

*a disciple's choice*

by HungryOnMain

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The prayer drum was struck thrice on the morning Narcissa reached one year's worth of service to the Temple of Homithos. She'd prayed at the altar each day, anointing it with oil; she'd tended the gardens, making sure the lemon grove was in good health; and she'd kept her faith, never once doubting her lord's power. And yet, on this morning, as the other disciples shuffled off to get breakfast, Narcissa stayed by herself. One year. It was time for her choice to be made. Whether she was to join her lord's heavenly entourage as an angel, or whether she was to add to her lord's glory by whetting his appetite, even for a moment.

Narcissa watched herself in the mirror as she got dressed. As a disciple, her wear was different from the worshippers, who wore robes of purple. She wore a similar robe, but hers were adorned with golden jewelry, chains and bands and embellishments that should weigh heavily, yet were naught but feathers to her. Her face was also adorned with golden paint, her forehead emblazoned with her god's symbol in gold, her cheeks having depictions of the sun and moon. Narcissa swallowed a sob that travelled up her throat. She'd need to wait until tonight to cry. For now, she had duties to perform.

The morning meal was simple, but it was all she needed to feel joy. When Narcissa took her bowl, it filled with fresh fruits and yogurt - her favorite. Her usual choice of breakfast was cereal, but today was special - and even her god knew. She stirred the fruits in with the yogurt, the creamy substance cascading over the plump blueberries and still-dewy blackberries, until the concoction was dyed a light pink. With a whispered "Thank you," Narcissa began to tuck into her breakfast, savoring every bite.

After her empty bowl disappeared into golden mist, Narcissa made her way to the main hall to perform her prayers. She removed her shoes to stand on the bare earth of the altar, the fertile soil beneath her feet gently divoting with each step. She took a moment to observe the statue before her - a stone pair of hands, cupped as if drawing water from a stream. Narcissa opened her vial of sacramental oil with a pop, and gently filled the cupped hands with one, two, three drops. As they ran down the lovingly carved folds of the hands, the drops began to glow with golden light. For a moment, she could see her god's form, knelt before her on the altar, his hands anointed with oil. Just as quickly as he appeared, he was gone. Narcissa hoped he liked her oil - she'd chosen lemon today.

Her prayers consisted of the usual triage - thankfulness for the day's pleasures, reports of her actions to spread the gospel of hedonism, and the request to increase the world's pleasure. Once her final prayer was whispered to the altar, she set off to the east exit, towards the fields. For three acres, grapes and lemons grew plump and ripe in rows. Narcissa took a basket from the stack to the right of the door, a woven basket that shimmered with the light of the sun. The rule regarding the gardens was that you would do the work that brought you pleasure. Narcissa loved the time she got to herself in the vineyard, picking the juiciest grapes to add to the refinery. Her basket slowly filled with bushels of red grapes, each one to be juiced and fermented into red wine. At the end of her row, she gazed into her basket, satisfied with her work. A good amount

for one person in only an hour. She let the basket rest on her hip, and walked towards the refinery's drop-off area, where she would place the basket to be juiced later that day.

Narcissa was in the temple again, tending to the acolytes. They came to give offerings, pray, and enjoy a moment in the gardens. The cold stone felt nice on Narcissa's bare feet as she walked around, checking in on each acolyte. Some needed water, others silence. It was not until she visited the last that she realized the eyes on her. This acolyte, an old woman, looked at her with golden eyes. "Be not afraid." The woman said, her lips unmoving. Narcissa sat next to her. "Which are you, stranger? Vessel or angel?" She said in a whispered voice. "It matters not. I bring a message, Narcissa." The old woman turned her gaze to her. "Please, breathe. Your choice is yours, and yours alone. None else may influence you." Narcissa swallowed another sob. "But, I do not wish to displease him... I don't want to die, either." The woman did not answer. Narcissa looked to meet her gaze, but she was gone.

The sun set on a clear sky. It was time. Narcissa had performed her duties for the day - now, it was her duty to descend. The other diurnal disciples stood next to her, four of them holding golden flames, their flickering light atop tall handheld candles. One held a cup of wine, pressed from the grapes she'd harvested months ago. Narcissa took the cup from her, and took a deep sip. The wine was delicious, fresh, and sweet, the way she liked it. It was almost artificial, but it didn't matter to anyone but her what it tasted like. As she swallowed, two disciples opened the doors to the stairs.

Narcissa could hear her steps echoing as she descended. She'd made this journey many times before, but this time, she felt alone. For such a hedonistic lifestyle, this choice was anything but pleasurable for her. Her anxieties rose with every step, until she stood before the golden doors. At the heart of the temple, under the Great Lemon Tree's roots, laid his room. Her god, her lord. Homithos. They were open for her. She took a shuddered breath, and walked in. The room was octagonal, lit by golden flames and lightly furnished. In the corner, before a tapestry, lain on a couch, was her god. He was much smaller than his usual form, which towered at over five meters high. He was just under two, able to fit on this couch with ease. He was wrapped in a soft blanket, and had the slightest smile on his face. His eyes closed, he seemed to be asleep. Narcissa heard his voice in her mind.

"Hello, my darling."

Narcissa swallowed her fears and stepped forwards. As she did, the golden doors shut behind her. "Come closer, my Narcissa." His voice echoed in her mind. She did so, every step feeling as though time were a thick jelly. "It's been a year since you joined my disciples, hasn't it?" He asked. "Yes, Lord. Exactly one year to this date." She answered. He smiled, and opened his eyes. His irises sparkled with gold. He spoke with his voice, and not his mind, "How shall we celebrate?" Narcissa trembled. Her fingers fumbled as she tried to make words happen. She tried to tell him that she wasn't ready, that she only wanted to keep worshipping, that she-...

"...my dearest, what's wrong?"

She couldn't look him in the face. Her eyes cast downwards, she watched her tears fall to the stone floor. "I'm sorry, Lord, please, forgive me," she strained through her tears, "I..."

“I don’t want to die.”

Her voice turned to sobs, and she buried her face in her hands. For the first time in a year, she felt pain. Her heart was shattering in her chest, facing the end of her life. A hand entered her vision. “My darling, how long have you been in pain?” Homithos asked her. His voice was pure concern, upset at this occurrence. “Since I woke today, Lord.” She answered, her voice peppered with sobs. “Oh, my dearest, shh. It’s all right.” He held her hands in his own. “You won’t die today, my Narcissa. Who put that idea in your mind?” She wiped her tears on her sleeve. “I just... I’ve never seen anyone who came here come back out again.” She finally met his gaze, her face wet with tears. “Oh. Of course your mind would make that connection, my dear. Forgive me.” He gently brushed a hair from her face and tucked it behind her ear. “The ones before you have not died. They have changed.”

A small light shined in his hand. “My Paragon, how are you?” He spoke. A voice came from the light, a familiar one to Narcissa. “I am well, Lord. I am helping this town repair their civic center.” Homithos smiled at those words. Narcissa tried to remember that voice. “Wonderful, my Paragon. Pardon me if I am interrupting, but I require your advice. I have another disciple with me.”

“Of course, Lord. What do you need of me?”

“How long have you been an angel?”

“Five years.”

Narcissa tried to think about where she was in the temple five years ago.

“And what were you before then?”

“I was one of your disciples, Lord, but the first to be a Paragon when I emerged from you.”

“Emerged from him?” Narcissa asked.

“Thank you, Clytemnestra. That will be all.”

“Of course, Lord.”

The light faded. Homithos looked to Narcissa again. “My darling, all my angels are born from me. They are still themselves when they emerge. Their bodies have changed, not themselves.” Narcissa nodded. “I’ll still be me?” Homithos smiled, and gently stroked her cheek. “Yes, my Narcissa. You’ll still be yourself. Your body will morph, and your face will change, but in your soul you will be you. You will always be my Narcissa.”

“...I’m ready.”

Homithos held her in his arms, gently. “Tell me how we will celebrate, my darling.” She embraced her god. “...please, let me be an angel.” They released their embrace, and gazed upon one another. “Of course, my dearest. There are two ways to be an angel.” He laid on the lounge again, and invited her to join him. She laid with him, her ear over his heart. “The first is the way most disciples choose, and it’s much easier on the body. You drink of my ichor each day, for another year.” Narcissa did not reply. “The second is much more intense, but much faster. You would spend a week within me, bathing in pure, undiluted ichor. And upon your rebirth, you will have become an angel of the highest caliber.” Narcissa pondered her options. “...may I choose

how to enter you, Lord?” Homithos stroked her head, ever so gently. “Of course. Any entrance to me will suffice. Most that take the intense route end up choosing to bathe in my semen, and who am I to object to such pleasures?” He said with a small giggle. Narcissa flushed red. She didn’t know that was an option.

“My Lord, I would like to, um... be reborn via your womb.” Narcissa said, her face still pink with blush. Homithos only smiled, and nodded silently. “Very well. Remove your clothing, my Narcissa, and we shall begin.” She undid her toga, still red with anticipation. The golden bands fell to the floor before her purple robes landed atop them. She stood before him, naked as the day she was born, hands behind her back. “My darling, I haven’t yet seen you naked...” Homithos whispered. “You’re beautiful.” Narcissa let out a sheepish laugh. “Thank you, Lord.” She stuck out her chest a bit, presenting her breasts. Homithos gave the left one a kiss, and the right one a gentle grope. “Oh, this body of yours... are you sure you’re willing to leave it behind?” She nodded. “Yes, Lord.” He nodded. “Of course. Let us begin.”



Homithos stood in the gardens, picking lemons from the top of the Great Tree. None of the others could reach up that high. “My Lord, are you sure you should be doing this while pregnant?” A worshipper asked from below. Homithos only laughed under his breath. “I’ll be fine, my dear. It’s not the first time I’ve been pregnant, and it won’t be the last.” He placed the lemons in the acolyte’s basket. “I’ll give birth within the week, don’t worry.” The worshipper raised a brow. “But, Lord, I’ve never seen you like this. What caused this?” The god of strange and otherworldly pleasures only smiled. “My Narcissa. This was her choice.” “My Lord, I’m afraid I don’t understand...” Homithos led the questioning acolyte into the temple to give him answers.

Within, Narcissa’s body rested, morphing and changing. Eyes all across her body, wings in six places, her breasts supple and leaking ichor of their own. Every step her god took made her mind swim with pleasure as the ichor she was suspended within sloshed. As her body became divine and opened doors to new pleasures, she was sure of one thing above all else.

She was still his Narcissa.