

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

A/N: Lucrezah bides her time.

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In the end, if Lucrezah wanted the fastest answers possible, she would abuse her position and go to Serafall to ask her fellow Satan to look into things for her. Hell, Serafall might even already have an answer... she was a fan of both Huntrix and K/DA as well, so it was almost certain that she was keeping tabs on them.

And yet... that was the easy path. It was also a slippery slope, because if Lucrezah started having Serafall stalk their favorite music groups for her *now*, where would it end?

... No. It was better if she stalked them herself in her own free time. That was definitely the morally superior option.

Of course, as Lucrezah looks around her office at the stacks of paperwork, she sees the problem inherent with her decision. It's going to be days if not weeks before she has a free moment, let alone enough time to hop over to Earth and do her own investigation.

Ugh... well, she might as well get a move on. If she worked fast enough, she should be able to justify going up to Earth by the end of the week at least! And then she would learn once and for all what the hell was going on! And if anyone had touched a hair on any of those girls' heads, they were going to rue the day! RUE IT!

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Amadeus feels a strange shiver go down his spine, even as he lounges back on Huntrix's couch. As if someone is walking over his grave. And yes, he'd just

learned that turn of phrase. He rather liked it! Though it did beg the question... did he even have a grave?

... Doubtful. Grayfia is the only one who would have bothered making him one, and she was too busy looking over his comatose person for five hundred years. Letting out a soft, amused huff, Amadeus turns away from his own thoughts and sweeps his gaze across the room.

Their little 'jam session' downstairs had been a complete success as far as he was concerned. K/DA had been a little hesitant at first, but they'd really gotten into things as time went on. It was like Amadeus had been able to see them slowly realizing in real time that they were making music for the fun of it rather than because of those shitty contracts.

And Huntrix, of course, was as high energy and bombastic as ever. Mira's dance moves, Zoey's quick wit and sharp tongue, as well as Rumi's singing voice drew K/DA in like nothing else, prompting a collaborative effort between the seven young women that had truly taken Amadeus' breath away.

Eventually though, it'd been lunchtime and they'd all made their way back up to the penthouse, where things had gotten a bit crowded. Still, utilizing the kitchen island along with the dining table, they'd been able to make it work. And having a veritable feast delivered up from the Tower Kitchens meant nobody went hungry.

In the aftermath of that meal, some of the girls had gone off to do their own thing and others were chilling like Amadeus was now. Some are still in the common area, but many have spread out through the rest of the tower. He's pretty sure Mira took Kai'Sa to look at Huntrix's wardrobes, which is of course it's own entire floor. And Rumi is off somewhere with Evelyn, while Zoey and Akali are trading knife throwing tips over in the corner.

As such, aside from his ever-present shadow in the form of Grayfia, Amadeus is all alone on the couch when Ahri abruptly sits down next to him. The nine-tailed fox's ears are twitching rapidly and giving away her nervousness despite her attempt to act nonchalant.

“... Hey.”

Amadeus blinks and then offers Ahri an encouraging smile.

“Hey to you too, Ahri. You doing alright?”

“I’m fine.”

Her answer is immediate and defensive... and tinged with a hint of dishonesty as a result. Seeming to realize that herself, Ahri’s fox ears pull down and she huffs.

“... I really am fine. Lunch was good. The time in the studio was also good. Everything has been... good. It still feels a little surreal that just yesterday we were locked up in our dorm and now we’re here and we ripped up our own contracts last night and...”

Catching herself rambling, Ahri trails off, prompting another smile from Amadeus.

“It’s a lot to process. Nobody is expecting you to be there in less than a day.”

Huffing again, Ahri shakes her head.

“Except it’s not less than a day for me, is it? Maybe the others... but you and Rumi *told* me that you would save us. That you would free us. And I... I didn’t really believe you, I don’t think. Not until I had my contract in my hands and was able to shred it myself...”

Amadeus just shrugs in response.

“It’s alright that you didn’t believe us back then. Words are wind, right? We had to prove it through our actions. Heh, I hope we’ve successfully done so, yeah?”

“... Yes, I'd say so. You've more than earned my trust at this point. Which is why... I think you deserve to know the truth about me. Especially before it comes back to bite us all in the ass.”

Amadeus frowns a little, his brow furrowing in concern. On the one hand, he wants to tell Ahri that she doesn't need to tell him anything before she's ready. On the other hand, that sounded quite foreboding... and Amadeus had to admit, he didn't want to leave a situation brewing that would risk harming anyone he cared about.

In the end, he stays quiet and lets Ahri broach the topic in her own time. To her credit, she only hesitates for a few seconds more before speaking.

“Evelynn sort of already spilled the beans. I'm... mixed race. Korean and Japanese. But whereas the humans can get away with that sort of thing, my kind really cannot. I'm half-kumiho and half-kitsune... and more than that, I'm cousin to the current leader of the West Youkai Faction in Kyoto.”

Amadeus soaks all of this in for a long moment. It seemed like a lot. But at the same time...

“I appreciate you telling me this Ahri, so please don't take it the wrong way when I admit I have no idea what most of that really means for us.”

Ahri blinks and stares at him, one of her fox ears twitching. Then, she lets out a light laugh.

“You truly mean that, don't you? What sort of Devil Lord are you supposed to be exactly? You reincarnate Huntrix, you rescue us from Millennium... but you seriously have no idea what sort of political ant hills you're kicking over in the process?”

Ah. Well... chuckling sheepishly, Amadeus rubs the back of his neck for a moment before shrugging as he decides to tell the truth.

"I'm a bit of a special case, you could say. Until a couple months ago, I was in a magical coma... for five hundred years."

Ahri freezes and just stares at him, wide-eyed. Amadeus nods, finding her reaction to be perfectly reasonable.

"Yes, I know. Technically, I come from the time of the Devil Civil War, when the current Satans rose up and took down the descendants of the Old Satans. I'm technically five hundred and twenty years old, but I've only been conscious for twenty of those years. Suffice to say, this modern era is filled with both wonders and horrors so far... but I'm glad I was able to help you and your friends all the same."

Ahri's mouth opens and closes wordlessly for a few moments longer before she finally finds her voice.

"FIVE HUNDRED YEARS?!"

Her shouted exclamation prompts Zoey and Akali to look over at them from across the room, even as Amadeus winces. Grayfia also tenses up, but he's pretty sure he's the only one even registering her presence at this point.

"You were in a coma for five hundred years and only woke up two months ago?!"

Amadeus bobs his head back and forth.

"Ehh, give or take a few days, yes."

Unable to contain her curiosity, Akali comes over with Zoey following behind.

"What's all this about then, exactly?"

Before Amadeus can answer, Ahri turns to her bandmate while gesturing at him.

“He has no idea what he’s done! It’s not just an act! He’s not just pretending to be aloof and above it all! He might be a Devil Lord, but it’s like he time traveled from the middle of the Devil Civil War and then just started fucking around.”

Ahri turns back to Amadeus, dawning horror on her face.

“Holy shit. You reincarnated Huntrix without permission, didn’t you? The Underworld is going to flip out... and they’re the least of your worries!”

Amadeus cocks his head to the side. That last bit about ‘the least of his worries’ was concerning... but at least when it comes to the first part he can clear things up.

“The Underworld is already aware. We’re in contact with the Satan Leviathan. She actually helped us in stealing your contracts... she provided the distraction the day we pulled off the heist.”

Ahri’s jaw drops open again at that and even Akali’s eyes widen in shock. Amadeus just shrugs.

“Regardless, I don’t care who wants to pick a fight over my actions or decisions. I’m content that I haven’t made any mistakes. I’ve only done what I wanted to do and what I considered necessary. I won’t apologize for any of it... to anyone.”

Zoey grins and shoots Amadeus a thumbs up at that, clearly in full agreement. Ahri and Akali, meanwhile, exchange a long look, something passing between them. Finally, Ahri looks back at him, even more serious than before now.

“When the Powers That Be find out that Millennium no longer has ahold on me, I don’t know what they’ll do. My cousin will probably want to retrieve me, but I am a blemish on her court so there are some among her subordinates who would prefer I don’t return there... that I die instead. And that’s to say nothing of those here in Korea who consider me an abomination for my kitsune blood. There will likely be assassination attempts.”

Taking a deep breath, Ahri stares Amadeus right in the eye.

“That is what you’re signing up for by continuing to shelter me. A political mess in one hand and nighttime assaults on this tower in the other.”

Dead silence follows her proclamation, only to be broken by Akali. The rapper crosses her arms over her chest and bobs her head in a nod.

“Yeah, same here probably. If my family finds out I’m no longer under contract with Millennium, they’ll definitely try to retrieve me or kill me. No doubt about it.”

Well now. That’s some heavy stuff. And yet... maybe Amadeus is crazy, but he’s not that worried. Rather...

“I won’t let anyone hurt or take you girls. I’ve said it before, haven’t I?”

Ahri scoffs.

“Sure you have, but you didn’t know all the facts back then. You can’t seriously be planning to face off against countless supernatural factions for us. You barely even know us! And besides... I can tell you’re strong but believe me when I say you’re not strong enough to deal with everything coming your way if you continue to shelter us.”

Amadeus just smiles. Sure, he could bring up Grayfia in this moment... but he doesn’t. He knows she prefers to be as unobtrusive as possible, most of the time. She is a powerhouse though, as evident by the fact that he quite literally can’t make her his Queen yet. However, on that note...

“Maybe not. But I’ve been training and so has Huntrix. And we’re all going to keep training as well. You can join us if you want. We can all get stronger together. Strong enough to ward off attempts on your lives, strong enough to say ‘no’ to the ‘Powers That Be’. Strong enough to get everything we want in this life.”

For that last part, Amadeus does glance over at Grayfia, though none of the girls seem to notice. He’s definitely thinking about the day he’ll be able to make

Grayfia his Queen. Once he's Ultimate Class, once he reaches close enough to her level... she will be taking his Queen Piece. And that, Amadeus knows, is a goal worth fighting for.

Grayfia blushes under his fond, affectionate gaze and they share a moment together... before Ahri unknowingly breaks it.

"Sure. We just have to join your peerage first, right?"

Amadeus turns his eyes back to the nine-tailed fox and arches a brow.

"No. Didn't I already say that I wasn't reincarnating any of you any time soon? Helping you get stronger is not contingent on you all joining my peerage... it's not contingent on *anything*. It's just an offer; one made because it sounds like you need the help. So help I'm willing to give."

Amadeus feels a weird mixture of amused and bemused as Ahri and Akali both stare at him. On the one hand, he understands they've both been through a lot and are going to be extremely slow to trust for the next while. On the other hand, how many times is he going to have to explain himself before they finally accept that he has no ulterior motives?! Seriously, it was getting a little ridiculous!

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