephrase.

NIKKI: Please do.

HARRY: Okay. I *knew* that if I *revealed* myself as an angel again, I was going to be reborn as a human. I *knew* that when I teleported off the bridge, but I did it anyway.

(He shrugged.)

HARRY: So now I have to face the consequences.

NIKKI: I see.

(She glanced at him in astonishment.)

NIKKI: So... you revealed yourself to save my life; knowing that you'd lose yours? You basically sacrificed *your* life to save *mine*.

HARRY: Well... yeah. Anything else would have been unjust.

NIKKI: Unjust?

HARRY: Yeah. It was *my* fault your life was in danger, remember?

(He then laid back and stared into the sky.)

HARRY: When you went over the side of the bridge, I had a choice to make. Let you die so I could live, or save you by ending *my* life. It wasn't a *difficult* choice. I'm the one who put you in danger, so I had to take the hit.

NIKKI: I see.

(She scratched her head.)

NIKKI: I think.

(She grimaced.)

NIKKI: But what do you mean when you say it was *you* who put me in danger in the first place?

(Harry cringed.)

HARRY: Yeah... um... that's a long story...

NIKKI: I have time.

HARRY: No, you don't. And besides it'd be pointless to explain all that. You're not even gonna remember it. Time will be reset, remember?

NIKKI: Wow. Was it that bad?

HARRY: What?

NIKKI: You can't even bring yourself to tell me, can you? How badly did you mess up?

(Harry furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: I don't want to talk about it!

NIKKI: But...

HARRY: Forget it! You wouldn't remember if I told you.

NIKKI: But I want to hear it. Please?

HARRY: No.

NIKKI: Pretty please?

HARRY: Still no.

NIKKI: I'm gonna keep asking until you tell me.

(Harry glanced at her uncomfortably.)

HARRY: Aw, crap; you are, aren't you?

NIKKI: Yup!

HARRY: Shit.

(Harry sat up and implored the heavens with his eyes.)

HARRY: Stan? Beam me up, will you? Stan?

NIKKI: Who's Stan?

HARRY: Someone who can't usually wait to drag me upstairs when I've made a cockup, but now I'm anxious to go he's nowhere to be seen.

NIKKI: I see. And when you say cockup...

HARRY: Stop fishing!

NIKKI: Tell me!

HARRY: No!

(He growled.)

HARRY: Stan!!!

(Just then, the entire world faded into white and Harry found himself, once again, sitting in the white room with Stan standing over him.)

HARRY: Thank fuck for that.

(He furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: You took your time.

STAN: Did I now?

HARRY: Yes! I really didn't *fancy* giving her an in-depth analysis of my litany of jaw-dropping screw ups; it's embarrassing! But *she* was going to pester me about it until we were both old and senile.

(He ruffled his neck.)

HARRY: So leaving me there to suffer was wrong!

STAN: Diddums.

HARRY: Mate...

(He released a rueful sigh.)

HARRY: So? Is she gonna be alright?

STAN: Nikki?

HARRY: No, mate; Princess Anne's favourite horse.

(He rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Who else could I have meant?

STAN: Fair comment.

HARRY: Thank you.

STAN: For an idiot.

HARRY: Nice.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: So? Is she gonna be okay or not?

(Stan nodded.)

STAN: Absolutely. Your replacement will head down there, cut Nikki off and tell her the bridge is about to close. She'll have to walk back and take the subway.

HARRY: Gary will just follow her.

STAN: Actually, after sending Nikki back, your replacement will go to where Gary was waiting and make him evacuate the bridge at the other end; posing a police officer.

HARRY: What's the point in that? He'll just wander over to the subway and ambush her when she comes out.

STAN: That's not gonna happen.

HARRY: How do you know?

STAN: Let's just say there'll be angelic intervention.

HARRY: Like what?

STAN: Leave it, Harry. All you need to know is, the matter is in hand and your replacement will do a far better job than you did, okay?

HARRY: Fine. As long as Nikki comes out of it okay, that's good enough for me.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: She's a good girl, Stan. She really doesn't deserve all this crap.

STAN: Feeling guilty, are we?

HARRY: Of course, I am. It was my bleeding fault.

(He sighed.)

HARRY: Speaking of which... what's the verdict then? Where are you sending me? A warzone? A famine hit region? Where? I'm fine with anywhere except Luton.

(He furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: God will send me there just to spite me now, won't he?

STAN: Harry...

HARRY: Come on then. Spill the beans. Where am I being reborn? And if it *is* Luton can you please make a note to have the police run me over when I'm much younger?

(Stan started to chuckle.)

STAN: You're not going anywhere, Harry!

HARRY: What?

(He grimaced in bewilderment.)

HARRY: Yes, I am.

STAN: No, you're not. Don't *argue* with me, you idiot!

HARRY: But... I don't get it. I revealed myself as an angel for the second time. That means instant disqualification from *being* an angel. Angel status revoked, I believe you said. Next step, being reborn somewhere shit.

STAN: And that's normally the case, mate. But that rule doesn't apply this time.

HARRY: What? How come?

STAN: Because, Harry, you've actually been on trial.

HARRY: I know. A year's trial in the destiny protection department, which I managed to fail spectacularly after only three months.

(Stan offered him a sympathetic smile.)

STAN: Yeah... to be honest with you, mate, that was all bollocks.

HARRY: What was?

STAN: Your trial for the destiny protection department. You don't have the wit, the skills or the subtlety for *that* job. You were actually on trial for a different department entirely.

(Harry stared through him in bewilderment.)

HARRY: Huh?

STAN: You heard me.

HARRY: A different department?

STAN: Yeah. One your personality is actually suited to.

(Harry furrowed his brow.)

HARRY: I'd better not be that department that hands out dreams. Alfie says that job's as frustrating as fuck.

STAN: Relax. It's not that department either.

(He shrugged.)

STAN: Again, you lack the skillset.

HARRY: Right. You *enjoy* telling me that, don't you?

STAN: I do. I really do. I don't know why, I...

HARRY: I do. It's because you're a c...

STAN: Anyway!

(He ruffled his neck then continued.)

STAN: I was about to tell you about the trial you were *actually* taking part in.

HARRY: Oh. Right. Go on.

STAN: Happy to.

(He nodded.)

STAN: When you were alive, you had a strong sense of right or wrong. Even as a child. You won a drawing contest at school once, remember? But because you thought the person next to you drew a better picture than you, you gave *them* the prize. That's your nature in a nutshell, Harry. When someone was more deserving than you, you always made sure the right thing was done.

(He smiled.)

STAN: Conversely, when someone took something that was rightfully yours, you fought for it. You fought until you'd taken it back.

HARRY: Well, yeah. Why would I want something that rightfully belongs to someone else? And why would I let someone take what's rightly mine? Surely *everyone* thinks like that to a *certain* degree at least.

STAN: No, they don't. Most people don't have a sense of justice anywhere *near* as rich as yours. Not even close. Some don't even have one! But *you* do. Big time. And that's what brought you to god's attention. You see, he has a role for you, Harry. That's why he had you killed when you were young. He needed you on his team as soon as possible. (Harry was staring at him in bewilderment.)

HARRY: He *had* me killed?

STAN: Yeah. Why?

HARRY: It wasn't just fate being a dick?

STAN: Nope. You *were* scheduled to die in your eighties, but god needed you sooner than that. So he expunged your life in order to grant you immortality as an angel instead!

HARRY: I see.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: So what department am I moving to?

STAN: Justice.

HARRY: Justice?

STAN: You're gonna be an angel of justice, Harry. You passed the trial with flying colours. What clinched it was when you *willingly* revealing yourself as an angel for the second time, even though you thought it'd end your life, just because you thought Nikki deserved to live more than *you* did. Anything else would have been unjust, you said. Well...

(Harry swiftly held up his palm.)

HARRY: No, no, no, no, no. Just stop, mate. What are you on about? Angel of justice? There's no such thing! Everyone knows that.

(He glowered at him suspiciously.)

HARRY: What are you trying to pull exactly? Are you trying to get me all excited, just so you can destroy me one last time? Are you? You are, aren't you? You're building my hopes up, so I'll teleport out with a spring in my step and a song in my heart, only to find myself in the recycling department getting prepped for rebirth. A final slap in the cock before you send me to Milton Keynes to grow up as a disappointing fuckwit. That's fucking mean, mate.

(Stan blinked at him nonchalantly.)

STAN: Anyway...

HARRY: Answer me.

(Stan ignored him then conjured a file in his right hand.)

STAN: These are your new guidelines. Read them thoroughly and when you understand them, come and see me. I'll send you back to the appropriate point on the earthly timeline.

(He handed the file to Harry, who just stared at the cover in astonishment.)

STAN: What? You look constipated.

HARRY: The title says... justice department, angel's guide.

STAN: Of course it does. What did you think it was going say? Harry Potter and the Gobshite of Doom?

HARRY: Well... no.

(He grimaced.)

HARRY: I thought it was going to be a guide to rebirth, featuring a map of Milton Keynes.

(He scratched his head.)

HARRY: The justice department is real?

STAN: It is, yes. Real and extremely secretive. That's why all the other angels think it's a myth.

HARRY: Wow.

STAN: Wow. Indeed.

HARRY: I don't know what to say.

STAN: Don't *say* anything. Read.

(He rolled his eyes.)

STAN: I mean it, Harry. Read it and make sure you understand it, because you're not leaving here until you do. Reading the guidelines is ultra important! That's a lesson you *should* have learned from the Nikki Palmer debacle.

HARRY: I have, yes. I'll read it thoroughly.

STAN: Oh, I know you will.

(He smiled.)

STAN: But I'm still going to test you on it before I release you into the world again. Just in case.

HARRY: Yeah... that's understandable.

STAN: Now read.

HARRY: What? Here?

STAN: Yup.

HARRY: It's gonna take days!

STAN: Time has no meaning up here, Harry. *You* know that. When you're done, give me a shout.

HARRY: Right...

(With that, Harry cranked open the file to page one.)

STAN: That's not an index!

HARRY: I know!

Nikki Palmer had been cast over the side of the river bridge at two minutes past eight in the morning. It was now that very same time again on the very same day. The *events* of that day, however had changed. Rather than celebrating committing a needless murder, Gary was pacing forth, looking extremely miffed. He'd waited an entire hour for Nikki to cross the bridge, only to be sent away to the far end by an angel whom he wrongly believed to be a police officer. Unsurprisingly, he was absolutely livid about it. With a deeply furrowed brow, he stomped his way forth, growling under his breath.

GARY: Just my fucking luck. Nikki was just heading onto the bridge when that fucking copper showed up out of nowhere. I've gotta walk to the subway now. Fuck sake.

(He sighed.)

GARY: Throwing her into the river was such an easy way to get it done, an' all. Now I'll just have to stab the bitch.

(He shook his head then glanced up. Having done so, he froze to the spot. Harry was standing six feet in front of him, smirking with pure joy.)

HARRY: Hello, Gary.

GARY: What the fuck do you want?

HARRY: Justice.

GARY: For what?

HARRY: Not for what. For whom.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: Nikki Palmer.

GARY: Fuck off. That bitch has got it coming.

HARRY: Ah, you see... that's where you're wrong.

(He then sprouted a pair of black wings and rose six feet into the air. Absolutely terrified, Gary was rooted to the spot.)

GARY: W-w-w...

HARRY: Well said.

(He rolled his eyes.)

HARRY: Congratulations, Gary. You're my first client.

GARY: Client?

HARRY: Yeah.

(He winked at him arrogantly.)

HARRY: Consider yourself privileged. You see, you're literally the only person in the world who can see me right now.

(Gary whimpered.)

GARY: What?

HARRY: It's true. Even the other angels can't see me. It's called dark mode.

(He smiled.)

HARRY: I know. I'm as shocked as you are. When it read about it in the angel of justice handbook, I was astonished. Well I'll be buggered, I said.

(He beamed fiendishly.)

HARRY: I'm *not* buggered though. That'd be you, mate.

(Gary gulped.)

GARY: Nope. Fuck that.

(He then attempted to flee, only to find himself fixed to the spot.)

GARY: What the fuck?

HARRY: Don't bother trying to run away, Gary. Have some self-respect.

GARY: But...

(Harry leant back slightly then cut him off.)

HARRY: Mate! What did I just tell you? Self-respect, son.

(He held a hand in his direction.)

HARRY: You've pissed yourself again!

(By now, Gary was trying not to cry. He'd never been so scared in all his life.)

GARY: W-what are you gonna do?

HARRY: I don't know, mate. I hadn't really thought about it. As an angel of justice what *should* my next move be? What counts as justice for a fella who was planning to throw an innocent fourteen year-old schoolgirl off a bridge?

GARY: I... I... I wasn't...

HARRY: You were. I *know* you were, because you actually did it once! Unfortunately for you, god likes Nikki, so he's sent an angel back in time to save *her* then despatched *me* to see to it that you get served.

GARY: S-served?

HARRY: Justice, mate.

(He beamed.)

HARRY: I love this, Gary. Normally angels aren't allowed to reveal themselves to clients. And they certainly can tell them about things related to heaven. *I* can though. It's actually permitted in the justice department. I can tell my client what I like. You're not gonna remember it, you see?

GARY: Harry... please...

HARRY: Nope! That's enough chatter. It's justice time!

(He then mused to himself.)

HARRY: Which brings me back to my point. What *is* justice? I mean what's a fitting punishment for someone who plans to kill an innocent? A gentle slap on the wrist, perhaps? No, that can't be right. How about a light kick up the backside?

(He sighed.)

HARRY: That doesn't sound right either.

(He then faked enlightenment.)

HARRY: I know!

(With that, he zoomed down to Gary, scooped him up then cast him over the side of the bridge. He screamed in terror all the way down until his body was smashed by the water below.)

HARRY: Death.

(He then peered over the side of the bridge and beamed with delight at the sight of Gary floating upside down; his life at an end. Delighted with his handiwork, Harry dismissed his wings then exhaled.)

HARRY: And that's *why* I can say what I like. *My* clients will never live to repeat what I've said.

(He then strutted away with a heart full of joy.)

HARRY: Nice one, Harry. Job done. Artistically sound and perfectly executed.

(He beamed.)

HARRY: This angel malarkey is a piece of piss.

Six months later.

Very much at peace with the world, Alfie was relaxing on a bench in the park, watching the world go by. In recent months, he'd starting taking *all* his breaks in this very spot. It was an excellent vantage point from which to observe the human race. It also had a superb view of the lake. Revelling in simply being there, he exhaled then allowed his eyes to follow a young couple who were strolling by, hand-in-hand.

ALFIE: Star-crossed lovers. Fantastic. Some of my finest work, actually. They even *look* right together.

(He nodded with self-satisfaction then turned his head to the side. Harry was just coming into land on the other end of the bench.)

HARRY: This time...

(His backside then plonked down perfectly on the seat.)

HARRY: Yup. Nailed it.

ALFIE: Impressive. Much better than last time.

HARRY: In the sense that I *didn't* miss the bench entirely?

ALFIE: Pretty much.

(They shared a chuckle then Alfie glanced ahead.)

ALFIE: So... how are things in the watching department?

HARRY: Dull. How are things in the cupid department?

ALFIE: Awesome; as always. I'm in fine form.

HARRY: Ah. Good to know.

(Alfie then grimaced uncomfortably.)

ALFIE: Sorry. I didn't mean to rub your nose it.

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: It can't be easy for you to have zero interactions with the human race anymore.

HARRY: Well...

ALFIE: Just observing and making suggestions about things angels might need to take a look at; unable to influence anything. That has to suck.

(Harry could only shrug. Angels of justice were strictly forbidden from revealing their roles to anyone other than those they were about to wreak fatal justice on. Even the other angels had to be kept in the dark about their department's existence. And so, they'd created the fictional *watchers department* as a cover. It was a simple and yet effective explanation as to why their members existed but never seemed to do anything.)

HARRY: Yeah... it's terrible, mate. Dull as fuck.

ALFIE: Sounds it.

(He smiled.)

ALFIE: Still. Like I said the other day, it could have been worse. You revealed yourself for a second time, mate. It's a miracle your soul isn't earmarked for a foetus; to be reborn in some dingy shithole somewhere.

HARRY: Right? I dodged a bullet there. God was obviously in a good mood that day.

ALFIE: Nah, it probably had more to do with the fact that he recognised you have superb observational skills.

HARRY: He did? When?

ALFIE: That's what *you* told me.

HARRY: Did I?

ALFIE: Yeah. Back when you first told me you'd been sent to the watchers department, you said god spared you because you'd make an excellent observer and he was in no mood for wasting talent.

(Harry looked enlightened.)

HARRY: I *did* say that, didn't I?

(He then raised a knowing eyebrow in a bizarre bid to make himself seem more honest.)

HARRY: Because it's true.

ALFIE: I never doubted it, mate.

HARRY: Oh. I'll shut up then.

ALFIE: Right...

(He then glanced at Harry enquiringly.)

ALFIE: So... it's not like you to come to the park in the middle of the afternoon. You're normally a morning and evenings man. What gives?

HARRY: I just felt like coming to the park, mate.

ALFIE: Right. So you claim. In reality, however, we both know you came here because can't live without me.

HARRY: Yup. You've got me. When you're not around, my broken heart pines, mate.

ALFIE: Yeah? I feel the same about... cake.

HARRY: You're a cold man, Alfie. A cold, cold man.

(He nodded.)

HARRY: With a really stupid face.

ALFIE: Easy.

(They shared a smirk then Harry glanced towards the lake.)

HARRY: Oh... hello. That's Nikki Palmer over there.

ALFIE: What?

HARRY: The teenage girl in the denim skirt, next to the lake.

(Alfie focussed hard.)

ALFIE: The one holding hands with that boy?

HARRY: What???

(Harry focussed hard then gasped in horror.)

HARRY: She's got a boyfriend!

ALFIE: So?

(Harry furrowed his brow bitterly.)

HARRY: So she shouldn't have! That's wrong, that is. I'm gonna say something!

ALFIE: Harry...

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: It's got nothing to do with you!

HARRY: Yes, it has! As a citizen of the world, I object. At *her* age, she should be focussing on education; not boys! Boys are cunts and can't be trusted! He'll hurt her! You know that, right?

(He growled.)

HARRY: That shit needs nipping in the bud!

ALFIE: Wow. Harry?

HARRY: What?

ALFIE: Mate... you're not her father!

HARRY: Well, no... but...

ALFIE: Stop it! Mate... I get it. You fucked up her case and you feel guilty about it. That's perfectly understandable. It's made you feel like you need to take responsibility for her. But that's bollocks. And you know it.

(Harry sighed.)

HARRY: Yeah... I *do* know that. It's just... I put her through hell.

ALFIE: Wrong. *She* barely remembers it. It's everyone *else* you put through hell. That poor police chief is still in the psychiatric unit.

HARRY: Yeah, alright; don't rub it in.

(He shook his head then glanced at Nikki again. Having done so, however, he flinched anxiously.)

HARRY: Fuck. Now Angie's here! Walking straight towards her!

ALFIE: Smiling!

HARRY: Like an evil assassin!

(He sneered.)

HARRY: I'm gonna go over there and...

(His face then dropped.)

HARRY: Oh.

ALFIE: Go over there and what, Harry? Ask them why they're chatting in a friendly manner?

HARRY: Well...

ALFIE: We can't have that, can we? People going to the park, being all sociable, whatever next?

HARRY: Oh, shut up. How was I to know they'd become friends?

(Just then, Stan's voice rose up from in between them.)

STAN: Brilliant, isn't it?

(Alfie and Harry threw him astonished glances.)

ALFIE: How long have you been sitting there?

HARRY: Yeah!

STAN: I literally just arrived.

HARRY: Right.

(He winced.)

HARRY: And to what do we owe the pleasure? I haven't fucked up again, have I?

STAN: No, no. I just wanted to see if for myself.

HARRY: See what?

STAN: Nikki and Angie, chatting as friends.

(He smiled.)

STAN: That case was a massive pain in my arse, so I thought it'd be nice to see the positive, final outcome with my own two eyes.

HARRY: Fair enough.

STAN: Drink it in, Harry? It was a complete success in the end.

(He smirked.)

STAN: Not that I'm surprised. That's what *happens* when the angel in charge *isn't* a gormless bell end.

HARRY: Mate...

(He then noticed Stan chuckling into his hand.)

STAN: Sorry. Couldn't resist.

HARRY: Yeah... it was probably the lack of trying.

STAN: Oh, definitely, mate.

(He sat back and smiled.)

STAN: See, what happened was, after Gary was killed by a rival gang...

(Harry and Stan shared a knowing smirk.)

STAN: Angie got scared. His death made her realise just how dangerous gang life can be. So she walked away from it. Turned over a new leaf entirely. Her mother's grief helped, of course. Her mother begged her to start living her life right and she listened. Made a full U-turn. She even apologised to Nikki for the bullying.

HARRY: And being a nice girl, Nikki accepted?

STAN: Indeed, she did.

(He exhaled.)

STAN: Perfect. And best of all, thanks to the spiritual welfare department Nikki's trauma has completely subsided.

ALFIE: And what about her father? Wasn't he being investigated for having links to gang activity?

STAN: Not anymore, no. The police have dropped that on the grounds that they couldn't find any.

HARRY: Thank fuck for that.

STAN: Right? So, aside from the police chief being committed to an asylum, it ended up being an excellent result for angel kind.

(Alfie furrowed his brow.)

ALFIE: Apart from the death of Angie's brother, of course.

STAN: What?

(He flinched.)

STAN: Right. Yes. How tragic.

(Harry chimed in coldly.)

HARRY: Yeah. What a shame.

ALFIE: At least *try* to sound like you mean it, Harry.

HARRY: That *was* me trying.

(Stan then sat up and smiled.)

STAN: Hello. Young Nikki's got a fella, look.

(Harry snarled.)

HARRY: Wanker.

STAN: That's cute.

(Alfie looked at the scowling Harry then smirked deviously.)

ALFIE: They're a good match too.

STAN: Really?

ALFIE: Yeah. Very compatible. Maybe I should fire off one of my arrows and make their relationship official.

(Harry growled.)

HARRY: If you *even* look at that bow...

ALFIE: I'm joking, mate. Easy.

HARRY: You'd better have been!

ALFIE: I am! They're not compatible *at all*. In fact, that relationship is doomed to end *very* quickly.

HARRY: Good! He's a cunt.

(Stan grimaced.)

STAN: What's eating *you*, Harry?

HARRY: I...

ALFIE: He's developed a father's love for Nikki.

STAN: Oh, god no. You're the last person she needs in her life.

HARRY: Excuse me?

STAN: Last time you got involved with her, she went from merely being bullied to becoming the target of crazed psychopath. At one point her *house* was in danger of being burned down.

(He shuddered.)

STAN: No, no; the kindest thing you can do for that girl is stay the fuck away.

HARRY: That's a bit harsh.

STAN: Harsh?

(He then started to laugh.)

STAN: It's anything but. You were a bloody disaster! Worst attempt at destiny protection ever. You were a disgrace to angel-kind.

(Alfie chuckled along.)

ALFIE: You really were. She went from being in danger of getting a wedgie and a slap at school, to being dissolved in a nuclear explosion. Just because you tried to help.

HARRY: Guys...

STAN: It's true. All I asked you to do was stop a schoolgirl from getting bullied, and this was you...

(He then mocked Harry's voice.)

STAN: Piece of piss! I know just the thing! I'll burn down the local shopping centre!

(Alfie then mocked him likewise.)

ALFIE: And if that doesn't work, starting world war three ought to do it. That'll give the bully something else to think about.

(Stan and Alfie then sat there roaring with laughter while Harry scowled at them.

Moments later, however, his face started to crack and he couldn't help but chuckle.)

HARRY: Ease off, lads, the riots were a great idea. The shopping centre needed to be rebuilt anyway.

STAN: Yes, but it's not going to be, is it? Not in the middle of a massive economic crisis.

ALFIE: Oh, yeah. You caused *that* as well.

(The two of them then fell into deeper fits of laughter. Left sitting there, Harry could only shake his head.)

HARRY: Wankers.

(He then mumbled under his breath.)

HARRY: At least now I know who to wreak vengeance upon next.

(An angry, booming voice then echoed around his head.)

GOD: Denied!

(Harry's hair stood on end then he slumped sheepishly into his seat.)

HARRY: Understood. Um.... I'll get back to work.

(He then upped and scuttled away, leaving Stan and Alfie to enjoy their fits of hysterics.)

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