

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

**A/N: Amadeus tells Celine the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help him- oops, better not use the G-word.**

**-x-X-x-**

“You’re right.”

Amadeus’ words land quite heavily in the otherwise silent room. Several people jerk, including the woman those words were directed at. Celine’s eyes widen and then narrow, even as he smiles crookedly and shrugs.

“Not about Rumi being tricked by me, mind you. But you’re right about the other things. I’m not human. I am a Lord of the Underworld... a Devil, if you will. We don’t share much in common with the demons I’m given to understand that these girls fight to be fair... we don’t eat souls for one, and even the trading of souls as currency has fallen out of practice, or so I’ve been given to understand.”

Celine doesn’t look happy to be hearing this, but before she can respond, Amadeus is continuing on, basically trying to get ahead of the inevitable blow up he assumes they’ll be getting from the woman.

“You’re also right that Rumi was extremely lucky to survive to adulthood... and that there was no conventional way by which to save her. She was dying, being killed by her own nature... which is why part of the help that I gave her was to change that very nature.”

He glances over to Rumi, who stands there with her back ramrod straight, looking uncertain... but also still not speaking up. If she wanted him to lie to her mentor, then she probably shouldn’t have thrown out that earlier line. ‘Nothing but the truth now’, wasn’t it? He liked that... he liked that a lot.

“... Rumi is now a Reincarnated Devil, having joined my species. This is the reason behind her miraculous recovery, because when one is reincarnated into a Devil, they keep all of the benefits of their previous species with none of the downsides. As such, Rumi’s half-demon heritage is no longer trying to consume her human soul from the inside out. She is no longer in danger of dying to such a tragic fate.”

Silence falls as Amadeus comes to the end of his explanation. Oh wait, he should probably mention the rest as well, shouldn’t he?

“Also, Zoey and Mira have chosen to join Rumi as Reincarnated Devils within my Peerage.”

He figures keeping that a secret would just cause problems later on, right? Best to get everything out in the open now. Only... well, suffice to say, Celine had looked *spectacularly* conflicted the more he’d been talking before. However, the moment he mentions Zoey and Mira were also now Reincarnated Devils, the conflict flees her features and she looks to the two young women, horrified.

“Wha- you two?! You abandoned your humanity?! Why? You weren’t in any danger of losing your lives like Rumi was! Why would you do such a thing?!”

Rumi winces while Zoey flinches back... but Mira steps forward aggressively, scowling all the while.

“Yeah? Why didn’t you tell us that Rumi was half-demon, Celine?”

Stiffening, Celine’s lips thin out.

“Because I trained you all to kill demons. I didn’t want there to be any confusion... and I couldn’t risk you hurting Rumi if you found out the truth...”

“Bullshit.”

“Mira!”

But Rumi's cry falls on deaf ears as Mira takes another step towards Celine, all but growling.

"You could have told us from the start. The moment you recruited Zoey and me; we were as fresh as fucking newborn lambs. We didn't know shit about demons or anything. Yeah, you trained us to kill demons... but Rumi wasn't even a demon, she was just half. You could have told us from the start and we would have accepted it. We would have accepted her. Because she's Rumi and she's **ours.**"

Celine shakes her head.

"I couldn't risk that! I couldn't risk her! And I couldn't risk you girls either! You HAD to internalize that everything with patterns needed to die. Hesitation in pitched combat with demons could have gotten any of you killed! And look what happened! Look what Gwi-Ma managed just by throwing a demon boy band at you all!"

"YES! Look what happened! Because we didn't know Rumi was lying to us on YOUR orders, we thought the worst of her! Because we didn't know Rumi's origins, we thought she'd made a deal with Gwi-Ma! Face the facts Celine, what happened at Namsan Tower was YOUR fault! The Honmoon was destroyed because you drove a wedge between us when we needed to be at our strongest and most unified! And in doing so, Rumi almost died because of YOUR failures!"

Mira's latest string of retorts seem to be landing like a string of brutally placed blows, one after another. Celine flinches at every accusation, even taking a step back at the end. She looks wide eyed and stricken and also horrified that Mira might just be right... or maybe WAS right.

"Enough!"

Rumi finally steps back in, moving in front of Mira and putting a hand up to keep Mira from advancing further. The taller girl stops and pauses, looking irritated but also perhaps feeling she might have gone too far. With a grimace, she crosses her arms over her chest, not retreating but also no longer advancing.

“That’s... enough. Celine... Celine only ever advised me. I’m a grown woman, have been for almost as long as we’ve all known each other. I could have told you both the truth myself... I *should* have told you. That’s not just on her, that’s on me as well.”

Mira scowls but doesn’t try and argue. On the other hand...

“That’s not entirely fair to you, Rumi. Celine raised you. Sure, we might all be adults... but she’s always been The Adult. And she failed us. Mira isn’t wrong about that.”

Zoey’s words, spoken in a quiet, somber tone, have just as much of an impact of both Celine and Rumi as Mira’s angry diatribe. Rumi doesn’t seem able to bring herself to disagree with Zoey, and Celine...

“Did I truly fail you all this much though? That you would forsake your humanity and join hands with... with a Devil? For what? Did he demand all of you in order to save Rumi? Was that the price?”

Quiet falls as none of the members of Huntrix seem to want to answer that question. For a second, Amadeus wonders if he’s going to have to step in again... but Rumi takes a deep breath, straightens up, and looks to Celine.

“Celine... I think you should go. For now, anyways. I... I do want to talk to you at some point. Just the two of us. And I want us to be able to explain things to one another. But for now... I don’t think you should come to the Tower without permission. I think... we need some space from you.”

Damn. Amadeus glances over to Grayfia to see what she thinks of all of this, but she looks as impassive and unmoved as ever, having stepped back to his side once it became clear Celine wasn’t going to get the chance to try and attack him.

Glancing to Bobby, meanwhile, shows that the stout man looks rather stricken by the exchange... but he holds his tongue all the same, staying out of all of it. All in all, everyone is quiet, watching to see how Celine will react.

The face of Huntrix's mentor seems to go through several different emotions, from consternation to grief to even a flicker of hope at the idea that Rumi won't shut her out forever. Finally though, she settles on resignation and slowly nods.

"I see. I... understand. I will go then... contact me when you are ready, please."

There's a lot of emotion contained within that 'please'. Just about the most emotion a woman can show without bursting into tears, Amadeus can't help thinking. When Rumi just nods wordlessly in response, Celine sucks in a breath and turns on her heel, making her way back to the metal doors that she and Bobby had come in through in the first place.

She presses something on the wall and the metal doors cycle open a moment later, showing the weird small closet-like space behind them once more. Amadeus still doesn't know what's going on there, because Celine steps in and the doors close behind her. Did humans in the current age have teleportation as well? Hm, it would make sense given that Rumi and the others were so rich...

"So, um... not to be that guy, but it's kind of my job so I do have to ask... what does it mean for Huntrix's future that you're all Devils now?"

Bobby's voice breaking the quiet is both unexpected and not. He is, after all, the girls' 'manager', which through context clues Amadeus has taken to mean he... does something or other with their music?

Rumi, Zoey, and Mira all glance at him, prompting Amadeus to give them all encouraging smiles. They puff up at that, one and all, and Rumi looks to Bobby.

"It doesn't mean anything has to change, not in the immediate anyways. We'll finish out this current break and do another comeback. We... won't age anymore apparently, at least not in a way that anyone will notice. So eventually we'll have

to retire one way or another. But... yeah. Huntrix isn't going anywhere, Bobby. And you have a place with us as long as you want it too."

That seems to perk the human man up somewhat, even if he does shoot one last melancholic glance towards the doors that Celine had retreated through, clearly a little sad about how things had gone between her and the girls.

Still, Bobby proves to be nothing if not the adaptable sort as he turns back and shoots a big, genuine smile in Amadeus' direction.

"Sounds like I have you to thank for saving Rumi's life. I know I said it before, but that was before I understood all the details... so let me just say it again. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping one of my girls."

Amadeus blinks, but ultimately nods, returning the smile with one of his own.

"Of course. Admittedly, I didn't come here tonight with intentions of saving anyone from certain death. Zoey summoned me of her own accord. But I'm happy I was able to help... and even happier to have met the girls and you. You all seem like lovely people."

At that, Rumi clears her throat.

"Before Bobby and Celine showed up... you wanted to hear our music, right Amadeus?"

Amadeus immediately straightens up, eyes widening in delight and excitement.

"Oh yes! Very much!"

Rumi glances to Mira and then to Zoey, a playful little smile dancing across her face.

"Well... while we could just show you recordings... and I think we should eventually so you can see what it looks like when we perform at a full concert since the next in person one will be months away, I also think a live performance

would be best. Why don't we all head down to the dance studio so we can show you what we're made of?"

Ooooh, that was a lot of things Amadeus only vaguely understood, but he gets enough from context alone to excitedly nod in agreement. With that, the girls and Bobby start to walk towards the metal doors. Amadeus glances to Grayfia before following after them, a little giddy.

"Oh, excellent! I've been wondering what human teleportation magic feels like, so I guess we'll get to experience that on top of your music!"

The former humans and Bobby give him strange looks as they all crowd together into the small square room beyond the metal doors.

"Uh... not teleportation, Amadeus. This is an elevator."

An... 'elevator'? And then Mira smirks, reaches forward, and presses a button... and Amadeus' stomach leaps up into his throat as the box they're in starts to move of its own accord!

As it does, Rumi helpfully explains what an 'elevator' is... much to Amadeus' horror. The humans had invented a contraption where they stuffed themselves in metal boxes and relied on ropes to pull themselves up and down their inordinately tall buildings. That didn't sound safe... that didn't sound safe at all!

Thankfully, the trip to the dance studio is quick and without incident, but Amadeus still looks at the 'elevator' somewhat askance as they leave it behind. If he can avoid it, he's never using one of those things ever again... they seem like death traps waiting to happen!

Of course, then they're in the dance studio itself, music starts playing, and the girls... the girls start performing. And all thought of awkward standoffs with Celine or humans inventing death traps or just about anything negative flees Amadeus' mind as he listens and watches Huntrix do their thing.

... They're amazing. They're utterly amazing.

-x-X-x-

Celine doesn't know what to do. And when she doesn't know what to do, she resorts to the one thing she does best... research. As Rumi had gotten weaker and weaker over the past several days, Celine had thrown herself into the Archives, the repository of all the knowledge gathered by the generations of hunters before her.

Unfortunately, she'd only found evidence of just how much of an anomaly Rumi was... no half-demon, half-human babe before Rumi had ever been successfully carried to completion. They almost always killed both themselves and their mothers in the womb, tragic as that was.

But Rumi was different... because Miyeong was different. The latter had been tied to the Honmoon, and Rumi had effectively been born as Miyeong's heir in that regard. So when Miyeong passed, Rumi became the youngest hunter the Honmoon had ever had and was sustained into adulthood by the Honmoon's ever growing spiritual power.

With the destruction of the Honmoon, the situation should have been hopeless. Celine definitely hadn't come across any mention of 'reincarnation' into another species being a potential solve at any point in her frenzied research.

But then again, she also hadn't been looking for it... now she is. And within a few hours of leaving Huntrix Tower behind and returning to the Archives, Celine finds something that just might be useful to her.

This isn't the first time Hunters have dealt with Devils, apparently. Over a hundred years ago, before the wars, there had been an instance of a Devil trying to recruit a Hunter into their peerage. It didn't work, mostly because the Honmoon protected its Chosen Three from such things.

The resulting mess was apparently deemed a 'political incident' by the Devil Government down in this 'Underworld'. Clearly not the same thing as Gwi-Ma's Demon Realm, Celine figures.

Still, what she finds... is a treaty. A treaty where the Devils' leaders had promised to leave the Hunters alone going forward. A treaty that declared no Devil was allowed to 'reincarnate' another Hunter, because the Devils recognized that the Hunters did good work keeping Gwi-Ma and his Demons at bay.

This was what Celine needed. Rumi was safe now... but Zoey and Mira never should have had to sacrifice their humanity to this scummy Amadeus character. No matter how beautiful he was, Celine saw right through it... she saw the monster underneath.

But of course, she was too weak to do anything about it personally. Without the Honmoon, without even enough spiritual power to summon her Spirit Weapons anymore, Celine had only the strength of an average human woman to lean on.

Maybe that was why Amadeus saw fit to rub what he'd done to her charges in her face like he had. Because he knew or at least believed that she couldn't actually do anything to him for his crimes.

... Celine smiles as she clings to the ancient, century-old parchment in her grasp. Maybe she couldn't do anything... but they would see what happened when she sicced his own people on him.

She was taking this all the way to the top. And she was going to demand restitution, one way or another.

**-x-X-x-**

**A/N: "It's fine, Celine can't do anything about this anyways."**

**Celine: "I'd like to speak to the manager!"**

**\*Surprised Pikachu Face\***

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