

A Wonderful Day in Hell

Prologue

The fires of hell were alight with the sins of the innocent. Many had come down here, hoping they would instead see a paradise that never existed. But the flames were all that existed, and many were burned in an eternity of damnation. Among them was a young man, at least by very loose standards. In a former life, he may have been a doctor, or an engineer. He might have been a teacher or scientist. Whatever he could've been, it would be an honest profession had it not been for the tragic set of circumstance that took his life. You see, this young boy had an abusive father that still walked the good green Earth and took in its fresh, unburnt air. The father was a drunk, and mean even by his own standards. The father had always suspected his son to be the result of an affair and thus resented the boys' very existence. The result, sadly, was rather predictable. The father came home late one night and, in a drunken rage shot the boy and his mother dead both. Thus they ended up in the fires of hell, where one was judged only by the sins that he had committed in life. For Satan had a love of sins, as sinners burned the brightest.

One day, the boy was feeling particularly depressed. Anyone would be in that pit of hate. He had not yet lived his life and yet saw its end and this troubled him immensely. As he had committed no sin in his lifetime, the devil took no interest of any kind. But the boy, who was smarter than most, had a smooth tongue and the brains to match. He knew the devil always got his dues, sooner or later. Didn't matter. Devil always got his dues. An audience with the great and terrible beast-king was not all that hard. He was a fair ruler. Not like in the stories of old. The devil reasoned well and would give his subjects anything they desired - for a price. Even resurrection was on the table, though the price was too many save for one. The boy approached and at once was greeted by the great beast-king himself. The conversation was interesting to say the least. "So the young boy approaches," the Devil roared, "For he seeks a favour. A chance to see his mother, perhaps? Or yet, to see some hope of a paradise he will never see? Come forward boy and speak your mind!" And so the boy approached a throne of bones and flesh. "I did not come to ask for paradise, or to see my mother. Neither is possible. But I came for a chance for resurrection," the boy offered. He did not plead, or beg or cry. Satan had very little interest in self-pitying worship. "What you seek has a high price. It is not a deal worth taking for someone with so little to offer," The beast-king explained, "What could you possibly have to offer?" There was no hint of malice or mockery. It was, as some would later suggest, all part of His greater plan. "In my place, I offer my own father - a man with enough sins to appease your appetite," the boy offered, "Allow him to take my place." The devil laughed in consideration. "If he really is as sinful as you say, then I will simply wait," it said with a victorious chant. "Of course or you could feast on those sins sooner rather than later," the boy countered. The devil pondered for a moment. The boy was right. The devil had an insatiable hunger, sated only by the worst sins imaginable. "I.... Accept your offer. Time will tell if you speak with honesty. Bring me his life and you will have yours again." The boy simply smiled and ceased to be a boy. Time was on his side.

The Resurrected Son

Jack had finally been resurrected on his grave. He had one goal in mind. Jack had to kill his father. Strangely, he had found himself a man in his own right. The devils advocates had told Jack that several years had passed and had explained that Jack was no longer the boy he once was. They had then given him a new name and all he needed to blend in. It was a difficult transition. The passage of time wasn't felt in Hell, eternity being whatever it was. Jack didn't really care though. He had a man to kill, and a contract to fulfil. First thing Jack had to do was find some clothes. Nothing too fancy, just something he could wear. Several people had already passed him by and had given him strange looks. Being naked in a graveyard could do that. Jack started to look around and had barely left the graveyard when a cop approached from the front. "Hold, sir. I'm going to have to ask you to stop right there," the cop said. "Of course," Jack said. "I need you to come with me. Is there anyone you would like to call," the cop asked. "Don't worry, I ain't going anywhere. I would apologise for my present condition, but I don't quite remember how I got here," Jack smiled and laughed. This caught the cop off guard. He was expecting some drunk or maybe some guy too high off his illegal prescription meds to know what the fuck he was doing. "Sir, I'm going to have to take you into custody. Please turn around and put your hands behind your back," the officer ordered. Jack didn't say anything else but silently followed orders. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see clearly a Devil's Advocate watching. Jack let off a smile, knowing full well that the games were about to begin.

The police station was noisy. Apparently, Halloween was a very busy day for the tiny little building. Jack was sat down at a police sergeant's desk who was more preoccupied with his phone than he was with Jack. Jack for his part was now dressed in loose clothes that the station had for people like him, that is those they found wandering naked through the streets. "So, you can't remember why you're in a graveyard drunk," the officer asked. Jack was a little annoyed by all the questioning. It had been several hours since he was picked up and seemed to be no closer to getting out than when he first entered the building. "That's right. I'm so sorry to bother you with this, it happens all the time," Jack told the distracted cop. It would be so easy to grab his gun and start shooting, but Jack guessed that it wouldn't end to well with him. "You say you have some sort of medical issue...," the officer started to ask. "A concussion. Or something like that. The doctor said it would affect my short term memory. Had it since I was a kid," Jack interrupted. The cop just waved him off. "Alright. You get off with a warning. But next time we see you walking round town naked, you'll spend a night behind bars. Got it?" Jack nodded and said yes. Soon enough, he was being escorted out of the building and back out onto the street, where he needed to be.

After wandering around a bit, Jack found a nice place in Central Park to lay his head for the night. But rest would wait after the Devil's Advocate – a demon by the name of Azeri – came calling. Jack didn't even need to ask. He already knew the Devil would send someone to make sure the deed was done. "Azeri. That your name," Jack asked, already knowing the answer. "You know it is. Funny isn't it. You didn't even ask," the demon said with such humour that he almost laughed as he spoke. "Ask what? I know why I'm here," Jack angered back. He sensed more than just mockery from the demon. There was also arrogance. "You don't need to sleep here, you know. Or do you humans enjoy sleeping rough," Azeri mocked. "Just get to the point demon. Your mocking will do nothing for either of us," Jack demanded. Azeri realised at that point that no amount of jest in the world would get to Jack. "Our master has gratefully conferred to you the means to which survive, until the mission is over of course." Azeri smiled, knowing Jack wouldn't get it at first. No human ever did. "What, is he giving

me a credit card? Must be generous of him,” Jack smiled as he spoke. Azeri was once again disappointed. Clearly, Azeri was dumber than he looked or Jack was smarter. “Yes, well. If you look in your right pocket, you will find such a card. And in your left, you will find \$2500. Be sure not to lose it. The card has another \$1.5 million. The master has allowed it to be given, both as part of the exchange and as a tool. Do with it as you will, so long as you bring him the sinner.” No further words were exchanged. None were needed. Jack smiled as he went on to book himself into a hotel.

Killing Angels in the Name of Demons

Two weeks and Jack had already found his father. The bastard had gotten away with murder. Literally. Officially, the two deaths (that of Jack and his mother) had been ruled as suicide due to no small part to the sheriff being his brother. Jack wasn't going to let that happen. He planned everything down to the last detail. Jack planned to live a long life after all this. First to go was the thing Father held most dear to him. His career was destroyed overnight when an “anonymous” tip lead to the FBI investigating several crimes involving dear old dad. His career in tatters, his relationship with his new wife also fell apart. Jack was more than happy to see everything fall apart from a distance. But it wasn't enough to simply see him suffer. Jack had to see him die too. And the only way that was going to happen was to do it himself. It happened late one night. There was no moon, Jack made sure. No light meant that no one could see him enter or leave. Father never locked the backdoor. He should have known better. Jack snuck in and silently climbed the stairs. There was a moment of hesitation whenever the stairs made a creaking sound. But moments passed and nothing happened, so Jack climbed up the stairs. He carefully checked each room before finding the right one and to make sure that they were both alone. When Jack was satisfied, he struck with full force. Using the knife he bought with him, Jack stabbed his own father multiple times in the chest before slitting the bastards' throat. Jack felt a sense of.... pride, accomplishment? He wasn't sure how he felt. But there was no turning back. Jack had prepared well for this. He knew that he had to burn the house down. Using diesel, he set the house on fire and watched it for a minute before fleeing. No one would know he was responsible for his own fathers' murder.

Rapture

It had been six months since his resurrection and Jack couldn't be happier. He had moved to Denver and set up a comic book shop, something which he always wanted to do, and was moving forward with life. He wasn't surprised at all when Azeri decided to pay a visit. “Looks like you're living well,” the demon said. Jack smiled and replied, “Well, I'm trying to. I'm guessing the devil sent you?” Azeri smiled back. “Not exactly. I've come to inform you that your father is currently lighting up the Masters' favourite beacon. And you will be sent to the Land Beyond when you pass from your natural life,” he said. Jack lost his smile. “Land Beyond? What's that?” “You'll see. In time my friend.” That would be the last time Jack would see Azeri. Or any demon.