

The Guardian Angels Pack : Volume V



Liam



Virginie T.

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The

Guardian Angels

Pack

Vol. 5

Virginie T.

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Chapter 1

Blood

A bit of calm at last. I'll be able to isolate myself a little with Lili as I've dreamt of doing for days.

— You're back.

She leaps into my arms and I spin her around in the air in the way she likes so much.

— I am. I'm all yours today.

— Yeah.

Her eyes sparkle in desire. It's been such a long time since we've taken the time to play together. She shouldn't live like this. She shouldn't have had the same childhood as me. What am I saying? Childhood? No; there's no place for any of that in this pack. No place for people like us to think about it either. I've long hoped and waited for someone to come to my aid. I've always known I was different. Fletcher never hid as much from me. On the contrary, he'd throw my Fatel pedigree in my face as if it were an insult.

Truthfully, he's scared of me. He has been since I was six, since my power was revealed and I risked losing him his life by freezing the blood in his veins. Years of suffering and humiliation were the aftermath.

— What are you thinking about.

Lili's slender little doll face is looking at me innocently. I'd give all I had for her. I could set the world on fire or bloody it to keep her safe, even at the cost of losing my soul. Indeed, it's probably been done for a long time.

Fletcher saw to that. Killing and maiming people in the name of the Ferocious has made an outcast of me, a heartless outcast to burn in hell. As long as I'm not taking Lili with me, so be it.

— I was thinking about what we could do today.

— Might we play outside? It's nice and sunny out.

With an unsure smile on her lips, she lifts her little begging eyes towards me. I hate taking her outside. I can't help it; it's a visceral thing. I'm doing my best to avert her from the sight of the pack's metamorphs.

Sneaky, these hyenas. I wouldn't want him to suddenly urge one of them to take my daughter. The alpha has other plans for Lili, this much I know and always have, from the day she was born. Simply, to jealously keep me for his own good pleasure, he provoked discontent amongst his own ranks.

Some of the members have already tried ousting him, but as he's the only one to drink my blood, he's almost invincible. Nobody has dared challenge him in years.

— Please.

— Alright, alright.

How do you want me to resist that loving face?

She reaches the door well before me, jumping impatiently on the spot. I can't help but smile in the face of her enthusiasm. She is just so adorable!

My good mood wanes a little in the face of the landscape offered to us. In the guise of my daughter's playground, it's nothing more than a prison. Our little chalet is surrounded by an oversized barbed-wire fence. Nobody is to leave without Fletcher's permission. There is one advantage to this: nobody can *enter* without his permission, which he never gives. My handlers stay outwith the enclosure, always. My daughter's safe as long as I obey. I'll never give the alpha any reason to go after my own flesh and blood.

— Maw, make me a toboggan.

Lili only has a few toys. She's understood for a long time that her life was particular. I've taught her the minimum for her survival. As for everything else, we're taking each day at a time.

In all honesty, my daughter has an extraordinary capacity to adapt.

Therefore, I do everything to keep her happy. A toboggan she wants, a toboggan she'll get. I concentrate a second to lower the temperature in the designated area. Little by little, ice springs forth from the ground to take

the form of a shiny, smooth slide. I finish off by moulding four low steps for Lili to climb to the top. Now that my daughter's not bouncing around like a kangaroo, she's just stamping her feet on the spot and clapping her hands.

— Yippee! Thanks, Mammy! It's perfect. Can I go on it, d'ye think.

I smile at her candour.

— Sure you can. Go on, love.

I love watching her play. I get the impression I'm leading a normal life for a mother when both of us are together. I'd like to be able to offer her a future full of joy and nothing to worry about. Still, I don't know if this will be possible. The fateful day's approaching fast. I'll do everything to keep her safe. In spite of everything, I won't be able to do anything if Fletcher decides to take her. Just my luck: he wants me to train her. Don't make me laugh!

From what I've understood, the children don't necessarily have the same power as their parent. For my part, I've learnt by practice, on my own. All I could do is to compel her to control herself as best she can. All of what's at stake is there. For a start, she must not kill animorphs in a bout of rage, lest she be executed without warning. I can *not* lose her. I won't be able to bear the loss of another child. I clench my fists until my knuckles whiten at the very memory. Fletcher and his smirk concealing an evil part of him had looked me right in the eyes, daring me to try something. My heart still bleeds for this loss. The only satisfaction I've had is the fact he's never had the opportunity to hurt me as much again. Never again am I going to let him have such influence over me.

— Maw, stop it! You're bleeding.

I blink a few times to come back to this present moment. Lili is just in front of me, worried.

— What's that, hen.

— You've got blood in your hand.

God. I must've pierced my hand with my talons. Although ... When I open my fist, it's not three small wounds in the hollow of my palm, but a deep cut running through my hand in a continuous straight line on the inside.

— What's wrong with you, Maw.

Lili's stress skyrockets. Small tears form in the corners of her beautiful sea-blue eyes. The problem is that, at the same time, small sharp claws emerge from the end of her fingers. I must reassure her for nothing untoward to happen.

— Shhh! Everything's okay, Lili. I've just cut myself, that's all.

A cut from I don't know what at all. Still, now's not the time to be thinking about it. The important thing is Lili's sadness. Strong emotion is dangerous for a Fatel, particularly one living amidst a pack of metamorphs.

I quickly bring my power to the index on my left hand, then gently passing it over the wound on my palm. A thin layer of frost closed my wound immediately, stopping the blood flowing out.

— Lili, look.

I show her my healed palm.

— You see? Not there any more.

She dries her eyes with the back of her sleeve.

— D'ye want a magic kiss.

— I'd love one. Be careful, though; you know it's going to be cold.

She delicately placed her lips on my poorly hand to kiss it better.

— There y'are. You're not poorly now.

— You're right. My hand is brand-new.

— It was cold, like when you eat an ice cream.

— Would that be a way of telling you're hungry.

— Oh yeah! Just a little ice cream, though.

I burst out laughing, despite my preoccupation with everything. My daughter has to keep the soul of a child for as long as possible. She'll learn soon enough that a Fatel's life is far from easy.

— You go have an ice cream. You'll need to brush your teeth tonight, mind.

— I promise I will, Maw.

The toboggan then disappears at the click of my fingers. It's no use Fletcher making disparaging comments about me spoiling Lili too much. I'll never be able to spoil my daughter too much; she doesn't know a thing about the outside world around her.

Whilst Lili's happily shovelling huge bites of ice cream in, I'm pondering this latest incident: an unexplained cut. This isn't the first time I've hurt myself, not remembering how; normally, however, these are insignificant bruises. *Who* remembers where this bruise came from or that one? I don't.

What I often asked myself about was some appearing when I'd spent all day in bed. This has always happened, as far back as I can remember.

Fletcher told me this didn't matter, but the day that it would, I'd know.

What would I know exactly, though? The best thing to do is to call Fletcher, balk at that as I do. This was meant to be a day just for mother and daughter. I'm going to disappoint her again.

— Do you *have* to go.

There's such sadness in that question. I can't. I don't want to forsake her one more time. Fletcher bit me this morning. He drank my blood, assuring me that afterwards, I could spend the day peacefully with my daughter. I won't be letting some strange phenomenon fritter my day away.

— No. I'm staying with you until you fall asleep.

— He's going to hurt you for making him wait. You have to tell him you've hurt yourself, don't you?'

She's far from being stupid. She can see too much. She understands more still.

— Don't worry. Nobody's going to hurt me or you, for that matter. Do you remember the golden rule.

She nods a few times.

— No animorph has the right to come near me when you're not there.

— Good. What's the silver rule.

— No metamorph has the right to take me from you.

— Perfect, Lili, well done.

I've drummed these rules into her again and again since her birth. Even before she could speak. I was already repeating them to her. I will let nobody reduce her to a blood packet like I am. I've accepted as much for a long time. As a Fatel, this is my destiny in this pack.

However, I aspire to higher for my daughter's sake and I'm going to fight to get her there. Fletcher isn't forever and I'm much younger than he is. I hope his successor will be less ... sadistic. Nothing is less sure, but I can always hope.

Since Lili was born and he's been using her as a means to pressure me into obedience, I've been privy to a lot of information. Having assured himself I was docile, he let me read. It's mad what you can learn from books. Before that time, the word Fatel was only an insult to me. Through history books, I've learnt more about my people over the past five years. I'll teach Lili our story one of these days, although she's as different to me and I am to Fletcher. However, I love her infinitely as any mother would her child.

— Maw, can you plait my hair.

— Sure I can, but go wash your face first. Your hands are sticky.

Her hair is as long as mine is short. It goes down her back like a long, silken brown waterfall. I love taking care of it. It seems that wee girls love playing with dolls. As for me, my daughter is my doll: the most beautiful doll in the world. I brush her hair before removing all the knots and braiding her long chocolate locks.

— Here y'are, chick.

— Your turn.

I play the game myself and let her comb my hair. I quietly grimace when she's insistent on a knot.

— Maw, why don't you grow your hair out like I do.

It's because Fletcher hates having hair in his mouth when he bites me.

— I find it keeps me hot. You know I like it cold.

— Yes. That's your power, the cold. What must mine be, then.

— A surprise.

The best surprise would be for her not to have any. After all, she isn't fully Fatel. However, I doubt whether fate has done me this as a favour. It can't be said I've had a lot of luck in life up to now. Also, what would Fletcher's reaction be if that were the case?

— Whatever it is, I'll always love you.

— Do I maybe have my Dad's.

I tense up hearing that word. She hasn't a father. At her birth, I believed there would be this link. Still, it's only a long-term project for her parent. For him, she doesn't exist and I'll do all I can to keep it so. That's why she thinks he's died.

— Your father didn't have any, sweetheart. He wasn't a Fatel.

— That's why I'm different to you.

— That's why you are a unique wonder. Now, let's get you to bed.

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