

SAMPLE CHAPTER

THE LAST ARCHANGEL - BOOK II

THE LAST KINGDOM

MICHAEL D. YOUNG

A NOVEL

CHAPTER ONE: STATUE DUTY

Pretending to be a statue was not Jarom's idea of fun. Even less appealing was balancing on one foot and pretending to be in the act of firing an arrow as a statue. Not for the first time, he cursed the building's architect for carving his cherubs in such unnatural poses.

And's he's obviously never actually seen one, he thought sourly. There's no way I still have that much baby fat.

Clara's voice, when it finally sounded in his ear, had never sounded sweeter. And it was succulent at the best of times. Even with a cold, she could pass for a reasonably-gifted radio personality.

"Confirmed, Big Halo. Beelzebub is not in this chariot. He must be flying towards you."

Jarom rolled his eyes while maintaining his statuesque appearance. "Clara," he spoke in his mind, "I promise, no one else can hear us. You don't have to use the ridiculous code speak."

Clara's laughter filtered through his mind, and Jarom almost broke his cover by cracking a smile.

"I never should have let you watch those mortal movies," he thought to her. "It was a terrible parenting tactic."

"Don't worry, Big Halo. We'll swat the Lord of the Flies and head back to the Fortress. I was thinking attack plan Jericho. You copy?"

"Yes," thought Jarom, not bothering to wrack his brain for what the term Jericho meant. She would probably change her mind by the time they got there anyway.

Returning to his task of surveying the street below, Jarom caught sight

"What took you, Big Halo? I drank through all the colas, diet and regular, and nearly drained the flavored waters. I thought you fell down a laundry chute or something." She covered her mouth with her hand, tossing her crimson hair from side to side as she suppressed a laugh.

Jarom adopted the sternest expression he could, which for a cherub wasn't much. "Let's get going. He's bound to have more than one goon on his security detail."

After approaching the door, Jarom inserted the key, holding his breath until the light turned green and the lock disengaged with a click.

"Okay," whispered Jarom. "On three. One, two..."

Clara barreled through the door on two and a half, ripping the door off its hinges and hurling it into the room. Inside stood a lone figure, whose handsome face had graced more newspapers and televisions than almost any man in history.

Clara spoke first, her sweet voice taking on an edge of unmistakable authority. “President Jennings. Or should I say ‘Puppet President Jennings’?”

The famous lips grinned without involving the rest of his face. “I didn’t order any room service. Perhaps you couldn’t read the ‘do not disturb’ sign. So let me translate.” A demonic scowl twisted his handsome face. “Leave, or suffer.”

He clicked his fingers and sparks flew between them.

Clara shook her head. “An extinguisher doesn’t fear the fire.”

She lunged forward, clamping both massive hands on the presidential shoulders. The president’s mouth locked open in an expression wider than a python’s yawn, his eyes blazing. Though the man writhed, Clara tightened her grip, her entire being glowing like sunlight filtered through a cloud.

A bright mark appeared on the President’s forehead, concentric circles filled with strange writing and symbols that pulsed and glowed with energy. What appeared first as a dark mist around the President congealed into a hideous face, gnashing and flailing and giving off a hideous moan.

The dark form ripped free and flew across the room, and the President’s body fell limp. Clara supported him until she could lay him on the king-sized bed. The mark remained faintly on his brow, though its light already faded.

The full form of the demon was now visible: a dark man with ashen skin that appeared as a single mass of festering sores. The demon leaped back towards his host trying repeatedly to reenter, but finding himself shoved back at every attempt by an unseen hand. The demon howled louder tearing at its chest and foaming at its mouth.

“What have you done to me?” it roared. “You cannot deny me my body!”

Clara stepped between the demon and the body. “It’s not your body,” she said, her tone venomous. “No one is your body. He is free from you and your kind forevermore. Such is my gift.”

Reaching into her thick hair, Clara removed a slender gold hair ornament she kept out of sight. The ornament held five pearls, four black and one white. Her nose wrinkling, she stabbed out at the form of the demon with the ornament.

THE STORY CONTINUES

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