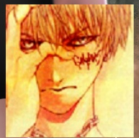


SAVING SABRINA

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The Second Book of Holt 2:1 - Snare the Devil



THE SECOND BOOK OF HOLT 2:2 – SNARE THE DEVIL

Her Husband told his parents about the Devil over family dinner.

“There's two of you?” her Father-by-Law asked, arching an eyebrow in her direction. “Like a twin or a clone or a-?”

“No,” Sabrina said, her hands in her lap. They were letting her sit in a chair with them, like a person. It was strange to sit in a chair and eat with a fork and knife after all this time, especially in polite company, and she found she liked it. She did not want to do anything to make them think that she was not grateful, like correcting her Husband or her Father-by-Law, but she had to tell them the truth. She swallowed, bowing her head. “I thought... I thought my father was a witch and my -mom was a mortal woman for most of my life, but my mortal mother was impregnated by the Dark Lord.”

“You're the antichrist,” Sabrina's mother-in-law whispered in horror and hatred.

“No, no,” Sabrina cried. Her shoulders shook and she held herself. “I, I gave it up , even before you saved me I gave that up... there was trouble with time and in the overlap there were two of me and, and, I don't know which was the original and which was the copy but we decided one of us could go be mostly human and one of us, the other one, could go to rule Hell.”

“Is that possible?” Sabrina's Father-by-Law asked her mother-in-law.

“She is possessed by more power than I ever had,” her mother-in-law said, thoughtful, “but it is maybe possible.”

“Dad, we could beat the Devil,” my Husband said, taking my hand in His and putting both on the table. I let Him take my hand, squeeze it, a small claim to remind everyone present that I was His. “We could finally end Lucifer's Rebellion.”

“In the name of the Lamb,” my Father-by-Law intoned.

“In the name of the Lamb,” we all echoed.

- The Second Book of Holt 2:2 -

Sabrina shook all the way up the forested pathway. The doors to the Convent of St. Adrienne towered over her, loomed over her like penance. She heard herself whimper, felt tears on her cheeks. She was sobbing the last few feet. Her Husband knocked on the door and they waited in the quiet, dead October leaves swirling around the cobblestones. She screamed and tried to run as the door opened, but a hand from within snatched the back of her collar.

“Where are you going?”

The lilting voice, like music. Sabrina's bowels let go and she wailed, collapsed as strong arms dragged her into the Abbey. She didn't even think of resisting, bowing her head, letting wwhoever wanted to touch her, mold her. She was stripped and did not fight back. Her clothes were taken away and she hugged herself, waiting for the pain to start.

A coarse blanket was placed gentle across her shoulders.

Strong sure hands helped her stand, helped her walk.

“Have you been a Good Woman in the service of the Lamb and your Husband?”

She sniffled, nodded.

“She has,” her Husband confirmed.

“Then you have nothing to fear from us, sister.”

Sister Joy helped her further and further into the Abbey, down into the far rooms. She was given a chair to sit on and crackers to eat and tea to drink and it all tasted like ashes but she forced it down because they told her to. It settled in her belly and she sat in her blankets and waited for things to go wrong.

“I am told you were the Antichrist, or that the Antichrist created you in her image, so that you could be partly human in her name.”

Sabrina, miserable, nodded.

“Did she give you a means of contacting her?”

“She did,” Sabrina admitted, explaining how.

They asked her about what the Antichrist could do, what the Antichrist was capable of. They went over their plans to capture the Antichrist with her, asking her if she thought it would work. They included her in their sacred task, made her feel like her input mattered, that she mattered.

It was the first time that she'd felt valued for her own knowledge since she'd been taken. She could understand her mother-by-law's slavish devotion. She threw herself into the work, telling them everything, improving their plan, working through the ways and means of capturing the Antichrist and holding her, taming her, breaking her.

There was a savage joy in feeling that the best version of herself was about to be saved.

Maybe, if Sabrina Morningstar fell, the ease with which Sabrina Spellman had broken would no longer feel like her fault.

- The Second Book of Holt 2:3 -

Sabrina was given something to drink that would make it easier to call upon the Dark Lord's gift, her magic. It tasted bitter but her Husband had told her to drink it and so she did, swallowed every last drop. She gasped as she felt His hand in her hair, yanking her head back.

“Can you feel it?” Her husband asked. “The Devil inside you?”

“I can,” she said, and she did.

She was always aware of the magic, a dull itch that settled in her skin. She couldn't scratch it, couldn't feel it as anything other than a constant sense of *loss*, of being incomplete.

It was there again, not the roar she had known, just a trickle.

Her mother-by-law walked closer and took her hand, took her away. The two of them sat down on the cold stone floor.

“Were you a witch?” Sabrina asked, and the other woman nodded, quick, curt. Sabrina imagined what she would have done if she had been asked that question in this place and understood – neither of them could trust the other, could confide in the other. Both of them knew that the

Convent of St. Adrienne could extract any and all secrets from them and that they were both powerless to hold anything secret, anything safe.

Their lives were not their own any more.

Their lives and their souls belonged to their Husbands and the Lamb behind them.

Her mother-by-law squeezed her hands.

“We're going to save the Antichrist,” she said, “the same way we have been saved.”

If there was regret in her voice or in her eyes it was just for the two of them and so very deniable, a thing that Sabrina might have read into innocent words. There was, she knew, only one correct response. She squeezed back, looked her mother-in-law in the eyes.

“In the name of the Lamb.”

- The Second Book of Holt 2:4 -

The summoning was easy enough.

Sabrinas Spellman and Morningstar were the same person. Where one was, the other could be.

Only the protections around the Convent of St. Adrienne had kept Sabrina Morningstar from hearing the screams and cries of Sabrina Spellman. Now, those protections were lowered just a little, with purpose, with intent.

Sabrina Spellman called for the Antichrist and the Antichrist came.

Sabrina stared – had she ever been so confident? The skirt the Antichrist wore was an inch or two below her rear, the red shirt showing too much shoulder, pressing up her chest. She was smiling on her face and in her eyes, warm and expectant, holding an apple in one hand.

“Sabrina,” the Antichrist said, “You have got to-”

The Antichrist stopped.

“What's going on?” she asked, more confused than scared. “What is all this?”

The trap closed, the protections snapping back into place.

Sabrina Morningstar staggered as if slapped, the air rushing out of her lungs. She stumbled back but did not fall, did not tumble to her knees. She found a wall and touched it and the power of the Lamb flared and she screamed, recoiling.

“What the me-?” the Antichrist said.

Sabrina's Father-by-Law and his friends had their rifles ready and fired, twenty Good Men unloading tranquilizer darts in the direction of the pretty girl. She saw it coming, raised her hand, raised two hands, screamed with the exertion it took for her to throw all twenty to one side.

Sabrina knew how powerful the Antichrist was. The Antichrist had descended into Hell and fought the whole of Hell's aristocracy, and she had proven herself their better. The Antichrist should have been able to flatten them all with little more than a thought.

But here, in this holy place, they had limited her power.

She was breathing hard, hands clenched into fists. Her power lashed out and drove the men back

as they charged her, sent them reeling instead of splattering them into mists. The sisters came with iron chains and tried to bind her but the Antichrist was no mere witch. She howled and the Devil held her breath, spun it into a web that caught the sisters and bound them, dragging them up and up, slamming the into the ceiling.

“Sabrina, what-?” the Antichrist said, her expression wavering. “What?”

Sabrina had stabbed the Antichrist with one of the fallen needles, pressed the liquid into her thigh.

“What?” the Antichrist repeated, her pretty eyes fluttering.

Sabrina grabbed another needle.

A third.

A fourth.

Six needles and the Antichrist fell to her knees and Sabrina pushed her down, looked into the glossy eyes.

“wh...” the Antichrist managed, but Sabrina could not tell if she was asking what or why.

“I'm sorry,” she whispered, praying to the Lamb that her mother-by-law didn't hear the word.

She jammed a seventh needle into the Antichrist's chest, through her shirt, and the Antichrist fell limp beneath her, betrayed and alone in this holy place.

- The Second Book of Holt 2:5 -

And that was how Sabrina Spellman finally betrayed herself, and how the Convent of St. Adrienne snared the Devil.