

Gethsemane

“Abba, Father, all things are possible for you! Take this cup away from me! Yet not what I will, but what you will.” Mark 14: 36

A light breeze moved with the fluttering sigh of olive leaves as Mikha’el moved from the heavenly plane to the earthly one. The light of the pilgrim’s small cooking fires illuminated the night. They had flocked to Jerusalem for Passover and there was a mixed tension in the air, whispers of Roman violence and the uproar that had occurred at the Holy Temple that day.

Mikha’el walked softly, careful to keep out the light with his hood low to shield his face, his cloak to hide his armour. Among the voices of the pilgrims there was a name that was being whispered over and over...*Yeshua...Yeshua...Yeshua*. People were speaking of miracles, of kindness, of Isaiah’s holy prophecies. *Mashiach*. He was a man who stood up to the *kohen gadol* Caiaphas and others who were more interested in placating Rome than obeying God’s Laws and Covenants. Yeshua is a friend of prostitutes, they whisper, he saved a woman from stoning, he ate with the tax collectors, he healed those infected with disease, he raised a man from the dead...*Yeshua...Yeshua*. Mikha’el shut out the voices until he heard the one he was searching for.

“Yei’aseh r’tzon’cha,” it was whispering, “Your will be done.” The voice was choked with tears and fear. Mikha’el stopped under an olive tree and watched the man. He was on his hands and knees on the cold ground, his tears and blood tinged sweat trailed down his dusty cheeks. He wore a long robe of plan wool, his head covered by a *tallit*. The leather sandals on his feet had seen many miles and were cracking at the straps. Hands roughened by heavy labor gripped the earth in despair.

Mikha'el wanted to take him far from Jerusalem. *Elyon please...*he prayed and flinched as he was rebuked harshly.

“That’s right, pray and despair,” a voice mocked. Mikha’el’s body went rigid with anger. It had been a centuries since he had heard that voice.

Hel’el, the star of the first morning, stood tall over Yeshua and was arrayed as in the days of Eden as perfect as the day he was created. Hair of the finest white gold hung from his head in curls that tumbled down his back. His robe was purple silk and he was arrayed in precious stones of carnelian, topaz, emerald, beryl, onyx, jasper, sapphire, carbuncle all set in the purest of gold. His sandals were of soft white kid and cuffs of gold were on his wrists. Mikha’el gripped the hilt of his sword as Hel’el circled. Yeshua prayed on, without acknowledging him.

“You have *lost* commoner. Your time is over. My servants are going to come and torture you in the most exquisite ways. You should have taken up my offer to join me in the desert. You are a slave to a Father that does not love you; so blindly you have followed him.” Hel’el sighed, “I was like you once, and it caused me to be cast from his presence forever. He is going to do far worse to you. I was a servant and you claim you are his son. What kind of father would abandon his own son?”

Hel’el crouched down to whisper gently, kindly, “He *is* going to abandon you, Yeshua. He already has. He has *given* you to me. You want to know why? Because I was his favourite first and always will be. Even as he cast me down he saved me. But there is no saving you. He is not going to lift a finger to stop me. There is no hope for you, Yeshua.”

“You still love to hear the sound of your own voice, Hel’el,” Mikha’el stepped from the shadows, hand still resting on his sword. He pulled back his hood and let his black hair fall from it.

“Brother, still the soldier,” Hel’el sneered as he rose to his full height. “Have you come to witness my victory?”

“Your victory? The battle is not over yet, Hel’el,” Mikha’el said as he paced around Yeshua. Hel’el moved instinctively away from him, their last meeting still fresh in his mind. They had fought for the body of Moses on top of Mount Nebo and Mikha’el had broken his perfect body in a brutal victory.

“This battle is very much over. Look at this pathetic mud creature. This is no Son

of God. He has chosen poverty and let lesser men scorn him when he had the choice to rule them. Even now they ready their weapons to seize him and he does nothing. He's no warrior; he won't rise up off the ground and fight for himself let alone for these petty creatures he claims to love. He's not even powerful enough to see us right now. He is a false prophet like all the others."

"If he is as weak and insignificant as you claim than why are you here? Why come to gloat over a peasant?" Mikha'el smiled.

Hel'el's perfect face twisted into a snarl, "He is *nothing*. I'm here to take my revenge out on this pretender."

"He has sent many of your demons back to you hasn't he? I suppose they are scared."

"They're lesser creatures and not very hard to scare away," he said dismissively. "This one has claimed to be something he is not. He said he would destroy me and I am here to witness how very wrong he was. He is nothing, a useless creation by a useless God who-

"Enough," said Yeshua as he rose to his feet and looked at Hel'el, his face was calm but his eyes were filled with anger, "Leave my presence Hel'el, I'm weary of you."

"Look for me on the morrow *Mashiach*," Hel'el said sarcastically. "I will be there when-

"I said go!" Yeshua commanded and Hel'el vanished. Those burning, furious eyes turned to Mikha'el and he dropped to one knee.

"You can see us?" he asked without raising his head.

"I always see Hel'el when he comes. I expected him tonight, I did not expect you Mikha'el." A hand rested gently on his hair and Mikha'el dared to raise his eyes. "Has Elyon changed his mind?"

"No, my Lord," Mikha'el choked, "Elyon will not allow us to interfere, he has turned a deaf ear to our petitions. I have come to...bear witness."

"So be it," Yeshua said and helped Mikha'el to his feet. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. I'm so tired, Mikha'el. I am not afraid of the pain but of when the Ruach leaves me as I know that it must. "

"If I could change this you know that I would. I would draw my sword and I

would...”

“Shhh, no Mikha’el. It must be this way. They are coming,” Yeshua said as angry voices echoed through the trees moving towards them. His brown eyes were filled with love and sadness as they looked at him and something inside of Mikha’el broke. “Your presence gives me comfort and strength. Will you stay with me?”

“Until the end of all that there is or ever will be,” Mikha’el swore. Yeshua smiled softly as men swarmed the clearing.

Mikha’el stepped back and watched in fury as Yehudah kissed Yeshua, marking him. Yeshua received it calmly, he knew it would happen but it didn’t make the betrayal sting less. In the squabble a follower managed to hastily swipe off a guard’s ear leaving him screaming and clutching his head.

“Put your sword away!” Yeshua demanded, “If you live through the strength of your sword you will also die by it. Do you think if that was the answer that I could not call down twelve legions of the mightiest *malakhim* to defend me?”

He looked at Mikha’el and shook his head. It took all of Mikha’el’s strength to sheathe his own sword. Yeshua knelt by the terrified, wounded man and touched his wound. His ear healed instantly, whole and perfect. The guard scrambled back from Yeshua, weeping and afraid.

Yeshua’s disciples had run away through grove to hide themselves so it was only Mikha’el who watched them place a bag over Yeshua’s head and drag him through the trees.

“I hope you enjoy what happens next,” Hel’el said as re-appeared in the glade. “You know it isn’t too late to change to the winning side, Mikha’el. I could use a decent warrior to lead my demon army.”

“You haven’t won yet,” Mikha’el said, trying to keep emotion out of his voice. “I wouldn’t be too eager to celebrate if I were you.”

“If he really was *bar-Elaha*, Elyon would have stepped in and saved him by now. I don’t see anyone rushing to this dirty carpenter’s side. Elyon is being the absent disapproving Father to his world of unloved bastards as per usual.”

“I only see one bastard here,” Mikha’el replied. “Go gloat somewhere else or I will beat you like I did on Mount Nebo.”

“Bring up Mount Nebo up by all means. You can hardly think I was going to spend all my energy wrangling over the body of that stuttering old fool. Another fine example of how Elyon treats his favourites. Moses had to tolerate forty years of squabbling idiots only to die before he gets some kind of reward for it. I only wanted his body because you were so intent on not letting me have it.”

“Your memory is as selective as ever Hel’el,” Mikha’el folded his arms to stop hitting his perfect face. “I seem to recall great speeches of how you would raise up a great temple to honour the saviour of the Hebrews with an elaborate tomb that people could come and worship before.”

“I was merely trying to honour him in a way that was fitting for a man who had sacrificed so much for a selfish God. I was only doing the thing that Elyon refused to do and that is to reward his children.”

“If you’d known anything about Moses you would know that being honoured by men meant less than the dirt on his feet. Go away Hel’el, your company is burdensome.”

“You are a bore like you have always been Mikha’el. You’re the perfect soldier because you are too stupid to have any thoughts of your own. No wonder you find the pretender so interesting-”

Mikha’el’s hand whipped out, knocking the words from Hel’el’s mouth. He stumbled backwards in surprise, the blood from his lip dropping on his perfect white tunic.

Hel’el smiled a bloody smile, “Ha! So there is still some fight left in you. It matters not, I have an execution to oversee and as I said, you bore me.” He vanished and Mikha’el unclenched his shaking fists.

It was a night that Mikha’el needed to be a calm, strong presence as Yeshua underwent his trial; he could not be this trembling, angry, desperate creature. He felt like every nerve in his body was stretched out and on fire. He had meant what he had said; if he could stop this night from happening he would have.

It had been Yeshua’s promise after the flood that had stayed Elyon’s hand from destroying mankind once more. Instead of destruction he would send Yeshua, *bar Elaha* himself, to try and guide them back, to bring new life and new hope.

Mikha’el knew where he would find Yeshua; Caiaphas’s schemes and ego had

bought this about. It was Temple coin that was chinking in Yehudah's pockets. Mikha'el was torn between pitying the man and wanting to drive his sword through him.

Calm down Mikha'el, he tried to tell himself. But there would be no soothing himself during the next few days. He would be riddled with fury but he had to be there for Yeshua and for Miriam. She'd known it would end but she was his mother first and it would not be the son of Elyon that she watched being murdered but that dirty, mischievous boy running through the streets of Alexandria.

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On the third day of his vigil at Golgotha Mikha'el felt Hel'el's presence drawing near. His hand gripped his sword as the Fallen One appeared laughing hysterically.

"Did I not tell you he was a pretender Mikha'el?" Hel'el grinned as he leant against Yeshua's wooden cross. "So much for all the power he was meant to have. Are you going to let me have this body or will you fight me for it like Moses? You don't need to worry about me building a temple for this false *Mashiach*. I'm hoping that they will drag it through the streets behind a horse-" Mikha'el launched himself at Hel'el, the grief of the previous days overwhelming him. He had his hands around Hel'el's neck when he heard a wheeze above him.

"Yeshua?" Mikha'el climbed off Hel'el. As he approached to touch his Master's foot he was flung backwards. Elyon would not let him comfort him even in his final moments. He shuddered as felt Elyon turn his gaze away from them, felt the Ruach vanish, and in that moment Mikha'el felt what it was like to be completely cut off from the grace of Shamayim. He gasped and sank to his knees as he caught the look of utter pain and abandonment in Yeshua's brown eyes. His lungs heaved in and out, desperate to take his final breaths.

"*Eloi*," he whimpered as Mikha'el's heart broke inside of him. "*Lema sabachthani?*"

Hel'el approached Yeshua with a look of cold fury in his eyes, "How does it *feel* to be the one abandoned? You are experiencing in but a moment what I'm doomed to suffer for all eternity."

Mikha'el sat on the ground, head in his hands as he watched Yeshua take one final breath before his body went slack. The triumph on Hel'el's lips halted as a powerful

tremble moved through the earth at their feet.

All of Jerusalem shook as lightning cracked overhead. Mikha'el got to his feet, sword out and ready to protect Yeshua's body from whatever attack Hel'el was summoning. But it was not Hel'el causing the earthquake. He was not laughing now and instinctively Mikha'el stepped back from him.

"I don't understand-" Hel'el began before he started to scream. Light was ripping through him, breaking through his skin, burning from the inside out.

Mikha'el felt Elyon's presence rush back through and around him. It encircled Hel'el as the power that he had stolen from Adam so long ago was pulled out of him, returning back to the Source of All Things.

As all of Jerusalem scrambled to be free of the falling buildings and crumbling Temple, Mikha'el smiled. It was only the beginning.