

# Advocation and Devotion

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*Gatesfield Boarding school is the meeting place for two unlikely characters:<br />*

*Lael, a devout Christian and a straight-A student with a painful past;<br />*

*and Adin, an angel-faced Satanist with a love of black and hatred of authority.<br />*

*When the boys are forced to be roommates, you can be sure that fur is about to fly! And yet, as time goes on, secrets about the past are being revealed and a visitor from long ago might just send Lael over the edge . . . and send Adin come crashing down with him.*

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# 1. Opposites

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Chapter 1:  
Opposites

Gatesfield Boarding School; a co-ed establishment for the students in the general area who were either privileged or rich enough to attend. A large and magnificent place, the ancient school was built of stone and wood. Formerly a convent, the building was mansion-like and built on grounds surrounded by woods and a lake. The main building was for classes, while the wings had been built long ago for dorms and other living quarters.

Now, as the day grew later and the sun drew away to the west, some of its rays struck the school glancewise. The many windows sparkling gave an impression of a million tiny diamonds stuck fast in an immobile rock . . . and maybe that was a fitting description, for what are young minds but precious gems that must be kept against the day?

School was winding down for the day around four in the afternoon. Most classes at this time of day were either Art, Home Economics, or Study Hall- classes that wouldn't require too much of tired students. In one of these latter rooms, oak tables were spread out to accommodate the students working and talking therein. The dull roar of the many kids all talking and moving at once quieted to a murmur as an announcement echoed through the large room. "Lael Reinhart, please report to the principal's office. I repeat . . . "

The boy in question was startled out of his work and looked up at the speaker just in time to catch the last of the announcement. " . . . to the principal's office. Thank you." There was an audible click as the sound was cut off.

The girl next to him, who had been occupied with using a barrette to fix her auburn hair away from large emerald eyes, blinked at him. "Wow, that's a change! You never get called to the office." she said, amused. "He probably wants to give you a medal or something. Or have you actually done something bad?" A teasing note entered her voice. "Like, I don't know, been caught smoking behind the school or something? Lael, you devil you!"

Lael rubbed the back of his neck, embarrassed. "No, I'm sure he just wants to talk about Homecoming or something. I am class secretary this year, remember, Deb?"

Deb (short for Deborah Cassia) nodded and sighed. "Well, yeah. I had to do an article on you for the school newspaper, remember? Anways, how am I supposed to finish my Algebra homework without you? You know I can't do math, and my parents'll kill me if I fail." She looked down at the paper in front of her with disgust.

Lael, in the process of picking up his books, looking at her with raised eyebrows and a crooked smile. "Don't worry about it, you caught on pretty quickly. If you feel unsure, look at the notes I gave you. I'm sure you'll do fine on the test tomorrow. You'll manage without me."

Everyone does.

As he walked down the pathway in the middle of the tables, Lael heard remarks from all sides of him- most of them from a group of delinquents who particularly disliked him for no other reason than that he got good grades. "Aww, lookit Lael!" one sneered.

"Wow, he actually got called to the office! What'd you do, break a record or something?"

"He probably bribed the principal. Hell, maybe he even-"

At that point, the study hall teacher sternly told them to be quiet. By that point Lael was at the door. As he turned back from the other side to close it, he felt something hit it- a pass by the sound of it. Not that it really mattered; he was pretty used to this sort of thing. Still, it was a good thing he hadn't been a few moments slower; the school passes were heavy, painted wood. Not exactly the sort of thing you like flying into the back of your head. Hearing the teacher's voice crescendo beyond the door, he turned and walked down the hallway, not wanting any more involvement.

Lael Reinhart was fifteen, tall and gangly for his age. The bangs of his blue, shouldblade-length hair covered his left eye, but the one visible was, behind the glasses, a warm golden-brown. Unlike the students that had been teasing him, he sported no piercings or jewelry of any kind, aside from the ornate golden and black cross with a blue gem in the center that hung around his neck. He even wore modest clothing, a golden-yellow button up shirt and jeans.

He wasn't thinking of that right now, however; what he was doing was studying the bits of the ground he could see from out the windows in the hall. Having grown up in a rural area himself, he knew to appreciate the majesty of the mountains and forests surrounding him; city-dwellers, like those bullies, didn't much care for them. Another reason he disliked them. But Lael, being soft-spoken and somewhat timid, wouldn't speak up against them, which often irritated the teachers.

Rounding a corner, he found himself standing in the main hall in front of the office he'd been summoned to. He knocked on the wooden part firmly. "Mr. Lindan? I'm here to see you."

"Oh, Lael! Come in." Came the reply from the other side of the doorway, and he went in, shutting the door behind him. As he turned to look at the principal, a sight stopped him in his tracks.

It wasn't Mr. Lindan- no, the thin, balding principal sat behind his desk as always. It was the person lounging in the other seat in front of him that caught his attention. Oh, what a pretty girl. Lael thought, stunned. For the person in the chair had to be a girl- the slimness of figure and face attested to that.

"Lael, this is Adin Duanson. Adin, meet Lael Reinhart." the principal said with a nod at each of them.

Wait a second . . . Adin's a guy's name . . . It hit Lael in a flash, and his face went bright red. No way! But, sure enough, when he studied Adin more closely, he could see that the body beneath the black, baggy jeans and tanktop was definitely male and the face was masculine, though with very delicate and pale features. Anyone at first glance could mistake him for a girl, especially since he was decked out in the piercings and black lipstick of a goth. Still, this didn't lessen Lael's embarrassment one iota.

As if he felt the weight of his gaze, Adin looked up at him, met Lael's eyes with his own large, violet ones, and looked away with rudeness that made the other boy angry. Normally he wouldn't have cared, but it was the expression in his eyes that miffed him- one of complete boredom and contempt. He'd just been dissed. At the principal's gesture, he reluctantly sat down in the next seat.

"Now, " Mr. Lindan said, making a steeple of his fingers, "I'm sure you're wondering why you're here, Lael."

"Yes, sir." he said, somewhat abruptly. This wasn't exactly the way he'd planned to spend his afternoon.

"Adin is going to be a new student of ours, " the man continued, ". . . and all new students, as you might well remember from your time here, need a helper around the school. You are a straight-A student and have almost all of the same classes Adin will be taking; in this perspective, you are the perfect role model and guide for him. He will also be your new roommate. If I remember correctly, your last one graduated a year ago, so it's a perfect solution."

What?! This guy, this young man who looked like a complete juvenile delinquent, was going to be his roommate? Lael would have protested normally in any case, but at that moment he caught sight of the necklace Adin was wearing- a silver circle with a red, six-pointed star within. A pentacle. Satan's sigil. This kid had an evil sigil around his neck like normal punks would have a chain or dogtags.

A wave of rage and despair threatened to overwhelm him for a moment, but he forced it, and the memories that came along with it, down. "Mr. Lindan, is this necessary?" he asked, forcing his voice to be still.

Adin, apparently, didn't like this idea either. "Why do I have to be in a room with this guy?" he snapped, sitting up in his seat. "I don't wanna be paired with some stupid fag!"

Lael wasn't going to take this sitting down. He sprung to his feet and glared down at the punk. "And I don't want to have my room invaded by some wannabe goth!" he retorted. "And I wouldn't be talking about 'fags', kid. You don't exactly look normal yourself!."

The other youth, who was sporting black locks with blood-red tips, jumped to his feet. Lael was viciously amused to find himself several inches higher than him, so the little brat had to stare up into his face, even if he went on tiptoe (which he was doing now- and that had to be hard with those heavy boots.) "Bring it on, pal." Adin hissed.

"Boys, sit down!!!" Mr. Lindan ordered loudly. The steepled fingers had come down flat upon the wooden desk with a slamming sound. Still glaring at each other, they sat down in their respective chairs, Lael straight-backed and proper, Adin with an arm insolently sprawled over the back of the seat.

"Now, will you two behave long enough for me to finish?" The principal's voice was stern now, with none of the kind politeness he reserved for new students. Lael nodded stiffly; through his peripheral vision he saw Adin shrug carelessly. It was enough to make your blood boil. And he'd have to live with this cretin?!

"Lael, Adin, despite how you might feel about each other, this arrangement will work." he said matter-of-factly. "There are few other openings in the dorms, and no others with such a convenient placement. You two will get along with each other, at least for the time being. We'll see how this works out in a month or so. Do you understand me?"

The look in Mr. Lindan's eyes allowed for no argument, so Lael swallowed his pride and nodded. After a pause, Adin did the same. The principal nodded and got to his feet. "Now, why don't you show him to your room, Lael? He should be able to get organized once there, and you can spend tomorrow helping him find his way around."

"Yes, sir."

Both of them were ushered out the door by their principal and given one last warning glance before he shut the door. Practically before it closed Adin had turned to glare at Lael with a look of pure annoyance. "This wasn't my idea. I hope you know that."

"Of course." he replied with a glance filled with equal venom. "If I had a choice, you wouldn't even be in this school."

He started to walk away, but Adin called out. "Hey, whatever your name is! Get back here!"

Lael turned partway back and raised an eyebrow. "The name is Lael, and why the heck should I come back?"

The other youth looked at him like he was the stupidest kid in the entire world and gestured at the pile of baggage at his feet, which hadn't been there before Lael had entered the office. Someone must have dropped it off while they'd been inside. "Aren't you going to at least help me with this?" he snapped.

"And why should I do that?"

"Oh, I just thought that since we were roommates, you'd be all nice and helpful and give me a hand." Adin said sarcastically. "Never mind, I'll do it myself."

Much as he'd liked to have held onto his hostile feelings, the sight of the frailer boy hoisting a bag almost as big as him onto his shoulders was too much for Lael to take. There really was too much luggage there for the punk to carry up by himself. So, with an annoyed sigh, he strode back and loaded himself with bags, putting his own books in one. Both ended up looking like pack camels, but by the time they were done, all the bags were being carried.

"Jesus Christ, isn't there an elevator we can take?" Adin groaned as they set off down the hallway.

"Don't say that!" Lael growled. "And no, not in this part of the building. There will be once we get into the other wing, but this one's the main building; classrooms and stuff. It's gonna be a little while before we get there."

"Hmph."

"And don't you dare think I'm gonna do anything like this for you again! You're a pain in the butt!" And in the shoulders, and the back. They hadn't been walking for even five minutes and the baggage was already causing muscle strain. What the heck did the brat have in here?

An annoyed sigh from behind him. "Just say 'ass' and have done with it, you idiot! Don't you ever swear? And what's with the flipping out about my saying 'Jesus' anyway? You some sort of religious nut?"

Lael, laden with bags, wasn't going to turn around to glare at the guy, but he came close to it. "I told you, don't say that! And yes, I'm a Christian. I don't like swearing or hearing the Lord's name in vain. Got a problem with it?"

Silence for a moment, then Adin spoke again. "No, not really. As long as you don't push it on me, we'll be fine."

Silence reigned for another few moments as they walked through the hallways. Finally, though, they passed the door leading to the male dorms, and Lael inwardly cheered as he spotted the elevator. Both of them set down the luggage with relief, and Lael punched the button. A brief pause, and the doors slid open with a "ding."

Adin slid in first, dragging the bags and occupying the left side. That wouldn't do at all. "Adin, get on the right." Lael ordered.

The other boy folded his arms and didn't move. "Why should I?" The bespectacled boy lost his patience again. "Look, just move! I don't like people being on my left side!"

"Jeez, touchy!" Adin grumbled, but moved to the other side nonetheless. It was only then that Lael got in with the rest of the baggage and punched in the floor number. In this case, two.

Waiting for the doors to open again, Adin looked over at the other teen curiously. "What was that all about? That some stupid religious shit again?"

"None of your business." In truth, Lael just didn't want to explain the reason to Adin. He wasn't about to tell a stranger something that most of the school didn't know about him. Especially not this brat.

The brat in question snorted and leaned against the wall of the elevator, crossing his arms. A few moments passed, then the familiar odd feeling as the elevator rose abated and the doors opened with another bell-like sound. "Come on." Lael said, picking up all the baggage again.

Adin did the same and followed him down the hallway.

They stopped at room 247, and Lael had to put some of the stuff down for a moment while he rummaged in his pockets for the key. While he unlocked the door, Adin looked around with surprise. "This place's more like an apartment building than a school."

"I suppose." Lael said absent-mindedly, fiddling with the keychain. His mother had loaded it with too many little things, and he was having trouble finding the key for some reason. "We've even got our own shower. You'll see once we're in there." In my room, he thought rebelliously. But it was only half-hearted; with his new roommate standing right next to him, it was easier to realize that this was going to happen whether he wanted it to or not.

He finally found the darn thing and opened the door with satisfaction, dropping the bags as soon as he got inside. "You're on your own from there." He remarked as he retrieved his schoolbooks from the bag he'd placed them in, and headed over to the left side of the room.

Adin stopped for a moment to look around. The room was good-sized; big enough to hold two twin beds with enough room for two desks, dressers, and small tables beside each. The walls were white, with green trim on the windowsill and a green-blue carpet. A door in the side led to a small bathroom, which was decorated with a marbled white and gold color.

"Holy crap, man." Adin said, sounding incredulous. "Not only are you a Christian, but you're a neat-freak too? This is gonna be worse than I thought. And what's with the colors in this place?"

"Green and white are the school colors." Lael said, rolling his eyes. "You would've seen that in the pamphlet. And what do you mean, neat freak? I like to keep things so they aren't messy."

"Bull, dude! There's not a friggin' spot on your side of the room!"

And it was true; all of Lael's belongings were in the place they were supposed to be. He had just now added his algebra and science books to the shelf on his desk, next to the black computer. More books, presumably for normal reading, were lined up in the hollow of the end table. Most conspicuous was the lack of clothes flung around everywhere, usually a staple in a teenage boy's room. They had all ended up in a small hamper in the corner of the room. Even his bed was made.

"Your point? Look, just keep your stuff on your side of the room, and we'll be fine." Lael said, his tone final, and sat down on the bed to regard the other teen with baleful golden-brown eyes. "Just get a few things straight; don't bother me while I'm doing homework, stay the hell away from my computer unless you actually need it for school, and do your own laundry. And no smoking or other stupid stuff."

"Like I gotta listen to you." Adin growled, stuffing socks into the top drawer of his dresser. Lael, who had taken out his Earth Science book and was starting on homework at the desk, heard him say something else a few moments later in a much softer voice. "Besides, I don't smoke."

He looked up and raised an eyebrow. "Sorry, but you kind of look the type."

"I don't care what I look like, I don't smoke!! Not cigarettes, not dope, nothing!!!" Adin turned around from packing his wardrobe (which was mostly black) and glared fiercely at Lael. "Got it?"

"Yeah, alright, I get it." Lael returned to his book with a shake of his head. He must've really hit a nerve there. Maybe the punk had actually smoked at one point in time, and quit. But something in the way he'd looked said that wasn't true; he'd actually sounded insulted when Lael had said that. Well, that was weird, in any case. But none of his business.

Lael had finished his science homework and was starting on the English when Adin had finally finished unpacking. When he finally looked up, he couldn't stop staring.

Adin had covered his side of the room with posters; some were for bands like Evanescence, others were for video games, but all were dark and creepy. Books were lined up semi-carefully on the desk; it was obvious that it would be messy before long. They were sharing space with a lean black laptop. Adin saw him looking and raised his eyebrows. "What? Got a problem?"

"All those posters . . . ?"

"What, we're not allowed to hang up posters?"

"Of course . . . but couldn't you've hung up better ones?"

"What, you expect me to hang up pretty little posters of that slut Brittany Spears or of some ridiculous pop band? That's not my style."

"Obviously."

"What's that supposed to mean?!"

"Nothing."

"Whatever." Adin kicked off his boots and fell onto the bed. He put his hands under his head and stared at the ceiling. After a few minutes of this, he started talking again. "Yo, what do you guys do for fun around here? I'm bored as hell."

Lael rolled his eyes. "You haven't gotten any homework yet, that's why. Most of our nights are taken up by it. Go on the computer if you want; there's a hookup under your desk. But don't start looking up porn or something, because I'll turn you right in."

"I'm not into that." Adin snorted. "I'm not some depraved little kid. Besides, I'll find a girl if I want one."

The other teen glared at him. "Watch it, pal. I'm not sure where you came from, but leave the girls here alone."

"Just shut the hell up. You don't know what you're talking about." Adin snapped. He swung his feet over the side and jammed them into the boots. "Why don't you show me how to get around here? I don't want to get lost tomorrow."

"Fine. We can get your key at the office, too." Lael sighed, resigned, and put a bookmark in "Great Expectations," the book he was supposed to be reading for English. He'd got back to that later. He almost welcomed the distraction; reading Charles Dickens had begun to give him a headache. Yes, he was a classic writer, but he needed to stop using obscure language and just get on with it, in Lael's opinion. Besides, if he didn't do this, Adin might just get into trouble or something. So he left with the other boy.

The next few hours were spent introducing the new kid to the many hallways and rooms of Gatesfield Boarding School, after a short stop in the office to pick up Adin's key to their room. He immediately clipped it onto a keychain already loaded with other keys, with the same pentacle hanging from it that was around his neck. I really have to talk with him about that. Lael thought uneasily. Just the sight of it made him uncomfortable.

After that, Lael took him on the main tour of the classrooms, pointing out what ones Adin would be using the next day and recommending the best route. Not that he wanted to- if he had his way, he'd have the punk be late, fail, and leave- but he knew Mr. Lindan would want to know why he'd let that happen, so he'd have to do his best for now. What a pain.

The left wing, he explained, housed all the female occupants of the school, including the staff, who were almost always on the top floor. The left, where they lived, was for the males. They both shared a huge cafeteria in the basement section of the main building, the rest of which was divided up into the classrooms. The school itself had only three floors, but it covered a lot of area horizontally. Swimming classes would be held in the pool in the basement, or occasionally in the lake nearby. Gatesfield boasted basketball, baseball, fencing, and track teams, all of which were extremely popular with the resident students and very competitive with other schools.

Adin didn't show any interest whatsoever in the sports, though his amethyst eyes did light up briefly at the mention of the swords used for fencing. Lael made a mental note to not let the crazy kid near any sharp objects in the near future.

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By six, their tour was over and they'd returned to the room. To Lael's relief, Adin didn't bother him, preferring instead to surf the net. Lael, when he caught sight of dark-looking site splashed with red, decided he didn't need to know what the goth was doing and fell to trying to read. He got about twenty pages farther through "Great Expectations" before he couldn't stand it anymore and went on to his other homework. World History and French seemed to go too fast, leaving him bored and without much to do. So he decided to go on the computer as well.

The first thing he did was check his mail. After signing into Yahoo Mail, he scanned the page: No new messages. Well, what did he expect? It wasn't like he had that many online friends, and his mother wouldn't send one to check up on him until Friday. So he signed out and into Yahoo Messenger. Unexpectedly, an instant message assailed him almost immediately.

BumbleBee15: Hi, Lael! What happened today? I haven't seen you since you went to the office.

Lael smiled. He had once told Deb that her name was from the bible, and meant "bee." She'd taken it as a compliment, and was known to use it ever since. He'd also told her that his own meant "belonging to God" and she'd made a Yahoo account for him using it. She was one of the few people he could count on to actually type out their sentences online. This was probably due to the fact that she was a reporter, and seriously disliked chatspeak. As did he. Once, So he typed in a response.

LordsBelonging: I got a new roommate. :(

BumbleBee15: Really? What's he like? Can't be good, if you're making that expression. ;)

LordsBelonging: You have no idea. I'll talk to you tomorrow, okay? He's right in the room with me.

BumbleBee15: Okay, I understand. Hey, thanks for the help in math! I actually helped my roommate do it tonight when she asked for help. :)

LordsBelonging: Really? That's great! See, I told you so! :D

BumbleBee15: Yeah, I know!

Here Deb was silent for a few seconds, then said something quickly.

BumbleBee15: Sorry Lael, but I've gotta get off. I just saw Barrak sign on, and I don't feel like talking to him.

Lael winced. Barrak, a.k.a. "lightening flash" for his basketball achievements, had been Deb's boyfriend for a year straight up until a few days ago. They had been arguing a lot lately, and finally decided to separate before things got any worse. Deb was still upset over it. Lael, who knew both of them well and had seen their relationship evolve, was sympathetic.

LordsBelonging: I understand. I'll talk to you tomorrow. Good night!

BumbleBee15: Okay, I'll see you. Night!

Lael watched her screen name disappear from the short list of his computer and signed himself off. There really wasn't anything left to do now, except maybe surf the net. As he went to click on the Internet Explorer icon, he heard an all-too-familiar voice on his left. "So, who was the babe?"

He jumped and turned to find Adin sitting on his bed. "What the heck were you doing just sitting there!?" he yelled. "Why didn't you say anything?"

Adin just stared at him with a perplexed look on his face. "I've been sitting here in plain sight. What, are you blind or something?"

Lael turned back to the computer and watched the page go to Google. After a few minutes, he answered. "Yes, I am. In my left eye."

There was silence for a few minutes, then a small "Oh" from the other teen.

"Sorry, I didn't know." Adin apologized quietly. "I figured you just had bad vision because of the glasses."

Lael shrugged. "It's fine. I'm used to it. If you need to get my attention from that side, tap my arm or something." He turned and glared at the other teen. "And don't read over my shoulder when I'm using the computer."

More silence. "How'd it happen?"

"It's a long story." Lael didn't want to talk about this right now; hell, he never wanted to talk about his past; but especially not today, when bad memories were so close to the surface. "I don't really feel like talking about it."

He heard the rustle of Adin's shirt as he shrugged and got up. "Suit yourself." He sat down at his own computer and continued to surf the web. A somewhat awkward silence fell in the room for the rest of the night.

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Lael and Adin went to bed around nine, both tired by the events of the day. Adin, by the sounds of it, dropped off quickly; but Lael, for some reason, just couldn't manage to fall asleep. He tossed and turned for what seemed for hours, until he finally stopped and just stared up at the ceiling.

"Damn it all." he muttered under his breath. He jammed on his glasses and sat up to look out the window. The nearly full moon was bathing everything with silver; even the gleam from the lake was visible through the trees. It was a shame they weren't allowed outside at night; he'd have loved to go outside and look at the stars, as he always had years ago when he couldn't sleep.

He raised one hand and covered his left eye; a useless move, since all he saw from that one was darkness anyway. He could remember the details of how he'd lost the sight in it if he really wanted to; the events of today, the sight of the blood-red pentacle, they'd both brought them close to the surface. But he wouldn't if he wanted to get any sleep at all tonight.

A change in the room's noise alerted him to something, and he turned around. Adin, who'd been snoring quietly, had turned toward him in his sleep; that's why the sound of it had increased slightly. Lael studied his face as it was lit by the moonlight. The curves and the contours of it, already pale, had turned pure silver like that of some god. It wasn't really surprising that he'd mistaken him for a girl earlier; with all the anger and frustration gone out of his face, Adin seemed oddly . . . angelic. It was hard to realize they were the same age when he looked like that, so young and vulnerable.

The way he acts . . . he reminds me of you, brother. he thought.

But no, that wasn't exactly true. He felt something different for Adin that he'd never felt for his

brother. He acted so rude, but the flashes of true emotion he'd seen before- the remembered sorrow in his eyes when he'd said he'd never smoked, and the understanding in his voice when he'd asked about Lael's eye- those had shown signs of a different person. If that tone had been pity, Lael might have hated him; but it had been understanding instead. Who was his new roommate, behind the mask of toughness he put up?

He suddenly found that he was staring at Adin . . . and wondering if his silvered skin felt any different than his own. A blush spread over his face and he lay down on the bed, covering his burning face with the blankets. Stop that! he told himself sternly. Just because he's pretty like a girl doesn't mean he is one.

But for some reason he couldn't get the guy's face out of his head, and when he finally fell asleep he found himself dreaming of an angel with Adin's face and outstretched arms.