

When mortals die, they stand before God and answer for their sins, based on which they are placed in either heaven or hell. Capital offences such as murder, theft, harassment and pouring milk before cereal will earn you a one-way ticket to hell. You lucky, puny, mortals. When immortals, like me, make unforgivable mistakes, we are stripped of our powers and thrown at the mercy of The Five Great Inconveniences; behold, my sisters; Indecisiveness, Procrastination, Distraction, Depression and Irritation; Yes, those are their actual names! Don't ask me why, just deal with it. My parents are simply creative that way.

Despite already being literal inconveniences to our family, my sisters had aspirations to follow in our father's footsteps and be responsible for convicting humans of crimes they had committed (or had not committed depending on how bored the ladies might have been). My father, being one of the top dogs of the universe and all, knew better than to hand over such an important task to them. 'But Daddy-' They had all wailed in unison, causing the Earth to tremble, dinosaurs to die, and Noah's ship to drown. 'Oh, fine.' My father must have grumbled at some point. 'I will let you take care of the jury in charge of immortals.' He is generous that way.

Anyway, enough about them; I am here to narrate the tale of my unfortunate condemnation into the pits of hell. How jolly. I am Anubis, the god of chaos, named after the Egyptian god of death. When I was born, my mother took one look at me and said: 'This boy will be the end of the world', before shipping me off to the underworld, to uncle Satan for good measure. She probably didn't want the world to end just yet.

Keeping all this in mind, I have no clue why my father thought it was a good idea to send me to Earth in order to discipline me; as if earth was some kind of boarding school for Divine brats. And all I did was refuse to marry the obsessive demoness my father had selected on my behalf. I mean, I don't blame her; it's not her fault I'm irresistible, but she didn't even have wings! I have standards you know. 'But dad,' I whined, causing just as much chaos as my sisters had millennia ago; tsunamis came, diseases spread, Justin Bieber got famous! Oh, the glory. 'It will be a great learning experience.' He insisted. 'Go help the mortals, my son. You're not capable of anything else. Bring glory to Earth again. I'm counting on you.' In case you think this was all melodramatic or something,

note that my father said this while scrolling through his Instagram feed. So, I took the midnight express to Earth; direct train ride from heaven to Manhattan, New York. Through the journey I had occupied myself by appreciating beauty that came my way. Needless to say, the view was gorgeous; exquisite, divine. Alas, I had to put the mirror down when the driver announced that the train had arrived at the destination.

I won't bore you with my Earthly adventures, but just so you know; my arrival at Earth was a total blessing for the mortals. I was the hero they didn't know existed. Can we just take a minute to recount all my favours upon humankind? We'd be here for a century at least. The latest iPhone? My idea. Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte? Mine. I was the one who prevented World War III towards the end of 2019. The fact that the spell actually got reversed and later led to a global pandemic killing millions is totally irrelevant. And okay, I'll admit that maybe roasting marshmallows in the middle of a forest in Australia was not such a great idea. How was I to know it would cause a forest fire?!

If, at this point, you are thinking I am being punished for killing one billion animals in Australia, clearly you are mistaken. My sisters don't care for their only brother, they could care less about animals. So, what crime could I have possibly committed to land in the position I am in right now: sitting cross legged on a rock in the middle of a pit of hell fire (for eternity), sipping lemonade whilst I furiously type on my MacBook, accompanied by a loud fangirl.

Things got messy just this morning.

I woke up to an overcast sky which immediately put me in a good mood; nothing like the probability of a thunderstorm first thing in the morning. It was only fair I took a stroll through downtown Manhattan. Grabbing my mustard trench coat and umbrella, I took my usual route to Starbucks. After getting my coffee, making judgemental remarks at little children, and chewing the cashier out for spelling my name "A New Biss", I walked out to a gorgeous city drenched in rain.

The sky was grey and hazy, the tops of skyscrapers dissolving into mist, all bright city lights blurred. The car headlights reflected a beautiful wash of red and yellow over the road, and it kind of felt like a dream; too beautiful to be true. There were many things wrong with earth, but nothing could ever outshine its beauty.

That was a perfect caption for my instagram post.

Standing at the sidewalk right outside Starbucks, I turned my back towards the road, raising my phone with one hand, and making a peace sign in front of my face with the other. Well, damn. Aren't I photogenic? I smiled at the front camera, my thumb reaching for the button.

Everything after that happened so fast, I can barely recall. Before I could capture my billion-dollar face on camera, some dumb mortal yelled: "She's going to fall!" I furrowed my eyebrows and following the gaze of the man who had yelled I saw the girl standing at the edge of the Starbucks rooftop. I shrugged. She would probably plummet a little to the left; I was safe.

Clearly the universe was not in my favour. I was about to snap a pic and leave, but that was before I felt a pair of hands applying force on my shoulder blades. I stumbled forward, eyes catching a glimpse of a vaguely familiar blond figure. Before I could yell and run after her, I heard a scream; my mouth went agape, eyes bulged out like saucers, locking with another pair of doe eyes growing bigger and bigger and then a ninety-pound sack of meat, fat and bones (well, mostly fat) slammed into me, knocking the wind out of my lungs.

I winced, opening my eyes to a crowd applauding and cheering. Before I knew it, I was raised to my feet, and told I was a hero for saving an innocent child. Well, I get the hero part; it goes without saying. But child?! For sure you could've fooled me. With that amount of weight, that kid could easily pass for a calf. I looked around. My phone was on the ground, a long neat crack down the middle of the screen, my clothes drenched and umbrella snapped into half. *This child's life better be worth all the damage*, I remember thinking. Well, spoiler alert: it wasn't. Not at all.

Under different circumstances, I would have loved to be at the centre of attention of all these people; signing autographs and making my debut as New York's local superhero. But the moment my eyes landed on a particular bone-face standing across the road, I knew I was screwed. As good as dead. Note: when I say bone-face, I mean literally. He wore a long, black robe, the hood covering his milk face and hollow eye sockets, which to be honest didn't really matter. It's not like anyone could see him; he was only visible to immortals and spirits of the dead.

His skeletal fingers were wrapped around a silver scythe, and eyes staring into mine... I mean they would have, if he had any, that is.

Dear readers, meet my old pal; the grim reaper.

Okay let me make this clear; I am not scared of him. But if he is at the scene, this means that someone is about to die, or rather, judging from the way he glared at me (or at least seemed to), someone was going to die- before they used me as a pillow and cheated death. Sincerely; curse the woman who had the guts to push me.

You see, immortals aren't supposed to intervene in mortal affairs, and well, I just let a soul escape death. As I said, I'm not afraid of the grim reaper... it's just that, well... he's a snitch. Also, he gets very upset if he misses the chance to rip out someone's life force. 'Hello, friend.' I ran up to him. I try to smile. I fail miserably. I'm toast. The grim reaper, folds his arms and frowns at me with all of his non-existent facial muscles. 'You let her get away.' He snapped, with enough attitude to fuel uncle Satan's followers for the rest of the decade. I was certain he wasn't just going to report me. He was going to spice things up and be overly dramatic like the brown auntie he was, just to have a little fun while he's at it.

'What? Who? Me?' I ask innocently with my panic-stricken face. He made a sound with his mouth: "tsk, tsk, tsk", and I suddenly wondered how he could speak when he had no flesh, and hence no tongue. Then I remembered that he is just a fragment of the author's imagination, so it doesn't really matter. Wait- I'm a fragment of the author's imagination- My eyes started to widen in horror. Sometimes I overthink to the point it hurts my brain.

My thoughts get interrupted. 'Your sisters will hear about this.' he threatens. Before I respond and tell him he's being ridiculous the world around me dissolves, disappearing into a dark void. Then come the memories; they flood my mind and my head spins, thousands of years flashing through my head at an incomprehensible speed.

I remember my childhood very clearly. My parents had always been fond of my sisters. All five of them. Yet, they ignored their only son. I never got to sit in the front seat of the chariot on family road trips, while my sisters took turns. I was

never allowed to have my own pet, and instead got my sister's Death Boar handed down to me.

'See?' My mom had said shoving the nasty creature into my arms. 'It can still rip flesh off bones. Good as new.'

Well, mom was right. I did miss a limb when I woke up the other morning, but don't worry, it grew back. I would have called child protection, but no one had come up with that idea at the time, so I moved back to uncle Satan's place.

The memories fade slowly, and the world around me reveals itself again; only it isn't Manhattan. Clouds settle at my feet; the air is humid and unpolluted, and my whole body groans happily, finding itself home after so long.

The happiness comes to a halt when I realise I'm standing right across five obnoxious women; the daughters of my parents. I won't even bother calling them sisters at this point, nor do I need to introduce them, as you will soon be able to see how they effortlessly live up to their names.

'He let a soul escape death.' I had completely forgotten the grim reaper was latched onto me. 'HE LET A SOUL ESCAPE!!!' The man shrieked. 'Can you believe it?! Oh my, oh my! The universe has gone into complete chaos! The balance between the worlds had been DISTURBED.'

I saw this coming. Mr. Reaper had officially gone full on brown auntie commando mode. 'It was an accident!' I protested. 'I swear.'

'Oh, please brother!' Irritation rolled her eyes, observing her perfect, manicured nails. 'All you've been doing is causing trouble over the past couple of years.'

'Anyone who steps into the court of the Five Inconveniences, loses his immortality. He's powerless and killable. Let's bury him somewhere in the orchard.' Depression said, a tiny trace of excitement in her voice. My left eye twitched.

'He probably won't even be worth the dirt we bury him in.' Procrastination sighed. 'Are you sure we can't do this later?'

I ran my gaze over all of them, trying to figure out which one of them it would be easier to reason with. 'Let's review your activities on Earth since you left home, hmm?' Irritation locked eyes with me briefly before flicking her index finger, and a scroll emerged in her hand; just like that. Irritation had always been the bossy type, and it was not like she was actually good at taking control of situations. Nuh-uh. She just insulted and verbally harassed everyone to the point they were prepared to believe anything she did or said.

'Anubis,' She began.

'Wait-' I interrupted. I had to stand up for myself. I was not going to get chewed out. Again. Mustering up all my courage, puffing my chest and clenching my wrists, I took a step forward. 'I have the right to-'

'You have the right to remain silent.' She glared at me, and I backed down like a little kitten. 'Besides, anything that comes out of your mouth sounds stupid. Save yourself the embarrassment.'

And so, she began the recital of all the bad things that had happened since my arrival on Earth. The list goes a little something like this: 'Trump became president, student loan crisis, increase in air pollution-'

'Yeah, Anubis stinks really bad at times. The stench must have contaminated the air.' Distraction commented unnecessarily. I sighed deeply, suddenly missing my comfy, mortal apartment in Manhattan. Somewhere at the back of my mind, I had a feeling I was probably never going to be able to see it again.

'Kill me already.' I groaned loudly, ripping my hair out in frustration. That particular statement caught Depression's attention, and she looked at me with undisguised interest.

'That's the spirit.' She pulled out a bulging handbag out of nowhere, and fetched out her glasses and a notepad. Did I mention that Depression runs her business on Earth as well? Considering the drastic increase in teenage depression, I would say it's going pretty well.

‘So,’ She turned to me. ‘Would you rather that I guide you through the process, or can you manage on your own?’

‘Girls,’ Distraction shook her head in disbelief. ‘Focus.’ Oh, the irony.

‘I think you should do your thing, Depression.’ Indecisiveness suggested. ‘But wait, wouldn’t that be kind of unfair? How about you-’

‘Sister, please.’ Irritation barked. ‘Can you ever make up your mind?’

‘Anubis,’ Depressions started. Here we go again. ‘You were sent to Earth to make it a better place, to aid mankind. But all you’ve done is created chaos.’ Irritation nodded her head enthusiastically in agreement. Take a break to appreciate the rare moment. ‘You’re worthless. No one needs you.’

‘Well, that escalated fast.’ Distraction commented unnecessarily again, sipping her tea. Where she got the tea from, do NOT ask. I will never understand how these girls pull stuff out of nowhere.

‘All this drama is giving me a migraine.’ Irritation complained, placing the back of her hand on her forehead dramatically. ‘Anubis, will you ever stop causing trouble?’

‘Well, Sherlock,’ I scoffed, my voice laced with sarcasm. ‘I AM the god of Chaos! What did you expect?’ BINGO. I knew I hit the jackpot, when my sisters exchanged looks; from frustration to confusion, and then realisation.

‘Yeah.’ Procrastination pondered. ‘Who told dad it was a good idea to send him to Earth?’

‘Yes.’ Indecisiveness agreed. ‘Yes?’ She looked confused. She always did. ‘So, does that mean our father is the one at fault here?’

‘Yes!’ I threw my arms up in the air. ‘Precisely!’

There you go dad! That’s revenge for all the times you made me sit at the backseat of the chariot!

‘So, how about you girls go strip Dad off his powers, and throw him into the pit of hell fire, huh?’ I smiled. Victorious.

‘Yeah, let’s do that later.’ Procrastination agreed. Kind of.

‘So, can I have my immortality back now?’

Irritation smirked. ‘Of course.’ At that, she snapped her fingers, and I was teleported once again. Spreading my arms wide, I stood prepared to be welcomed by the chilly Manhattan air. Boy, was I disappointed.

Greeted with a gust of hellishly hot air, smoke and ash, I found myself in the middle of a pit of fire. In front of me stood a gorgeous woman; platinum blond hair, and hollow, pitch black eyes. She smiled at me. Allow me to introduce you to Hella; the demoness my father was trying to set me up with, the reason I was one Earth in the first place. ‘Anubis,’ She shriled. ‘Finally. It took time, but I was finally able to bring you here!’

‘What?’ I furrowed my brows, suspiciously. Then it hit me. She was the blondie who pushed me back in Manhattan. I gritted my teeth. She had planned all this so that I’d end up here.

‘You little brat!’ I wailed loudly. ‘Wait until I get out of here!’ On cue, a voice boomed through the loud speaker hanging right above the pit.

‘Anubis, you are here-by chained to the pit of hell fire, to burn in flames for the rest of your life, for attempting to commit treason.’

The good news? I am immortal again, and hence, immune to hell fire. ‘We have all eternity together.’ Hella smiled sweetly, snaking an arm around my shoulders. I shudder. Death might have been a better option.

The bad news? I am immortal again.