

## The Devil's Makeover

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# The Devil's Makeover

by [Antarctic\\_Echoes](#)

## Summary

So how many of you have seen Gates (2012) with Tom Ellis as a dorky, protective dad of a 9 year old daughter named Chloe? Here's a silly one-shot.

Mark Pearson (Tom Ellis in Gates) takes his wife Helen and daughter Chloe to Los Angeles for a holiday. While there, he runs into Chloe Decker and one Lucifer Morningstar....

Takes place right after S2x03, when Dan tells Chloe they should file for divorce.

## Notes

A super-huge shout out to my excellent beta, ScooterThyme! You make my work shine -- thank you!! And thank you for the title, you rock!

Disclaimer: Lucifer Morningstar and Chloe Decker are owned by Vertigo Comics, DC Comics, Neil Gaiman, Mike Carey, and everyone else involved with the Lucifer TV show and comic books. Mark, Helen and Chloe Pearson are owned by Laurence Bowen, Andrew Collins, Richard Preddy, Dan Sefton, Abigail Wilson and everyone else involved with Gates TV show. I own nothing and make no money on this. I merely am borrowing the characters for... uh... writing practice.

Mark Pearson was not a wealthy man.

So how he found himself and his family in Los Angeles was beyond him, other than that his nine-year old daughter, Chloe, and his wife, Helen, had begged to come to California. True, the weather was much warmer than in Britain, even in the off-season -- which was nice -- but it had cost him more than he could afford. He was a simple builder, with a small business and three workers. He did a lot of repair work, but it didn't bring in the money like it used to.

Helen was a realtor and made good money most of the time, but the market had been down for the last few years and her commissions had taken a hit. The move to the new house had also taken a chunk out of their savings... plus they needed to save for Chloe's education.

They were on a fairly tight budget these days.

Still, he couldn't resist trying to give his wife and daughter whatever they desired. It was always a sore spot with him that Helen made more money than he did, and that her family really hadn't wanted her to marry him. Even though it was a struggle for him, he tried his best to provide for her and Chloe.

With that in mind, he emptied his rainy day bank account, told Helen he had a sudden windfall of money, and put it toward the California trip. It hurt, but he did it. He figured that they could make the trip without too much financial difficulties if they economized.

Unfortunately, Helen had wanted to stay at some posh hotel in the middle of a very posh district.

"When are we ever going to go to California again?" she had asked when they had planned the trip, and pointed at the five-star luxury hotel in the travel guide. "This is where I want to stay. Since this is the one and only time we'll be going, I want to go in style!" She showed him the map of all the attractions around the hotel. "Look, there's even 'The Hottest Spot in Los Angeles' -- a nightclub named LUX -- nearby! Oh please, Mark, we have to stay there, we just have to!"

And so on top of his rainy day savings, there went his whole year's earnings -- but he didn't tell her. The plane tickets weren't bad, but that hotel... ouch. And the Disneyland and Universal Studios tickets.... And food. Mustn't forget about the cost of food. It was enough to make his head spin. He did enjoy all the rides and shows, and the hotel *was* nice, but he couldn't help fretting about the cost of... well, everything.

Today they were planning on going to the beach, but Chloe was completely wiped out from visiting Disneyland the day before, so he and Helen had decided to let her sleep in. Mark eyed the coffee pot in the room, and sighed. He really wanted something more substantial than coffee, but he couldn't afford the room service. Pulling on his old, stained gray hoodie, he called out to his wife.

“Helen, I’m going to make a run to that Starbucks we passed yesterday, a few blocks down. Do you want anything?”

The petite blonde woman popped her head out of the bathroom, a toothbrush in her mouth. “You’re going out?”

“It *is* past nine o’clock,” he said. “I know you want to have brunch later, but I’m hungry.”

Pulling the toothbrush out of her mouth, she sighed and gave him a loving look. “You bottomless pit, you. Very well.... But... you’re going out in *that?!?*”

“What?” he asked as he looked down at his hoodie, tee shirt, and faded jeans. “I look all right....”

“This is Los Angeles! We’re on vacation! You should have brought something... well, nicer....”

“This is nice!” he said defensively.

“For going to work in!” Helen popped back into the bathroom then popped back out, this time without the toothbrush. Tightening the sash of her robe around her, she said, “Must you go? Why not relax?”

“I’m really hungry....” he said plaintively as he gave her his famous puppy-dog look. “Come on, Helen, I’ll be back before you know it, with a surprise for you and Chloe.”

“Well, if you’re going, take the rental with the GPS. You’ll get lost, otherwise.”

“Lost?” He laughed. “Please, love, I’ll be fine... and I could use the exercise.”

She eyed him for a long moment before smiling indulgently. “Oh, very well. Don’t be long though, okay? Otherwise we’ll come looking for you.” She gave him a smooch on the lips.

“Right. I promise I’ll be quick.” And with that, he walked out the door.

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Mark had thought he knew where the Starbucks was... but obviously he didn’t. It was stupid to think that he knew Los Angeles when he had never been there before. He should have listened to Helen and taken the car with the bloody GPS. Should he have taken a left, instead of a right? He tried to double-back, but then got even more confused. Embarrassed at having

gotten lost, he refused to ask for directions. He just kept walking, not realizing he was getting farther and farther from the hotel....

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Chloe Decker drove down the streets of Los Angeles toward LUX. Today was her day off, and with Trixie at a sleepover, she was lonely. Now that Dan was filing for a divorce, she felt a little lost, and wanted to be with someone. No, not just someone... Lucifer.

Her partner was very eccentric and more than a little childish, but she trusted him, and he always had her back. He also made her laugh. The thought of him trying to touch a charred crotch on a victim still had her chuckling, although she would never admit it to him. And she could use a little amusement right now. The thought of finalizing a divorce with Dan was... depressing. She knew it was the right thing to do, but it still was the death of her marriage, and that thought in and of itself was sad.

As she turned the corner, she spotted a tall man walking along the sidewalk. He was lanky and walked hunched over. Even though he wore a disreputable gray hoodie and faded jeans, something about him reminded her so strongly of Lucifer that it piqued her curiosity. She found herself pulling over, getting out of the car, and walking toward the man.

It *was* Lucifer, but not the Lucifer she was used to seeing. His hair wasn't swept back off of his forehead as it usually was -- instead it lay flat on his head, like he had just washed it and left it to air dry. Gone was the beautiful, confident posture; instead he slouched, as if embarrassed by his height. He was dressed so sloppily that if she wasn't a detective and trained to notice things, she would have never recognized him. Surprisingly, he walked right past her.

"Lucifer?" she called out to him, but he didn't turn around. "Lucifer!"

Dashing up to him, she stopped him with a hand on his arm. He turned and looked at her blankly. She was surprised at the puzzled look that came over his face.

"I'm sorry, are you talking to me?" he asked.

The accent was... different. He didn't have that affected speech like he usually did. Gone was the anger, the bitterness, the sarcasm. Instead he sounded like a normal, soft-spoken average middle-class guy from Britain. His expression was open, and lacked that wicked look that he often got when he met up with her. But the face was Lucifer's, right down to the five o'clock shadow.

"Of course I'm talking to you, Lucifer," she said.

He blinked. “Did... did you just call me Lucifer?” he asked with surprise as he looked behind him to see if she was talking to someone else.

Was this some kind of joke? Her eyes narrowed as she peered at him with suspicion. Was he making fun of her? It sure didn’t seem like it. If he was, then he was more capable of pulling a practical joke than she had ever imagined.

“Hey, are you okay?” Chloe asked.

“Um, yeah. I just... I just got a little confused with the streets here.” His brow furrowed as he asked, “Why are you calling me Lucifer?”

“Because it’s your name,” she said with a narrowing of her eyes.

He looked at her very oddly, his eyebrows furrowing as he gave her an uncomfortable smile. “Um yeah, okay. Uh.... I think I better be going.”

She grabbed his arm to keep him from leaving. “Lucifer --”

Still giving her that odd look, he laughed a little and said, “You must have me mistaken for someone else. My name is Mark. Mark Pearson.”

For a moment Chloe thought he was joking, but then she realized his eyes were dead serious. She knew the man in front of her was her partner, but he seemed to be having some sort of identity crisis. Then it hit her -- Lucifer had no past before five years ago. Was this who he used to be? Had he been a victim of amnesia for five years and had now just gotten his memory back? It wasn’t implausible. There were plenty of stories of amnesiacs living their lives not knowing who they were after an accident or traumatic event. She wondered what had happened to him to make him suddenly revert to his old identity.

“Are you okay?” she asked. “Have you had any head trauma in the last few days?”

“What?” Mark gave another uncomfortable laugh and started backing away. “Uh, look, Miss... uh... Miss --”

“Oh come on, you know me.” When he just stared at her, she gave him a puzzled look. “Don’t tell me you don’t remember? Chloe.”

“Huh? Where?” he asked, suddenly looking around, which had the detective blinking at him in surprise. What was he looking for?

“Lucifer!” she said sharply, drawing his attention back to her. “What the hell is wrong with you?”

“Er... uh....” The tall man looked awkwardly around, then back at her. “Look, I’m really sorry, but I have to be getting back to my family.”

“Your family?”

He nodded. “My wife and daughter --”

*“You’re married?!”* Horror swept through Chloe. He was a playboy! Had he been married this entire time he’d had amnesia and been completely unfaithful?! Not only that, but -- “You have a *daughter?!?”*

The tall man looked at her oddly and gave another smile that clearly showed how ill-at-ease he was. “Well, yeah. Look, I really must be going --”

“Uh-uh, no way. We’re getting to the bottom of this. For the first time I’m finally going to get some answers about your life.” She started dragging him to her car, but he dug in his heels and ground them to a stop.

“Look, really, I’m not in the habit of being picked up....”

Chloe’s eyes popped. “Wait. You think I’m hitting on you?!”

“Well... uh.... Aren’t you? No? My mistake, then,” he said as his face started to turn red. “I just... it’s... well.... Perhaps we can flag down a police officer and he can help you?”

Chloe rolled her eyes. “*I’m* a cop, remember?”

“Oh!” His face brightened. “You’re a cop? Then perhaps Helen sent you? I have been gone for a while... although I didn’t think I had been gone *that* long.”

“Helen?”

“My wife.”

The detective shook her head. “We really need to talk. You need to tell me everything. Come on.”

“Huh? Oh.... okay, but there isn’t much to tell.” He didn’t resist; instead he clumsily followed, putting up a little fuss but not much. “You’re going to take me back?”

“Yes, I am,” she said as she stuffed him into her car. It was definitely strange not to be fielding sex jokes with him. He must have hit his head really hard.

“Oh, right,” he said meekly -- which was so odd to Chloe, for if there was one thing Lucifer wasn’t, it was meek -- and sat trustingly in the car.

Shaking her head at his very bizarre behavior, Chloe started heading toward LUX.

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There weren't many days when Lucifer left his flat before noon -- unless he was working on a case. He usually downed a Scotch and got to work in LUX, but today he felt oddly reluctant to do that. Perhaps it was because he knew Maze would no longer be down there, or maybe it was the act of kicking Mum out of the house. He didn't know. He only knew that he wanted to get out, and coffee sounded good.

Stepping out onto the sidewalk, he started striding toward the local Starbucks a few blocks away. Normally he would have driven, but he was itching to do something different. What he really wanted was to see the detective, but he knew she was buried up to her ears in paperwork from their last case. Maybe he'd stop by the precinct later...? Yes, that was a plan.... after he had his coffee. He always liked Starbucks because they roasted the beans so dark that it tasted like charred coffee -- and he loved anything with a good char.

Walking into the little shop, he ordered an espresso con panna -- he loved the indulgence of whipped cream -- then sat by a window, looking at the street and watching the humans saunter past. It was funny how they were so into their little worlds that they hardly noticed anything around them. Bloody hell, half of them had their heads in their phones -- the world could have ended and they still wouldn't have noticed. In fact, they would probably stand in Hell with their heads still in their phones, completely oblivious. He laughed at the thought.

Finishing his drink, he rose and walked outside. The autumn air was crisp, with a hint of cold -- the weather was slowly changing. He enjoyed the hot, toasty summers which reminded him of Hell, but the fall weather wasn't bad, either. At least it wasn't bloody raining. As he started walking back toward LUX, something barreled into him from the side.

His first thought was that he was being attacked by Mum, but looking down, he saw with great dismay that a little girl had wrapped herself around his waist. It wasn't Beatrice, for this spawn's hair was red, and she was slightly taller than the detective's little one. Since when had the Devil become a human spawn magnet?! He gave a sharp cry of distress, but the little human creature only grinned up at him and said, "Daddy!"

*Daddy?!*

Horror washed through him so great that he almost started screaming. This was worse than the the most heinous torture of Hell! Whimpers of distress started to escape his throat as he struggled to pry the human creature off of him... but she was bloody strong!

"Mark! There you are!" he heard someone yell from behind him. Turning, he saw a petite blonde woman walking toward him, although she stopped midstep at his glance. "Mark?"

"Oh, Daddy, you look fab! Where did you get these clothes?" the little girl cried as one of her hands started playing with his jacket lapel. Oh horror of horrors, surely this was some sort of nightmare?! Why couldn't he wake up?! He was so appalled that he couldn't even get any words out -- only sputters.

The blonde woman had started walking up to him again, getting the familiar lustful look humans got when they interacted with him. "Oh, Mark, you look... you look... wonderful! Is this the surprise you were going to give me?"



*Surprise?* Bloody hell, what was she on about?! Why did she keep calling him Mark? *Who was she?!*

“Right. I’m not sure what’s going on --”

“Because I think this is the sexiest I’ve seen you look since we got married,” the woman continued, obviously not listening to Lucifer at all.

“Well,” he said with a grin, before the last part of her sentence sunk in. “*What?!*” She had rendered him speechless once again. “*Married?!*”

She still wasn’t listening. Finally reaching him, she ran an admiring hand up and down his sleeve. “Oh Mark, what a wonderful surprise! I know we should have waited until you came back, but we were worried, and....” Her eyes narrowed. “Is this new? I didn’t think you packed a suit --”

“Daddy, are we going to go to the beach, now? Are we, Daddy?” the little girl asked, grabbing his hand and tugging at him.

“Bloody hell, no! I -- I’m not --”

“Language, Mark! And you promised!” the woman said with a grin, giving him a playful swat on his arm before taking it in hers and pulling him in a different direction.

Lucifer didn’t know what to do. The thought of running to the beach with the woman wasn’t bad, for he loved being with any woman, but the child.... The human spawn scared him to death. As he started getting dragged off by the strange woman and her child, the Devil did something he never thought he’d ever do.

He broke away, and ran.

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“Mark!” Helen called after the disappearing figure and frowned. What had gotten into him?

Chloe frowned, puzzled. “Why did Daddy run away, Mummy?”

“I don’t know. That was very odd.” Thinking hard, she said, “You know, maybe he wasn’t done preparing his surprise, and we spoiled it by looking for him.” Nodding to herself, she said, “I’m sure that’s it. Why don’t we go back to the hotel and wait for him? He’ll come back when his surprise is ready.”

The little girl gave a big smile. "Okay, Mummy!"

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Mark stared in awe as Chloe and he stepped out into the spacious penthouse. He had never seen such luxury! So this was how the wealthy lived! His eyes went to the black, glossy piano before admiring the bar.

"Wow," he cried as he wandered out into the living room, then started studying all the books. "Wow!"

Chloe shook her head at the man she thought was Lucifer. Had he been in a fugue state for the last five years, and now could not remember anything of his current life? She had heard of that happening to people..... Just what had happened to him since the last she had seen him? She followed him for a bit, then let him just roam while she stayed by the bar.

"Lucifer -- I mean, Mark... can you tell me about yourself?" she asked. No time like the present to start finding out about Lucifer's past....

"I'm a builder," he called out as he continued his foray into the penthouse. "I have a small business in -- oh wow, look at that!" He had wandered out onto the balcony and his breath caught at the view. "Wow, this is amazing!" Mark turned toward Chloe, his face lit up like the sun, which made Chloe blink. The only time she ever saw Lucifer look like that was when he had found that stash of cocaine on their other case....

"Do you live here?" he asked as he ambled back into the living room. "Because... blimey, this is just amazing!"

"You don't know where you are?" she asked.

Mark gave her a crooked smile and cocked his head, a puzzled look on his face. "No, should I?"

The cocked head was the first thing Chloe had seen the man do that reminded her of Lucifer. "You... you live here."

"Me?" He laughed. "Oh, I wish! If only Helen and Chloe could see this...."

That puzzled the detective. "Chloe?"

"My daughter."

That made Chloe's eyes narrow. It was too much of a coincidence that his daughter happened to have the same name as her. Could this be some sort of delusion he had fallen into? Had he bumped his head and made a whole new identity for himself? Did he have a split personality?

The elevator dinged behind her, and she turned, wondering who it could be. Probably Maze....

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Panting as he rode up in the elevator, Lucifer was sure he had just escaped some nutcases from an insane asylum. He had run the entire way back to LUX, convinced the little spawn was right on his heels. Bloody hell, *Daddy?! Just the mere mention of the word was enough to send him into a fit. Was this some sort of joke by his dad?! If it was, it bloody well wasn't funny.*

Straightening his clothes as the lift doors opened, he stepped out with relief. It certainly was nice to be back home. A movement caught his eye, and his face lit up when he saw Chloe by the bar.

"Detective!" he said happily. Well, the day had just changed for the better.

Chloe turned, horrified. "Lucifer?!" she exclaimed, staring at him with a startled look on her face.

The fallen angel blinked. That was hardly how she normally greeted him. A movement in the living room caught his eye. Wait. She had brought a friend with her? A male friend? And not the Douche. A flare of some uncomfortable emotion burned in his chest, but he refused to acknowledge it as jealousy. It was probably just heartburn from the coffee.

"What's this?" he asked as he glanced at Mark, who had started to make his way over to them. "Have you brought a homeless person into my abode?"

"Homeless?" Chloe repeated in shock, then shook herself hard. There were two of them. *Two.* Was Mark Lucifer's long lost twin brother? And if not, then.... Oh god, had she just grabbed a complete stranger and dragged him over to Lucifer's flat...?

"Homeless?" Mark asked as he approached. Surprise reflected on his face as he stared at the fallen angel. "Uh... Hi. I'm Mark Pearson." He thrust out his hand. "She keeps calling me Lucifer.... That must be you."

Lucifer looked down at the hand as if it was a disgusting creature, then back up to the man it was attached to. “Correct,” he said, studying the tall man. “Do you mind telling me what you’re doing in my flat?”

“I... I thought he was you....” Chloe said, her voice trailing off with embarrassment.

“Really?” The Devil looked Mark up and down while circling him like a vulture. “Seriously, Detective? I’m much more handsome than this poor sod.”

Chloe winced. “Well, he certainly looks like you, to me. Maybe he is your brother or cousin or something?” *Hopefully?*

“Hardly,” he said with a sniff, then gave a predatory smile. “Although I do see something of a slight resemblance. Very slight, mind you, but it’s quite... fascinating.”

Mark glanced from Lucifer to Chloe then back again, fidgeting uncomfortably from the Devil’s examination. There were strange undercurrents he could sense, but damned if he knew what it was all about. “Well, uh, no harm done,” he said cheerily. “Look, if one of you can just take me back to the hotel --”

“Mark, I am so, so sorry,” Chloe said, taking his arm, a blush staining her cheeks. “Let me make it up to you. I’ll take you back --”

“I’d really appreciate it,” Mark said happily. “I... I got a little turned around on the streets, and my family is waiting --”

“I think I met your family,” Lucifer said as he continued to inspect the other man. “Crazy blonde woman and little red-headed spawn?”

“Uh....” He gave a little laugh, and said, “I guess you could say that.”

Chloe promptly grabbed the tall man’s arm and started dragging him toward the elevator. “Look, Mark, I can’t tell you how sorry I am --”

Lucifer’s arm shot out, blocking their path, giving Mark another once-over. “I still can’t believe you thought he was me. I mean, really, Detective! He looks nothing like me! And he lacks style, to say the least.... Bloody hell, man, what *are* you wearing?!”

The tall man glanced down at his gray, stained hoodie. “What? What’s wrong with what I’m wearing?”

“Are you serious? There is no way you’re going out on the streets of Los Angeles looking like *that*.” Lucifer quickly stripped the hoodie off of Mark, tsked at the old tee shirt, and shook his head. “Ugh, deplorable! We can’t have you going out like that. No. Definitely not.” He threw the hoodie into the nearby trash can, which had Mark crying out in protest.

“Hey! That’s my favorite hoodie!”

Chloe grabbed her partner’s arm. “Lucifer --”

“No, Detective! I mean, really! If he looked enough like me to fool *you*, what would other people think when they see him? They would think that *I* dress like a slob! I can’t have him diluting the Lucifer brand going out like that -- he’s going to ruin my jam!”

Chloe slapped her palm on her forehead and shook her head while Mark looked indignantly at Lucifer.

“I’m not a slob! Well, okay, my favorite hoodie *is* stained, and my jeans are faded as well, but I can dress nice when I need to.”

“Well, you are going to dress nice *now*. Bloody hell, you humans have absolutely no sense of style -- or sense, for that matter! I mean, really, you’re here in the city of Los Angeles and you decide to walk around like a homeless person?!”

“Lucifer, he doesn’t look like a homeless person --”

“Wearing that makes him look like *me* as a homeless person, and that is bloody unacceptable! I absolutely refuse to have people think that I am homeless! Can’t you see, Detective? His appearance reflects badly on *me*!” He grabbed Mark’s arm and dragged him toward the master bedroom. “First thing we have to fix is that hair. Deplorable! Come along, chop chop, this way....”

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In twenty minutes, the pair emerged, looking like twins.... Well, except Mark looked extremely uncomfortable. Lucifer, on the other hand, had a huge, wicked grin on his face.

“I confess I didn’t understand the fascination human spawn had with dolls, until now. What do you think, Detective? Doesn’t he look splendid?” the fallen angel asked gleefully.

Chloe was astounded by the resemblance of the two men. She kept feeling like she was seeing double.

“Stand up straight!” admonished Lucifer to Mark. “Don’t slouch. Carry yourself with confidence! Come on, man, I can’t have you going out in a three thousand dollar Armani suit looking like you’re the Hunchback of Notre Dame!”

The tall man choked. “Three thousand dollar --”

“Yes, yes, one of my cheaper ones. Now come on, look sharp!”

Mark looked and felt extremely uncomfortable. “I can’t take this....”

“Of course you can,” Lucifer said with a smile. “After all, I’m not letting you leave here unless you make me look good.”

“But --”

“Take it, Mark. Lucifer has more than enough suits. He can spare one,” Chloe said kindly.

“But....” He felt uncomfortable. He didn’t even know these people, and here he was, receiving a suit with a price tag that was more than he ever imagined a suit would cost. Lucifer then thrust something in his hand -- a roll of money. Lots of money.

“Here, you poor sod. I can’t have you walking around looking like me and pinching pennies like a bloody miser. Spread it around, will you? Otherwise you’ll make me look bad.” With a slap on his shoulder, the Devil dismissed his double. “Now, off you pop! The detective will take you back to your crazy wife and... spawn.” He shuddered at the last word, then turned on his heel and walked to the bar to pour himself some Scotch.

Mark glanced down at the money, then at the Devil, then the detective. “I don’t know what to say....”

“Just be sure to maintain your stylish look -- bloody hell, stand up straight, man!” Lucifer barked. “And don’t worry, you don’t owe me anything -- consider this a freebie.”

The tall man’s brow furrowed; he didn’t understand. Chloe just shook her head and took his arm.

“Come on, Mark, I’ll take you back to your hotel,” she said and led him to the elevator.

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Chloe dropped Mark off at the hotel, but not without stopping first at Starbucks for him. He had to get a scone, for he was still starving, and a couple of chocolate croissants for Helen and Chloe. The detective apologized about the mix-up several times to him, but he only laughed good-naturedly. After all, he had gotten a three thousand dollar suit and enough money to pay for the hotel from Lucifer!

He happily jogged up to the hotel room and opened the door to find Helen and Chloe waiting there for him. Smiling, he said, “Hello, ladies!” Spinning around once, he showed off his spiffy clothes and new hairstyle. “What do you think?”

“You still look fab, Daddy! Why did you run away earlier?” Chloe asked.

“Run away? What?” Mark thought hard, and remembered how Lucifer had mentioned meeting his family. “Oh, that was... that wasn’t me.”

“Who was it, then?” Helen asked, standing up. She had a very amorous look in her eye. Perhaps she liked the new image?

“No one,” he said quickly. “But I did bring you back a surprise from Starbucks.” He handed them their chocolate croissants -- the surprise he had initially gone to get them.

“I think I like this new you,” she said with a smile and gave him a smooch on the lips. Mark grinned.

“I do too, although it became pretty strange for a while there.”

“What do you mean?”

He shook his head. “It isn’t important. Listen, I don’t think I’ll be able to maintain this posh look once we’re home, but it’ll be nice to be like this while we’re here. Shall we go to the beach after brunch?”

“I’d like that,” Helen said warmly as Chloe jumped about the room, cheering.

Mark started feeling better about the whole California trip at last, and he had the Devil to thank for it....

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