

More than I expected (with teaser from Gods Old and Dark)

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Got the outline finished and made coherent, and still had some time left over, so I did the first 1488 words of Chapter One, scene one – about eight and a half pages. I'll still have about 500 words to do on the scene tomorrow, but I already know what I want to do with it, and how I want to end it. Book starts are always the easy part for me, so I'm not surprised at how smoothly it flowed. (The middle is waiting – no doubt I'll have plenty to bitch about when I hit that.) Nevertheless, it was fun, and I like what I got.

Here's a tiny teaser, just for fun. Please remember, this is first draft with typos intact.

Gods Old and Dark – Chapter One

Heyr Thorrson, pounding roofing nails into shingles on the hottest August afternoon Wisconsin had seen in ten years, suddenly smelled spring in the air. He slid his hammer into his tool belt, closed his eyes, and inhaled deeply.

The scent that he caught this time wasn't spring, but it had the same feel to it. Newness, and life, and goodness – but fragile. Fragile.

“Hmmm,” he said. And, “Well. By damn.”

He yelled to his fellow roofer, “Hey, Lars, I'm on

break. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ Lars, sweating and shirtless and looking like he $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ d been run through a wringer, just grunted. Heyr took the time to go down the ladder, though it would have been easier just to jump. He kept breathing deep, making sure all the time that this wasn't just his imagination, just wishful thinking, because jobs were hard enough to come by anymore, and he didn't want to do anything stupid.

The smell was still in his nose when he went to the foreman, who gave him a little smile when he walked up and said, $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ You could have the decency to pretend to be as exhausted as the rest of us. Doesn't this heat bother you? $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$

Heyr shrugged. Extremes of weather had never bothered him. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ Just lucky, $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ he said. And then, one more quick breath. Still there. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ I hate to do this to you in the middle of a job, Colly, but I $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ ve got someplace I need to be. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$

Colly shrugged. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ Don't worry about it. You never miss a day, never ask for time off. You need to go someplace this afternoon, go ahead. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$

$\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ I don't mean this afternoon. I mean I have to leave now. I quit. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$

Colly, whose real name was something so dreadful that Heyr had never heard him or anyone else use it, held his hands out wide and stared at the development springing out of dirt. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ We got this house and fifteen more just like it. You know you got a job until this is done, and for anything else I get when this project is finished. You're my best guy. You quit, I'm going to have to hire three other people to replace you. You can't just walk out on me like this, man. In the middle of the day. In the middle of a roof – Jesus wept, your nail box is still up there, and half a flat of shingles. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$

$\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ Told you when I signed on I'd stay as long as I could. Well – this is as long as I could. $\ddot{i}\dot{i}^{\frac{1}{2}}$

Colly looked at him, exasperated. *“You said that six years ago. I figured by now you’d made up your mind.”*

“Doesn’t have anything to do with me,” Heyr said. “I like you, liked working with you. You treated me right, and the rest of your men, too, and I appreciate it. I just got my call. Have to go now. Right now.” He turned and left.

Colly was yelling after him, but Heyr walked across the site, climbed into his white pickup truck, and pulled out. He had a cell phone in the truck. Soon as he was out on the highway, he picked it up and hit *“1”* on the quick dial.

He heard two rings. Then a voice one degree too sexy for professional use said, *“First National Savings and Loan, Nancy Soderlund speaking. How may I help you?”*

Heyr had his window rolled down. He took another deep breath. *“Yep, it was still there. “Have to go, Nancy,”* he said.

There was a moment’s silence, in which Heyr had time to wish he’d stuck to his guns about keeping his relationships uncomplicated.

“Go? Where?”

“I’m not sure. I just have to go.”

Another silence. *“Well ... for how long?”*

Make it clean, he told himself. Make it quick.

“This is what I told you about when we moved in together, Nancy – that one day I was going to have to leave.”

A very, very long silence followed this announcement, while she tried to figure out what he was talking about. Then, into the silence, she screamed in his ear, *“That was FOUR YEARS ago!”*

I did quite a bit more, but that's enough for starters.

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