

# Diary of the Damned

## Chapter 1 - Purgatory

### Day 1

And so it has come to be - my time on the mortal plane has come to an end and my spirit now rests in this world between worlds, a brief stop on its eternal journey. This afterlife seems remarkably similar to Earth, at least if you ignore the complete lack of sky or ground around us and the fuzzy grey haze that everything has to it. Yet there are buildings aplenty, presumably houses that other spirits have built for themselves to remind them of their mortal homes.

Well, my first order of business for the day is to find somewhere to settle down. I don't know whether any laws govern this afterlife but hopefully I shall find out soon enough. Though I'm not sure exactly how laws would be enforced if we're all already dead. Would the most serious crimes result in being sent back to Earth again? I wonder...

### Day 2

This morning a Purgatory Official came to me and explained the way things work here. As Purgatory is inhabited exclusively by former Earthlings everything is constructed to be as similar to Earth as possible. Ostensibly this is to provide comfort and familiarity to all the new souls who arrive here, though I'm not entirely convinced that this would be very good for everyone. What if their lives on Earth were fraught with suffering? Can it really be comforting to remind them of that? Will those who spent their lives in a war zone be reassigned to a place of comfort or will they be herded into familiar constructs? There is much and more that I do not yet know of this world and something tells me I need to be on my guard while I'm here.

I was even told that there's a thriving economy here in the afterlife. I suppose it makes sense; everyone needs goods and services and what better way to facilitate that than through money? Can't say I'm too pleased at the prospect of working again though, I thought I could spend the rest of eternity in peace and not worry about getting to work in time each morning! No rest for the wicked I suppose.

### Day 114

Wow, time passes quickly in this place. Seems like only yesterday I started my job as a receptionist to meet and greet all the new souls that enter this world. Unfortunately it seems that death does little to soothe the inherent fury that people reserve exclusively for those individuals paid a meagre wage to be of service to them at all costs. Indeed, the clarity of mind that they experience on their death bed, as they regret all of the dreams and desires that they failed to realise throughout their life, somehow serves only to convince them further that the poor sod behind the desk is personally responsible for all of the problems they have suffered and ever will suffer. Spirits we may be, but pain is just as real as it was on Earth. It's the people who died with a weapon in hand that are the worst! On Earth you can die from grievous lacerations, but up here? You simply suffer the agony of it for several days.

Alas it seems that this is my destiny, to be chained to this desk and to suffer the endless

moans of the pathetic ingrates that pass through these halls. I thought death was supposed to be a release from all of this suffering, not a continuation of it!

### **Day 147**

I picked up a holiday brochure today for a holiday resort in Hell. It sounds quite interesting; the weather is always warm, you can get a nice hotel room right by the sea and there are plenty of tourist attractions to visit. The entry fee is very expensive but then again you get what you pay for! I'm of a mind to visit this resort. I'll just have to see if I can get a few days off work. I wonder what would happen if I simply left though? Would I be chased down and forced to return, or would they simply fire me and hire someone else instead? On that note why do none of the other new souls have to perform reception duty? Have I been singled out for some reason? Is this some sort of penance for misdemeanours on Earth?

Come to think of it, I do not recall seeing any guards here. Perhaps I shall sneak out the next time there is a brief respite in the seemingly constant stream of new souls pouring in. Yes, I like the sound of that. Imagine the looks on their faces when they come here, expecting to find some poor fool to take their anger out on, only to find there is NO ONE! HAH! Oh that will be a glorious moment, to finally get one up on these wretched scum pouring in! Ah, thinking of it almost makes the gunshot wounds easier to bear...

## **Chapter 2 - Hell**

### **Day 208**

Well, after FINALLY escaping from that nightmare of a job and paying the exorbitant entrance fee I have arrived here in Hell. It's nice to be somewhere warm for a change; Purgatory just seemed so...cold somehow. There was such a long queue to enter, it felt like I was standing in line for hours, though it is hard to tell the passage of time down here. The imps kept prodding us with their little tridents to move the line along. I suppose they were just being playful, although those tridents are bloody sharp! Can anyone die of blood loss in the afterlife? I guess not, considering all the beatings I took in Purgatory. But when does the bleeding stop?

In fact, come to think of it, have I *ever* stopped bleeding since the first cut? Where does all this blood come from? And WHY is it so bloody painful? Just what is wrong with this stupid afterlife? Is it just some sort of ridiculously long initiation process for tormented souls? I really hope this ends soon! I think I'd rather be back on Earth again than suffer this agony for much longer...

### **Day 210**

After walking 40 miles to the hotel in this blazing heat and spending several hours climbing the eternal stairway (only to find that there were only 15 steps to it and that I needed to ascend them facing backwards to make any progress), I have at last reached my hotel room. Considering all the ordeals I've faced so far, this actually seems quite nice in comparison. Oh sure, there are no windows and the heating is constantly on at maximum temperature, but aside from that and the complete lack of soundproofing, this seems like a nice resting area. A very small resting area with a ceiling so low that I have to crouch down at all times and strain my neck, but a resting area all the same.

They have provided a bed of nails to sleep on. I imagine this would put off a lot of people,

but I know that they are perfectly safe to sleep on as your weight is distributed evenly amongst the nails. In fact I think I might rest my head for a few hours now.. it has been a very tiring journey after all. Good night diary! I think I shall have a nice holiday here..

### **Day 211**

Diary, I have one word for you this morning: Ouch. While it may be no surprise that the laws of physics are different here, it never occurred to me just how strong the gravitational pull can be. I woke up impaled! As in, I had physically slid down through every single nail! I was almost getting used to the constant agony, but this is on a completely different level! It took me about 20 minutes to lift myself off again, which exacerbated the pain even further.

I was starting to think coming to Hell was a bad idea, but it seems there are some small comforts to be had. I ran a bath after getting out of bed and, perhaps unsurprisingly as it is far too hot down here for water to exist in liquid form, the taps were pouring molten lava instead. I tentatively stepped in and screeched in agony, but when I withdrew my foot I noticed that the impaling wounds had healed! I have no idea what it is about lava that gives it such healing properties, but all the flesh wounds had closed up and even the pain was slowly subsiding! For the first time I am actually starting to feel happier here in Hell.

### **Day 212**

Diary, I take back what I wrote in my last entry. I was woken up during the night by the people in the room next to me. Yet just as I was about to bang my fist on the wall to tell them to keep it down, I realised those weren't screams of pleasure, they were screams of pain! These people were being *tortured!* I couldn't bear to listen and yet those blood-curdling shrieks reverberated through my mind all the same! It seems that just as I am getting used to the physical pain, Hell finds a way to replace it with mental pain instead! I apologise for this shaky script dear diary, but my hands have not stopped trembling since this morning! I can't even write anything more for today, I am sorry.

### **Day 214**

Dear diary, can you believe it? It's the middle of July and yet Hell suffers its worst winter ever.. in *summer* time! That's right - Hell has literally frozen over. This is nothing like the brochure promised - what happened to the blazing heat and warm seas of lava? I was even starting to get used to the constant smell of sulphur, but if this cold spell lasts for more than a few days then I'm going to have to get used to that sickening aroma all over again once it finally ends! And don't even get me started on how *slippery* it is down here! I've already cracked my chin wide open and there aren't even any lava streams about to cure it this time around!

I know the owner of this resort cannot do anything about the weather, but I still cannot help but feel infuriated by this turn of events. It's the bad icing on a poisoned cake! When you think things just cannot get any worse, Hell freezes over! I don't know how much longer I can bear it here to be honest..

### **Day 220**

Well diary, I'm pleased to report that the frozen spell has finally lifted. The streams of lava are flowing again and surprisingly the sulphuric aroma was quite easy to get used to again. Unfortunately, that is where the good points end. I don't really know what else I can tell you

about diary, other than that the food here is terrible. And when I say terrible, I mean absolutely inedible. There is only one thing they serve here as food and that is coal. Seriously, COAL? What manner of inhuman FREAK would want to eat COAL?! Oh but it gets worse - the Pit Lords stand over you with their whips when it is served to you. And if you don't want to make things worse for yourself, you had better damn well eat it! I feel like my oesophagus has been torn to shreds by now, but if you utter even one word of complaint, that's it, the whips are flying. Or perhaps I should say flaying - I had to spend 10 minutes bathing in the lava to restore what little flesh remained on my back after this morning's meal!

It's getting to the point now diary that I think Purgatory was perhaps the lesser of the two evils. Oh sure it was excruciatingly painful to suffer all the words and weapons of the recently deceased but at least there you knew what to expect! Down here it's almost impossible to tell what's going to happen next! You think you've suffered the worst and then the worst turns out to be nothing in comparison to what this realm of torment offers up next! I really feel I have made the wrong decision you know, coming here..

### **Day 230**

I have absolutely had enough! I always thought it was mere hyperbole when people referred to "holidays from hell" yet now I know exactly why people say that! This holiday has been an absolute nightmare from start to finish! I WILL BE MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT THIS! Oh just you wait dear diary, the owner of this pathetic resort will get such a nasty complaint that they simply won't know what to do! I will have them GROVELLING for my forgiveness! And I won't stop there, oh no no, this will be in all the papers! I will make sure that nobody ever suffers the sheer torment I've endured at this abysmal resort!

## **Chapter 3 - The Infernal Palace**

The Damned sat waiting impatiently, tapping his fingers on the arm of the rough stone chair whilst his other arm propped his head up. He thought about clearing his throat loudly to express his irritation, yet he decided against it considering that the desk clerk had thrown a beaker of acid at him for simply humming.

After what felt like an eternity, the desk clerk spoke up. "His Evilness will see you now."

The Damned sprung to his feet excitedly and started to walk towards the door until the desk clerk screamed and hurled an axe at his head.

"NOT YOU, YOU IDIOT! Your appointment isn't for several years yet, sit back down!"

The Damned returned to his seat grumbling while one of the Devil's supplicants trotted over to the door, holding in his hand a great long sheet of parchment that trailed behind him, containing a long list of names. The Damned glanced at the parchment as it trailed by but recognised none of the names on the list.

After many more years of mind-numbing boredom the desk clerk walked over to the Damned and smacked him in the face with a morning star. "The Devil will see you now," he said before returning to his desk as though nothing had happened.

Feeling battered and bruised from his mistreatment the Damned slowly waddled over to the door and entered the Devil's throne room. He gazed up at the great black stairway, groaned and began his ascent.

The Devil sat in his obsidian throne, gazing at the Damned with his fierce yellow eyes. After a full minute he spoke. "State your business."

"I am NOT happy!"

"Of course you aren't," the Devil replied, "you're in Hell."

"That's exactly my point! I have quite literally had the holiday from *hell* in this resort and I think you owe me an apology and a refund *at the very least!*" He exclaimed.

The Devil simply laughed.

The Damned was absolutely infuriated. "Just who do you think you are? Eh?! You are the worst resort owner and manager that I have ever had the displeasure of complaining to! You run a pathetic establishment! Your staff are rude at best and downright bullies at worst, the food is simply terrible, I am constantly kept awake by the screams of the tormented, the whole place stinks of sulphur, there is absolutely no night life here whatsoever and you have the gall to call this a *holiday resort*? I WILL SPEAK TO THE PAPERS ABOUT THIS, JUST YOU WAIT!"

The Devil roared with laughter as gouts of flame erupted behind his throne.

"WHY DO YOU KEEP LAUGHING?!" Screamed the Damned.

The Devil continued laughing hysterically for several more minutes, the bursts of flame in the background rising and falling in rhythm with the laughter. By the end he was weeping tears of laughter that instantly evaporated.

"I do not know whether you are blind or merely stupid," the Devil said. "You have come to me complaining about the problems you've suffered and yet you fail to see that the problem lies with you!"

The Damned simply stood there open-mouthed and frowning, speechless from anger and confusion.

"It seems to me that in death you are no different to how you were in life. Your problem is that you simply can't take responsibility for anything that happens to you. You're always blaming it on someone or something else. You have to stop running away or else you will simply keep making it worse for yourself."

"How DARE you speak to me like that?!" Exclaimed the Damned. "Not only do you run the most horrible holiday resort I have ever known, but when I come to complain you even have the gall to INSULT me?!"

The Devil leaned forward in his chair and lowered his voice. "I am not insulting you one little bit. I am simply exposing the truths that you have always denied to yourself. All that you see here is simply an outward manifestation of your repressed memories."

"I don't understand..."

"Don't you see? Everything you think you have suffered here is just a reinterpretation of what happened to you throughout life. All the pain and trauma you could not come to terms with has come back to haunt you. None of this is real - it's all in your mind."

At that moment the Damned felt as though he had finally found the missing piece of a great puzzle. As this revelation began to sink in, everything around him faded away into oblivion. He was no longer in the Devil's throne room, nor could he sense any remnants of what he had apparently experienced since he first arrived in Purgatory. There was simply nothingness.

He had finally found peace.