

The Ending

By A. C. Zito

I heard my sister in the other room. I knew who she was talking to. It was the devil. I creaked opened my door just a little bit more as I watched as she played a couple strings on her guitar for him. He looked like a young boy but had the face of a man in his thirties. And he was pale white.

“So do you really think my songs and my playing and singing abilities are really that good, Lucas?” I shook my head in disgust. I knew that the devil usually took the form of a man or a woman to star-crazed coming of age adults. And my sister was about to leave for college any day now. What was she doing? She could go to school and be a teacher or a doctor or a lawyer. She doesn’t have to make googles of dollars just by selling her soul to some stupid fallen angel that nobody likes.

“You know that they call me *The Industry*. I can make all of your dreams come true, Claire. Just think of me as your agent into Hollywood. I’ll get you with all the agents, all the paparazzi will know who you are, and so will all the stars. All the stars are with me in case you didn’t know that. None of them don’t make it through unless they go through me first. So are you ready, Claire? Are you ready to be on everyone’s TV for as long as you live? Of course you’ll have your peak and then you’ll have to retire. Doesn’t everybody after they’re done just want to live in their mansions with their millions upon billions of dollars? Don’t you want all that money? Don’t you want all the boys in your high school to know who you are? The cutest ones will wish they dated you; Larry Pence, Marco Fundy, and even Harrison Jones. I already have a star that you will just love to meet! And you’ll probably marry one of the stars too! Not everybody does but some who are lucky. We like to think of ourselves as a tight-knit group us superstars. If you say super nice things to me and do tons of sacrifices and rituals in my honor, I’ll let you marry one of the Jonas Brothers. Or maybe some actor like Logan Paul or musician like Post Malone.

“What are you doing?” I whispered. I’m sure Satan heard me, but he paid me no mind.

“She’s going to do it you know?” I looked behind me to see my angel friend, Theliel.

“Please say it ain’t so?” I whispered back. Theliel nodded in return.

“Do you know what happens, don’t you?” I hated that Theliel knew I didn’t know.

“Theliel; you know I don’t know. Now tell me! What’s about to happen to my sister when she does it?” Theliel shook his head with sorrow.

“Oh, Bella; that won’t be your sister once she signs the contract... that will be a demon and in your sister’s place...” I looked at Theliel in aghast.

“What the devil is saying, Theliel... say it ain’t so! Not *all* celebrities are soul givers, are they?” Theliel shrugged.

“Yes... I guess you can tell who tries to get the devil’s attention and who says ‘*NOT ME, I won’t be going down to the Underworld,*’ and it’s too bad it’s all a game to them.” Then Theliel directed my attention back to Claire and the Devil.

“So every star sold their soul to you?” Claire asked the devil. The devil nodded slowly saying over and over again.

“Yes, yes, yes. Every single one. From Tom Hanks to Beyoncé to Madonna to Elvis Presley to Marilyn Monroe. It’s a new thing I started doing in America because ‘*in God we trust*’ is over and *The Industry*, that’s me that is, has just begun.” Theliel directed my attention back to him.

“This is where the devil will do it. Look away, Bella Oswald. This is where young Claire will sign the contract.” I looked at Theliel feeling a stupendous weight of anger on my shoulders.

“Is there not anything I can do?” Theliel shook his head. Then said:

“Maybe it’d be better if you did watch so you’d know who your new sister really was now.” So I turned back to the two and watched as the devil took out a huge piece of parchment that he rolled out in the air to show the legally binding contract. It looked so magnificent yet so evil at the same time. The ink pen that the devil brought out was normal to say the least. Everything except where the metal tip was supposed to be, instead the tip was pure fire.

“She’s not going to sign it.” I whispered. She signed it. As soon as she did, a door opened up to a basement licking with eternal fires where the devil then turned into a very old, fat, ugly, pimply, old man where he then said:

“Ding dong, ding, dong, we’re married! Isn’t it great!” And then sucked her soul out of her body. She began screaming as it was sucked down into Hell and then a demon that looked almost as terrible as an ogre mixed with a vampire swooshed out and swooped into the body that used to belong to Claire Oswald. Then the devil disappeared and the room fell silent. She went to the door and drove off in her car. As I heard the car backing out of the driveway and then drive off, I then looked to Theliel. He looked at me sadly.

“Every celebrity does it. Your sister wasn’t the first one.” He said. And then he added: “Some people already know. They still watched TV and listen to music. It’s just like the demons that are all of your celebrities are playing as clowns and putting on a show.” I nodded to this and went to go lay down. And then I started praying. I praying for my sister’s soul.