



Call on Me in the Day of Trouble

by Mia Sundby

"Call on me in the day of trouble" said the billboard, the words plastered across in huge bold red letters, framed just beneath the hellish visage of the Overlord himself.

Billie frowned up at the face of the Overlord, craning their neck to see his full likeness: dressed in a shiny suit, his dark hair slicked back from his head to reveal red horns poking out at the temples, the same red as his glowing eyes, glittering almost as bright as his inviting smile, the Overlord certainly struck an image.

John came back, coffee in hand, and passed a cup to Billie.

"He doesn't look like that, y'know." He said, following Billie's gaze.

Billie sipped their coffee and nodded. "I met him once."

John seemed impressed. "In the flesh? Contract and all?"

"How'd'you think I got here?" They responded wryly, gesturing to the words emblazoned at the bottom of the billboard.

"Call on me in the day of trouble", indeed.

John laughed. "Oh, sorry, pal. Insensitive of me... I've down been here so long I forget!" John's laugh continued for a little too long.

Billie watched him, eyeing the bowl cut and cross that were at least seven hundred years out of fashion. "He didn't reveal himself to you when you signed?"

John's laughter fizzled. "Ah... Not exactly. Not in the way he shows himself to people these days --all business suits and briefcases. Oh, sorry," he added, stepping out of the way of a devilish imp scurrying past with a tray of smoking coffee cups as it threw harried glances at the cracked watch, strapped to its red wrist like a handcuff. It snapped and garbled at John as it passed, its red leathery wings flapping agitatedly.

John lifted his hands in defence. "I said I was sorry!"

The imp spat at his feet, and Billie watched as the saliva smoked like acid upon hitting the obsidian stone walkway, then flapped on past as quickly as it could.

As the imp disappeared, John lowered his hands, shaking his head --but Billie's eye caught on the burned shape of a crucifix in the palm that didn't hold his coffee cup. Gesturing, they asked,

"Was that you?"

John frowned, then realised what they were referring to. "Oh, this? Yeah. Used to be a monk, when I was," he pointed, "Up *there*." There was a beat of quiet as he stared down at the crucifix scar. "I thought I could repent, at least at first."

Billie wasn't sure quite what to say to that, so they kept their mouth shut, wondering if they shouldn't have asked. In the lull, they found their eyes straying back to the image of the Overlord. They recalled their own meeting with the devilish being.

"Still," they piped up, their voice laced with irony, "At least the boss is hot, right?"

John laughed --thankfully, it was a little less unhinged this time--, and knocked his coffee cup to Billie's, with a grin. "I'll drink to that."