

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Dual POV!

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Its not often her brother sends an official summons these days. They talk regularly of course, anything otherwise would be unconscionable, but Michael has long sat uneasily upon the Throne of Heaven, so he usually refrains from summoning her or the other Great Seraphim to him like this.

For him to do so now, well... it speaks of something important. And Gabriel herself has something to say to Michael as well, so she's more than happy to answer the call. Except, when she arrives at the usual place in Sixth Heaven, aka Zebel, he's nowhere to be found.

That's even more worrying, especially when she casts her 'sight' beyond the confines of Zebel and finds him further up... in Seventh Heaven. That was where their father and creator, God Almighty, had resided back when he was still alive. It was also where the Sacred Gear System, as well as the rest of God's Systems, were housed.

Despite its supreme importance, none of them liked to go there if they didn't have to. Instead, Zebel had become the 'core' of Heaven after their father's death, where Michael and Gabriel and their fellow Seraphs tended to do their business. It was where Michael ruled from, where he worked from.

So for him to be in Seventh Heaven right now was... certainly concerning. Gabriel's beautiful features are marred by a frown and furrowed brow as she ascends to join him, arriving at Michael's side in a rush of feathers.

"Brother."

Michael looks up from his work studying God's Systems, a warm smile gracing his features as he regards her. However, beneath that welcoming warmth,

Gabriel sees uncertainty, plain as day. Something has rattled Michael. Something has happened.

“Sister. Thank you for coming.”

Gabriel slowly nods.

“You called, I answered. What is happening? What have you found?”

Michael looks back to their father’s systems for a long moment before sighing.

“... I don’t know.”

Gabriel swallows hard. It’s not necessarily unsurprising to hear such a response from her brother. Michael was not some egotistical creature who could not admit when he was wrong or ignorant on a subject. And their father... their father had been called ‘Ineffable’ for a reason.

The Four Great Seraphim had worked together to decipher as much of God’s systems as they possibly could in an effort to maintain what they could of his grand design... and repair what little they might of what degraded in his absence.

They’d had some success with the former. They’d had a lot less success with the latter over the years.

So yes, it wasn’t surprising that Michael didn’t know something. It was all the more worrying though.

“Walk me through it.”

Stepping up to her brother’s side, Gabriel places a hand on his shoulder, offering her support both emotionally and literally. They can pool their perception together, bringing forth potential for greater insights. It’s not truly additive though. They can’t double their understanding of God’s work by working together... but it’s better than nothing.

Michael shows her what he's found, pointing out the... discrepancy in God's systems. Immediately, Gabriel both understands and does not. There's something off about what he's showing her, but at the same time... true comprehension of why it's off escapes her completely, just as it's escaped Michael.

"What is this? This... blemish..."

Sighing, Michael shakes his head.

"I know not. But it is there. And it is growing. Or rather... I suspect it was always there. It was merely hidden from our gaze until recently. Now, more and more, it is becoming... exposed."

Gabriel's frown deepens as she studies the anomaly. Slowly, she nods in agreement with her brother, finding his words to be true and right.

"Then we need only wait for it to fully reveal itself to us. And once it does, we can wipe it away and remove this stain from the Lord's perfection."

Michael smiles softly at that, even as they both pull back from their father's work and turn to face one another.

"As always, you know exactly what to say, Sister. You are right, of course. We will monitor the situation for the time being and act when it is appropriate to act."

Feeling lighter now that she's managed to lift even a little of the crushing weight on Michael's shoulders, Gabriel smiles brightly for a long moment... before remembering she has something to say to Michael in turn.

"Ah... there is something else, Brother. The Kuusho Clan has updated their complaint with us and is requesting once again that we take action."

Michael pauses... and his face twists up into a fresh grimace as he lets out a despondent sigh.

“What do they expect us to do? Their daughter signed that contract of her own will, foolish as it might be. All to escape them, according to our investigations. Could we override it? Perhaps, but if we or the Church are seen to be acting so unilaterally, it would only draw the ire of other great powers. And it’s not as though the girl would thank us for putting her back with her Clan...”

Gabriel nods along in agreement with everything Michael is saying. The situation was... complicated. While nobody was happy to know that Kai’Sa Kuusho was effectively tricked into a magical slave contract by the human magicians of Millennium Enterprises, there were several mitigating factors that made it difficult to simply retrieve and free her from her bonds.

Not least among those mitigating factors was the abuse that the Kuusho Clan had been found guilty of committing against the poor young woman, abuse that had almost certainly driven Kai’Sa to take the first chance at escaping she could find, without actually looking too closely at it.

Yes she’d been foolish and reckless to sign such a contract. But it was her own family who had made her desperate enough to do so. That said...

“That’s where the update comes in, Brother. According to the Kuusho Clan... Millennium Enterprises has lost the members of K/DA, including young Kai’Sa.”

Michael pauses and gives her an incredulous look.

“What? How?”

“The contracts were stolen... and a day later, K/DA vanished as well. Nobody knows where they currently are, but the Kuusho Clan believes we must intervene now that there is no certainty the contracts are even still in play.”

Pondering that for a long moment, her brother eventually grunts.

“So they want us to find their wayward daughter and force her to return to them. I see no reason we should honor such a request. If the girl has managed to

escape her fetters, I would not see us put her back with the family who seeks to shackle her anew. Besides... she never did activate her Sacred Gear, right?"

Gabriel shakes her head at that last bit, causing Michael to nod decisively.

"Hopefully she never does. That would be for the best, truth be told. While obviously we prefer that Sacred Gear remain in the hands of our allies on Earth... it's even better if it remains inactive altogether."

Admittedly, Gabriel agreed. And yet...

"I still request that you send me to investigate the situation, Brother."

Looking at her incredulously, Michael frowns all over again.

"What? Why?"

His confusion is understandable, but Gabriel is happy to explain.

"I have no desire to return young Kai'Sa to her parents or clan. They have lost the right to her... and she more than deserves her freedom. However, there is every chance that she is not actually free. It's possible whoever stole those contracts has managed to steal her and her bandmates as well. In which case, it would be better to free her from them, would it not? Otherwise, it becomes all the more likely that her Sacred Gear will activate."

Michael tilts his head to the side as he considers her words for a long while. Gabriel feels like she's given an impassioned argument and done her best to make her case, but at the end of the day, she will abide by whatever her brother decides. Finally...

"Very well. I see the merit in what you are saying. Though... sending you seems a mite overkill, Sister."

But Gabriel is quick to shake her head.

“Not for this, Michael. Surely you can agree... even knowing where this particular Sacred Gear is located is important enough for one of us to go personally. Securing it... well, that would be just as good, would it not?”

Sighing, Michael nods.

“You’re right, I suppose. Then go with my blessing, Sister. And return safely once you have handled things to your satisfaction.”

Gabriel smiles softly, pleased as ever with her brother’s leadership. He was not their father and they both knew that of course... but he did his best. And he always would.

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The last five centuries had not been kind to Lucrezah Lucifer. From an outsider’s perspective, that statement might seem laughable, of course. She was the most powerful Devil in the Underworld, sharing the designation of Super Devil with scant few others. She was the Satan Lucifer, the Embodiment of Destruction, and generally seen as First among the Four Great Satans.

She ruled the Underworld and from the common devil’s perspective, probably looked like she had everything she could possibly want. How could she not with all her power? Anything she might desire, she could simply ask for or demand and it would be provided to her, right?

Except... no. Lucrezah Lucifer did not have everything she wanted from life. In fact... Lucrezah was horribly, terribly lonely.

Five centuries was an awful long time to not get over something and deep down, Lucrezah knew that. And yet... even five hundred years later, she still woke up with Amadeus Valefor’s strained, determined, handsome face front and center in her mind.

Every single night, she dreamed of that day. Every single night, she watched as her Power of Destruction chewed its way through Valefor Shields and then

Amadeus' arms. Sometimes she found herself focused on his face. Sometimes she found herself focused on Grayfia's.

Grayfia Lucifuge. By all rights, she should still be out there somewhere. Lucrezah had made a promise to the other woman's father before he died that she would find her and make amends. But she'd failed to keep that promise. Not from lack of trying... merely from incompetence.

Anyone who heard Lucrezah calling herself incompetent would also probably scoff or have a good laugh. But what else would one call it? For all her power, she couldn't even locate a single female devil. What use was she if this was the limit of her capabilities?

Sometimes, in her darker moments, Lucrezah privately hoped that Grayfia was still out there somewhere and had been training all this time to defeat her... to kill her. Because after five hundred years, she really wasn't sure what way she could even make amends with the other woman, save for her life.

But no. Of course, Lucrezah knew that she couldn't just lie down and die for Grayfia, even if the other devil showed up and demanded it right this moment. For all her guilt, for all her depression, she had responsibilities she could not shirk. She was the Satan Lucifer, after all.

She was also very, very lonely though, as previously mentioned. And in that loneliness, Lucrezah's one single solace had ultimately become music. She was something of a musician herself in fact, having found moments of respite in learning to play. But more than any of that, she was a lover of music, especially the music from Earth.

Devils made music, sure... but privately, Lucrezah had always felt like humans made *better* music. She couldn't explain why. Perhaps it was because their lives were so fleeting they couldn't help but push themselves past their limits more often than devils did. Regardless, it was true in the end.

Unfortunately, even music was a source of depression for Lucrezah at the moment. One of her favorite groups in the modern era, Huntrix, had been on

hiatus for some time. Lucrezah knew better than most why this was, to be fair. She'd looked into it a long time ago and found out that Huntrix were actually the off-shoot of a centuries-old group of Korean Shamans who had used the power of song and soul to seal away a Demon King called Gwi-Ma behind a protective barrier known as the Honmoon.

There was even a treaty between the Underworld and their predecessors to leave them be, something Lucrezah had greatly appreciated when she'd discovered it. Of course, she hadn't told anyone, not even her fellow Satans, about her discovery. She'd simply continued to admire Huntrix and their music from afar.

... But something had definitely happened to them at Namsan Tower. Lucrezah had been too busy with her domestic duties in the Underworld to really look into it, but as far as she knew all three girls were still alive, so hopefully it wasn't anything too bad.

However, now... well, now her second favorite group, K/DA, was also on a sudden hiatus! They were supposed to have their next show yesterday, but it had been cancelled out of nowhere and their schedule for the next several weeks had been wiped clean, as though they weren't going to be performing for a month or more!

Why? The question gnawed at Lucrezah like nothing else. She was always so careful not to abuse her power as a Satan. She was in charge of Domestic Affairs after all, not Foreign. It would be a massive overreach if she tried to look into things as the Lucifer rather than as just Lucrezah, a concerned fan.

By all rights, she should just leave it be. And yet... and yet... Lucrezah really just wanted to make sure her favorite musicians were okay. Was that truly too much to ask?

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