

Divine Intervention

*None
Too
Soon*

Jennifer MacKenzie

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Divine Intervention: None Too Soon

Another day, another dumbass.

That wasn't exactly a nice thought from a Guardian Angel, but Thomas was having a tough time. His job guiding Second Chancers was becoming routine and boring. Two years of sobriety helped him heal some of the damage he'd done in the last few centuries, but for some reason, he was not very fulfilled.

Oh, watching Michaela and Tim Lassiter find happiness had been rewarding. And bringing Elizabeth and Jerod together had been difficult, but worth it. Chris and Danielle had been a challenge, and their joy with each other was a pleasure to see.

So, what was wrong with him?

Working at his computer, his wings twitched nervously, irritability running up his nerves. Nothing interesting today. There were no distinct turning points, no crises with his charges. Thomas sighed. It wasn't exactly boredom.

It was loneliness.

There were his AAA meetings (Angels Alcoholics Anonymous), but they couldn't fill this ache that was getting worse every day. Having feelings at all was a new experience. These feelings were uncomfortable and agonizing. Guilt, fear, anger were all emotions he could handle. This loneliness was sharp and painful.

He didn't like it.

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It would be easier to find oblivion in a bottle. Disappear. Numb the pain.

Sweat broke out on his forehead and his wings flapped in agitation. Just one drink. No one would know and he'd get a little respite from the emptiness in his soul. His hands shook, and Thomas prayed silently.

I'm going to lose it here. After two years of sobriety, I'm done. Being sober hasn't made me happy. How am I going to fight this?

As if in answer to his prayer, Thomas's phone rang.

"Thomas? We have a problem." It was his boss. No doubt he was aware of Thomas's prayer, but nothing would be said.

"Nothing is showing up on my screen." Thomas checked his computer.

"It isn't one of your charges. Another Guardian Angel needs your help."

"Okay. Which one?"

"Marina."

He bit back a groan. Why her? Marina. She was the reason he was a Second Chancer. They went way back, Marina and him. Back to Helen of Troy. That was a mess his drinking had made worse. He had held on to resentment against Marina because part of him believed if she hadn't turned him in, he might have fixed that whole Trojan War thing. Who knew those humans would start a war over a beautiful woman and his charge, Paris? Now, he knew that she did the only thing she could.

Still, she didn't have to dump him. Okay, Helen was her charge and Thomas interfered by getting all hot and bothered by Helen's Guardian Angel. And, sure, it was his fault Paris got the hots for Helen. Marina turned him in and then left him alone to drown in his own misery for another few centuries or so. His silence must have gone on too long.

"Thomas?" His boss was trying to get his attention.

"Isn't there anyone else?" He asked, knowing the answer.

"No. She needs your help."

"All right. Where is she?"

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“She’s in the Second Chancer’s department. I’ve already sent her to you. She’ll be there in a little over an hour.”

Sullen resentment settled over Thomas. He didn’t want this. He didn’t want to see her.

“Yes, sir.”

“Thomas, you need to deal with this. Help Marina and you may help yourself. You know how that works.” His boss’s voice was soothing.

Keeping himself from snorting with disbelief was almost impossible, but he did. He only said, “Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.” And left it at that.

A little over an hour. He hadn’t thought too much about what happened with Helen of Troy and that whole mess. He’d discussed it with his Angel AA sponsor, but somehow, the depth of the hurt he carried from it wasn’t healed yet.

What happened in Troy? He’d fallen for Marina in a bad way. Back then, he’d been young, strong, and rebellious. She’d been gorgeous and rebellious herself. He’d taken a lot of liquid courage and made a play for her. Unfortunately, their attraction was shared by their charges and Paris hijacked Helen causing an uproar that ended in the destruction of the city of Troy.

Kind of a historical foul up.

Lost in the past, he remembered Marina was dazzling and he’d fallen for her instantly. His clouded judgement caused a lot of trouble and the Big Boss had to step in and clean it up. For punishment, he’d been sent to the Second Chancers Division, bringing people together who kept missing their chance at their soul mate.

For centuries, he nursed his persecution complex, ignoring his own part in his situation. He blamed the Big Boss. He blamed Marina. He blamed Paris and Helen.

Now, he knew his own stupidity had caused his downfall. How had Marina ended up in Second Chancers? She’d done the right thing. Turning him in and bringing Helen back to her husband after the destruction of Troy seemed to make her a primary candidate for advancement, not punishment.

A knock sounded at his front door.

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His stomach clenched as he opened the door and faced his past.

Glorious and still beautiful, Marina stood on his doorstep. Long, flowing blonde hair, blue eyes and still willowy after all these centuries. She struck him now as she had then. Damn. Why couldn't she have gotten fat and complacent over the millennia? Her wings were furled, a sign that she was nervous or fearful. Her eyes were focused on his chest, not his face. The only thing Thomas could think was she didn't even want to look him in the eye. She was probably still mad at him. Sighing, he stepped back from the door.

"Hello, Marina." Pleased his voice was steady, he continued. "Come on in."

She cleared her throat. "Hello, Thomas. How are you?" Her eyes focused on the ground as she glided into his home.

"Fabulous." He tried to keep the sarcasm out of his tone, but failed. Even he heard the bite in his answer.

Her wings fluttered a little as she crossed to one of his chairs and perched on the edge of it. "The Big Boss sent me here." Which made it clear she wouldn't have come otherwise. "I have a problem I can't fix."

"Oh?" He raised an eyebrow.

"Yes. One of my charges is going to kill herself and I can't stop her." She said it as if she was referring to the weather. Shock tore through Thomas. When a charge became so depressed they contemplated suicide, it usually meant the Guardian Angel was very unhappy. Usually, the Big Boss tried to step in, but Angels, like some humans, were very good at covering up their desperation.

"How am I supposed to help with that?" What did Marina's unhappiness have to do with him? Sending her to him seemed the height of folly. If it was his fault she was unhappy. He couldn't fix the past.

Marina's face turned away from his. "I don't know. They seem to think if we work out our....." She stopped, seeming to search for the words. "...differences, I'll be able to help my charge."

A laugh exploded from his throat. "Our differences?"

Her body stiffened and her wings tensed. "Yes, our differences."

"Which ones? You mean the one where you slept with me and then turned me into the Big Boss? Or the one where you dumped me? Or maybe the one where it's been a couple of thousand years since you've

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acknowledged my existence?" He hovered on the edge of losing his temper. His wings unfurled and his muscles clenched.

"I didn't dump you." She held up her hand when he would have protested. "And I thought it would be best to stay away from you. As long as you were drinking, I couldn't help you. Don't you see?" Her eyes pleaded with him, but he'd fallen for that innocent act once. Never again.

"I see you're not going to address the night we slept together." *The best sex I'd had since the beginning of time.*

His only satisfaction from his comment was that her face flushed a bright red. "No, I'm not." She said firmly.

Everything in him wanted to usher her out the door. Nothing had changed. "You did dump me. I was drunk, but I remember that. *You're a drunk and I'm not going down with you.* That's what you said." His bitterness left a sour taste in his mouth.

"I remember." Her face was forlorn and sad.

Why couldn't he just let her drown in the misery of her own making?

He sighed. "I don't know how we're going to work out our differences, Marina."

He reached for the phone, preparing to call the Big Boss and give up.

"No! Please." She stood up and clutched his hand to stop him from getting the phone. "I can't fail again."

"You didn't fail. Helen went back to Agamemnon and lived a long life. I'm the one who took the blame for the destruction of Troy."

"I did fail. They took me off World Leader Guardians and transferred me to Second Chancers. The Big Boss held me responsible, too." She turned her back on him, giving him a clear view of her soft wings and gorgeous butt. Why hadn't the woman gotten uglier over time? Time hadn't been as good to him. Why did she have to look as good as she did then? Very non angelic thoughts flitted through his mind.

"Only because you slept with me." His jaw tightened. He held onto his anger as a defense against the feelings she brought out in him.

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“No. Because I wanted to stay with you.” He almost didn’t catch her answer. “How much do you remember?”

That made him stop. All he remembered was how obsessed he was with Marina. The rest of the time was a haze. “Not much.”

“Do you remember shooting arrows into the Spartans and causing them to attack when the Trojans almost gave up?”

The scene came back to him. He’d stood on the highest peak in Troy, drunk on whiskey and lust, and shot arrows off with some harebrained idea that he was Cupid and spreading love. He groaned.

“Vaguely.”

“You were lucky you didn’t kill anyone.” Her back was still to him. Her wings sagged.

“But that night—” he started.

Whipping around, she faced him, and her blue eyes filled with tears. “Don’t you see? I should have left you then. I should have gone to the Big Boss and turned you in, but I was afraid I’d lose you. I lost you anyway.” The tears fell, streaming down her face.

Things were getting too serious. He hated it when women cry.

“Well, you have to admit. It was funny.”

Her lips twitched. “Especially when you shouted that you were Cupid and you were spreading peace and love.”

Thomas rolled his eyes. “At least I was too drunk to hit anything.” He laughed. What else could he do? Making a joke of it took the sting out of his foolishness.

When Marina laughed with him, memories of their time together slithered into his mind. The memories that he’d put away for so long because the longing that he experienced with them was too painful.

Abruptly, he turned away and got a glass of water. He was a fool. He’d loved her then with all of his rogue, irresponsible heart. He loved her now. Being near her was almost more than he could stand. There was no hope for him.

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As his wings furled, closing and folding, Marina could see the light moment had passed. Her heart broke as she studied the man she'd given her heart and soul to centuries earlier. He had aged well, his black hair was still curly and hung crisply at the nape of his neck. His hips were narrow and his shoulders broad, though he was a little more stooped. Experience tempered the arrogance she remembered from the old days. How could he know that she longed for him every day since then?

Fear drove her to stay away. It was clear to her that she couldn't change him or stop him from drinking back then. She ran from him, blaming herself for his decrepit condition and the trouble their tryst created. Then, when she heard he was sober, her glimmer of hope was dashed before it even began to shine.

Shaking her head, she knew this was the reason her charge had given up hope. How could her helpless human fight against despair if the Angel sent to guide her gave in to hopelessness? The silence stretched, years of wretchedness yawning between them.

"I don't remember much from that time." He spoke with his back to her, wings drooping. "But tell me this. I've been sober for two years. Was I so awful that you couldn't call me?"

Shock electrified her. She stood up and gripped his arm to turn him to face her. "What are you talking about? I did."

His blue eyes pierced hers. "No. I know you didn't. I waited and waited. I wanted to call you but—" He dropped his gaze and tried to jerk away from her hold.

She stiffened her arm and demanded, "What? Why didn't you call me?"

His glare showed his helpless anger. "You dumped me, remember? You didn't want me. How was I supposed to call you when you didn't want me? You didn't want me in your life so much that you handed me over to the Big Boss rather than be with me."

Shaking his arm, she gave herself over to her own fury. "You idiot. You were drinking. I wanted to help you but I couldn't. Everything I did made it worse."

"Two years. Two years, Marina, and it's been more of an eternity than the years I spent drunk." His hand

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covered hers and removed it from his arm.

“I called you, Thomas. Two months after you left rehab, I called you. I never heard back from you, so I thought you hated me.” Tears threatened to spill over. She would not cry. It was pathetic. She shouldn't have admitted that she'd called him.

When she finally looked at his face, she was surprised to see bewilderment and shock written all over it. It was beginning to dawn on her that he hadn't known. He hadn't rejected her.

“I swear, Marina. I didn't know. I never got your call.” He stepped closer to her, his wings spreading in a circle around her. “Why did you call me?” His voice was velvet over her skin. She closed her eyes. All these years and that voice still haunted her. Desire, longing, wanting all flooded her body and her wings spread and touched his.

His hands touched her shoulders. When her eyes opened, she met his and their blue depths filled with hope and desire. “I called you because I love you. I always have. Even when you were drunk, I loved you. It's killing me.” The tears finally spilled over and a sob caught in her throat.

Gentle touches on her cheeks wiped her tears away as his fingers stroked her face. “I love you, too. Didn't you know? Why else would I shoot arrows in the air playing Cupid? I'm just sorry I spent so much time trying to run away from it.” His arms wrapped around her and she buried her face in his neck. “I love you so much that I didn't want to hurt you by forcing my way back into your life if you didn't want me.”

Leaning back, she glared at him. “Well, don't make stupid assumptions like that again. I'm miserable without you.”

Thomas grinned at her. “Would you mind terribly if I said *good?*”

Joy filled her heart and her wings fanned out in a glorious display. “No, I wouldn't mind at all.”

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“Well, those two took long enough to smarten up.” The Assistant said.

“That's why they're perfect for their respective jobs.” The Big Boss gazed fondly down at his two wayward angels.

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The Assistant sighed. "It means they're going to be distracted for a while."

"Perhaps. But for a good reason." The Big Boss clapped his employee on the shoulder. "Love is always a good reason."

The End