

## “The Devil’s Own Truck”

### Chapter 12 - Excerpt

"What comes next? What comes next is I get the hell out of here. I've been stuck so long, I'm aching to stretch my hooves."

Az didn't really have much of a plan yet, but he knew he wasn't gonna reap 10,000 souls by staying in a junkyard with one mopey kid. He could go ahead and claim Jordan, but something about that felt rude. Earth was a big place, surely he could meet his quota without killing this one guy.

"Alright kid, why don't you open up that big gate over there and let me out, and then we'll just forget we ever even met. Works out well for both of us." Az tried to head to the gate, but he still couldn't move.

"Hey, what gives, fleshie? Why the hell can't I move? You took the damn shackles off, right?!"

"Of course I took the boots off, you saw me do it. And what gives yourself, you said you were gonna let me talk to my dad?! That was the deal!" Jordan began to raise his voice in frustration. He had to cross a whole lot of mental hurdles just to even acknowledge this damn truck was talking to him, he wasn't about to let it be for nothing.

"Talk to him? I didn't say a thing about talking to him. I said MAYBE I would let you send him a message or something. And when a demon says 'maybe' and 'or something'? That's gonna mean 'nothing' every time. Consider this a free lesson in demonic interactions: when making a deal, always get specific with the details." If a box truck could sport a shit-eating grin, Az's whole hood would have been brown. "Hey, look at that!" He said, condescendingly, "You learned a neat fact! So that's a little more 'something' than the 'something' that was 'nothing' was!"

Jordan glowered at the truck, and started to respond, when he stopped. He waked to Az's door and peeked in the window.

"What the hell are you doing, you hairless imp?" It left Az very unsettled that Jordan was so quiet. When he took a step away from Az, he had a huge grin too. If Az had a regular shit eating grin, Jordan's was the grin of a shit-sommelier.

"Oh, I was just checking something. I noticed that even though you can turn your lights on, and maybe wiggle your wheels around a bit, you can't actually move." Jordan crouched down so his face was right in front of Az's headlights. "You wanna know why?"

Suddenly all of the arrogance and smugness Az had flaunted when he was taunting Jordan had evaporated. "What did you do to me, you bipedal bastard?"

Jordan stood up dramatically. "Oh, me? What did I do? No, I didn't do anything. You can blame good old 2010 vehicular engineering. You see, almost all of the vehicles pre-2020 share a feature. None of them had push button ignition stock."

"I don't have a clue what it is you're trying to tell me kid, so cut the dopey victory act you're doing here, and spit it out." AZ was growing more and more frustrated. If the mortal became any more obnoxious, he might go ahead and harvest him just out of spite.

"It means, you asshole, that just like every other vehicle, you have a key. A key you need, to start your ignition. And without that key to start your engine, you're just an annoying, smart mouthed prick, stuck in a junk shop."

Az's shock was written all over his non-existent face. How could Lucifer leave him with such a gleaming weak spot? She expected him to reap 10,000 souls for her, but then put him in a body that could be disabled so easily?

"And where, dear human, is this key I need?" Az said with all the patience he could fake.

Jordan's smile grew even larger as he sweetly replied "Oh, I brought it into the shop the night I pulled you in. All the keys go inside of the shop, so nobody can hop the fence and steal the cars." He gathered up his tools from the ground, and turned back towards the garage. "It's been a long morning, amigo. Time for lunch, I think. You can hang out here, breathe in that fresh earth air, maybe think some more

about that deal we had, and I'm gonna go inside and make myself an omelette. See you in an hour, buddy!"

The sound of the shop door slamming echoed off the walls of the junkyard, as Az reflected on this latest humiliation. The humans had bested him, more than once now. He was clearly either underestimating them, or overestimating himself. Either way, he was pissed. "I hope he chokes on his omelette" Az grumbled.