

Ye Who Enters Here...

By Xenny Diemes

The Night Stalker, the greatest vessel manned by the greatest pirate in the world, lay in ruins floating around the ocean. Her dark and nefarious crew are cut down to slim numbers struggling to keep afloat despite being undead. Its first mate taken hostage and the ones responsible? They are bringing forth their plans to bring about a new dominion on Earth and destroy Heaven and Hell burn, all thanks to their new powers by the Heart of Demons. There is however, hope. Hope that is holding on to a large, loose plank of wood floating aimlessly in the ocean. The mighty Leviathan finds her and picks her up in its strong hands. It is Darquebane, now reverted back to her true form Jacqueline, slowly recovering from her injuries and seeing her beloved pet still alive even after her dark powers are gone. Assessing the damage and the remaining crew. Jacqueline knows that this is a fatal blow for not seeing this coming sooner.

However, it was. The writing was on the wall when the Heart of Demons tells of its ultimate fate and the key to ensure the survival of the two realms and Earth lies in the chest and its treasure. To her amazement, it is a piece of the Heart itself. Still, brimming with power that flowed into her body. A mystical rush flowed through her body and gasps as her muscles swell a bit before shrinking back down. Though it is strong, it isn't enough to change her back, instead the shard is made for two purposes: To gain access back to Hell in defiance of her banishment, the second will come when she faces its master. Darquebane turns to Leviathan and orders it to find the remaining crew members and get them to safety, while she will have to go to Hell to get what he has taken from her a long time ago. Jacqueline then calms Leviathan down as he objects to her plans, leaps off the sea dragon's hands and dives into the water while he follows her orders. As the golden lioness swims deeper into the watery depths she holds the shard in her hand tighter and tighter, the shard cracks and finally explodes in a flash of light.

The watery depths soon turn into a tunnel of fire sending the woman into the Underworld. Her body is set ablaze but the lion only grits her teeth tight, holding back to the pain of being set on fire but it is nothing to her. It's more of the pain of loosing Earth, the crew and most importantly, Timothy to those monsters if they succeed and it lies with dealing with the master of the realm and his willingness to go along with her plans. At the end of the portal. Jacqueline instinctively lands on a rock edge and jumps down in ways that makes acrobats envious and lands on her feet with enough force to form a deep crater around her feet. Jacqueline mighty roar extinguishes the flames on her body, leaving her clothes in tatters and as a mean to let out all the pain inflicted from the portal. Looking at this damned world through her new red-irised eyes, a world where the damned call home is now in broken as a result of what transpired. Nothing short of letting the inmates run the asylum, the realm where even the strongest souls break is now in utter chaos.

The damned and tortured run amok, rebelling against their tormentors far worse than they once did. Jacqueline has no time to deal with them except those who attack her first and the result was brutal. She broke necks, slashed faces and bodies like sliced sausage with her claws and threw a few to the dogs. Abilities she couldn't have gotten by herself, but with the help of the shard itself. It gives her a bit of power to fight her way to the chamber. It may not be enough like before but its essential. On her way, she searched high and low, while fighting off the rogue souls to see for herself the fate of the Heart. With the shard conveniently tucked into her cleavage, her movement is free to do some serious damage to those who get in her way and to know what it will be like to become one of Hell's denizens. Jacqueline under the power of the red shard, she smashed tormentors, nightmares now fear her and sinners are brutally silenced in her presence, leaving death and destruction in her wake. It is of no difference to the regulars.

Jacqueline finally arrives at the chamber of the Heart and watches to her sorrow see it shattered in pieces laying across the hall, along with the savagely torn remains of its guardians that fought to the end protecting it. The result of Hell falling apart around her is clear: Since its creation,

every shattered soul that has ever been made except for the original fallen angels and the devil himself were all the creations of the Heart itself and are linked except for her. Now with it destroyed, those who are linked and fully shattered how just die or become severely weakened. The biggest inherent flaw of the Heart since its inception, because it fell into a “will never happen” scenario which tragically did. She fell to her knees, and sobbed softly, any hopes of saving Timothy and the Earth falls.

In a cage, holding onto the bars with fury as his world is brutally attacked by these super-demons and rogue angels, fleets destroyed, cities burning around him and all he can do is watch, by why? The answer was just as sadistic as it is embarrassing. Timothy's world is falling apart in the hands of thirty, yes thirty beings from both sides, all to create their dominion, and those who would dare to fight against them would lose severely. Taking a short break from their conquest, Marmaroth and Astera fly up to Timothy's cage and mock him a bit before zapping him off the bars. Admiring their new enhanced bodies “given” to them gazing at their tremendous muscles, enhanced powers and Marmaroth couldn't help to gaze and uphold Astera's new far bigger chest. Stating that they are far better than that wimp of a kitten. This angers Timothy and he tries to attack them before getting zapped again.

Snapping out of it. Timothy wants, no, demands to know how they can do all of this and not anyone from Hell and Heaven know about it. Since there is no chance of him escaping or anyone actually willing to stop them, it was safe for the both of them to give their answer. It all lied with a phenomenon, nothing that their precious books or prophecies could have predicted and Astera was the one who first discovered it. It did not have a name, no one does but it gives anyone who goes through it the ability to enter heaven and hell undetected and appear without the help of a mortal on Earth. They together state that this is nothing a mortal like him would find in prophecy. He then asks of what do they want, their answer is domination and to cut heaven and hell of their precious supply of souls both as a stand and as a punishment for theirs and others treatment. They once see their

masters having great potential to better those they say “loved” the most over their own watchers and guardians but instead turned lazy and unresponsive only acting when their servants steer away.

Since then, no angel or demon couldn't do anything that can't be tracked and acted upon, that is until the phenomenon is found. Now they are free to do the things that they failed to do and nothing is going to stop them. Timothy interjects and tells them that Darquebane will. Marmaroth and Astera laugh at that possibility. Again they showed their bodies and flexed so hard, it almost looked as if they were about to explode and then relaxed. It is a show that their new bodies came from the source that made his mistress what she is: The Heart of Demons, with it now gone, she is now mortal again and now swimming with the fishes. Timothy does not want to believe it but they assured him that she is good as dead. As they leave, Timothy falls on his knees, clutched his fists at what he heard and hits the base of his cage. His master, gone? The woman who made him into the man he is gone like this? He still holds on to the belief that Darquebane is still alive and right now finding a way to get back and destroy these monsters once and for all.

That is if Jacqueline can try to figure out a way to get her powers back now that the Heart is gone. The shard tucked in her cleavage starts to glow brighter as if it is trying to signal her to another source, stronger than the heart itself. Jacqueline then realizes a long time ago that when she was made into a far powerful demon, she was completely not herself and nearly wiped out everyone in Hell including the devil himself but in a last ditch effort, he pulled the power away from her leaving her in a weaker state before being exiled. If the glow is what she thinks it means, then there is still hope, and sets forth for the master chamber. Sitting on his throne, dealing with the surviving lower minions over the chaos that befell his kingdom since the Heart's destruction, Lucifer, the devil, the reigning master of Hell itself is helpless and looking for a solution of what is the cause of such a disaster. He could have personally investigated the situation himself, but under the “original deal” he is forbidden from ever setting foot on earth. Then suddenly a break comes from the side doors of his chamber and its one of his noble soldiers, one of the original fallen that can see what is happening to Hell and seeking

an answer on Earth, only to be severely beaten and broken by demons far stronger than he is.

Falling to the floor, Lucifer comes to his aid only to seek an answer to what is going on. His only answer was that Astera is behind it along with an angel before they attacked him. Lucifer's eyes went wide as such an event. An angel colluding with a demon and is responsible for the current state. He then turns back to the warrior and asks if there are anyone from Heaven reacted to it, no one was his answer before he passes out. Under orders, he gets his minions to help the warrior and now has to deal with what he's been dealt with, Heaven is unaware, his own forces that were created by the Heart is cut down to a number so low it is useless against what they have. If the continues, Heaven and Hell are doomed. Then from the front doors, heavy bangs come from the thick metal doors and soon those doors began to pit and buckle. Broken from their hinges, the doors fell off and through the doors, is Jacqueline herself with a smirk on her face, she callously says this:

“Remember me?” Says Jacqueline.

This of course, pissed Lucifer off, how dare she return and face him. But Jacqueline doesn't have time for his crap and pulls the shard out from her chest and flashes it in front of Lucifer, blinding in pain, he falls back and withers in pain, but that's just the beginning. All over his body, his muscles radically swell and throb randomly, making himself bigger and even more grotesque the closer the shard is to him. Jacqueline's suspicions proved correct. The power of the Heart, the biggest chunk of it still remains in him. Barely able to move with the sudden burst of throbbing muscle mass, demands for it to stop. Jacqueline refuses and uses this moment to let him know of what is going on, but then again, he knows of it and can not do anything about it himself, knowing that he has the power to do so. If he wants his dominion to survive or to not ether explode or become immobile for the rest of his existence, she wants her powers back. With his muscles swollen, brimming with the power of the heart to break free he struggles to look Jacqueline in the eye with his angered expression. That she is

getting into affairs that she knows nothing about. Jacqueline angrily grabs Lucifer by his engorged throat and tells him outright that his kingdom is falling apart and he has the nerve to tell her he can't stop it?!

He may be a dangerous, devious and sinister liar in the eyes of mortals but this is the one time he has actually told the truth, and it's all because of a little thing called the "original deal." Many eons ago after the rebellion and his fall from grace, he decided to grow more powerful on his own terms until he became on equal with the almighty himself. Which posed a serious problem when he exercised his newfound strength for a second round and it nearly destroyed everything. As a compromise, both he and the almighty decided to let the lower beings of their realms deal with the acquisition of souls and to never again interact on Earth. Doing so, would force either him or the almighty to fight again and ultimately blink out all of existence. Inversely refusing to fight would also have the same effect as the deal was also his decree and to break that would prove the almighty wrong and also break existence as well. Hence, if there was any major battle for the souls of Earth, it has to be done by their warriors. But now whatever forces he has, are too busy trying to regain order and his guess is that Heaven is in the dark, giggling even in his immobile state. That gives Jacqueline more the reason to do what she can to stop this and what gives them the ability to not be seen by the realms.

Lucifer laughs and tries to move but the muscles hold him down telling her if his own mightiest fighters can't beat her and her accomplice, what chance does she have? Jacqueline knows she has that chance or else he will come out as the loser who let the realm of Hell fall apart while his lower minion will become the new ruler of a world where he won't get his precious souls from anymore. Mumbling and struggling for an answer, he reluctantly agrees and demands that she remove this power out of his body. Jacqueline gets the shard and presses it against his swollen body and instantly the flash of red energy is ripped out of his body and Lucifer is back to his normal self. The shard began to rise and began to branch out in all directions until he becomes a smaller version of the Heart of Demons. Lucifer tries to touch it but a blast of energy knocks him off and slams him against

his own throne. It did however reacted differently to Jacqueline and calls for her to “step inside” she does and suddenly pulls her in. The crystal rises in the room and emits more blinding light. Lucifer can only see the silhouette of Jacqueline being consumed by swirls of energy and her body radically change before his eyes. Then the light dies and the crystal crashes on the ground.

Lucifer at first assumed that maybe the power destroyed her as he sees nothing going inside until a humongous, dark, muscled arm smashed through the crystal's wall, followed by a roar that echoed throughout Hell. Even so loud that it snapped Timothy out of a sleep in his cage. It felt strange to him but it was a sign. A sign largely unaware by Astera and Marmaroth and their new powers that something will come for them and spell doom for their plans. The sign? Darquebane is Back!

To be continued...