

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

A/N: Grayfia and Celine return~

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When Grayfia returns them to Huntrix's Tower some time later, she makes sure to do so on a lower floor than the penthouse, that way they can both enter via the elevator. It's not that she wants to keep anything from her Lord and Master necessarily, but she feels a little bit embarrassed about dragging Celine all the way to the Underworld now that they've talked and found common ground.

Of course, they still step off of the elevator together... and by the time they do so, Amadeus and the others are all awake. Grayfia's Lord sits on the couch with Rumi in his lap while Mira is making food in the kitchen and Zoey is sitting on the kitchen island kicking her legs back and forth.

All for of them freeze up when they see Celine... and Amadeus furrows his brow in confusion when he sees Grayfia with her. Rumi, meanwhile, immediately jumps up out of Amadeus' lap at the sight of her mentor, looking like she's been burned.

"C-Celine! It's not what it looks like! I-!"

Celine just raises a hand and shakes her head.

"It's alright Rumi. You don't have to explain yourself to me."

Rumi's jaw drops open in disbelief and both Zoey and Mira pause and look over as well, utterly baffled. Celine takes advantage of their silence to pan her gaze around to the two of them as well, meeting their eyes with her own before continuing on.

“None of you have to explain yourselves to me. All three of you are fully grown women. You know better than I what’s best for you... you can make your own decisions now... and I just have to accept that.”

There’s a silent pause where Rumi opens and closes her mouth wordlessly. And then...

“CELINE’S BEEN BODY SNATCHED!”

Zoey breaks the silence by shrieking at the top of her lungs and fleeing leaping down from the kitchen island to hide behind it instead. The breach of decorum is something Grayfia might talk with her about later... but to be fair, Zoey wasn’t wearing her maid uniform right now and therefore wasn’t ‘on the clock’ as humans liked to say.

Besides, Grayfia is not oblivious to what the youngest member of Huntrix is trying to do, defusing the awkward situation with humor. Indeed, Mira just scoffs at both Celine and Zoey and turns back to her cooking, while Rumi groans and rubs the bridge of her nose between her fingers.

“Zoeeeeey...”

Celine, for her part, lets out a chuckle, taking it in good stride and surprising the younger women even further in the process.

“Apologies if I’ve been such a pain that those words are enough to make you think I’ve been replaced by an alien. I fear I’ve put far too much of my own expectations on you girls... even if you managed to rise and meet them at every turn. And I’m sorry if I haven’t said it enough... but I truly am so very proud of all three of you.”

There’s another pause at that, prompted by Mira grunting and speaking in a deadpan drawl.

“Yeah. Definitely body snatched.”

“I know, right?!”

Rumi, in contrast with Zoey and Mira’s flippant responses, looks like she’s about to cry. Finally, she crosses the room in a few strides and throws her arms around a surprised Celine, pulling her into a powerful hug that the older woman grunts at for a moment before hesitantly returning.

Grayfia, meanwhile, makes her way over to her Master’s side where she belongs. As soon as she’s close enough, Amadeus leans in with wide eyes to whisper to her.

“What did you do to her? You didn’t hypnotize her, did you?”

Blinking, Grayfia holds back the urge to smile even as she shakes her head.

“No, Master. I simply kept her from interrupting you all while you slept. After that, we spoke at length and... came to an understanding. She is not quite so difficult, once I explained to her that you are not the monster she fears you to be.”

Lord Amadeus makes a noise in the back of his throat at that, before glancing back at the couch.

“I suppose you were also the one who... tidied up after we were done?”

Here, Grayfia allows herself a very small smile. As a treat. Dipping her head in a nod, she hums.

“Yes my Lord.”

“Well... thanks for that.”

“No thanks are necessary. It is my duty as your maid to clean up your messes.”

Amadeus huffs and rolls his eyes good naturedly, causing Grayfia’s smile to grow just a little bit more. She knows he’s mostly humoring her by letting her continue to be his maid above all else. If he’d forced the issue, she probably

would have married him and become Lady Valefor... but Grayfia isn't sure she would have been content with that.

Regardless, as they both pause, watching Rumi and Celine having their moment together, Grayfia only hesitates briefly before mentioning one other thing.

"Ah, but on the topic of hypnosis... Serafall did remove Celine's memories of their conversation, Master."

Amadeus' head snaps to her quickly at that, his eyes narrowing into slits and his tone becoming an angry hiss.

"What?"

Grayfia nods her head in the direction of Celine, keeping her voice quiet so that only he can hear her.

"She's the reason that Serafall found us. She tried to activate an ancient treaty between the Underworld and her organization in retaliation for the reincarnation of Huntrix. Serafall spoke to her... and then promptly erased her memories of the conversation so Celine would think she received no response, before coming here to try to strong arm us into submission."

As much as she could now appreciate Celine's perspective a lot more, and as much as she did believe the human woman wasn't as bad as first impressions had initially made her seem... Grayfia still felt like Amadeus should have all the facts. Her Lord needed to know everything so he could decide how best to respond.

On the one hand, Celine had caused them a lot of trouble by inadvertently siccing Serafall on them like she did. On the other hand, Celine, as the girls' mentor, could technically be considered under the banner of House Valefor. Which meant she would have House Valefor's protection... if Amadeus chose to see it that way.

As his anger quietly mounts, Grayfia figures it could go either way... and she'll happily support his decision regardless of her own feelings in the matter. Finally, Amadeus lets out another hissing breath.

"Grayfia... can you reverse the memory modification?"

Smiling slightly, Grayfia inclines her head.

"I believe I can, Master. Do you want me to?"

"Yes. Wait... first, we should at least tell them."

Grayfia simply hums in acknowledgment and follows Amadeus' lead as he steps forward. As is appropriate, her Master draws the attention of everyone in the room almost instantly once he wants it. He just has this aura about him, making it all but impossible to ignore him when he's seeking attention.

Amadeus pauses with his mouth open, having been about to call out... but with everyone's eyes on him, he shakes his head and moves along.

"Celine."

Huntrix's mentor stiffens up at his grave tone, clearly not sure what to expect from him.

"... Your memory has been tampered with by another Devil. Grayfia here can fix it, but I wanted you to know first. Is it alright for her to go ahead and remove the modifications?"

For a moment the room is silent... and then everyone tries to talk at once. Celine is baffled, while Rumi, Zoey, and Mira are all varying degrees of angry. Grayfia watches as Amadeus raises a hand, their Lord and Master silently demanding quiet... and getting it too. He nods to Huntrix in particular with an apologetic grimace.

"You all already met the Devil in question... it was Serafall."

Then, he looks back to Celine questioningly. Finally, the human woman nods hesitantly.

“I... yes, please.”

She looks to Grayfia and Grayfia finds herself pleased that they'd had their long chat... because she can see the trust in Celine's eyes. Stepping forward, Grayfia doesn't mince words or waste time. She simply pulls at Serafall's efforts, unraveling them.

It's not something just anyone could have done to be fair, but Serafall hadn't gone out of her way to make her modifications too reinforced, so an Ultimate Class Devil like Grayfia is able to reverse the memory loss relatively easily.

Celine lets out a sharp gasp as her memories return to her... then, she scowls angrily.

“That... bitch!”

Zoey gasps in scandalized delight.

“Ohmygod, Celine just swore!”

Celine just growls some more.

“That fucking lying cunt of a whore!”

Zoey's eyes widen, no longer as delighted.

“Ohmygod, Celine is swearing...”

Fortunately, Celine doesn't seem to have much more vitriol left banked up beyond that. In fact, she collapses backwards onto the couch behind her, seeming exhausted all of the sudden.

"I suppose... I suppose I brought it on myself though. I should have known better than to trust a literal embodiment of Hell..."

Then, realizing what she's saying, she flushes and looks to them, specifically Amadeus and Grayfia.

"Ah... present company excluded, of course?"

Grayfia exchanges an amused look with her Master, with Lord Amadeus shaking his head as he turns his gaze back to Celine.

"It's alright. We're not exactly on the best of terms with the Underworld's leadership either."

Celine nods absently at that.

"Oh right, yes... Grayfia told me."

Her Master shoots her a glance, but Grayfia just hums... she'd tell him everything later of course. Just in case her actions really were deserving of punishment.

"... I led this Serafall Leviathan right to all of you, didn't I?"

Celine suddenly looks stricken, even as none of Huntrix are willing to meet her eyes. Because yes, she'd done exactly that. Grayfia watches as the human woman hesitates for a moment... and then bows her head to Amadeus.

"My sincerest apologies."

Lord Amadeus looks surprised for a moment before waving it off.

"It's fine. You were doing what you thought was best for your girls, right? So I get it. Besides, it did end up working out... though Serafall certainly has a lot to answer for."

“Damn straight she does!”

Rumi finally speaks up, the purple-haired young woman looking particularly incensed, her hands curling into claws like she wants to get them around Serafall’s neck and wring it out. Grayfia doesn’t necessarily fault her for it... Serafall had essentially messed with Celine’s mind out of laziness, so she didn’t have to deal with the human woman any longer. It was a flagrant abuse of power.

"Perhaps we should cancel the 'collab'?"

Amadeus’ suggestion is met with a pause from Rumi and the others. Celine furrows her brow.

“What’s this about a ‘collab’?”

Rumi gives Amadeus an imploring look, which he responds to with a nod and a wave of his hand. The situation with Serafall is quickly explained to Celine after that, and once Rumi is done, Celine immediately shakes her head.

“You can’t cancel the collaboration. Or... my apologies, allow me to rephrase that. You shouldn’t cancel the collaboration. You can obviously do whatever you want and should only treat my words as advice... but ultimately, that collaboration will help you all even more than it will help Serafall, I do believe.”

There’s a pause as Celine takes a breath, only to realize everyone is hanging off her every word. Straightening up a bit, she continues on.

“Not only will it give Huntrix some much needed good PR ahead of their next album release, but it also gets this woman off of your back for a bit, right? You said that she said she ‘wants you all to herself’. Well, that’s fine and all, but the less you have to deal with her, the better... and this way, you don’t have to deal with her quite so much outside of the collaboration.”

Amadeus scowls, but not because Celine is giving bad advice. Rather...

"I can't let her get away with her assault on your mind though. You're under the protection of House Valefor."

Celine blinks owlishly at that, even as Grayfia silently nods approvingly. She would have supported her Lord's decisions no matter what, but she would be lying if she said she wasn't happy he'd picked this path.

"I am?"

"Of course you are! Rumi, Mira, and Zoey are all members of my House now. You, as their mentor and close ally, therefore, fall under the protection of my House. It's only one degree of separation... Serafall should have known better."

Amadeus huffs as he crosses his arms over his chest.

"... But I suppose she didn't, given she didn't even know who had really reincarnated Huntrix until she ambushed us after she'd already spoken to you and modified your memories. However, once she *did* find out, she should have moved to rectify her mistake. That she didn't... is unconscionable and needs to be addressed."

Celine blinks before slowly nodding as she internalizes what he's saying.

"I see... well then, it is my suggestion that you nevertheless keep the collaboration intact and seek other forms of compensation."

Grayfia watches her Lord and Master consider that for a long moment.

"Alright then. I know what we're going to do."

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