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JENNIFER L.
ARMENTROUT

GRACE
AND
GLORY

THE FINALE TO THE HARBINGER TRILOGY

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#1 *New York Times* and internationally bestselling author **Jennifer L. Armentrout** lives in Charles Town, West Virginia. All the rumors you've heard about her state aren't true. When she's not hard at work writing, she spends her time reading, working out, watching really bad zombie movies, pretending to write, and hanging out with her husband and her Border Jack, Apollo.

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Rage and Ruin
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Jennifer L. Armentrout

Grace and Glory



To all the health-care workers, first responders and essential workers who have worked tirelessly and endlessly to save lives and to keep stores open, at great risk to their own lives and the lives of their loved ones. Thank you.

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Zayne stood only a few feet from me, the surprisingly cool July breeze lifting the edges of his blond hair off bare shoulders.

Or that was what I *believed* I was seeing.

I was slowly going blind. My line of sight was already severely restricted with little to no peripheral vision. Eventually, there'd be nothing but a pinprick of sight left. To make seeing things all the more iffy, cataracts had formed in both eyes, causing my central vision to be blurry and eyes even more sensitive to light. It was a genetic disease known as retinitis pigmentosa, and not even all the angelic blood pumping through my veins could prevent the disease from progressing. Bright light of any sort made it difficult for me to see and low light wasn't any better, making everything shadowy and hard to see at night.

So, with only the lampposts inside Rock Creek Park lighting the walking path behind me, it was more than possible that I wasn't seeing what I thought I was. I'd also gone through a hellish trauma mere days ago, handed a beatdown of epic proportions by the psychotic archangel Gabriel, also known as the Harbinger of Overlong Monologues, so God only knew what that had done to my eyes.

Or my brain.

Zayne could be a hallucination, one driven by brain damage or grief. Either of those two things actually made more sense. Because how was he standing in front of me? Zayne was...oh God, he had died, his body having turned to dust by now, as all Wardens' did upon death. The bond that had linked us together, made him my Protector, gave us both strength and speed, had turned on us the moment I truly acknowledged how much I was in love with him. He'd been physically weakened, and Gabriel had taken advantage of that. I'd heard Zayne say his last words. *It's okay*. I'd watched him take his last breath. I'd felt that cord that had connected us together as Protector and Trueborn snap inside me.

He'd died.

He was dead.

But he was right there, standing in front of me, and I smelled freshly fallen snow and mint—*wintermint*. It was stronger than before, as if the

summer air was soaked in winter.

Because of that scent, for a moment, I wondered if he were a spirit—someone who'd died and crossed over. When souls who'd moved on to the great beyond came to check in on loved ones, people often smelled something that reminded them of the person who'd passed on. A perfume. Toothpaste. A cigar. Bonfire. It could be anything, because Heaven...Heaven had a certain scent; it smelled like whatever you desired most, and I wanted Zayne to be alive more than I wanted anything.

I smelled Heaven right now.

But even with my funky vision, I could see that Zayne wasn't a spirit. That he was flesh and blood—*glowing* flesh and blood. His skin held a faint luminous glow that hadn't been present before.

Dizziness swept through me as I stared into eyes that were no longer the palest blue. Now they were an intense, vibrant hue, reminding me of the brief moments at twilight when the sky was the deepest shade of sapphire. Wardens didn't even have eyes like that, nor did they glow like one of those old Glo Worm dolls Jada had once found in the attic when we were kids.

And Wardens sure as Hell didn't have the kind of wings spreading out from Zayne's broad shoulders. They weren't Warden wings, which often reminded me of smooth leather. Oh, no, these were feathered—white and thick with streaks of gold glowing with heavenly fire, with *grace*.

Only two things in this world and beyond, outside of God, carried the potent and all-powerful *grace* within them. I was one of those things.

But Zayne hadn't been a Trueborn like me, and neither had he been like the few humans who had an angel perched on their family tree, giving them a watered-down, way less powerful *grace* that either enabled them to see ghosts and spirits or caused them to display other psychic abilities. I'd been told my whole life that I was the only Trueborn, a first-generation child of an angel and a human, but that hadn't been exactly true. There had been Sulien, Gabriel's offspring, but Zayne had killed him, so I guessed I was back to being the unique person that I was. All of that was irrelevant, because Zayne had been a Warden.

The only other being with that kind of *grace* and wings was an angel, but Zayne hadn't been that, either.

But he totally had angel wings now—feathered angel wings that glowed with *grace*.

“Trin...?” he said, and I sucked in a sharp breath. Oh God, it was his voice, and my entire body seemed to shake. I would’ve given up just about anything to hear his voice again, and now I was.

I took a shaky step forward.

“I can...sense you.” Confusion filled his voice as he stared at me.

Did he mean the Protector bond? I searched for the buzz of awareness, the hint of emotions that weren’t mine. I found nothing. There was no cord. No bond.

He wasn’t my Protector any longer.

“Trinity,” he repeated softly, and I heard it then. The tone of his voice. It was off. More than just confusion. “The name...it means something.”

My heart skipped a beat. “Because it’s my name.”

He tilted his head into the shadows, but I could still feel his stare. Did he...did he not remember me? Concern blossomed. I had no idea how he came back or why he resembled an angel, but if something had happened to him to affect his memory, I would help him. We’d figure it out together. All that mattered was that he was alive. I took another step, lifting my arm—

One moment he was standing several feet away, and then the next he was right in front of me, those incredible wings blocking out the world behind him. Zayne had moved faster than any Warden could—faster than even me.

I flinched in surprise, jerking my head away. In the back of my mind, I knew that Zayne, knowing how my vision worked and how hard it was for me to track movement, wouldn’t have moved liked that. But something was clearly up with his memories and—

Zayne grabbed my hand as he dipped his chin, inhaling deeply. He shuddered, lifting his head. My eyes widened. As close as he was now, I could see the familiar lines and angles of his face, but I saw them...I saw them more clearly, and that didn’t make sense, either. His wings blocked out the moonlight, and the glow of the nearby lampposts wasn’t close enough to explain how I could see him so well. His features were too distinct, and there...there really was this glow under—

“Do you think you can take me on, little nephilim?” he demanded.

Wait. What?

All my senses went on high alert as I stared up at him. “Little—?”

Healing skin and muscles protested, flaring hotly as he pulled me against his chest. His arm clamped down on my waist like an arm of steel. The hold was crushing but the contact of his body against mine was still a shock to

the system, scattering thoughts and silencing the warning bells that were starting to go off loudly. He lowered his head once more, and my entire body tensed in anticipation. There was a whole lot of weird going on, but he was going to kiss me, and I would never not want—

He buried his face in my hair, inhaling deeply once more. “Your scent... I know it. It calls to me. Why?”

“Because you, uh, know me?” I suggested.

“Maybe,” Zayne murmured, and for a moment, he just held me, and I started to take that as a good sign. “But you... I recognize the *grace*. It’s powerful. Like an *archangel*,” he said, the last word spit out like he was talking about some kind of incurable disease.

What in the holy Hell?

I turned my head, unable to raise my arms from where they were trapped at my sides. “Zayne, it’s me,” I said, trying to make sense of what was happening. “Trinity.”

He went incredibly still. “There is something important—your name, your smell,” he interrupted, shuddering once more as his hold on me softened. “I feel too much. All the greed and gluttony, the loathing and hatred. It’s *inside* me, filling me up.”

That...that didn’t sound good at all.

“But you smell amazing. Intoxicating. It’s familiar,” he repeated. He shifted his head, and I felt his mouth against my jaw.

I gasped, senses overwhelmed by the burst of warring sensations. My body was all on board with his closeness, but not my brain or my heart. “Let go of me, and we’ll figure out what’s going on.”

Zayne didn’t let go.

He *laughed*.

And that laugh...it was nothing like the sound I loved and cherished. Shivers crawled across my skin, and not in the fun, good way. His laugh was cold, cruel even, and there wasn’t a single part of him that was cruel. “Put me down, Zayne.”

“Stop calling me that.”

My heart stuttered. “That’s your name.”

“I have no name.”

“Yes, you do. It’s Zayne—”

“And I’ll put you down when I feel like it,” he interrupted. “Guess what, little nephilim. I don’t want to.”

Okay. I loved him with my whole being—loved him more than anything. I was also superconcerned about his mental state at the moment. I wanted to help him, and I would, but he was really starting to tick me off.

“Stop calling me *little nephilim*,” I warned.

“It’s what you are.”

“What I am is a Trueborn, but neither of those things are my name. It’s Trinity or Trin.” I squirmed, trying to wiggle free. A low, animalistic sound radiated from the back of his throat. “Put me down or I swear to God—”

“God? You swear to God?” He laughed again. “God has abandoned us all.”

A shock went through me. A wild mixture of relief, confusion, irritation and something far stronger, and shattering. For the first time since I’d known Zayne, I felt fear in his arms.

My body went ice-cold, and my own personal alarm system reacted to the bolt of fear. Deep inside me, my *grace* sparked.

Zayne hissed—he actually *hissed*—like an angry, feral cat. An angry, very large feral cat the moment my *grace* pulsed inside me. That was beyond weird.

Instinct took over. Twisting my body, I ignored the pain from all the healing injuries and brought my knee up, slamming it into his groin.

Or at least, I tried to.

Zayne anticipated the move. My knee hit his thigh. A wave of anger and rapidly growing panic whipped through me as my *grace* pressed at me, demanding to be let out, but I fought it down. He was confused and he’d just come back from being dead with angel wings, so I didn’t want to hurt him *too* badly. My *grace* would do more than that. It would kill him.

Managing to get an arm free, I punched him in the jaw, hard enough to send a flare of pain across my knuckles, and he smiled. He smiled like I hadn’t even punched him, and the curve of his lips was all wrong. It was icy and inhuman.

“Ouch,” he murmured. “You’re going to have to do better than that.”

I jabbed out with my palm, catching him under the chin. He grunted in pain as he pushed—no, *threw*—me aside. I hit the ground several feet back with a sharp yelp. Shock still had its tight grip on me, dampening the sting of a fresh new wave of pain as I looked up at him in realization.

This was Zayne but not.

He would never toss me like a Frisbee. Even if I deserved it, and God knows, I could be extremely obnoxious, but Zayne would never do that. I could kick him straight in the face, and he would never lift a finger against me in any way that would harm me.

Shaking off the pain and confusion, I climbed to my knees—

There was a blur of golden skin and wings, too fast for me to track, and then he had ahold of the scruff of my shirt. He lifted me off the ground and straight into the air. I dangled several *feet* from the ground.

Holy crap.

His wings rose and spread out. They were massive and beautiful. Also, really frightening at the moment. He held me there like I was nothing more than a toddler throwing a tantrum! A small one, at that.

And that really flipped my bitch switch.

I kicked out, catching him in the stomach. His grip on my shirt loosened, and then suddenly I was *flying*.

I landed on my stomach, slamming into the ground once more. Pain lanced my ribs as the air rushed out of my lungs. Okay. *That* was what being tossed like a Frisbee really felt like. Now I knew the difference. Good to know. Groaning, I flipped over and started to sit up. I didn't make it very far. He was there, above me, his face in mine. Those brilliant blue eyes were like shards of ice. His stare chilled my flesh, my soul.

“Zayne, please—”

He gripped my chin, fingers pressing into my skin. “Stop calling me that.”

“It's your name—”

“It is not.”

“Then what am I supposed to call you?” I shouted. “Jackass?”

One side of his lips kicked up. “You may call me death. How does that sound?”

A whole lot of fear blasted my system, but I hid it. “How does that sound? It sounds pretty stupid.”

The smirk froze.

I swung my fist.

His hand snapped out, catching my wrist. He hadn't even taken his eyes off mine—hadn't even let go of my chin. “This feels familiar.”

“Me telling you something you've said sounds stupid? Because it should ___”

“No.” His eyes narrowed. “This. The fighting.”

“That’s because we’ve trained together! We’ve fought each other,” I told him in a rush, trying to overcome my panic and anger. “Not to hurt each other. Never to hurt each other.”

“Never to hurt each other,” he repeated slowly, as if he couldn’t comprehend how those words went together. His head twisted to the side as his eyes closed. “This isn’t…” His fingers dug in, squeezing until I was sure that my jaw would splinter. “You know me. You’re important.”

I swallowed down the fear. “Because…because we do know each other. We’re together. You wouldn’t do this. You wouldn’t hurt me.”

“I wouldn’t?” He sounded even more confused. “Why is that? You’re a nephilim. You carry an archangel’s *grace*.”

“That doesn’t matter. You wouldn’t hurt me because you love me,” I whispered, voice cracking. Tears filled my eyes. “That’s why.”

“Love?” He jolted as if burned, letting go of my chin. “I love you?”

“Yes. Yes! We love each other, Zayne, and whatever has happened to you, we can fix this. We can figure it out together and—”

“We?” His hand curled around my throat, the grip a fraction from being deadly. “There is no we. There is no Zayne,” he spat. “I am *Fallen*.”

There wasn’t time for those words to do any damage or for them to make sense. His hand clamped down until only the thinnest amount of air could get through. I had no idea if he would squeeze or not. If so, had he come back to life just to kill me? Seemed fitting in an ironic way. If that turned out to be the case, obviously I was going to be superdead and superpissed, but I’d also be so heartbroken. Because when Zayne snapped out of whatever this was, the knowledge of what he’d done would kill him all over again.

I didn’t deserve this.

Neither did he.

What I did next was hard to explain. My hands lifted without conscious thought. I placed my trembling fingers against his cheek and pressed my palm against his chest. Flesh against flesh.

Zayne blinked, releasing his hold as he jerked back. There was a brief glimpse of confusion clouding his bright eyes as I twisted to the side, sucking in glorious oxygen. I didn’t know what made him let me go, what stopped him from applying just a little more pressure. Too happy to be breathing again, I really didn’t care at the moment.

His hand closed over my shoulder, and I tensed, but all he did was roll me onto my back. It was *almost* tender.

“What...” He shook his head again, sending strands of blond hair swinging. “Why wouldn’t you attack me? Why would you touch me? I can feel the power in you. You can fight me. You won’t win, but it’s better than just lying there.”

Better than not killing him, I wanted to say, but even I could realize there was no point in doing so. Reasoning with him wasn’t going to work. I could scream from the rooftops that I loved him, and it wasn’t going to make a difference. I had to get out of here, get somewhere safe to figure out what the Hell was happening. I hated to do what I was about to do, but there was no other option.

Reaching to my thigh, I unsheathed the iron dagger that had remained hidden under the length of my shirt.

“Why won’t you fight me?” he demanded. “You’re the enemy. You should fight me.”

I couldn’t even process him calling me the enemy. “I won’t fight you because I love you, you freaking idiot.” My fingers wrapped around the handle of the dagger as his features settled into the look he always gave me when I did something he couldn’t understand, which had been often. It tore at my heart.

“I’m sorry,” I whispered.

Zayne tilted his head to the side again. “Sorry for—”

I reared off the dirt and grass, swiping my arm in a high arc. The sharp edge of the blade caught him under the chin. I kept the blow quick and shallow, just enough to stun him.

Zayne stumbled back, his beautiful face contorting in fury. He clasped his throat, letting out a roar that sent chills to my very soul. Springing to my feet, I didn’t hesitate. I took off as if the very devil was after me.

* * *

I ran and ran, blindly cutting through traffic and nearly mowing down countless people as my sneakers pounded off pavement. How I didn’t get flattened by a car was beyond me. Every part of my body hurt, but I didn’t slow down. I didn’t even know where I was going—

Follow me.

My feet stumbled as the voice that was so not mine echoed around me. Breathing heavy, I slowed. Harsh yellow streetlights cast ominous shadows along the sidewalks. Faces and bodies were nothing more than shapeless blurs as horns honked from the street and people shouted.

Follow me, Trueborn.

Either I was losing my mind, which in my humble, nonbiased opinion would be completely understandable at this point, or I was actually hearing a voice in my head.

But didn't hearing voices in your head also mean you were losing your mind?

Follow me, child of Michael. It is your only hope to restore the one who Fell for you.

A sudden image of what had looked like a star plummeting to Earth formed. Zayne. That had been Zayne.

Fallen.

He said he was Fallen.

I knew what that meant, but it couldn't be.

Follow me.

The voice...it sounded like it bled power. It was no voice I could imagine. I swallowed dryly, my gaze darting around erratically and seeing nothing. Zayne had come back from the dead—he'd come back different in a very *Pet Sematary* way, and with wings, but he'd come back. That was him, and he was alive, so I could very well be hearing a real voice in my head.

Anything was possible at this point.

But if the voice was real, how in the world was I supposed to follow something I couldn't see?

No sooner had that thought finished, I heard, *Trust your grace. It knows where to go. You're already halfway to where you need to be.*

Trust my *grace*? I almost laughed, but I was too winded to do so. I was already halfway to where I needed to be? All I had been doing was running...

I'd been running blindly.

I'd run with no real conscious thought. Just like when I touched Zayne. Instinct had taken over both times, and instinct and *grace* were one and the same.

I was willing to try anything that would help me figure out what had happened to Zayne.

Picking up my pace, I started running and went straight until I took a left. There was no reason. I just cut down a street and then kept going. Then I took a right. It started raining, coming down steadily. I had no idea where I was going. Heart thumping against my ribs, I crossed a congested corner. I hadn't heard the voice again, and just when I was beginning to fear I had imagined it, I saw the...the church across the street, slowly becoming more clear. Constructed of stone and with many steeples and turrets, it looked like something straight out of medieval times. Every part of me knew that was where I'd been led to. How or why, I had no idea.

I thought I recognized the church as I climbed the wide steps, passing between two lit lampposts. Saint Patrick's or something? Moonlight glinted off the cross above the doorway, and for a moment, it looked like it glowed with heavenly light.

Stepping under the alcove, I drew in a shallow breath. Rain coursed down the side of my face and off my clothing. Blood caked under my mouth. Was it mine? Zayne's? I wasn't sure. I had a sinking suspicion that I might've cracked a rib that probably had just healed, but I felt no pain. Maybe because I was feeling so much it didn't leave room for my body to beg for a time-out.

"Here goes nothing," I muttered, approaching the door, and halted.

Every hair on my body stood and the sense of unease grew until I found it difficult to swallow. Having no idea what to expect, I opened the heavy doors and stepped inside the building built over two centuries ago. An immediate fissure of electricity danced over my skin, like a warning that I was...that I was somewhere I didn't belong.

A child of any angel, let alone an archangel, was a big no-no even though I was basically created to fight for all the holy rollers. I shouldn't be all that surprised by how every instinct in me demanded that I turn and leave.

But I didn't.

My muscles locked as a small door to my right creaked open. A young priest swathed in white robes with red trim stepped out.

He nodded at me. "This way, please."

Unsure whether I should be grateful that I appeared to be expected or really freaked out, I got my feet moving. Quietly, I followed the priest down a narrow corridor. As we went, he stopped every few feet to light candles. If he hadn't, I probably would've walked into a wall.

Saint Brendan the Navigator's statue guarded the entrance to the nave of the church. He held a boat in one hand and a staff in the other. Saint Brigid stood opposite of him, a hand over her heart.

I had a creepy feeling that the statues were eyeing me as the priest led me toward the sanctuary. My steps faltered as my eyes slowly pieced together what I was seeing.

Four stone angels knelt on the floor, their wings tucked back. In their hands were basins of what I guessed was holy water, since I doubted they were collecting rainwater or something.

The priest stepped aside, motioning me forward. With my heart in my throat, I entered the sanctuary. Straight ahead, a thirteen-foot cross hung above the main altar, bearing both the crucified and risen Jesus.

A frigid breeze reached me, and the next breath I let out formed misty clouds. That was...odd. So was the rich scent of sandalwood accompanying the cold air. I turned and found the priest gone. Vanished.

Great.

Not to be sacrilegious or anything, but this wasn't a place I wanted to be left alone in. I started past the stone angels—

In unison, they lifted their bowed heads and held their basins out.

Oh my God, that was a whole bucketful of nightmares. My stomach dipped as I resisted the urge to run back through the hallway while stone ground against stone. One of the angels' arms broke away from the basin, moving slowly to point to the right of the altar. Chills ran over my skin as I slowly turned.

I gasped.

He stood before the altar, dressed in some sort of white tunic and pants that no one could buy off Amazon. The outline of his body seemed to shimmer as he took complete corporeal form. From the tips of the whitish blond curls down to his bare feet, he was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

I opened my mouth to speak, but then his wings unfolded from his body, spanning at least eight feet in each direction. They were so luminous and white they glowed in the dim light. They moved noiselessly, but the power of those wings stirred the air, blowing back my hair even with several feet separating us. I squinted, leaning forward. What was on the tip of each wing? Something was...

Oh God.

There were eyes on the tips of his wings. Hundreds of them!

My skin crawled as my gaze went back to his face, but I had to look away quickly. It was painful—the purity to his beauty cut through my skin, shining a spotlight on every dark thought I'd ever had.

I knew what he was—what type of angel.

A Throne.

To look upon them was to expose every secret one ever held and be judged for each one. And I was being judged now. His whole demeanor, from the way he tilted his head to the side to the way his bright blue eyes seared through skin and muscle, told me that he was seeing *everything*.

And he wasn't impressed.

There was death in those crystal eyes. Not “moving on to the next stage in life” or “standing before the Pearly Gates” kind of death, but the vast emptiness of the final death—the death of a soul.

I took a deep breath and started to speak.

The angel opened his mouth.

An ear-piercing blare shook the stained-glass windows and the pews, hitting an octave that no human could make or stand. I doubled over, clutching my ears. It was like a thousand trumpets blaring at once, shaking me to the very core. The sound echoed through the sanctuary, bouncing around my skull until I was sure my head would explode. Wet warmth trickled out of my ears, down my hands.

When I didn't think I could take it anymore, the sound ceased.

Trembling, I lowered my bloodstained hands and lifted my head. The angel looked at me pitilessly as his wings continued their quiet movement.

“That was special,” I croaked.

He didn't speak, and the silence that stretched out was unbearable.

“You summoned me here,” I said, bracing myself for another unearthly wail. That didn't come. Neither did a response. “You said it was the only way to help Zayne.”

Still, there was nothing.

And I just lost it. All the pain, the fear, the grief and even the joy of seeing Zayne again crashed through me. “You spoke in my head, didn't you? You told me to come to you.”

Silence.

“Can you not hear me? Did your own scream burst your eardrums? Or is this amusing to you? Is that it? Is Gabriel trying to end this world and

Heaven not enough entertainment for you? Damn you!” I yelled, scratching my throat raw. “Fine. You just want to stand here and stare at me? I can do the same thing. Better yet, how about I go outside and start telling every person I come across that angels are real. I can prove it. I’ll just whip out my *grace*. Then I can introduce them to a few demons and when I’m done with—”

“That won’t be necessary.” He spoke in a voice that was richly musical, infinitely kind without a trace of humanity. It was so at odds with itself that I winced. “You’re here for him, the one who died protecting you.”

I flinched then. “Yes. But he’s alive.”

“I know.”

“He’s not right.”

“Of course not.”

I shook—every part of me shook. “What happened to him? How is he here?”

The Throne tipped his head to the side. “He committed an act of selflessness and sacrifice by coming to your aid. He did so out of the purest love. He was restored to his Former Glory.”

“Former Glory?” I had no idea what he was talking about.

The Throne nodded. “But he chose you. He chose to Fall.”

The room seemed to spin as what the Throne was saying began to sink in. It didn't make sense, but I knew what the angel had meant by saying Zayne Fell. I knew what Zayne had meant when he said he was Fallen.

What I didn't understand was how it was possible.

I had to take several deep, calming breaths before I spoke again. "Zayne was a Warden and my Protector. How did he Fall when he was never an angel?"

His wings rose and then settled. "What do you think the Wardens were before they were cast unto stone? Did you believe the Creator snapped them into existence out of boredom?"

I started to frown. Yeah, that was exactly what I believed.

"No. God was not simply bored. What you call Wardens were once the guardians of man, great ones, but they failed. They caved to the lure of sin and vice. They Fell."

"I don't understand. I was told—"

"That the Fallen were wiped clean from this Earth by the Wardens?" He smiled faintly. "They rewrote their histories. Can you blame them for wanting to hide their shame?" He stepped down from the altar, causing me to tense. "They buried their deeds so deep that many generations have been born and gone to the Heavens, never knowing their true past. Some who Fell were stripped of their wings and their *grace* by the archangels and Alphas. Others escaped into Hell. But those who did not run, and recognized their sin, took their punishment. They were entombed in stone."

"Alive?" I whispered.

"They became the warning that evil was all around and no one, not even God's angels, were immune to it."

"They became the first stone gargoyles." I sucked in a small breath, horrified to think that anyone had been trapped in stone. "How long?"

"Centuries," the Throne answered with a shrug.

My mouth dropped open. Centuries trapped in stone? How did any of them come out of that with their minds intact?

"But with the demon populace increasing, God intervened, and the Alphas gave some of those entombed a choice—to be free to fight the

demons and protect man or to remain entombed.”

That didn't sound a whole lot like freedom or a choice to me, but what did I know?

“Those who accepted the choice became the first Wardens, their true stone form designed to serve as a reminder, and the human form given back so that they could blend in with humans. Their *grace* was still removed so that there was no risk of a rebellion and they were able to create a lineage who would continue to protect man and serve God's will,” he explained. “That is who the Wardens truly are.”

I suddenly thought of what the demon prince had said to me the day I'd gone to the coven to get Bambi, his familiar, back. *Good thing the Wardens wiped out the Fallen eons ago, eh?* Then Roth had chuckled as if he'd known something I hadn't. Roth knew! That was why he was constantly making snide comments about the Wardens.

“Wait. Those who didn't accept the choice? Or weren't given one?” I asked. “What happened to them?”

“You already know the answer to that.”

I sucked in a sharp breath. I did. I just didn't want it to be true. “They're still entombed.”

“They are.”

Dear God.

The Throne watched me. “Then, when a Warden dies, he or she comes unto judgment. They will either be ushered into eternal peace or granted Glory. To be reborn as they once were.”

Learning how the Wardens became who they were was mind-blowing, and I had questions. Like how in the world did the demons keep this a secret? If Roth knew the truth, which I was betting he did, then more had to. But at the moment only Zayne mattered. “So when you say he was restored, he was made an...an angel?”

He nodded.

“Zayne had wings—big, fluffy angel wings—and he had *grace*. A lot of it. I didn't think the Fallen had wings or *grace*.” That was what I'd always been told, and even Roth had said so. Only Lucifer had retained his wings and *grace*, because he'd been kicked out before God realized that should be a thing to do.

“Not all are given redemption. Only those who are truly deserving or are found to be useful are restored to their Glory, given their *grace* and wings.