

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

A/N: Evelynn knows a scam when she sees one. Or so she thinks.

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Even as she's ripping up her contract along with the others, even as she can *feel* the magic loosening its hold on her before dissipating entirely, proving that this is all very real... Evelynn is still waiting for the other shoe to drop.

She knows when something is too good to be true at this point, after all. She's had more than enough experience to know that a smile on a pretty face doesn't mean jack shit. What matters are actions. And as good as this might all seem, Evelynn can read between the lines pretty damn easily.

"You might as well bring them out now."

Akali and Kai'Sa, and even Ahri, had all begun to get excited, on the verge of breaking into full blown celebration as they let the scraps of their contracts drift out of their hands and down to the ground. But Evelynn's voice cuts through that building excitement, causing all eyes to turn towards her.

She though, only has eyes for the self-proclaimed Lord of the Valefor Clan, Amadeus Valefor himself. A man like him has no business being as gorgeous as he is, even by devil standards. But appearances, Evelynn knows full well, can be quite... deceiving.

In response to her words, Amadeus' brow furrows and he looks honestly baffled as he shakes his head at her.

"I'm not sure what you mean."

But of course, Evelynn doesn't buy it. Even if he's said all of that lovely stuff about getting them out from under Millennium's thumb and how they have guest

bedrooms made up at Huntrix's tower and that they're going to have a chance to figure out what they all want to do next... she knows better.

It won't be new contracts though. No, rather...

"Your Evil Pieces. It's obvious where this is going. You wish to recruit us into your peerage. You might as well stop trying to hide it at this point... we all deserve to know just how little choice we actually have."

The smiles drop from the faces of her bandmates. Evelynn feels a light twinge of guilt at making them do so, but she's used to being the bearer of bad news at this point. She's even more used to being the bad guy. So she'll be the bad guy. Better that than letting the others get their hopes up only to have them all torn down again.

Lord Valefor is frowning at her now. Evelynn just stares back at him, unafraid. She'll take the brunt of his anger too, if she has to. She'll be the punching bag. Satan knows Ahri has suffered enough in that position these past couple years as their defacto leader when it came to all things Millennium.

"... I didn't do any of this to recruit you into my peerage, Evelynn. And nothing that's happening tonight or in the following days is contingent on any of you joining my peerage either."

Seriously? He was going to continue trying to deny it? Evelynn pointedly looks to Huntrix before sweeping her gaze back to Amadeus.

"You expect me to believe that you reincarnated those three into your peerage and then... decided to help us escape Millennium out of the kindness of your heart? You, a Devil? Pull the other one. I know what our kind are like. Especially the nobility."

She can feel all of the excitement draining out of her fellow idols at this point as they start to realize she's right. Sure, their previous owners might have been bog standard humans doing bog standard evil human things, but they weren't going

to be saved by some devil nobleman and not have there be strings attached. That sort of thing didn't happen... not even in fairy tales, really.

"You... you're completely misrepresenting the situation with us! Amadeus saved my life, Evelynn! I was going to die if he didn't reincarnate me!"

Evelynn looks over at Rumi and scoffs.

"Right, because you were a half-demon. And that whole shield you three were maintaining was sustaining you right up until it wasn't."

Rumi, Mira, and Zoey all look poleaxed by this.

"You... knew?"

To be fair, Evelynn's fellow bandmates are also surprised. It's not like she'd told them... not like she'd told anyone, really.

"Of course I knew. And if I knew, do you think he didn't? He might not have manufactured the situation, but don't think he didn't take advantage of it."

Out of the corner of her eye, Evelynn sees the Devil Lord's maid take a step forward, a thunderous scowl on her face. She tenses up, ready to defend herself against the servant if need be... but to her mild surprise, Amadeus stops the maid with a hand on her arm and a wordless shake of his head.

Well, if he was going to let her continue to talk, then she was going to talk. Before she can though, Zoey is speaking up.

"You're wrong! I summoned Amadeus myself out of desperation! He had no idea who any of us were at the time!"

So naïve. Evelynn scoffs, crossing her arms over her chest.

"It's called acting. And you fell for it. Ask yourself this, how did you find a way to summon him in the first place?"

That draws Zoey up short. That gives the younger woman pause. Evelynn just nods. Now they're starting to get it. Good. She'd rather everyone know they were living a lie, rather than continuing to believe everything was sunshine and roses. She-

"And what makes you think you're worthy of joining my peerage?"

Amadeus' voice cuts through the tension like a knife, bringing Evelynn's gaze back over to him. He tilts his head to the side, watching her with an unreadable expression.

"You're so convinced that I'm only doing this to recruit you all into my peerage... but why would I waste any of my Evil Pieces on you lot when I already have the best musicians in the world?"

Despite Evelynn's words, every member of Huntrix perks up at that, instinctively puffing with pride. Ugh, lost causes, all of them. Meanwhile, she just narrows her eyes at Amadeus, gritting her teeth.

"Don't act like you didn't do your homework. You know exactly how valuable each of us are. I'm the last scion of a dead clan, Ahri is half-kumiho, half-kitsune and even Akali and Kai'Sa have human connections that you could leverage to your benefit."

The other three women all tense up at that, but Evelynn knows she isn't saying anything that Lord Valefor doesn't already-

"I have no clue who any of you are or what your so-called value might be."

Evelynn *knows* he has to be lying, somehow... but he's honestly the best liar she's ever seen. She can't figure out any of his tells, infuriating as it is.

"Here's what I know about you four girls. You're amazing musicians, second only to Huntrix. And you were trapped in an incredibly shitty situation by predators who took advantage of your love for music to enslave you. You deserve to be

able to make your own choices. You deserve to be able to be whoever you want to be and do whatever you want to do. And on my honor as Lord Valefor, I promise I will do everything in my power to ensure that happens.”

Evelynn’s eyes bulge out of her skull as she feels magic swirling through the air. His oath... that vow he’d just made had real power backing it. If he went against it, there would be consequences. Not death or anything so harsh as that, but... it wouldn’t be pretty. Why would he go so far, just to try and convince them? He already had them all at his mercy anyways...

“That’s... things don’t work like that. The universe doesn’t work like that.”

Even to her own ears, her voice sounds faint and uncertain, her previous confidence forgotten. And then... a hand on her shoulder. Evelynn jolts, looking to Ahri with wide eyes. Ahri looks back at her with a smile of all things on her face.

“Maybe... just this once we’ve caught a lucky break, Eve.”

No... no, that doesn’t make any sense. Evelynn doesn’t get lucky. She doesn’t... people don’t care about her. She’s never...

“Can we maybe get out of here and check out those guest rooms now, if they’re really real? I don’t think I have the emotional bandwidth to even watch you continue arguing this late at night. I’d rather get some sleep and we can get back to debating who wants to take advantage of who here in the morning.”

Kai’Sa’s deadpan delivery almost makes Evelynn laugh, even as K/DA’s dancer stands there with a hip cocked out and her arms across her chest, a tired look in her eyes. It hits Evelynn then too... the weight of the past hour. Being kidnapped from their dorm. Destroying their own contracts. Fuck... she’s drained too.

Shoulders slumping, she nods.

“Alright. Fine.”

She's half-expecting Amadeus Valefor to demand an apology or something from her before he'll take them anywhere. But no, the man continues to be this weird unicorn who acts entirely different from any devil noble that Evelynn has ever had the misfortune of interacting with or even hearing about before. He just smiles and nods and before she knows it, they're all in Huntrix Tower and the Huntrix girls are showing off their new Reincarnated Devil strength by moving their slightly busted wardrobes into their new rooms.

Back at Millennium, they'd been forced to sleep together in a dormitory by their 'masters'. The second most popular Idol Group in the entire damn world and they were treated like first year rookies. Their manager had said it was all about 'team building' and keeping 'cohesion high', but Evelynn had known better. It was about keeping them in their place. Not to mention saving costs by not needing to spread security to watch all of their different rooms.

Now though, they each had their own room down a hallway of four of them. Each fully furnished with a larger bed than any of them had been allowed to have for years. They're all just a door away from each other... not that Evelynn expects any of the other members of K/DA to spend much time worrying about her going forward. Not even Ahri...

Before she knows it, she's all alone in her room, everyone having split up and their hosts having left them to get some sleep. Evelynn stares down at her bed as her shadows curl around her, filling the room to the brim. A shuddering breath leaves her lips as she slowly lays down.

And yet, even as tired as she is, sleep eludes her. Glowing yellow eyes stare up at the ceiling even as everything else becomes bathed in shadow, until nothing remains in the pitch black except for her gaze.

She remains like that, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Because it has to. She knows it does. All of this... was too good to be true.

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"You girls know I didn't... manufacture our first meeting, right?"

He put on a brave face back in the Demon Realm, mostly because it felt like he needed to shut Evelynn down even if it meant stooping to her level for a moment... but now that its just them back in Huntrix's penthouse, Amadeus can't help but check in with his girls. Grayfia has remained behind downstairs to stand guard over K/DA while they rest, making sure nothing untoward happens with any of them.

Rumi, Zoey, and Mira share a glance between one another for a moment before resolutely and unanimously shaking their heads.

"We know, Amadeus."

"You would have to be like... a masterclass actor to have pulled off something like that! I literally almost killed you the moment we met! So did Mira!"

"Zoey is right. Besides, I know shitty people. I know them all too well. You aren't one of them."

Amadeus lets out an explosive breath, his shoulders slumping in relief. Then, he collapses onto the couch, needing to sit down.

"I'm happy to hear that. I don't... it was never my intention to take advantage of anyone. Do I really come across like the sort of person who might?"

Sitting down beside him, Rumi shakes her head.

"I don't think so. I think that was all Evelynn, really."

When Amadeus gives her a curious look, she just shrugs.

"There's clearly a lot of trauma there. Whatever Evelynn has been through, even beyond just Millennium being shitheads, it's painted her entire worldview."

Mira nods, her arms crossed over her chest.

“The world’s been shitty for so long that she expects it to keep being shitty. I know that feeling really well... it was how I felt before Celine recruited me. Heh, remember back during our training, how long it took for me to let you guys in? Fuck, I even made Zoey cry...”

Mira grimaces and looks away at that last part, prompting Zoey to hop over and hug the taller girl from the side.

“H-Hey, I just sniffled a bit! It’s okay, Mira!”

“Yeah, yeah...”

Somehow, Amadeus didn’t think Zoey had ‘just sniffled a bit’. Still... this conversation helps. The problem is...

“What do we do next? Give them all some space to figure out things on their own? Evelynn just shot out a bunch of secrets about all of them, even if they were vague. I just... look girls, this time I can’t make this decision on my own. You all might not have the same experiences as K/DA, but you would know what they’re going through better than me. I don’t want to mess this up...”

Rumi, Zoey, and Mira all share another glance with one another at that, before finally Rumi speaks up.

“I think you’re right to give them some space, Amadeus. Only they can decide when they’re ready for more. Right now... they just need to know that they’re safe and free. Of course, that might ultimately mean letting them go...”

Amadeus didn’t like that idea. Mostly because he was afraid Millennium would just snatch them up again if any of them left the protection of the tower. But... there was a thin line between protection and imprisonment, wasn’t there?

“Just because we want to give them space doesn’t mean we can’t offer them an open hand though!”

Zoey's sudden exclamation draws all of their eyes over to her, only to see her bouncing up and down excitedly.

"Here's what I'm thinking... cuddle pile tonight... and tomorrow, after breakfast, we go down to the studio and have some fun! The studio... which is just a floor above the guest rooms!"

Well now... there was an idea.

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!