



ARCADIAN DIVINITY

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The ambulance siren rang in my ears and made them feel like they were bleeding as I took in the scene. The shrill noise from the emergency vehicle stabbed my eardrums as I watched the woman struggle to breathe. She was crushed in her mangled car, unable to get out. She panted heavily and was quickly slipping into a panic.

My eyes tightened as I watched her. I was unable to help the woman or do anything as I stood on the road where the wreck had occurred. It had been a hit and run.

I knew she wouldn't be able to see me. It was impossible for anyone to be able to.

It was hard to witness her struggle though. I watched her blood slowly leave her body as the paramedics finally arrived, along with the fire department.

The young man who had witnessed the accident and had called the emergency services earlier was watching the woman's car. He saw her trapped in her vehicle and couldn't control the tears streaming down his face.

I looked at the woman as she turned her head, looking at the EMTs and the firefighters. They were using the jaws of life to get her out of the

wreckage, but I knew that they were going to run out of time. The wreck had caused irreparable damage to her vital organs. The woman had been crushed by the roof of her car, injuring her lungs, and even puncturing one of them. There was blood everywhere from her injuries, and I could hear her raspy breathing as she struggled to stay conscious. I could tell she realized that she was dying.

I took a few steps closer toward the vehicle that was destroyed, walking toward the firefighters. They were using the equipment to retrieve the dying woman.

The EMTs passed me, completely oblivious to my presence. They brought a gurney out from the ambulance, ready to bring the woman to the hospital. They were working hard to save her, even though it clearly wasn't going to happen.

The sound of the emergency equipment rang in my ears as they worked diligently to pull the woman out. I headed toward the vehicle, waiting for the woman to leave the mangled car.

It took a few minutes for them to get her as she was pinned.

I saw it in her face that she was getting pale from the blood loss.

On the side of the road, the bystander was crying.

"Hang in there!" one of the firefighters yelled at her as they continued to slice through the vehicle. "Just hang in there!"

I felt bad for the man instantly. Everyone at the scene was trying their hardest to keep her away from death, but I knew that she was going to lose that battle. There was finally a crunching noise as the car cracked open, allowing one of the firefighters to go in and retrieve the woman. Her brown hair and peach colored skin were covered with blood.

The firefighter gently cut her out of her seatbelt, and I watched him silently as he gingerly laid her flat on the gurney.

"Come on, come on, come on, stay with me," I heard the firefighter quietly say as I edged closer to the wreck. He was watching the woman

steadily as he rushed the gurney toward the EMTs. "Stay with me," he said as he continued to talk to her.

The EMTs rushed over to the firefighter, grasping the gurney. They quickly put an oxygen mask over the woman's mouth and nose. Her breathing was slowing though, her face becoming paler. She didn't open her eyes as I walked over to her.

No one could sense me as everyone focused on getting her to the hospital. But she was going to lose her fight.

"Alright," I said quietly to the young woman as her breathing became shallow. I touched her shoulder lightly. "Time to go."

Her chest rose and fell, one last time, before all the life left her. She slipped into a permanent slumber. She passed away silently.

Backing away, I kept my eyes on everyone at the scene of the horrific wreck. I watched them as they moved the gurney inside the shrieking ambulance. Then the EMTs quickly got inside the vehicle with the woman's body. I watched the team frantically take off, the ambulance screaming into the daylight. I stared at the place the emergency vehicle had just been. Then I noticed that the bystander was in the back of a different ambulance. Soon it was just me on the side of the road watching where the accident had taken place.

My thoughts were interrupted when I heard ragged, scared breathing behind me.

I twisted my body around and saw the young woman. Her brown hair was now free of blood, her body no longer broken.

She was perfectly fine. No marks or bodily fluid were on her. She looked panicked when she saw me, and her eyes were filled with tears.

"No. No. No," she said, shaking her head.

I walked toward her calmly. "It's alright," I said softly as I stepped over to her. "You have nothing to be afraid of."

The woman gulped. She was terrified that she had crossed over, that she was no longer alive. Her blue eyes were wide as she stared at me, understanding finally taking hold.

“You’re safe now,” I said, extending my hand out so she could take it.

The young woman blinked rapidly, before grasping my extremity.

“It’ll be okay, I promise,” I whispered in her ear, before my gigantic black wings flapped. They pushed us both off the road and into the atmosphere. I held the young woman tight against my chest.

She cried as I held her close. I just embraced her, knowing how scared she was. She was now a Spirit.

A Spirit that would now live in Heaven.



I took a deep breath as I looked at my surroundings. I was on the top of a skyscraper, looking down at the city, at the hustle and bustle below me. I wasn’t really paying attention to anything. I was just feeling the breeze blow across my skin, my face.

The sound of car horns filled the air as I stared absentmindedly in the sky, my thoughts going to the young woman that I’d just brought to Heaven.

She’d been scared because she’d left her family behind. She feared how they would cope without her. But above all, she was scared that she’d completely transitioned into a Spirit.

She was safe now.

“Caelum?”

I turned around at the sound of my name, seeing Adiel watching me. “Yes?” I responded, looking at his face.

His dark brown eyes appeared quizzical. "Are you thinking about her?" he asked, advancing toward me.

I nodded, twisting away from him in order to look at the sky again. I could see Adiel come up beside me out of the corner of my eye.

"She was so scared," I said. "She was terrified of dying."

"Mortals are always scared of the inevitable," Adiel said. "Especially death. They're always wondering how it'll be, or if they are going to go to the right place. But you did the right thing, Caelum, you did your duty."

"She's safe now," I said, in almost a whisper.

"That she is," he said, twisting around to look at me. His brown eyes locked on mine. "She's no longer in pain, and you helped her," Adiel said. "Just remember that." He placed his hand on my shoulder. "You're guiding Spirits to the Afterlife. You're doing your responsibility, no matter what. You are doing the right thing. Remember that."

I nodded, understanding his words.

I felt him gently thump his hand against my back before walking off. I could hear wings rustling before I turned around. I saw Adiel take off into the sky, his black appendages flapping behind him.

Adiel oversaw taking care of the Spirits that I brought into the Heavens, while I predominantly stayed on Earth. I moved the Souls of the deceased whenever they crossed over. There were many responsibilities among the angels, and I was tasked with easing the Spirits into the Afterlife.

I watched Adiel as he flew off, wondering in the back of my mind if I indeed was doing the right thing.

But then I just sighed, knowing that I was, and that sometimes the reactions of others were unavoidable. I was helping individuals. I was saving them.



I was used to the reactions of individuals that were dying, as well as loved ones who were watching it happen.

Crying, screaming, cursing... I had seen and heard it all.

There were so many ways that people dealt with death. Sometimes people dealt with it lightly, accepting that the individual was in a better place. But then there were others that refused to accept it. They would curse in order to get the feelings of hurt out.

I had also experienced my fair share of the ways that individuals had died, as well as their animals. Shootings, car wrecks, euthanasia, stabbings, cancer, natural causes... I was no stranger to anything, after millennia of moving Souls.

Nothing seemed to faze me anymore. It seemed like I was immune to everything regarding my duty.

I found myself emotionally distant and wary. Emotionally wary because of the way the mortals reacted to the death of another mortal. Because of how they would grieve.

I exhaled as I looked at the scenery, coming back to myself. I extended my wings out from behind me. Then I took off, flying away from the skyscraper on which I had perched.

I sensed I was going to be needed again soon.



As I flew from the skyscraper and toward the ground, I sensed that death was nearby.

I tucked in my wings right as I came across a middle-aged man, who was on the busy sidewalk. He clutched his chest and cried out in agony. A passerby quickly saw this and shouted out in a panic.

“Help! Someone, please, help!”

She put a hand on his back, trying hard to comfort him as another younger man came over. The young man inspected what was going on quickly before taking his phone out and calling 9-1-1.

The older man, though, collapsed, suffering a massive heart attack.

I saw him take his final breath as the young man started doing CPR. I knew though, that his Soul had left his body, and that he had already passed on.

I watched the people as they tried to revive the middle-aged man, doing their best, when there was a voice behind me.

“Hello?”

I twisted around, only to see the man’s Soul. He appeared bewildered.

“What is going on? It seems like I just lost consciousness, but now I...”

He stopped. He had trailed off as I looked at him knowingly, before his eyes hit the ground. His body was there and people were trying to resuscitate him. He blinked rapidly before looking back up at me, his brown eyes watching mine.

“Am I.... Am I... dead?” he asked, stuttering a little as his voice caught.

I nodded. "Yes," I said as he looked at the sidewalk, tears beginning to fill his eyes.

As they found mine, he took a deep breath. "Who are you?"

"My name is Caelum. I'm here to bring you to the Afterlife."

The man just stood there, dazed. He couldn't believe that he was not among the mortals anymore. I had seen this look a lot before. "You're... you're...you're an angel?" he asked, his voice trembling.

"Yes. Yes, I am." I extended my hand out before I turned my head curiously. "What's your name?" I asked, trying to calm him down.

"Eric," he responded. "My name is Eric."

"It's nice to meet you, Eric," I said. He smiled a little at my tone, before glancing at my hand. "Everything's alright, Eric, I promise. I'll bring you to Heaven."

Eric looked pale as he watched my eyes. Then he glanced behind me, where a crowd of people had gathered.

The younger man was continuing chest compressions on Eric's body, not knowing that he was gone. It was heartbreaking to watch, but again, I was used to it.

Eric looked back over at me, tears gathering as his eyes connected with mine. He grasped my hand, fully and truly trusting me.

"Come on," I said. "Let's bring you to the Afterlife."

At that moment, my wings came out of my back. Eric stared at the feathers, transfixed at the deep, black color before I wrapped my arms around his body. I got a good grip on him. And then we were propelled up into the sky.



“Adiel?”
He turned to look at me, his tanned skin and bald head appearing almost tawny.

“Yes, Caelum?”

I took a deep breath before exhaling in a gust. I stood in the Heavens. I had just brought Eric up here, so I had stayed to ask Adiel a question. I was not in the Heavens a lot, since my home was on Earth. So, I couldn’t stay too long. I didn’t want to distract Adiel from his duty.

He was the Guardian of the Spirit Realm.

“Do you ever get attached to the Souls? I mean, have a friendship with them? Is that normal for you?” I asked tentatively.

He smiled, the expression taking up his entire face before he answered. “Yes. It is perfectly normal to be attached to a Soul. Why? Would you like to see someone? I can grant them permission if you’d like.”

I shook my head. “No. No, thank you. I was just wondering.”

I was so used to dealing with what my duty entailed. I never really got close to anyone. It would just make everything gut-wrenching if I did. I was guarded when it came to doing my obligation to the mortals.

Adiel just continued to smile as he looked at me. “Caelum,” he started. “Why did you ask that?”

“I was just wondering,” I repeated. “This responsibility can be a little bit... difficult to handle at times,” I said, stumbling on my words.

“Well, you can always just talk to me if you want to communicate with any Soul. All you must do is ask.”

I nodded. “Okay. Well, thank you.”

“You’re welcome, Caelum.”

And with that, I twisted around and extended my wings out, flying out of the Afterlife.



Over the next month or so, I stayed on Earth, doing what I was fated to do. I tried hard to focus as the question that I had asked Adiel kept creeping up in my mind. I gritted my teeth. Embarrassment flooded through me.

One day, as I was bringing the Spirit of an elderly woman up to the Afterlife, I saw Adiel again. A grin spread across his face when our eyes met, before he turned his attention to the older woman. She squinted when she saw Adiel, and I could see a twinkle in her eyes as she smiled at him. She appeared calm as he gently put his hand on her back, guiding her to where the rest of the Spirits were.

“You’re safe now,” I heard Adiel say as he walked along with her. “Don’t worry, you’re alright now.”

He turned his head toward me as his hand stayed on her back. He wanted to talk afterwards.

I nodded understandingly before Adiel's head twisted back around. I waited patiently, just looking at my surroundings.

Everything was a mixture of extraordinary color. There were white and amber hues surrounding me, while I was standing on top of a cloud. Flecks of gold hit my skin as they dropped from the Heavens like snowflakes.

There was a huge expanse of the Afterlife that was empty. Very faintly, beyond that, I saw the trace of the gargantuan, bright, and speckled Golden Gates. The Gates that were perched on the clouds and were named after the bits of gold that were scattered across the giant fence. They appeared beautiful, welcoming, and non-threatening as I saw them open at Adiel's command. He was still walking with the woman. He grasped her hand gingerly before they both went into the Soul Realm.

Adiel was the Guardian of the Soul Realm. He was the Guardian of the Golden Gates.

When an individual, or animal, died, there was a Gate to pass through. The Soul would reside inside, forever.

I blinked as I looked away from the Golden Gates, peering around at the rest of the scenery.

That was when I saw the Heavenly River nearby. The Heavenly River that was used by Adiel to view Earth when he could not fly down there.

Adiel was mainly tasked to be in the Soul Realm but could occasionally visit Earth if he wanted to.

The River showed anything that he wanted to see.

I walked over to the River, absentmindedly looking in the Water, studying my reflection that appeared in the liquid. I sighed as I saw it.

My blue eyes appeared almost too big for my face, while my dark brown hair was short. My skin was a light color that resembled the inside of a peach. I moved my back muscles as I looked at myself in the reflection,

and, within moments, I saw my enormous black wings appear behind me. I smiled as I saw them.

I was happy with my wings. They were everything to me and helped me complete my destiny.

No matter how cautious I was when it came to my duty, I still loved my wings. They were my favorite possession.

“Still loving your angel wings, are you?”

Adiel’s voice startled me. I jumped slightly as I saw him heading over my way. He smiled as our eyes met.

I nodded. “Yes.”

“Well, that’s good. You’re recognizing that your responsibility is also your destiny. You love your angel wings, so you realize what would happen if you were to lose them.”

I gulped at the thought. If I were to lose my wings, I would be tossed into Hell, and Fall. I would be a Fallen Angel. The thought of Falling terrified me.

I shook my head, coming out of my reverie.

Adiel was watching me closely. “You’re not the only angel who is constantly wondering if you’re doing the right thing. You’re not the only one who thinks about the Souls who’ve passed on, or who were struggling to survive, only to die. Other angels have these thoughts in their head too,” Adiel said, looking at me. “You’re not the only one either to doubt your abilities.”

“I don’t doubt my abilities,” I countered. “It’s just that sometimes, I wonder about the Souls that have passed on.” Like the woman in her mid-twenties that I had brought up from the car wreck.... “I feel like I should have some emotion about them, but I do not want to at the same time. It’s a strange feeling.”

Adiel just stared at me. “Even a great, powerful angel isn’t immune to the mortal emotion. You must, at least occasionally, experience what the mortals are going through. It will help you understand the Soul more.

That way, you know how to comfort them, or their family. Caelum,” he said, sighing a little before continuing. “You must experience the emotions of the mortals. You must see, hear, and feel what they go through. It will change your entire outlook on your existence, I promise,” he said.

He looked at my face as I glanced down at the cloud that I was standing on. I brought my attention back to him.

“Alright,” I said. “I understand.”

Adiel nodded. “Good. It’s important to know that.”

He looked down at the Heavenly River, where both of our reflections were. It was the only place we angels could see ourselves, since we were supernatural beings.

We could not be seen by any mortal, or in their mirrors. We were completely invisible, except in the Heavenly River.

Adiel looked at me through the Waters. “See, you can be a part of a mortal’s life, just by watching them,” he said. His brown eyes were on my blue ones. “You can see how they interact with others. That way you can recognize their personalities, the way they perceive the world. It will help get you through the obligations that you have toward them.”

“Okay,” I said.

“You can also view any mortal that needs comfort. That, or ones that need to be brought up to the Heavens,” Adiel said. “Whatever you need, it’ll be here, in the Heavenly River.” He twisted his body around to face me. “Caelum, it will help if you get involved in the mortal’s lives, even for a little bit.” He grasped my shoulder gently, before sighing once more. “Well, I better get back to the Souls. You take care of yourself, alright? Stay safe.”

“Alright,” I said, before Adiel twisted his body around. He walked off into the Golden Gates of the Soul Realm.

I watched him leave silently before my wings flapped, getting me airborne before I left the Heavens.



I could usually feel the sensation of a mortal leaving the Earth and crossing over. It was a change in the energy that I felt. It was a frequency that only the angels could feel.

It was released right before, during, or after their passing.

There was no sense of time in the Afterlife, or for the angels. Everything was based on the mortal's timeline. A timeline that, to an angel that lived for millennia, was incredibly short.



I could sense the change in energy as I landed on the road. I pulled my wings in before walking down the street of the neighborhood.

It was almost like a magnetic pull, and I made my way toward the sensation.

As always, no one saw me as I walked along. I grinned at the children playing in the street. They were young, and were enjoying what they were doing. Being youthful and naïve.

I smiled as I walked along the street silently, before I felt the energy again. It was a nearby house. I walked over to the front yard of the home, stepping on the driveway, before pausing.

Wait a moment. I had been here before. A year earlier, to help a family pet transition to the Afterlife. A dog, a Golden Retriever.

I remembered this because the young girl, the daughter, was extremely upset about the dog crossing over. She had named the animal Lola.

But this family...I knew them. I knew this family.

The woman in her late twenties to early thirties who was a single mother, named Phoebe. She had a now seven-year-old daughter, named Camilla.

I shook my head as all the memories flooded back to me. I had been summoned to a home I'd been to before, which meant that this was going to be interesting.