It was a Tuesday when Satan realized he didn’t want to get up for work.

Granted, in Hell it always felt like Tuesdays. That was part of the torture. Everyone agreed that Tuesdays were the absolute worst, and therefore, Satan had made a decree six thousand years ago that it would always feel like a Tuesday. It’d gone over well with the demons.

But it was actually Tuesday when Satan pulled the covers back over his head. The screams of the damned filtered in through the open window near his bed. It should have made him feel better. It didn’t.

There was a knock at his bedroom door.
He ignored it.
The knock came again.
He ignored it once more.
When it repeated for a third time, Satan shouted, “What!”
“Sire?” a voice came. “It’s time to get up.”
“I know it is,” he snapped.
“Oh. Well. Just making sure you knew. You have your conference call first thing, and I know how you hate to be late for anything—”
“I am the Lord of the Underworld,” Satan snapped in response as he pulled the covers off his head. “I am never late. I arrive exactly when I want to, and that makes it always on time.”
“Oh. Right, sire. Exactly. May I enter?”
Satan sighed. “If you must.”
The door opened.
A small man entered. He had a pencil thin mustache. His name was Carl. Satan often wondered if what would have happened if he’d known that being named Carl and growing a pencil thin mustache was an automatic ticket to Hell. Would he have shaved? Applied for a name change? He didn’t know. Hell was filled with many men named Carl who had pencil thin mustaches. Satan should have thought that one through more when he’d negotiated with God for the rights of souls. It’d been God’s idea to give him all Carls with mustaches. It’d seemed like a good deal at the time. Now, Satan realized it was just another big fuck you from the man upstairs.

And speaking of God, it was actually Tuesday, which meant his first order of business was going to be a conference call with the asshole himself. As if the day couldn’t get any worse.
“I hate everything,” Satan muttered.

“That’s the spirit,” Carl said cheerfully as he stood in front of a massive bureau. The doors were blackened and made of human skin. It was an antique Satan had found in a shop in one of the lower pits of Hell on a trip a few centuries ago. “And what would sire wish to wear today? Something terrifying, perhaps? The Cloak of Eternal Hangnails? The Jeans of Unholy Neoconservative Politics? Ooh, there’s always the Overalls of Diabolical Misery. You haven’t worn those in a long time.”

“That’s because no one wears overalls anymore.”

Carl nodded. “True, but you’ve always been such a trendsetter.”

Carl wasn’t wrong. The minions of Hell had been all abuzz last year when Satan had showed up to the office in the Coat of Terrible Atrophy. Designers had been quick to replicate the coat and they’d practically flown off the shelves. A few of them actually had flown, given that one designer decided attaching wings would be a good idea. That had been a mess that’d taken almost a full week to clear up. The designer of said coats had been sent to the dungeons for his crimes.

The problem with that, though, was sending anyone to the dungeons should have filled Satan with a sense of accomplishment. But it hadn’t, and at first, Satan had just ignored it. Everyone was entitled to have an off day, after all.

But it’d only gotten worse.

He found himself growing more and more apathetic toward his responsibilities. Where once he’d found joy in torture, now it seemed like too much work. Even wielding the whip with the little metal spikes on the end didn’t do it for him as it once had.

Surveying the Kingdom of Hell was something he always looked forward to. He’d once loved going from realm to realm, peeking in on the goings on. But even the Lava Fields Sponsored by the NRA looked dull and boring now, the same old same old. It was just lava filled with guns. It’d lost its luster a long time ago.

His human resources representative, a terrible woman named Cheryl, had suggested that he consider therapy, but he’d scoffed at her. He didn’t need therapy.

(It didn’t help that most of the therapists in Hell had once been in charge of queer conversion camps on Earth. They were just awful, awful people, and he didn’t think they could help him. Still, there was a bit of happiness involved anytime one of them showed up in Central
Processing. The looks on their faces when they found out that most queer people automatically went to Heaven simply because they were queer was divine.

“Sire?” Carl asked.

“The jeans,” Satan said, knowing that if he didn’t pick something, Carl would, and one of the big reasons Carl was in Hell at all (aside from his name and mustache) was because of his horrific fashion sense. Carl had spent most of his time on Earth wearing a fanny pack and sandals with socks. Yes, he’d also lit a retirement community on fire, but that failed in comparison with his choice of outerwear and facial hair. Satan had thought of banishing Carl several times, but he loathed the idea of having to train someone new. Carl knew him and knew him well.

“Excellent choice, sire,” Carl said. He pulled the jeans from the bureau, grunting as he did so. They were heavy and long, seeing as how Satan was fifteen feet tall. Satan thought about helping the struggling Carl, but he just watched him instead. He hoped such a little thing would bring him joy. Carl managed to get the jeans out completely, but then collapsed to the floor in a heap, the material laying on top of him.

“Don’t worry,” Carl gasped. “I’ve got this.”

Satan didn’t worry, not one bit. Not about this at least. And he didn’t feel joy at all.

Carl somehow escaped the confines of the jeans. He stood up from the ground and dragged them toward the bed. He was sweating, but that made sense: it was ninety-seven degrees in the bedroom, just as Satan liked it. “There we are,” Carl said, setting the jeans up on the bed. “Up and at ‘em! I have a feeling today is going to be an awful day.”

“I don’t need you to cheer me up,” Satan muttered as he put his feet on the ground. He winced as he flexed his toes, hearing them pop and crack. He hadn’t slept very well the night before. He’d been preparing for today’s conference call, acting out conversations in his head, practicing rebuttals and retorts so that God would know he meant business. It was not lost on him that this was his own version of actual Hell. God always had the upper hand, and never let Satan forget it. And though God had kept his mouth shut so far, Satan knew it wouldn’t last much longer. God tended to get involved even when he wasn’t invited to provide his opinion on a matter. Today was probably going to be the day the dam broke, and Satan wasn’t ready to deal with his shit.
“Of course you don’t,” Carl said, grabbing Satan by the hand and pulling him off the bed. “Now, you overslept a little, so there isn’t time for breakfast. However, I put coffee in your travel mug, and also put a muffin in a baggie for you to eat on the way to the office.”

“I hate muffins.”
Carl snorted. “So you say, and yet you eat them whenever I make them for you.”
Satan scowled down at him. “Only because you don’t know how to make anything else.”

“Too right. If only I hadn’t listened to the monsters in my brain who told me to burn everything in sight, I might have opened a bakery.”
Satan hesitated. “Is…is that something you want?”
Carl shrugged as he dragged the jeans off of the bed. “I guess. But it doesn’t matter now, does it?”

Satan frowned down at him. “You can have a bakery if you want.”

Carl stared at him. “What?”
Satan rubbed the back of his neck. “I mean, you stay in the house all day, waiting for me to get home. What do you do while I’m gone?”

“Well, I mostly sit around replaying my entire life and wondering why my father didn’t love me enough to come to my T-ball games, and if that would have stopped me from wanting to light things on fire—”

“You can have a bakery.”
Carl gaped at him. “I can? But…but that’s so nice.”

“I can be nice when I want to,” Satan muttered, hating how defensive he sounded.

“I know,” Carl said quickly, the jeans evidently forgotten. He’d long since gotten used to Satan’s nudity, even though it’d taken him a long while to get over the fact that Satan had a very large penis. “But it’s just…” He squinted up at Satan. “Are you feeling all right, sire? You’ve been…rather cordial lately.”

“I have not.”

Carl blanched at the halo of fire that bloomed above Satan’s head. “I didn’t—I mean no offense, sire.”

The halo faded as Satan breathed through his nose. “Forget it. It was a bad idea.”

“No, no,” Carl said. “It’s…good. I would love a bakery, if you think you could spare me during the day. It’d be a lot of work, but I think—”
“Maybe not an *entire* bakery,” Satan said, trying to regain some control. “Like, a cart. Or something.”

Carl nodded furiously. “That’s worse and is almost a mockery of my lifelong dream. Thank you. I would love a cart. Or something.”

Satan felt a little better. “It would be heavy and hard to push around.”

“The wheels could be square,” Carl said helpfully.

“Right. Square wheels. And you would always be out of something that everyone wants to order.”

“Oooh,” Carl breathed. “I’d have to apologize profusely and give discounts on other items to make up for it. That sounds perfectly terrible.”

“Yes,” Satan said. “Exactly. And you would have to sell cake pops, which are the most pointless confectionary in the history of existence.”

“Right?” Carl said. “Why are those even a thing? It’s cake on a *stick*. Who the hell does something like that?”

Satan felt better. He hated when people called him nice. He was anything but. He was the Dark Lord. The Snake in the Garden. The Evil Blight upon the world. He wasn’t *nice*. He wasn’t *cordial*. He was the monster who haunted the dreams of the innocent. He stripped the flesh from their bones and drank their blood as they begged for mercy.

(Though, a little voice reminded him, he didn’t *actually* drink blood anymore, seeing as how it gave him heartburn. Oh, the joys of being ancient. It never got any easier.)

“Good,” Satan said. “Then you can have your cart with square wheels. I’ll put in the order today. I just got new stationary that I’ve been looking forward to using, and this will do nicely.”

Carl grinned up at him. “Thank you, sire.”


He stood in front of the mirror, studying himself as Carl scurried around him. He flexed his arms, enjoying how douchey it made him look. His body was strong, and though he’d let himself go a little, he was starting to like the swell of his gut, the way his thighs looked like thick slabs of concrete. His entire body was a violent shade of red, and while that sometimes limited his fashion choices (*he hated* when something clashed with his skin), he’d grown to love himself for who he was. He barely even remembered what he’d look like in Heaven, though God was
always quick to remind him of the muscle twink he’d once been. And while Satan had never been too fond of labels, he sometimes wondered if he was a bear now, like the type who could be called *Daddy*. He’d never spoken those words aloud, sure that he’d never hear the end of it.

Still, he didn’t look half-bad, or so he told himself. The horns on his head were black and sharp, his teeth white and straight, and though his nose was a little big, ever since he’d gotten his septum pierced, he’d found himself okay with it.

“Daddy bear,” he muttered to himself.

“What was that, sire?”

“Nothing,” he said quickly. “Ignore what I just said, or I’ll stick nails through the bottoms of your feet.”

“Didn’t hear a word,” Carl said easily. “Lift your leg for me, please.”

Satan did, and Carl began to pull on the jeans. He tried to zip them up and button them, but Satan knocked his hands away. He didn’t like Carl’s hands so close to his junk. It was the mustache. It was horrible.

“Hmm,” Carl said, eyeing him up and down. “Still missing something. Ah! I know. Suspenders of Discontent. They would go perfectly.”


“Like you’re trying too hard to show off your body inappropriately in a workplace environment that will make everyone uncomfortable?”

“Oh. Right. Yes. Fetch the suspenders.”

Carl did.

By the time he’d slung them over Satan’s shoulders and clasped them to the tops of the jeans, Satan was feeling a little better. Perhaps today wouldn’t be too bad after all.

*****

“Make terrible choices!” Carl called from the door. Satan nodded at him as he walked out from his house onto the brick sidewalk, his travel mug in one hand, a muffin in a baggie in the other. The coffee tasted like ass, just the way Satan liked it. The muffin didn’t look that bad either, though he’d never say it out loud.

He thought about whistling as he walked to work, but then reminded himself that he was the Beast Who Brings Misery to All, so instead, he scowled at everyone he saw.
“Bad morning!” a demon called to him as he walked by. He stopped to admire the
demon’s work. On a raised stone dais sat a large wooden device known as the Rack of Infinite
Doom Sponsored by Dick Cheney. The demon spun the crank, stretching out a man whose
continual screams only grew louder the more the binds around his wrists and arms pulled.

“Bad morning,” Satan responded. “Who’s this?”
The demon stopped the crank before wiping his brow. “Keith Martins.”
“His crimes on Earth?”
“He was mean to dogs.”

Satan glared at the screaming man. Satan had a fondness for dogs, even though the only
ones that found their way to Hell were poodles. He had no qualms about torturing people who
were cruel to animals. “How long have you been at it?”
The demon looked down at his watch. “Um, it’s been…thirty-seven hours.”
That was a long time. Still. “Make it a month.”
The demon smiled crazily. “Will do, sire! You can count on me!” He immediately started
spinning the crank again. Satan wanted to stay and watch, but he was already late, and God
would never let him hear the end of it if he missed their call.

He walked along the River of Gross Pollution, pleased to see the amount of toxic waste
barrels. They’d ran into troubles last year when one of the demons had reported to him that the
river was almost clean enough to drink from. They’d redoubled their efforts and had made it one
of the more noxious places in all of Hell. It smelled grotesque, like spoiled meat sitting in the sun
for far too long.

There were flashes of light above him. He looked up to see the Pneumatic Tubes of
Doom Sponsored by Insufferable Vegans Who Feel the Need to Shame Those Who Eat Meat.
Demons were being summoned to the Earth above, appearing mostly to down-and-out humans at
crossroads who were interested in trading their souls for all matter of things. It was really rather
shocking just how easy it was for people to give away something so important, yet so intangible.
It was mostly men, of course, seeing as how men were fragile little creatures who acted tough
but usually crumbled at the smallest inconvenience. It mattered not to Satan. A soul was a soul.
There was a time when Satan himself had gone up through the tubes, but then Hell had
continually expanded, and he just didn’t have the time he once did to harvest the souls himself.
He missed it, though he understood that being the big boss meant he had to delegate certain responsibilities.

He stopped momentarily near the park to watch a group of personal injury attorneys doing yoga. There were more personal injury attorneys in Hell than any other profession, and they wailed and screamed as they were forced into the kapotasana pose, their backs bending harshly, their legs folded underneath them. “Bad morning!” the yoga demon called over to him before turning back to the attorneys. “Oh, look! Someone was involved in a minor car accident but claims they were somehow permanently injured and there’s no one to represent them.”

A ghostly apparition appeared in front of them, the translucent outline of a man wearing a neck brace. The man said, “I know we were only going two miles an hour in a parking lot, but I’m so hurt, I can’t even make love to my wife anymore. Won’t someone help me get financial compensation that I’m absolutely not owed as I’m committing insurance fraud?”

The attorneys cried out in horror when they realized they couldn’t get out of their yoga positions to get to the man to sign him as a client. It was wonderful.

Satan nodded at the yoga demon and continued on. Maybe today wouldn’t be so bad after all.

*****

The office was abuzz when he stepped off the elevator. His secretary and office manager, an older woman named Donna, was there to greet him. On Earth, Donna had murdered six of her husbands for their life insurance money, earning the moniker of the Black Widow of Sacramento. She’d poisoned each of them and then played the part of the grieving widow, all the while using the money she’d gotten for extravagant purchases, such as a yacht and the original puppet used in the television show ALF.

Satan adored her.

“There you are,” she said, looking down at her off-brand tablet that only worked sometimes given the WI-FI was spotty. It was Hell, after all. “Bad morning. I thought I was going to have to push your conference call back.”

“Oh, he’d just love that,” Satan grumbled.

“Probably,” Donna agreed. “But he loves everything. He’s God, after all.” She fell in step beside him as they walked toward his office in the corner. “There are a few other matters of importance, though they can wait.”
“Like?”

“The demons in West Hell are still pushing to unionize, and their appointed union leader wants to talk to you.”

“Of course he does. Tell him I’m busy.”

“Oh, I have,” she said. “For the last year. But it’s best that you get it done and over with. You don’t want a revolt on your hands.”

Satan scoffed as they walked through the hundreds of cubicles that filled the thirteenth floor of Hell, Inc. He kept his smile to himself when some of the office demons shouted in frustration when their computers needed to update yet again. “If they tried to revolt, I’d just destroy them all and make more demons.”

Donna rolled her eyes. “And find yourself in the same position in another year. What harm could it do to just listen?”

He glared at her.

She ignored him. “And then there’s the League of Christians Who Cite the Lord’s Name in Their Twitter Bio and Then Don’t Act Christian At All in Their Twitter Posts.”

Satan groaned as they reached his office. “Again? Evangelicals are the worst.”

Donna patted him on the arm as he held the door open for her. “They aren’t very happy they ended up here.”

“Well, they shouldn’t have acted like assholes. I swear, when Twitter was invented on Earth, I was not prepared for just how many people would be sent here because of it. You would think people who had the Twitter name of LoveJesusSoMuch would know not to be racist or homophobic, but here we are.”

“I’d be fine if we said we never received their request,” Donna said, typing on her tablet. “Oops. Would you look at that. Their memo is in my spam folder where no one actually ever looks. Oh well.”

“You’re my favorite,” Satan said, sitting down in his chair.

“I know.” Donna stood on the other side of the desk, tablet clutched against her chest. “You look tired.”

“It’s Tuesday,” he reminded her.

“I still don’t know why you get so nervous about your conference calls with him. He’s not so bad. And he seems to care about you quite a bit. I can’t fault him for that.”
“He’s just so…so…”
“Forgiving? Magnanimous? All-knowing?”
“Smug,” Satan decided on.
“I can see that,” Donna said. “I can’t imagine being him and not being smug. But you shouldn’t worry so much about it.”
“Easier said than done.”
“I suppose. I’ll put the call through when it comes in. Do you need anything else from me?”
Satan shook his head. “No. That should be fine for now.”
“Eat the muffin,” she called over her shoulder as she headed for the door. “You get grumpy when you’re hungry. Oh, and love the suspenders by the way. Very dashing. If you were straight, I’d probably make you fall in love with me, take an insurance policy out on your life, and then murder you and use the money to buy a chain of semi-successful chicken restaurants.”
Satan was absurdly touched. “Thanks, Donna. I don’t know what I’d do without you.”
She winked at him as she closed the door.
Satan sat back in his chair, rubbing a hand over his face. He took a sip from his coffee, grimacing at the taste. It was perfect. And that reminded him. He reached into his desk and pulled out a large, flat stone. He held up a finger, watching as a black claw grew out from the tip. He scraped the claw against the stone, the letters flaring brightly. Once he’d finished the memo, he waved a hand over it. Instead of square wheels, Carl’s cart wouldn’t have wheels at all. He’d be forced to push it wherever he went, and it would take forever to get anywhere. It was perfect. The stone dinged in his hands when Donna confirmed receipt of it.
It was only a moment later when the phone beeped. “God for you on video chat line one,” Donna said, voice crackling.
Satan sighed. “Put him through.”
“Putting through.”
The monitor on his desk lit up with a red screen. In the center, spinning slowly, was a graphic of himself, wearing a suit, his arms crossed over his massive chest. He was scowling, of course, because he hated having his picture taken. The words HELL, INC were underneath. And then the screen went white.
Like, blinding white.
He grunted and covered his eyes. “I told you not to do that.”

“Fuck you, man. I totally got you again. Feel that heavenly light, you little bitch. Feel it all over you. Drink it in, for I am the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

“I hate you so much.”

“Shut up. Whatever. You love me.”

“Turn it down.”

“Oh, is the pretty light hurting Satan’s wittle eyes? Aw. There, there, wittle Satan. I’ll turn it down for you.”

The light faded.

Satan dropped his hand and glared at the screen.

There, with a dipshit grin on his face, was God himself.

He was wearing a white suit, sitting back in a white chair. His beard was made of little fully clouds, and he was grinning, the corners of his eyes crinkling. “Hey, man.”

“Hi,” Satan said, fighting a begrudging smile. The idea that God and Satan were enemies was a human one. Sure, they had their disagreements, but it wasn’t anything they couldn’t get over if they tried hard enough. Yes, God was smug, and could be a dick about it, but Satan could handle it. And even though dead wild horses would never be able to drag it from him, he had a soft spot for his brother, their history be damned.

“How are you?” God asked.

“All right, I guess.”

God arched an eyebrow. “Huh.”

That wasn’t good. It was too early for one of God’s *huhs*. Satan crossed his arms over his chest. “What?”

God shrugged. “You look tired.”

“Fuck you, I don’t.”

“Yeah, a little. You’re—medammit.” A loud crash came from somewhere off screen.

“Sorry, man. Hold on a second. I swear to me, don’t ever have children. They drive you up the wall.” God stood from his chair and stepped away off screen. “Jesus! Jesus Christ, you better not be making a mess in the kitchen. We just had it cleaned!”
A surly response came crackling through the monitor. “I’m not! And don’t tell me what
to do! You’re not even my real dad. Joseph is! When he and Mom get back from their vacation,
I’m going to tell them you never let me do anything.”

“You do that,” God said. “See how far it gets you. And you know I’m your real dad. Your
mom was a virgin when I put my seed of light inside of—”

“Gross! Stop it! And that’s not how pregnancy works. You made sure of that!”

“Just…I’m making a very important call right now. Please keep it down. I promise when
I finish, we’ll go ride unicorns or something. We’ll make a day of it.”

“I hate unicorns!”

“Jesus, I’m warning you. Lose the tone.”

“Or what, you’ll send me to Earth and let me die for more sins again that aren’t even my
own? Real original. Oh, hey, guys, of course you can nail me to a piece of wood. I’m here for
you, after all!”

“That’s it. You’re grounded!”

“You can’t ground me! I’m calling Mom!”

“Do it, then! And you tell her that you think she wasn’t a virgin. See how that goes.”

“I’m going to hang out with my friends. At least beggars and whores understand me!”

Somewhere deep inside the cloud castle God lived in, a door slammed. God sighed as he
reappeared on screen, sitting back down in his chair. “Sorry about that, man. Sharing custody is
hard. Joseph and Mary have been gone for a week. It feels like a year.”

“He’s still acting like a teenager?”

God rolled his eyes. “He is a teenager. He asked me a while back that he wants to be
sixteen for a little bit. Said he didn’t get the chance to act like a kid on Earth. I allowed it,
thinking it wasn’t going to hurt anyone. Worst decision ever.” God shook his head. “Kids, man.
Can’t live with them, can’t allow them to be crucified or you’ll never hear the end of it.” He
paused, rubbing his beard thoughtfully. “Maybe I could send him down to you for a little—”

“Absolutely not,” Satan said.

“But—”

“If you do that, I swear to you that I’ll never forgive you.”

“Yeah, yeah. Fine. You just enjoy seeing me suffer.”

“That’s because I’m Satan.”
“Right,” God said. “Anyway, how goes it, man? You doing okay?”
“I’m fine.”
“Uh huh. Want to try that again?”
“I told you to stay out of my head. Just because you created me does not mean you get to f**k around in there.”

God snorted. “Now you sound like Jesus. Fine. We can do this the old fashioned—” He sneezed into his hand. He pulled his hand back, grimacing as he looked down at it. “Aw, man. I just made another galaxy. Gross. Fucking Allegra’s not working. They’re doing construction down the hall, and the dust is just everywhere.” He wiped his hand off on a tissue before crushing it into a ball and throwing it in the trash.

“Don’t you want to put that in the sky?” Satan asked.

“Nah,” God said. “For all I know, it’d end up having another place like Florida in it. Don’t need that happening. I can barely keep up with the real one as it is.”

“What is up with that place? Even I don’t like going there.”

God shrugged. “I was high when I made it. Had this real dank herb. Thought it seemed like a good idea. But, like most ideas when I’m high, it didn’t turn out like I thought it would. Same with those plastic packages scissors come in. I mean, how the hell are you supposed to open it? You can’t use scissors because they’re in the package. It’s a philosophical conundrum, man.”

“Eh, I use those down here now. Perfect torture device.”

“Of course you do. You’re welcome.” He sat back in his chair. “Since you won’t let me in your head, you’re gonna have to tell me what’s going on.”

“Or I don’t and we can hang up and pretend this conversation never happened.”

“Right,” God said dryly. “Because that’s going to work.” He sobered. “You know the only reason I agreed to give you the Kingdom of Hell was on the promise that we’d have these weekly talks. It’s not therapy, but—”

“It better not be.”

God shook his head. “Nah, I wouldn’t do that to you, even if I’m pretty much the most qualified being in all of existence. I just…I want you to be happy.”

“That sounds terrible. And you also want everyone to be happy. It’s kind of the point.”
God sighed. “You know what I mean. Fine, then. Not happy. Fulfilled. I want you to have a life of fulfillment. I always have, even when you were up here. Sure, we argued a lot, but you were still one of my angels, man. I want the best for you.”

Satan fidgeted in his chair. “I know. And you don’t need to worry about me. I’m fine.”

“What now?”

God sat forward in his chair, elbows on the desk. “How’d the date go on Saturday? You like him?”

Oh, himdammit. Satan had hoped he’d forgotten about it. He should have known better. God had a tendency not to forget anything. He could be a wrathful dick that way, always smiting this and smiting that. Granted, it’d been a long time since he’d rained destruction down on the Earth, but still. It didn’t take much to set him off. And when he got a bug up his holy ass, he made it his mission to see it through. Even Satan had been a little appalled with the whole flooding and destroying most of humanity thing.

Hence Joey, who had appeared in Hell a few weeks back. Satan should have known God had a hand in it.

Joey had been…well, not charming, exactly, and definitely not sweet. He’d been a hired hit man on Earth, and per his intake sheet Satan had perused before their date, he’d killed upwards of fifty-seven people, mostly mob-related.

And while Satan could be into that, it was all he talked about.

Literally.

From the moment Joey sat down, it was all about him: how many people he’d killed, the ways in which he killed them, which were his favorites, and which ones he wished had gone differently. Satan usually loved a good story about death and destruction, but it got old after the first hour. When Satan had tried to steer the conversation in a different direction, Joey had appeared confused. It was only then that Satan had learned that Joey absolutely didn’t know how to talk about anything else. Satan had considered taking him home and fucking him before banishing him to one of the lower pits. But then Joey had been rude to a lovely little demon waitress, and Satan had been completely done with his bullshit.

“It didn’t work out,” Satan said coolly.
“Huh,” God said again. “I really thought he’d be the one. Sucks, dude. My bad. I thought I was getting better at the whole matching making thing.”

“You’re not.”

God shrugged. “Well, you win some, you lose some. You got laid, at least.”

Satan picked at his muffin. “About that.”

God sighed. “Seriously, Satan? Come on. It was a sure bet. Even if he was a terrible person, you could have at least boned him and gotten it out of your system. What the hell.”

“I didn’t want to bone him!”

“Why not?”

Himdammit. He wasn’t going to let this go. “I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Well, tough shit. We’re going to.” His expression softened. “Look. I know things have been a little…busy for you lately. I get that. Free will is obviously working in your favor these days. I should have seen that coming, but what can you do? Give a being the right to be an asshole, and chances are, they’re going to be an asshole.”

“I am busy, thank you for noticing—”

“But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t take some time for just you, man.” God tapped his fingers on his desk. “There’s something to the idea of self-care. When was the last time you did something just for you without worrying about anything else?”

Satan blanched. He tried desperately to come up with something to refute God, but his mind was blanking. He opened his mouth to speak, but no sound came out.

“Yeah,” God said. “That’s what I thought.”

“I don’t know why you care so much,” Satan growled.

“Bullshit you don’t. I’m your big brother. Of course I care about what happens to you.”

He sat back in his chair. “I love you, man. I know we’ve had our differences in the past, but I hope you remember that I’m always here for you, no matter what. We’re family, you know? It’s my job to call you out when you start acting like a jerk. And frankly, that’s exactly what you’re being right now. Maybe I should come down there for a bit. A little divine intervention. We could get high, laugh a little, knock back a couple of beers, swap stories about—”

Satan was alarmed. “No,” he said quickly. “Absolutely don’t do that. I don’t need you to—”

“Satan.”
“God,” he said flatly.

God threw up his hands. “Then what is it? You don’t want to get laid. You don’t want to hang. It’s always work, work, work with you. Come on, man. That’s not sustainable for a happy existence.”

“I don’t want a happy existence. I’m the Dark Lord of—”

“Blah, blah, blah. That doesn’t do fuck-all for me, and you know it. You get to be happy just like everyone else does. And it’s time you start realizing that. Look at me.”

Satan tried not to, but this was God, and he pretty much listened to most things he said.

“What.”

God leaned forward again until his face was practically pressed against the screen. “What is it you want? More than anything.”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Satan.”

“Would you knock it off?”


“Jesus Christ.”

God laughed. “He already left. Can’t save you now, dude. Tell me.”

Satan deflated. “If I do, will you drop it?”

“Yes,” God said promptly.

“Liar,” Satan mumbled.

God sniffed. “I never lie about anything.” He frowned. “Well, most things. The Crusades were kind of a mess, but I don’t know if that was entirely my fault.”

Satan looked toward the door, making sure it was shut. It wouldn’t do to have anyone overhearing. Granted, he could just annihilate anyone that did, but by then, people would be talking, and he hated trying to chase down rumors.

He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “I’m…gah.” He scrubbed a hand over his face before glaring at God. “You can’t give me any shit for this.”

God held up his hand solemnly. “I swear to me I won’t.”

“Okay. It’s like…just.” He lowered his head to the desk, his horns knocking against the stapler and tape dispenser. “I might be a little lonely.”

“What was that?” God asked. “ Couldn’t quite hear you. Connection must be bad.”
Fucking liar. He raised his head but refused to look at the screen. “I might be a little lonely,” he said through gritted teeth.

“Ah,” God said. “I see.” And the funny thing about that was Satan knew he could see it. He could see everything. He knew what Satan was going to say but was still allowing him to say it himself. Whatever else God was, he could be a good guy when the situation called for it.

“Stupid, right?” Satan mumbled, picking again at the muffin.

“Not at all, man.” Satan jerked his head toward the screen to see God smiling quietly. “It actually makes sense.”

“Really?”

God nodded. “I kind of figured you felt that way. It’s been building for a while, huh?”

“A little,” Satan admitted. “I don’t know why.”

“You don’t?” God asked. “I thought it was obvious.”

He blinked. “It is?”

“Pretty much, man. You’re not human, and even though I love those messy little fuckers, they are by no means perfect. And they’re not even the best thing I’ve created. Go ahead. Ask me. Ask me what the best thing I created was.”

Satan sighed. “What was the best thing you created?”

God leaned forward again and whispered, “You are.”

“Get the fuck outta here.”

God laughed. “I’m being serious! I get it, man. I was right where you were at one point, you know? I was the ruler of all things, and it was so medamn boring. I mean, sure, it was fine for a while, floating through infinite darkness, but you can only take so much before you want a change. So then I made the angels, and they were all right, I guess. Weirdly vindictive, but that’s something else entirely. And then I had a little fire and brimstone left over, and thought: why the fuck not? I made you, and it was honestly the best thing I’ve ever done.” He paused, considering.

Satan didn’t like the smile that was forming on his face. “I’m like your dad that way.”

Satan groaned. “You are not my father. I don’t have a—”


“Fuck you.”

“Please?” God asked. “I want that more than anything.”
“I won’t.”

God sighed. “Fine. Be that way. I get it, though. It can be tough being at the top of the food chain. You’ll always think with anyone new you meet that they just want to use you for something. I mean, fuck. Do you know how many prayers I get per day for the most asinine shit? That’s not what prayer is for! I’m not a fucking genie granting wishes.”

“And yet, you could still do it,” Satan pointed out.

God waved a hand at the screen. “Meh. If people got whatever they wanted whenever they wanted it, they wouldn’t be able to appreciate the little things. Humans are, for the most part, good, but they don’t have patience. That was my bad. I should have given them more. But Eve was a little dick who did not deserve Adam, which is why I made him Steve.” God stared at Satan. “And then you had to pull that whole snake-in-the-tree bullshit. Don’t think I’ve forgotten about that, dude.”

“Oh, here we go again. That was one time!”

“Yeah, yeah, whatever.” God grimaced. “Eden never would have worked out, anyway. Utopic bullshit. I was too young and idealistic. Man, did I learn my lesson real fast.”

“I don’t know if you did,” Satan said slowly.

God stroked his beard. “Eh. Trial and error, I guess. Humanity is a work in progress. A couple of days ago, I was seriously considering wiping the whole thing out again and starting from scratch. On Sunday, even! The most holy of days!”

“What changed your mind?”

God shrugged. “I looked in on this kid in Pakistan. Fifteen years old. Has his mom and sister. Dad’s up here with me. Kid was working his butt off to keep the family afloat while still going to school. Wants to be a veterinarian. And for some damn reason, no matter what life throws at him, he manages to stay optimistic. Good kid. Bright. I think he’s got a big future ahead of him.” God shook his head. “That’s the funny thing about humans. Just when you think there’s no hope left, you find these little beams of light. Makes you think. At least it did for me.”

“Yeah, I’m sure he’d love to know the only reason humanity wasn’t destroyed was because of his boundless optimism.”

God chuckled. “Wouldn’t want it to go to his head like some people.”

“I’m going to pretend that wasn’t directed toward me.”

“Denial,” God said. “I like it. So.”
“So,” Satan said, not liking God’s tone.
“Lonely, huh?”
Satan didn’t respond.
“Think we should do something about that?”
“We?” Satan asked dangerously.
God grinned. “You know I like to meddle.”
“I know,” Satan muttered. “And I swear to you that if you even think of trying to get involved, I will storm the Gates of Heaven and bring my wrath upon you.”
“Promises, promises,” God said. “And I doubt you’d make it past the Pearly Gates. Peter’s got this new security system installed. State of the art. Has lasers that sound like puppies barking when they fire. It’s adorable. And deadly.”
“He’s so fucking weird.”
“Right? I dig it, though. I mean, who the fuck comes up with puppy lasers? It’s gnarly.”
He sobered. “If you don’t want me to get involved, I won’t. On one condition.”
“Of course there’s a condition.”
“Yeah, well. I’m God. It’s sort of my schtick. It’s not a big deal, though, I promise. Here’s what I want you to do, okay?”
Satan tried not to show how eager he was, but by the look on God’s face, he failed miserably. Smug motherfucker. But there was a warmth in his chest at his brother’s smile, and he knew God was the only being who would tell it to him straight. And as much as he bitched about it, Satan knew he needed to hear it every now and then.
“You need to put yourself out there more,” God said. “Take a chance, you know? Joey probably wasn’t the best fit, but you’re either in the office or touring the Hell realms making sure everything is still on fire or whatever. You don’t take time for anything else, especially yourself. Join a soccer league or take a pottery class. Meet new people without the crown of Hell on your head. Yeah, you’re the supreme leader and all that, but it’s okay every now and then to let your guard down and just have fun, you know?”
“Fun,” Satan repeated. “Your advice for me is to have fun.”
“Yeah, man. Get out there. Do something different. When was the last time you just took a day for you without worrying about anything else?”
“I…” He was appalled when he couldn’t easily answer the question. Surely it hadn’t been
that long, right? He’d taken a vacation, but that was…what. Three, four thousand years ago? Woolly mammoths were still a thing, so that had to be then. “Holy shit.”

“It’s what I drop in the toilet bowl every morning at nine fifteen,” God agreed. “Let me ask you something.”

Satan was still dazed. “What?”

“When was the last time you were happy? And I’m not talking a fleeting feeling. When was the last time you were well and truly happy? First thing that comes to mind. Don’t think hard about it. Go.”

“Summoning,” Satan said promptly, surprising even himself.

“Going up to the crossroads? People asking for shit in exchange for their souls?”

“Yeah…yeah. I liked the negotiating. They wanted something I could give them, and they had something I wanted. It was…I don’t know. There’s just something I like about the commerce of it. It was good. Made me feel like I was doing something important.”

“All right, all right,” God said. “Here we go. Getting back to basics. See? That’s a start, man. You’ve been stuck in a rut. I get it, probably better than anyone else. We think we’re supposed to be a certain way, and we do it for so long, we forget how to be any way else. You gotta break free, you know? Why don’t you do that? Take a day and just answer some summons. Worst thing that happens is that it’s not for you anymore, and we’ll have to figure something else out. But at least you’ll know, right?”

“Right,” Satan said faintly. “I guess I could.”

“Yep,” God said. “Awesome. So we have a plan. You’ll answer a summon to Earth, and next week, we’ll talk again about how it went and—”

“Whoa, whoa,” Satan said, suddenly alarmed. “I can’t just do it now. I have responsibilities! Unions! Hypocritical Twitter bios! I have to plan so that I—”

“Satan.”

Satan sighed. “What?”

“There’s always going to be an excuse,” he said gently. “Always something that needs your attention, and we’ll be having this same conversation for the next century. If not now, when? You got this, man. Hell won’t fall apart in because you took one day for yourself. You’ve earned it, okay? Trust me on that.”

“I’ll think about it.”
God smiled ruefully. “I suppose that’s good enough for now.”

“And if I do it, you won’t be involved.”

“Of course not,” God said. “I mean, who the fuck am I? Only the Divine Creator of all the things. What the fuck do I know?”

“Asshole.”

“Bitch.”

“Literal motherfucker.”

God grinned. “I love you, dude.”

Satan didn’t fight the smile this time. “Yeah, yeah. I love you too.”

“Damn right you do. Okay, enough mushy stuff. Let’s talk business. Last week, we were talking about you taking the entire American South since they’re mostly a lost cause. You still good with that?”

“So long as it doesn’t include Florida.”

God rolled his eyes. “Yeah, no. They’re on their own from here on out. Fucking wasteland, I shit you not. Anyway, let’s move on to white people who call the police on people of color for no other reason aside from being racist dicks. You got the special area opening for them, right?”

“Yes. Should be ready by next year. We’re constructing waterslides, but instead of water, it’s spoiled mayonnaise.”

“Fuuuuck me,” God breathed. “That sounds amazing. I might need to come down for the grand opening just to see that shit. You’re so fucked up for even thinking of it. I love it.”

Satan warmed at the praise.

*****

That evening, he left the office, making sure Donna would be on her way out soon. She waved him off, telling him that she had to file a couple more reports before heading home.

He felt a little lighter than he had when he’d woken up. As much as he hated to admit it, God tended to have that effect on him. And he did have a point, much to Satan’s consternation. He was stuck in a rut. He didn’t know how he hadn’t seen it before. Now that it’d been laid bare for him, it was so damn obvious. And it wasn’t like he liked being lonely. He could have his pick of anyone he wanted, man, woman, or other. But sex was sex, and while it was good, he realized he wanted something more. Someone he could talk to. Someone who didn’t care about who he
was in Hell. Someone he could come home to and bullshit about their day with while making
dinner and listening to the screams of the damned filtering in through the open window above the
sink. He didn’t think it was too much to ask for. And while he couldn’t think of anyone off the
top of his head who fit that description, God was right. He would only find such a being if he put
himself out there more. Took more chances. Maybe he’d join one of the billion speed dating
groups in Hell.

He came to a fork in the path near the park. Going left would take him home. Going right
would take him to the summoning tubes.

He hesitated.

And then said, “Fuck it.”

He went right.

*****

The demon shift supervisor looked as if he were about to pass out when he saw Satan
approaching. He paled and almost dropped the clipboard he held in his claws. “S-sire!” he cried
out, causing the other demons to stop and turn with wide eyes. “This is a surprise! I didn’t know
we were expecting a visit today.” He looked around frantically until he found his assistant who
was shaking his head wildly.

“You weren’t,” Satan said. “Just thought I’d stop in for a little bit. Maybe answer a
summon or two myself. No big deal.”

Everyone stared at him.

“Answer a summon?” the supervisor squeaked. “You?”

Satan frowned. “Is that going to be a problem?”

“No! No, of course not, sire. It’s just…you’re you. You have demons for that! Surely you
wouldn’t want to waste your time on something so measly as a summon.”

Satan narrowed his eyes, his halo of fire beginning to burn above his head. “Are you
trying to tell me what I can and cannot do?”

The supervisor almost fell over, a tremble rolling through his entire body. “I would never
presume to—”

“Then keep your mouth shut lest you find yourself on the receiving end of my wrath,”

Satan snarled at him.

“Y-yes, sire!”
The halo faded. “Good. Now, then. Which tube can I use? Is my old one available?”

The supervisor frantically flipped through the papers on his clipboard. “666 is still up and running, sire. We upgraded it with the others last year.” He looked up from the clipboard, swallowing thickly. “I’m…it’s just that, are you sure?”

“I am,” Satan said. “Do I need to be nude, or is what I’m wearing sufficient?”

“It’s fine,” the supervisor said hastily. “You look wonderful. Magnificent. There has never been a vision such as—”

“Stop talking.”

The supervisor snapped his jaws closed. His tail curled around his legs, the black tip twitching.

He heard the other summoning demons whispering as he walked along the path that led to the other tubes. They wouldn’t look him directly in the eye, each of them bowing low. A few fell flat on their faces. Satan struggled to keep from laughing at them. He was supposed to be putting himself out there, making new friends. “Hello,” he said mildly. “Nice to see you. Hello. Looking good. Hi, there. Love what you’ve done with your teeth. Hey. Hello. Supervisor.”

“Yes, sire,” the supervisor said, running to catch up with him.

“How many souls have we acquired today?”

“Seven thousand six hundred and twenty-nine.”

“Seems low.”

“Tuesday,” the supervisor said. “Everyone hates Tuesdays. We’ll be back up beyond ten thousand tomorrow, guaranteed.”

“Good.” He stopped in front of tube 666. He reached out and touched the plexiglass, allowing himself a moment to fondly reminisce. Oh, he’d been so young and foolish, thinking that he could have that life forever. If only he’d known what he’d end up becoming. The younger version would be so disappointed in the office drone he was now. He’d been so evil and gung-ho. It hurt a little to think how far he’d let himself fall. Maybe God actually had a point for once.

He pressed his hand against the screen next to the tube. It lit up brightly as he pulled his hand away, the words WELCOME BACK SATAN! appearing on the screen. The door to the tube slid open as the words disappeared. He frowned when the screen started glitching into static.
The supervisor rushed forward. “Stupid things, you just gotta give them a little—” He slammed his fist against the screen. Nothing happened. He did it again. Nothing happened. He bent over, his face close to the screen. “Huh. That’s weird.”

“What is?”

The supervisor stood back up. “It looks like it’s corrupted, like something is interfering with—oh, there it goes. Must have just needed a moment to reboot itself.”

The static disappeared and was replaced by the words:

SUMMON INCOMING
LOCATION: TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES, NEW MEXICO
SUMMONER: JIMMY DAVIDSON
AGE: 21
REASON FOR SUMMON: WANTS A BILLION DOLLARS AND ALSO SOME NACHOS

“They never change,” Satan muttered.

“Are you sure about this, sire?” the supervisor asked. “Surely you don’t want to waste your time on something so…insignificant. I can switch it out for another human who isn’t so frivolous with their soul.”

“This will do fine,” Satan said. “I might even give him a piece of my mind. Who the hell would give their soul away for nachos?”

“And a billion dollars,” the supervisor added helpfully.

“Yeah, that’s not going to happen,” Satan said. “I think he needs to be schooled in the proper etiquette of summoning demons. And he’s going to get it from the master himself. I will have his soul, the putrid little tchotchke that it is.”

He stepped through the door into the tube. He turned around and wasn’t surprised to see the demons had gathered before him. They were all staring at him with wide eyes. He sighed. “Don’t you all have work you should be doing?”

They scattered like cockroaches.

The supervisor was frowning down at the screen next to the tube again.

“Is there a problem?” Satan asked.

The supervisor shook his head slowly. “No, just…I guess it’s been so long since this tube has been used, it was bound to act up a little. Probably nothing. Are you ready, sire?”

“Fuck yeah,” Satan said, sounding more confident than he felt. “Let’s rock this shit.”
The door slid closed.
A panel lit up on the plexiglass in front of him. Words appeared; READY Y/N?
He hit yes.
The tube began to shake.
He closed his eyes, and a moment later, rocketed toward Earth.
He laughed the entire way up.

*****

When he opened his eyes, he was in the middle of nowhere, standing at a dirt crossroads. It was night, and the sky above was filled with a field of stars. It’d been a long time since he’d seen them. He often thought the sky was God’s greatest creation. It was so vast and could make one feel the smallest they’d ever been.

He breathed in Earth air. It was cool and sharp without even a hint of brimstone. It felt good in his lungs.

The crossroads had fields stretching out on either side of him. In the distance, he could see the faint lights from the town of Truth Or Consequences. Crickets chirped, and an owl called out from somewhere in one of the fields.

He turned around slowly, trying to find who had summoned him.
There was no one there.
“What the fuck,” he muttered. Then, “Hello? I’m here for whoever summoned me?”
Nothing.
“Seriously, not cool,” he said. “You can’t just summon and ditch. That’s not how these things work. Have some tact. I’m very busy, and I don’t like it when people pull this shit.” He looked down to make sure he’d been pulled to the right place. Sure enough, in the center of the crossroads, dirt had been disturbed, meaning the proper items had been buried. Maybe whoever it was had changed their minds. It happened. He’d just have to go back and try—

That’s when he saw it. Movement behind a boulder a little further down the road.
He sighed and turned his face toward the sky. “You can come out. I know you’re there.”
“Holy. Fucking. Balls,” a voice said, and from behind the rock, rose a man who was supposed to be Jimmy Davidson.

Though, man might have been a bit of an overstatement. He barely looked old enough to drive. Satan was taken aback by the sight of him as he stepped out from behind the rock. He was
wearing tight black jeans and a fucking midriff t-shirt with a sports logo on the front. It wasn’t until he got closer that Satan was able to make out the words in bedazzled letters: POWER BOTTOM.

Satan choked.

Jimmy was a skinny thing. His dark hair was messy, though Satan thought that was by design rather than accident. His nipples were obviously pierced, and there was a little trail of hair that went from his belly button down to the top of his obscene jeans that left absolutely nothing to the imagination.

And since Satan was a consummate professional, he did not stare at the obvious bulge in Jimmy’s jeans. He was here to broker a deal, nothing more.

Jimmy’s jaw was dropped as he approached Satan, gaze crawling up and down slowly, stopping at his crotch. If he wasn’t red already, Satan would be worried that he was blushing. He almost crossed his arms over his chest when Jimmy’s gaze lingered there but managed to keep his arms at his sides.

“Who are you?” Jimmy breathed. He stopped near Satan, looking up at him with wide, dark eyes. “Are you my dreams?”

“No,” Satan said, his voice thunderous. “I am your nightmare. I am the thing that lives in the dark. I am the—”

“I want to climb you like a motherfucking tree, holy shit.”

“—evil that…lurks in the…what.”

“Who are you?” Jimmy demanded. He looked antsy, fidgeting from one foot to the other. “Are you my demon? I mean, you look like a demon. You’ve got the horns and the sneer and the fucking crazy ass eyes that are, like, totally glowing. What’s your name? I’m Jimmy.” He looked up at Satan through his eyelashes, tongue swiping over his lips. “But you can call me whatever you want.”

“What,” Satan said again.

“Oh man,” Jimmy said. “Suspenders with no shirt is totally my new sexuality. Fucking look at you. Goddamn daddy bear right here, I shit you not. Turn around.”

“What.”

Jimmy twirled his finger impatiently. “Turn around. I want to see if the back is as good as the front.”
“I’m not going to turn around!”

Jimmy pouted, sticking out his bottom lip. “But…but why?”

Satan glared at him. “I’m not here to be ogled.”

“I don’t know what that means,” Jimmy said. “Is that demon for something?”

“What? No, it means—”

But Jimmy was already walking around him. “Oh hell, yeah. The back is as good as the front. Look at that ass. I would just put my whole head in that and motorboat the shit out of it. So bouncy.”

Satan whirled around. “Would you stop it?”

“Stop what?”

“Objectifying me!”

“Um, then why are you wearing jeans and suspenders and nothing else? I mean, when I wear something like that, I want people to look.” His brow furrowed. “Am I making you uncomfortable?” He gnawed on his bottom lip. “Sorry. Sorry. I promise I won’t touch you without your consent. Consent is important. Can I touch you?”

“No!”


“I’m not soft.” He sucked in his stomach as best he could.

Jimmy frowned. “It’s okay if you are. I like it. Total dad bod. Hey, question.”

Satan could barely keep up. “What?”

“I’ve been very, very bad.” He batted his eyes. “Would you ground me?”

“What in the actual fuck,” Satan said.

“Exactly,” Jimmy said. “What in the actual fuck. What’s your name? Is it something cool like Derek?”

“Derek,” Satan repeated. “You think that my name is something cool like Derek.”

“I don’t know,” Jimmy said. “I’ve never met a demon before. I don’t know what their names are. Derek seems like a demon name. I knew a Derek once. He went to jail when the police found out he had murdered a bunch of people. I was pissed he’d ghosted me, but then I felt better about it because I didn’t want to be murdered. Win win!”

Satan wondered if they knew the same Derek. Probably. That guy was a fucking asshole.

“Demons aren’t named Derek.”
Jimmy deflated. “Oh. That sucks. What’s your name, then?”

He puffed out his chest and told himself he wasn’t putting on a show. “My name… is Satan.” He looked off into the distance, wanting to make sure this idiot was suitably impressed.

“Whaaaaaat,” Jimmy whispered. “Like the Satan?”

“Yes,” Satan said. He put his hands on his hips. He wasn’t posing. He wasn’t. And so what if his halo of fire appeared? It did that sometimes.

“Oh. My. God,” Jimmy said. “I summoned the Satan? Like the literal devil?” He threw his hands above his head and began to shimmy his hips. “Fuck, yes! I’m so good! Ha, suck it Dad who said I’d never amount to anything if I didn’t apply myself! I got the fucking Devil all up in this shit!”

“Are you done?” Satan asked. He wasn’t charmed, no matter what random thoughts were going through his head, consisting of such phrases as so fucking adorable and what a moron.

“No,” Jimmy said. “I’ve still got a few shakes left.” And he did just that, bopping his hips from side to side. “Okay, now I’m done. Hi, Satan! I’m Jimmy. Jimmy Davidson.” Ridiculously, he held out his hand.

Satan stared at it.

Jimmy wiggled his fingers

Satan sighed the long suffering sigh of the put upon. But then he shook Jimmy’s hand, the human’s much smaller than his own. But his skin was warm, and if he lingered for longer than was completely necessary, there was nobody there to call him on it. He was just entertaining the little brat. Yes, the fact that he was so impressed by Satan was a plus, but he was used to that. Most beings cowered before him. The fact that this weird human seemed to be ecstatic over it was a strange feeling.

“There,” Jimmy said, pulling his hand away. “Now that we’ve been properly introduced, Satan—may I call you Satan?”

“No. You may refer to me as The Lord of All—”

“Good. So, Satan. I have a question.”

Satan rolled his eyes. “Of course you do.” He expected this. Jimmy would ask how this all worked, what he would need to do in order to get what he wanted, how long he’d get with his soul before it belonged to Hell, the whole nine yards. Satan began to prepare his sales pitch,
ready to tell Jimmy that while a billion dollars was out of the question, nachos were certainly doable.

So imagine his surprise when Jimmy asked, “What’s your favorite color?”

He blinked. “What?”


“Unless?”

Jimmy began to pace back and forth. Satan was no surprised to see the number on the back of his shirt: 69. “Unless it’s not red because you already get enough of that every time you look in the mirror.” He glanced at Satan. “And fuck me, if I looked like you, I’d look in the mirror all the time. Probably jerk it too, but I digress.”

“What the hell,” Satan mumbled as he stared at Jimmy.

“Is it black?” Jimmy asked. “Nah, that’s probably too easy. You look like something a horny goth princess would draw and put on Tumblr, so I bet it’s not.”

“A horny what and what?”

“Green,” Jimmy said, stopping in front of Satan. “I bet it’s green. Your favorite color is green. I know things like this. My grandmother was psychic before she went to jail and died in a knife fight over toilet wine. She told me it skips a generation, so I have the sight like she did. Your favorite color is green and your favorite food is…worms.”

“Are you always like this?” Satan asked incredulously.

Jimmy shrugged. “Mostly. I don’t know how else to be but me. But since I’m pretty great, I’m okay with it. And that’s not my ego talking. It’s the truth. At least I think so.”

“My favorite color is not green. And I don’t eat worms.”

“Oh,” Jimmy said. He squinted up at him. “Are you sure?”

“Yes. My favorite color is blue, and I like lasagna.”

“Wow,” Jimmy said, sounding impressed. “You’re so international. Lasagna. Fancy as fuck. I had lasagna once in Tulsa. It was eye-opening. I’m glad we’re getting to know each other. This is fun. My favorite color is suddenly red, and my favorite food is cock.”

Satan gaped at him.

“Too much?” Jimmy asked. He nodded. “Too much. My bad. My favorite food is actually pizza, but you know how it is. Red is my favorite color though. It’s like blood. Did you
know that blood being blue in the body is just a myth? It’s always red, just different shades. The only reason we see blue in our veins when we look at them is because light penetrates the skin and illuminates them, and blue and red light penetrate at varying degrees of success. Our eyes make us see the blue. Crazy, right?”

“What are you talking about?”

“I know! It’s nuts! I didn’t think that was true at first, but I didn’t want to find out on my own because that would mean cutting my own skin, and I hate getting scratches. It hurts.” He shook his head. “ Weird, huh?”

“I…don’t know?”

“That’s okay, Satan,” Jimmy said. He reached up and took Satan’s hand again. “I can teach you about that kind of stuff since you belong to me now. Come on! Let’s go sit on the rock and talk about life and feelings and if size matters. I really hope it does, because I can see you’re proportional everywhere.”

Satan was so gobsmacked, he didn’t even pull away as Jimmy dragged him toward the boulder he’d been hiding behind. “I don’t belong to you.”

Jimmy looked back at him. “What? You don’t? But I summoned you. That’s how it works.” He dropped Satan’s hand and started to climb up on the boulder. He couldn’t quite make it and grunted as he slid back down. He frowned, took a few steps back before getting a running start. But he had too much momentum, and sailed right over the boulder, landing with a crash on the other side as he squawked.

Satan gave very serious thought to running away as fast as he could.

He didn’t.

Jimmy’s head appeared on the other side. “I’m okay!”

“Oh,” Satan said. “Good. I was so worried.”

“Aw,” Jimmy said. “That’s nice of you.”

“I was being facetious.”

“Sexy facetious,” Jimmy said as he climbed up on the boulder.

“That’s not a thing.”

“It is if you believe it enough.” He patted the rock next to him. “Sit.”

“I think I’ll stand if it’s all the same to you. Now, about the reason you summoned me.”

Jimmy shrugged. “We don’t have to talk about it yet. I have so many questions.”
Satan sighed. “I’m not going to tell you the point of existence. That’s for you to—”
“Ew. I don’t care about *that*. That’s stupid. There are bigger things to focus on.”

Bigger than the meaning of life? Satan suddenly felt out of his depth. He’d never been one for philosophical discussions. They bored the shit out of him. There was a reason why he’d sent Descartes packing after only three days, shoving him up to Heaven and making him God’s problem. But since he couldn’t go back without a deal in place (the demons would *immediately* start talking, and he’d never hear the end of it), he knew he’d have to at least get through this.

“Fine,” he grumbled. “But we’re going to make it quick. I’m on a timetable here.”

Jimmy nodded. “Totally get that. My boss at Pizza World says the same thing. Well he did before he was arrested for stealing from charities for sickly orphans.”

“Does everyone you know end up in jail?”


He wasn’t. “Yes.”

“You could sit by me,” Jimmy said, patting the rock beside him.

“Or I could just stay right where I am.”

Jimmy rolled his eyes. “I’m not going to bite.” He grinned razor sharp. “Not unless you want me to. Still want to touch your tummy.”

“Not going to happen.”

“But…but it’s *right there*."

“Ask your questions!”

He started pouting again. Satan thought about spanking him, but he thought Jimmy would enjoy that too much. *Satan* would probably enjoy that too much. Tuesdays were very fucking weird.

“Okay. Ready? Here we go. What is…. your favorite movie?”

“That’s not a question.”

“It is because I ended it as one. Didn’t you hear the way my voice rose at the end of the word *movie*? That means it’s a question. Do you not have questions in Hell?” He balked. “Do you not have *movies* in Hell? Oh my god, have you ever seen a movie?”

“We have movies,” Satan said. “There’s one theater that only plays Transformer movies in slow motion.”
Jimmy grimaced. “That does sound like Hell.”

It was one of their best forms of torture. Satan couldn’t wait to get his hands on Michael Bay. It was only a matter of time, especially since God had already promised Satan he could have him. “It is.”

“Are those your favorites?”

Satan shook his head. “No. I…is this really what you want to know? Like, you just summoned the Devil himself, and you want to talk about movies?”

“Yup. That’s what you do on first dates. You ask questions to get to know the other person before you fuck them. Oops. Sorry. Boundaries. You ask questions to get to know the other person before you make love to them.”

Satan’s eyes bulged. “This isn’t a first date!”

“Not with that attitude it’s not,” Jimmy said. “I learned on the Internet that if you believe in in your dreams hard enough, they’ll sometimes come true. Dream big, my man. Favorite movie. Annnnnnd go.”

Satan threw up his hands. “Maid In Manhattan.”


Satan scowled. “It’s a good movie. Jennifer Lopez doesn’t get her due as an actress. Her comedic timing is impeccable.”

Jimmy said, “What.”

“It’s a good movie!”

“Uhh, if you say so. Okay, your turn.”

“My turn for what?”

“You get to ask me a question now,” Jimmy said. “Remember? That’s how we get to know each other since this is a first da—I mean, since we’re friends. Yes, friends. That’s what this is.”

“We’re friends?” Satan asked dubiously.

“Aw, thank you. That’s so nice of you to ask. Of course I’ll be your friend.” And then, as if Satan wasn’t standing right in front of him and couldn’t hear him, he muttered, “Gonna friend all over your tummy later, that’s for damn sure, just you wait and see.”
Satan wondered if this was some kind of joke. If the demons were fucking with him. If they were, he was going to destroy them all as soon as he got back. It was going to be slow, and painful, and they would all be screaming.

Satan snuffed out his halo of fire before it could grow. “What is your favorite—”
“Do you have wings?” Jimmy demanded. “I’ve always seen pictures of you with wings. Is that a real thing? Can you show me? Oh my god, can you fly? Can you take me flying?”
“No, I will not take you flying.”
Jimmy nodded sagely. “Because you don’t have wings.”
“I do,” Satan said. “I just left them at home. They’re too big to wear every day. Only for special occasions.”
“But this is a special occasion.”
“It’s really not. And besides, you move around too much. I would probably end up dropping you.”
Jimmy gasped, his hands going to his throat. “You care about me.”
Satan was bewildered. “How did you get that from—”
“You won’t take me flying because you’re too worried you’ll drop me.” Jimmy sniffled. “Gosh, that’s so nice of you. But you don’t have to worry about that. I trust you and your gigantic muscles. And even if you do drop me, I know you’ll catch me like I was some maid in Manhattan.”
“If this is you playing some trick on me,” Satan muttered to God, “I’ll never let you hear the end of it.”
“Who are you talking to?” Jimmy asked. He looked around wildly. “Are there other demons here? Are you all going to take advantage of my young, nubile body? Oh nooooo. Please. Nooo. Anything but that.” He winked at Satan.
Satan felt uncharacteristically flustered. “I’m not—there’s not going to be any advantages taken. I was talking to God.”
Jimmy started choking. “God is real?”
Satan blinked. “Of course he’s real.”
“Sounds fake, but okay.”
“I’m real. Why the hell would it be so impossible that God is real too?”
Jimmy shrugged. “You’re standing right in front of me. God isn’t, so.”

“That’s—that’s not how it works!”

“Sure it’s not,” Jimmy said easily. “Whatever you say, Satan.” He laughed. “Oh man, I can’t believe I’m talking to the Satan. That’s so nuts. Let’s recap! Your favorite movie is Maid In Manhattan, you rock suspenders, and you have wings, but you won’t take me flying because you’re too scared you’ll drop me since you care about me so much.”

“That’s not—”

“I feel like I know so much about you already,” Jimmy said dreamily. “We’ve got this, like, connection. I’ve never felt this way about anyone before. I thought I did once, but it turned out to be food poisoning. Do not eat tacos that you get from a truck on the side of the road. I learned that lesson the hard way.”

“Are you high?” Satan asked, sure that was the only explanation.

Jimmy made a face. “Ew, no. I don’t like drugs or alcohol. My brain is already screwed up enough as it is. I don’t care if other people do that stuff, but it’s not for me.”

“Your brain isn’t screwed up,” Satan said, lying through his teeth, only because it felt like the right thing to do.

Jimmy looked as if he had stars in his eyes. “That’s the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me.”

“It is?”

And, remarkably, Jimmy seemed to curl in on himself a little, the bluster and bravado fading away. He gnawed on his lip again. “I’m not exactly…you know.” He shrugged awkwardly.

Satan sat down on the rock next to him, making sure there was enough space between them. It lasted maybe two seconds before Jimmy scooted over, their legs pressing together. “That’s better,” he said. Surprisingly, he kept his hands to himself.

“What are you not, exactly?” Satan asked against his better judgment.

“It’s not a big deal. Let’s talk about something else.” He brightened. “I know! Tell me something that no one else knows. Like, a secret.”

Satan rubbed his jaw. “A secret, huh?” What could it hurt?

Jimmy nodded furiously. “And you have to make it a good one. Nothing dumb.”
“Hmm. Okay. Let’s see. Ah! You know the word colonel? C-O-L-O-N-E-L, right? As in the military.”

“Right,” Jimmy said.

“But it’s pronounced kernel, like from corn. It makes no sense whatsoever. There’s no r.”

“Right.”

Satan puffed out his chest again. “I did that.”

Jimmy was suitably impressed. “You did? Holy crap. That’s evil.”

“Yes,” Satan said. “I know. And you know how when you write down the word Wednesday, but you always have to sound it out as wed-nes-day to make sure you get it right, even though you know how to spell it?”

“You did that too?”

“Yes, I did,” Satan said. “Just chipping away at the psyche slowly. That’s part of the game.”

“Wow,” Jimmy said. “I can’t believe I never noticed how mildly inconveniencing that is. It totally makes sense now that would be because of you. Good for you, Satan. You sound like you’re really awesome at what you do.”

“I try,” Satan said. “Some days are harder than others.”

“Why?” And as if Satan would notice, Jimmy scooted closer until he was completely pressed against him. “Is it tough being the King of Hell?”

Satan let him be. The brat was probably cold. His little shirt wasn’t going to keep him warm, especially since the later it got, the more of a chill there was. It had nothing to do with the fact that Satan liked him right where he was. That wasn’t even remotely close to what it was.

“Sometimes,” Satan said. “There’s a lot I have to worry about. New people coming all the time, getting stuff ready for a certain family that’s currently in charge of America. It takes a lot of work to keep Hell running smoothly.”

“Sounds like it,” Jimmy said. “What do you do for fun when you’re not watching Jennifer Lopez pretend to be a maid?”

Satan winced. “I… work a lot. I haven’t really had time for anything else lately.”

“Oh,” Jimmy said. “I totally get that. I work twenty hours a week at Pizza World, and I’m exhausted by the time I finish. I guess it’s pretty much the same as you. I can’t believe how much we have in common already.”
“Not even close.”

Jimmy ignored him. “Well, if you had more time, what would you do for fun?”

Satan hesitated. It felt like the conversation with God all over again, which was ridiculous, given that God rarely wore shirts proclaiming him to be a Power Bottom. And the fact that Jimmy wasn’t the creator of the known universe. “You sure you want to hear this?” he asked.

“So sure,” Jimmy said. He sounded like he meant it.

“Well, I like to go walking.”

“Where?”

Satan shrugged. “Everywhere. There’s so much to see in Hell. I don’t think even I’ve seen everything. It seems like I’m always able to find something new. A few months ago, I came across this little valley filled with venomous snakes the size a school bus. They were constantly eating each other and then fucking to make more snakes so they could eat even more. It was really pretty.”

“It sounds like it,” Jimmy said, and Satan believed him. “I saw a snake once, but I ran away from it because it was scary. It turned out to be a stick, but I didn’t know that until six months later when I realized it was made of wood.”

“That’s…quite a story.”

“Thank you,” Jimmy said. “It’s one of my best. It really shows the type of person I am. I’m so happy you loved it. What else do you like? Do you like mini-golf? I’ve always wanted to play mini-golf, but I’ve never gotten the chance. It looks like fun.”


Jimmy picked at a threat on his jeans. “I don’t know. Seems kind of dumb to go by myself, you know?”

“What about with friends?”

Jimmy groaned. “Yeah, I don’t have many of those. Not that I’m a bad person!” he added quickly. “Just, I’m a little…intense.”

“That’s one way to put it,” Satan said.

“Yeah, I know. But that’s okay. I figure one day, I’ll find someone who doesn’t give a crap that I act all weird most of the time. I mean, there has to be someone, right?”

“I think so,” Satan said quietly.
Jimmy beamed up at him. “Awesome! I like talking to you. You’re so cool.”
“I’m really not.”
“Well, I think you are, so it counts.”
“I’ve never played mini-golf,” Satan admitted, feeling his face grow warm. “We have four hundred courses in Hell, and the cup where the ball is supposed to go is too small for the ball to fit. I just never went. Haven’t had time.”
“It does,” Satan agreed. “That’s kind of the point of torture.”
“Do you ever torture people?”
Satan was shocked at the bright gleam in his eyes. “Not as much as I used to.”
“Do they deserve it? Like, are they murderers and bad people and stuff?”
“And stuff,” Satan said. “And if they’re down there with me, they usually deserve it.”
“But you’re a good guy,” Jimmy said, sounding confused. “Why would it be so bad to be with you?”
“It’s Hell,” Satan said dryly. “It’s kind of the point.”
“Doesn’t sound so bad to me. Sure, the snake thing isn’t that great, but you have movies and mini golf. It sounds like Albuquerque. I’ve been there a few times. Have you ever been?”
“To Albuquerque? On occasion.”
“Whoa,” Jimmy said. “I wonder if we were ever there at the same time. That’s crazy to think about, huh?”
“Yes,” Satan said. “This is certainly crazy.”
Jimmy squinted at him. “Is that one of those things where you say one thing but mean something else entirely?”
“No.”
“Was that one of those things where you say one thing but—”
Satan put his arm over Jimmy’s shoulder, pulling him close. “Stop it.”
“So warm,” Jimmy mumbled, pressing his face against the side of Satan’s stomach. “So soft. Question.”
Satan sighed. “Go for it.”
“Have you ever gotten into a fight? Do you know karate?”
“Yes, I’ve gotten into a fight. No, I don’t know karate.”
“Did you win your fight?”
“Yes. I’m Satan. I win at everything.”
“I don’t know karate either,” Jimmy said. “I tried to go to a class once because there was this asshole who kept picking on me. But then I got bored after the first five minutes and decided to go get a McFlurry instead. It had M&M’s in it. And then the asshole tried to fight with me again, so I kicked him in the balls and he didn’t get back up for a long time.”
“What was his name?” Satan asked through gritted teeth.
“The asshole? Why?”
“Just tell me.”
“Bobby Gordon.”
Satan twitched his fingers against the rock. Bobby Gordon was now marked for Hell when he died. Satan would enjoy his arrival.
“Anyone else give you crap?”
Jimmy shrugged. “A few people, but I can handle myself. They think I’m crazy. I probably am, at least a little bit.” He blinked slowly. “But I think that’s okay. That doesn’t make me a bad person.” Then, “Unless you want me to be. I can be so bad—”
“I bet you can,” Satan said.
He pulled his arm back when Jimmy stood on the rock. He almost fell over the side, but Satan caught him by a belt loop. He walked around behind Satan, and said, “Do your horns hurt?”
“What? No.”
“Oh. Can you feel it when people touch them?”
He frowned. “Why? What are you—”
Jimmy jumped onto his back, using his shoulders to climb up. Satan grunted when he got a foot in the side of his neck. He was about to tell Jimmy to get the fuck down before he hurt himself when he felt hands wrap around his horns.
And he immediately melted into a puddle.
Not literally of course, though he could do that too if he wanted. His horns were very sensitive, and the kid was tugging on them lightly.
“Oh my god,” Jimmy whispered. “Are you purring?”
Satan coughed roughly. “I’m not purring.”
“You were!” Jimmy said, and then rubbed his hands up and down Satan’s horns. Satan’s eyes started to flutter shut before he forced them back open. “Would you stop that?”

“You liked it,” Jimmy said cheerfully. He sat down on Satan’s right shoulder, his legs dangling down onto his chest. He poked Satan in the cheek. Satan snapped his teeth at his finger, and Jimmy laughed as he pulled his hand away. “This is so cool.”

“What is?”

“This whole thing,” Jimmy said. “Like, I never thought when I came here that I’d get to meet someone like you. You’re rad.”

“Thanks. I think. Why do you want a billion dollars?”

He felt Jimmy stiffen on his shoulder. “You’ll think it’s stupid.”

“Probably. You wanted a billion dollars and some nachos.”

“Yeah. My bad. I was just super hungry. I forgot to eat before I came out here.”

“And the money?” He reached up and held onto Jimmy’s ankles to keep him from kicking his legs. The bones felt small and delicate underneath his hands.

Jimmy sighed. “It’s just... well. Like, the friends thing, you know? I thought that if I had money or whatever that I could have friends. People would like me because I could buy them stuff.”

“Those aren’t real friends,” Satan said. “They’d just be using you.”

“I know. But maybe it would only start that way, and then after I buy them whatever they wanted, they would just like me for me instead of running and screaming in the opposite direction because I said something stupid. I told you it’s dumb.”

“A little,” Satan said. “But I get it.”

“You do?”

“Yeah. People tend to run and scream in the opposite direction whenever they see me too.”

“That’s because you’re the devil.” He heard the smile in Jimmy’s voice and knew what was coming next. “A handsome devil.”

“You just couldn’t resist, could you.”

“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take. Nelson Mandela said that.”

What the fuck. Satan let it slide. “You really want a billion dollars?”
“I don’t know,” Jimmy said. “What would I have to give you in return?”
“Your soul.”
“Huh,” Jimmy said. “That doesn’t sound so bad.”
Satan groaned. “It is, you dolt. Don’t you get it? If I own your soul it means when you die, you’ll come to Hell.”
“Yeah,” Jimmy said. “But you’ll be there, so that’s good with me. We could totally play mini-golf! Ooh, and watch Jennifer Lopez movies!”
“I’m not going to take your soul,” Satan said.
He felt Jimmy sag on his shoulder. “What? Why not?”
“Because you don’t really want that.”
“Yes, I do!”
Satan pulled Jimmy off his shoulder, settling him down in his lap. He realized almost immediately how bad of an idea it was when Jimmy wriggled back and forth and whispered “So proportional” in an awed tone.
“Listen, Jimmy.”
Jimmy sighed. “Dammit, now you sound like a dad, but not in the good daddy way. We’ll have to get to that later, I guess.”
“You don’t want to do this.”
Jimmy glared at him. “Why not? It’s my soul. I can do whatever I want with it. It’s not like I use it for anything. What’s it matter to you?”
“Because you’re a good person,” Satan said. “I can see that.”
“Oh,” Jimmy said. He lay his head against Satan’s chest. “You can?”
“Yes. There are…certain people, people who you know are destined for big things. Sometimes, you can see the light that burns within them. It’s blinding.”
“And you think I’m one of those people?” Jimmy asked, sounding incredulous.
“Yeah,” Satan said. “I do. Your light is very bright.”
“That means I’ll go to heaven when I die,” Jimmy said.
“Exactly.”
He scrunched up his face. “But what if I don’t want to? I think I’d rather go to Hell, you know? So we can hang out, or whatever. If you won’t take my soul now, maybe I’ll just do bad stuff so the light goes away. What do I have to do? Murder someone? I don’t know if I can do
that. I mean, I like blood or whatever, but murder is gross. Unless it’s a child molester. If I kill a child molester, would I go to Hell? Or would that give me more Heaven points? Nah, scratch that. I can’t kill anyone. I think it would make me too sad. And I won’t hurt animals, because I that’s just mean. Unless it’s a goat, because fuck those guys.” He brightened. “I know! I can rob a bank!”

“You’re not going to rob a bank,” Satan scolded him. “Don’t make me tell you again.”

“Or what? You’ll spank me?”

“Yes,” Satan snarled. Then, “No, I—would you stop moving!”

Jimmy did. “I don’t get it. You keep saying Hell is bad, but you’re in Hell, and you’re not bad.”

“I’m the worst,” Satan snapped at him.

“Nah,” Jimmy said. “You’re pretty great.” He was then distracted by pressing his hands against the slope of Satan’s stomach. “So gooood,” he breathed.

Satan let him touch. There was no one else around. What harm could it do? And, if he was being honest with himself, it felt nice to have someone close like this. It’d been a long time. Too long. Maybe God had a point after all.

“I like you,” Jimmy announced, apropos of nothing. “Just so you know.”

“Wonderful,” Satan said flatly.

“And I think you like me too.”

“I don’t.”

“Liar,” Jimmy said fondly. “So you’re not going to take my soul?”

“No. I’m not.”

Jimmy nodded. “That’s fine. I can just summon another demon and give it to them instead.”

Satan grabbed him by the shoulders and lifted them up until they were face to face. “You will do nothing of the sort. If I ever hear you tried to summon one of my demons again, I will make your life a living—”

Jimmy kissed the tip of his nose.

Satan gaped at him.

Jimmy grinned.

“What are you doing?” he demanded, shaking him slightly.
“You looked so cute with your serious face,” Jimmy said. “I wanted to kiss it. So I did. I like your nose ring.”

“Stop that.”

Jimmy did it again, smacking his lips loudly. He pulled away and then froze, eyes widening. “Oh no,” he said. “Are you even queer? I didn’t even think to ask! Oh man, I’m so sorry if you’re not. I mean, you could be if you wanted to, and by the time I’m done with you, you’ll—”

“Shut up,” Satan growled, setting Jimmy back down on his lap. “Yes, I’m queer. All higher beings are. Heterosexuality is unnatural. It should only be used for procreation, and nothing more.”

“Whoa,” Jimmy said. “They sure got that wrong in the Bible, huh? God didn’t write that?”

“No. He didn’t.” Satan sighed. “He has a shirt like yours.”

“God’s a power bottom?” Jimmy exclaimed. “That’s awesome! I mean, I’m probably better at it. You know those bucking bronco machines in bars? I once stayed on one for four hours at the highest setting.” He blinked innocently up at Satan. “What’s that? You say you don’t believe me and a demonstration is in order?”

“I didn’t say anything.”

“You were thinking it,” Jimmy said, tapping the side of his head. “Psychic, remember?”

And for the life of him, Satan wondered if that was actually true because he had been thinking it, much to his dismay. Except the bucking bronco machine had been his own dick and Jimmy’s thighs had been a vise and—

“Nope,” Satan said, standing abruptly, knocking Jimmy to the ground. “Nope, nope, nope. Time for me to go.”

“What?” Jimmy said, pushing himself up. “But I haven’t gotten my wish yet!”

“And you’re not going to,” Satan growled. “It’s time for you to go home. Don’t let me catch you out here again, or I’ll… I’ll—”

“Send me to Heaven and I can see just how much of a power bottom God is?” Jimmy asked.

Satan saw red. Granted, he usually saw red, but this was red. The idea of Jimmy on his knees in veneration while plowing into God was almost more than he could take. He knew God
wouldn’t do that to him, but Jimmy would certainly try. And he hated it. He’d never been one for jealousy, but it was pissing him off more than he cared to admit. If he were smarter, he’d go back to Hell right this second and forget about Jimmy Davidson entirely.

The problem with that was Satan had never been the smartest being. Which is why he opened his mouth and said, “Fine. You want a billion dollars and some nachos in exchange for your soul? You want to be so fucking stupid to think that’s a good idea? You got it.”

“Eh,” Jimmy said. “I changed my mind.”

Satan sagged in relief. “Thank you for finally seeing—”

“Oh, no,” Jimmy said. “I’m still going to sell my soul. But I don’t want a billion dollars and some nachos anymore. I want something else.”

“What?” Satan asked, suddenly frightened as to what would come out of this little asshole’s mouth.

Jimmy crooked his finger, beckoning for Satan to lean down. He did.

They were eye level. He really was pretty. If only things could be different, maybe they could—

“Instead of a billion dollars and some nachos,” Jimmy said, “I’d like to sell my soul to you so that you’ll be my boyfriend.”


Jimmy nodded. “Yep. I’ve thought about it for a long time—”

“Define a long time, you little—”

“—and have weighed the pros and cons about the entire situation—”

“Oh, the pros and cons, have you? I’m sure you—”

“—and I’ve come to the conclusion that you and me are pretty much destined to be together, seeing as how you need me and all—”

“I don’t need you. I don’t need anything.”

“—and so, in conclusion, I’d like to sell you my soul and then we can date and do stupid stuff that couples do like read to each other in the park and then just fucking bone into each other like it’s nobody’s business. I’m talking nasty ass fucking, so much so that we’re covered in fluids that are better left undesc—

You’ll just rail into me and destroy my asshole, and I’ll call you daddy and I’ll be your baby boy because I think that sounds nice. And when we finish, I’ll make
you tea because you look like you need someone to make you tea, and then you can tell me how amazing I am and that you can’t imagine your life without me.” He smiled. “Okay, I’m finished. Your turn. I’ll take constructive criticism if you have any to offer, but please keep in mind that I’m fragile.”

“Bullshit,” Satan said faintly.

Jimmy shrugged. “You’re right. I tried being humble once, but it didn’t take. It’s not my fault everyone else can’t appreciate the entire Jimmy experience. I think you can, though. Thoughts? Questions? Concerns?”

“You don’t want to know the thoughts I’m having.”

Jimmy nodded sympathetically. “Because they’re dirty. Don’t worry, I can take it.” He stared pointedly at Satan’s crotch. “At least, I think I can. You know what they say, if at first you don’t succeed, get a bigger butt plug.”

“No dirty thoughts,” Satan said, lying through his teeth. “I’m not going to be your boyfriend!”

“Oh,” Jimmy said. He rubbed the back of his neck. “Uh. Okay? That’s…cool. I respect your choice and your autonomy. I mean, it sucks, and I’m devastated and will probably never get over it, and when I die and go and have sex with God, I’ll try not to let myself wish it was you, but—mmph.” He blinked around Satan’s hand covering his mouth.

“Stop. Talking,” Satan said.

The brat licked his hand.

“I don’t want your soul,” Satan said. “That’s not—fucking shit. Okay, fine. Listen. This was one date, okay?”

He felt Jimmy smiling against his hand. He struggled not to smile in return.

“You don’t have to give me your soul. We can go on another date and see how it goes. If we decide it’s something we want, we can talk about it then. Deal?”

Jimmy nodded frantically.

Satan sighed as he dropped his hand. “Fine. But I’m very busy. I don’t know when I’ll have time to—”

Jimmy kissed him.
It wasn’t fierce. It wasn’t aggressive. It was a sweet press of his lips, there and gone again before Satan even knew what was happening. Jimmy was blushing in the darkness as he pulled away.

“Wow,” Jimmy whispered. “I feel like Jennifer Lopez now. I get it now. I truly get it. I’m a Maid in Manhattan.”

Satan kissed him this time. He felt Jimmy gasp into his mouth as he lifted him up off the ground, holding Jimmy’s thin body against his own. The brat was warm, and Satan’s hand spread against the bare skin of the small of his back. He groaned when Jimmy grabbed onto his horns, holding him in place.

“So good,” Jimmy said, kissing his cheeks and nose and chin. “Holy shit, I can’t believe Satan is my boyfriend. Can we go inside a church and tell everyone just to see what happens? I bet they would all just die. Literally.”

“This was a bad idea,” Satan muttered, but he didn’t let Jimmy go.

“Nah,” Jimmy said. “It was the best idea. And just think. Now that this situation has been cruci-fixed, we can go cruci-fuck! Hurray!”

“Oh my God,” Satan mumbled as Jimmy attacked his mouth again. “Why are you like this?”

But he was smiling.

And for the first time in a long time, he felt the quiet rustle of his own soul, a little pinprick of light.

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By the time the sun started to rise, Satan had blue balls.

It was entirely unpleasant.

But he couldn’t entirely be upset by it, seeing as how Jimmy’s lips were swollen, his face flushed prettily. They hadn’t gone far, Satan not wanting their first time to be in the middle of the desert in New Mexico, for fuck’s sake. He’d learned rather quickly that Jimmy was very hands-on: on his chest, on his nipples, on his stomach, on his dick through his jeans.

“I have to get back,” he said, kissing Jimmy goodbye for the billionth time.

“Nooo,” Jimmy mumbled. “Stay here.”

“Can’t. I have to go to work.”

“Take the day off! You’re the boss.”
He pushed Jimmy’s hands away gently. “I know, but I need to be there. I’ve been gone longer than I planned.”

Jimmy looked unsure. Satan hated it. “You’re…you’re going to come back, right? You’re not ghosting me? Just saying what I want to hear to get away? I hate it when that happens.” He kicked a rock, dust billowing up around his feet.

Satan put a finger under Jimmy’s chin, lifting his head. “I’m not. I promise.”

“Okay.” Jimmy shoved his hands in his pockets. “If you say so.”

“I do. Trust me when I say I can find you anywhere.”

Jimmy swallowed, pupils dilating. “I like it when you make threats sound like sex.”

Yep. Time to go. If he didn’t leave now, Satan wasn’t going to be responsible for his actions. “Don’t do anything stupid,” he said. “If I hear you tried anything, you’re not going to like what happens when I come back.”

“Spanking?” Jimmy asked hopefully. “That would be the bee’s knees. Big ol’ daddy hand smacking right on my—”

He needed to run. Now.

He kissed Jimmy once more before turning around and heading back to the crossroads. He took a deep breath, willing away his erection because he did not want the demons to give him shit for it.

He turned back toward Jimmy.

Jimmy waved, wiggling his fingers.

Satan frowned. He would’ve expected more of a fight.

He closed his eyes and felt the pull of Hell rising around him. And just before he disappeared, he heard footsteps running on the road toward him. He opened his eyes and—

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He was in Hell.

The door to the tube slid open in front of him.

The demons scattered away.

He stepped out, glaring at the supervisor.

The supervisor said, “Sire? How did your trip go? I didn’t see the soul come down. Was there a problem with—”
The panel next to the tube lit up. A voice rang out. “CONTAINMENT BREACH. CONTAINMENT BREACH.”

“Well fuck me,” a voice said from behind them.
Satan whirled around.

Jimmy stepped out of the tube, jaw dropping as he looked around at the hellscape before him. “This is so cool!”

“What is that?” the supervisor screeched. “Kill it! Kill it with fire!”
Satan kicked him as hard as he could. The supervisor landed in a pool of lava and died a horrible death. Satan didn’t feel bad at all.

“Whoa,” Jimmy said. “That was awesome. Hey! Hi!” He waved at the demons that were gathering around them. “It’s nice to meet all of you. Is one of you Derek? Half of you look like you could be a Derek. This is fun. “I’m Satan’s boyfriend, Jimmy!” He cocked his head, brow furrowing. “I guess that makes me the Queen of Hell in some way.” He curtsied. “You may bow before your—ack!”

“What are you doing?” Satan hissed, grabbing him by the collar of his shirt and jerking him forward.

Jimmy shrugged. “I missed you already so I decided to come with you so I didn’t have to miss you. I’m very needy that way. I hope you’re prepared for that. I have a feeling our relationship is going to be extremely codependent.”

“That’s…you can’t…you’re not supposed to be here!”

“And yet here I am. Wow, it’s not as warm as I expected. I thought Hell was eternal fire and damnation and blah, blah, blah. This is so great. Hey, look! Mini-golf!”
Satan dragged him toward the tube. “You have to go back.”

“No thank you,” Jimmy said, digging in his heels. “You can’t treat a queen this way.”

“You’re not a fucking queen!”

Jimmy sniffed. “Rude, but I’ll allow it. Let’s go back to your house and you can take me on a tour of your bed. You should know that I can do the splits. I feel that’s very relevant to the conversation at hand. Oh, you have to be a Derek. You got Derek eyebrows.”

“I am Derek, actually,” a demon said. “Thank you for the compliment.”

“You’re welcome,” Jimmy said. “Keep up the good work.”

“You’re going back to Earth,” Satan snarled. “Right this second.”
“That’s one idea,” Jimmy said. “I have a second. Ready? We could play It’s Almost Winter. Here are the rules: I’m a tree, and you’re the squirrel who has to fill me with your nuts so you don’t die.”

Satan paused. “That’s a real game?”

“Of course it is,” Jimmy said. “I wouldn’t make something like that up on the spot, no sir! And another rule is that we have to play it for at least six hours.” He stood on his tiptoes, his face near Satan’s as he dropped his voice. “I have a very quick recovery time, Mr. Squirrel.”

“Move!” Satan shouted at the demons as he threw Jimmy up and over his shoulder. “I have important business to attend to!”

Jimmy was laughing hysterically, and Satan didn’t feel bad at all when he swatted him hard on the ass.

“You go back after,” Satan said.

“Of course,” Jimmy said. “I’ll go back right after.”

*****

Jimmy, as it turned out, was a fucking liar.

He didn’t go back.

In fact, he stayed.

And Satan couldn’t find the strength within him to send him back.

He didn’t know what that made him. An idiot, for sure, but he suddenly found himself not caring at all.

Especially when Jimmy decided that having sex in his office was something they needed to do the following Tuesday. “Would you stop that?” Satan hissed as Jimmy choked on his dick underneath his desk. “He’s going to call any minute!”

Jimmy didn’t stop. In fact, he seemed to make it his singular mission to deep throat as much of Satan as he possibly could.

Which is why Satan was groaning when God appeared on his screen.

“Oh my me,” God said, eyes wide. “What are you doing? Are you—”

“Nothing!” Satan cried, sitting forward and grunting as Jimmy tugged harshly on his balls. “Nothing is happening! I’m totally—ooohh fuuuuuuck.”

“Dude,” God admonished. “Not cool. I did not need to see what your orgasm face looks like. Holy shit.”
Jimmy popped up from underneath the desk, wiping his mouth. “I recognize that voice,” he said, as if he hadn’t just swallowed Satan’s jizz. He leaned forward and stared at the screen. Suddenly, he smiled. “Terrance! Hey!”

God gave him a jaunty little salute. “Hi, Jimmy. How are you?”

“Pretty good, pretty good. I just got face fucked within an inch of my life—”

“Terrance?” Satan asked, putting his dick back in his pants. “Who the fuck is Terrance?”

Jimmy pointed at the screen. “That’s Terrance. I thought you were supposed to be talking to God? Terrance is the one I met last week who told me I should go summon a demon at the crossroads. He came into Pizza World last Tuesday and told me how easy it would be to get whatever my heart desired if I just buried some graveyard dirt and chanted a bunch of shit.”

Satan breathed heavily through his nose. “And you just believed him?”

Jimmy shrugged. “Sure, why not? He tipped me seven hundred dollars. He obviously knew what he was talking about.”

“Obviously,” God said, a shit-eating grin on his face. “Oh, how the Lord works in mysterious ways.”

“I hate you so much,” Satan grumbled, pulling Jimmy back into his lap. The brat settled down against his chest like he belonged there.

“I doubt that,” God said. “Remember what I said, dude? You deserve every happiness. I meant it then, and I mean it now. I won’t take up much of your time. Seems as if you have your hands full.”

“Not yet,” Jimmy said. “We’re still working up to that.”

Satan sighed deeply.

God’s expression softened. “Every happiness. Never forget that. We can talk next week, okay? I promised Jesus I’d take him out cloud fishing today. He’s bitching about it, but—”

“I am not!” Jesus cried somewhere off screen. “I just don’t see the point. It’s like you don’t even know me! I wish I was never born and then died and then was reborn again!”

God sighed. “I can’t wait until his mother gets back. I am not cut out for this shit.” He shook his head. “Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do.”

“Bye, Terrance!” Jimmy said.

God winked at him. “Bye, Jimmy. I have a feeling we’ll talk again soon.”

The screen went dark.
“Nice guy,” Jimmy said. “Weird that you know him too. When is God calling?”

“You want to get out of here?” Satan asked.

Jimmy tilted his head back, looking up at him. “Really?”

Satan nodded. “I hear there’s a new mini-golf course that’s opened. Haven’t been to it yet. We could check it out?”

Jimmy was up and off his lap, already running toward the door. “Fuck yes! Donna. Donna! Satan and the Queen of Hell are taking the rest of the day off. You’re in charge. Do whatever you want! Blow some shit up, girl, you got this. I believe in you!”

And here, in the bowels of Hell, Satan smiled.

*****

They were kicked out of the mini golf course after the fourth hole when Satan was discovered putting his dick in Jimmy’s hole for the fourth time.

And wouldn’t you know?

They lived happily ever after.

THE END?