

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

A/N: Moving right along~

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Mira and Zoey's hands dip into the case... and come out again a moment later, each of them holding up a Pawn. Amadeus blinks and raises an eyebrow at their choice, curious as to why they wouldn't pick stronger pieces given the chance.

Zoey, seeing his reaction, puffs up a bit.

"You shouldn't be so quick to discount a woman's intuition, Amadeus! Especially when it's a woman you love!"

Mira shrugs like it's all beneath her.

"Yeah, what she said."

It takes him a moment to realize what they're saying. Basically, they've come down on Grayfia's side of the argument and don't think he should 'waste' stronger pieces on them. Hm, not that it was really much of an argument. Grayfia had simply given her opinion, something she was of course always allowed to do. Meanwhile, he'd disagreed.

But to be clear, the only thing Amadeus had really disagreed on was whether or not it should be Zoey and Mira's choice. So long as they didn't try to claim his Queen Piece, he didn't really care which pieces they chose... Pawn or otherwise.

With a shrug of his own, Amadeus steps forward to do the deed. Only, to their credit, Zoey and Mira have one last surprise for him... and for themselves too. Grayfia had said it before, that the two women weren't worth more than one or two Pawns... but as it turns out, they're worth two, not one.

Four Pawns, two apiece, wind up sinking into Zoey and Mira's chests just like the Rook had sunk into Rumi's. Both of them gasp, backs arching for a moment as the Evil Pieces change them on a fundamental level, turning them from humans into reincarnated devils on the spot.

Despite already undergoing the procedure herself, Rumi still looks a little nervous, biting her lower lip as she glances between her friends cautiously.

"Zoey? Mira? How are you both feeling?"

Mira responds first, moving her arms and legs away from herself and studying her body for a moment.

"... Hard to describe, honestly. I definitely feel different... but a good different? Feels almost like we've got the Honmoon back... but not quite, if that makes sense."

Rumi nods along slowly even as Amadeus tilts his head to the side, considering whether or not that does make sense. Then, Zoey finally interjects.

"I feel... I feel *evil*!"

Rumi and Mira's heads whip around as the younger woman leaps up from the couch with a cackle.

"Pure Evil! Muwahahahaha!"

She lunges forward, grabbing Amadeus by the shoulders and beaming maniacally. Except there's a glint in her eye that gives him away.

"Let's take over the world, Master!"

"Zoey!"

Rumi's alarm makes it clear she actually buys it... but Mira's slight smirk makes it doubly clear she's not believing this for one second. Pulling away from Amadeus, Zoey spins around and plants her hands on her hips.

"There's no use fighting it, Rumi! We're evil now! We've joined the Dark Side, plain and simple! So we might as well lean into it and embrace our inner devils! I know you feel it too... the darkness calls to you!"

Rumi blanches, looking panicked... but also just a little intrigued? Maybe Zoey notices that second part too, or maybe she's just had her fun. Either way, a moment later she lets the act slip away and giggles, waving her hands through the air in surrender.

"I'm kidding, I'm kidding! Just playing around, you know!"

Rumi looks relieved at that, a relief that mostly overwhelms the smidge of disappointment in her eyes. Mira just snorts derisively. Meanwhile, Grayfia steps up alongside Amadeus and huffs, speaking quietly.

"Your newest servants are certainly lively, my Lord."

Grinning, Amadeus nods.

"I love it. They're perfect."

Of course, all three girls hear the exchange and turn their attention back to him and Grayfia. Zoey in particular all but skips up to the silver-haired maid, gazing up at her with shining eyes.

"Soooo... now that I'm a servant of 'Lord Amadeus' too, does that mean I'll have to be trained to be a maid?"

Amadeus arches a brow even as Grayfia goes still for a moment at the question. She shoots him a glance, but he just shrugs, leaving it up to her. Finally, Grayfia turns back and slowly nods.

“Not all of my Master’s servants must become maids... however, if you wish to be trained... do know that once you’ve begun, you will not be allowed to stop until I’ve brought you up to my standards.”

Rumi and Mira share a concerned glance at that, but Zoey just smiles as wide as she possibly can and bows deep at the waist.

“Then I’ll be in your care, senpai!”

Something approving flashes through Grayfia’s eyes at that, though her lips remain set in a tight pursed line.

“Very well. We shall see what can be made of you.”

“Was that a pun?!”

“No, it was not.”

“Awww...”

Amadeus watches this exchange with some amusement, even as he finds himself imagining Zoey in a maid uniform of her own, learning at Grayfia’s feet. It’s a frankly adorable mental image. Just way too cute. It brings a smile to his face as he pictures it... right up until he realizes everyone is now looking at him.

Oh right, he’s sort of in charge here, isn’t he? And now that everything is settled, what with Rumi no longer being in danger of dying and all three women converted to devils... they were probably wondering what was supposed to happen next, weren’t they?

Well... Amadeus looks to Grayfia and gestures around the opulent area with a grin.

“I would say our mortal currency problems have completely vanished now, right Grayfia? With this, we can just have the girls buy us some land so you can train me properly without worrying about property damage!”

Rumi straightens up at that.

“Uh, yeah... we definitely have enough money to purchase land. But what was that about property damage?”

“Ah, well it’s rather simple. Grayfia is what we call an Ultimate-Class Devil. She’s at the upper end of that classification, making her very, very strong indeed. I, meanwhile, am only a High-Class Devil. I too am at the upper end of High-Class, however I’m still much too weak to be able to use my Queen Piece on Grayfia just yet.”

Gesturing to himself and Grayfia, Amadeus finishes the explanation.

“Basically we need enough space for Grayfia and I to train extremely hard while not having to fret about innocent bystanders or damage to the surrounding terrain. Doing so down in the Underworld is out of the question because...”

Amadeus trails off there, suddenly realizing something rather crucial. He’s just brought Rumi, Zoey, and Mira into his peerage, making them part of his household and converting them into devils... and he forgot to tell them one very important thing before they made their decision.

The trio of musicians look at him curiously now, clearly all wondering why he’s trailed off... but not a single one of them looks suspicious or worried. Because they trust him for some reason.

“Ah... I’ve fucked up.”

As the members of Huntrix furrow their brows in confusion, Grayfia frowns and shakes her head at his side.

“You have not erred my Lord. They were not privy to our secrets before joining your peerage.”

Amadeus isn’t sure he agrees with that.

“They should have at least known what they were getting into...”

Grimacing, he turns to the girls.

“Sorry, it’s like this... we devils are a contentious lot at the best of times. Some would say we were born into war, made for it even. War has never been... my cup of tea, but I’m something of an anomaly. An exception.”

Judging by the blank faces, he’s not doing a good job of explaining, so Amadeus stops babbling and focuses up.

“Basically, Grayfia and I are from the losing side of the last major war in the Underworld. A war that took place five hundred years ago... and to be fair, we’re pretty sure the enemy believes us dead. However, we cannot train at the level we need to down in the Underworld because the enemy rules there now and could be alerted to our presence and therefore our continued survival. So... yeah.”

Even Amadeus knows he finishes that explanation rather lamely. But all he can do is watch as Rumi, Mira, and Zoey exchange looks for a moment before unanimously shrugging.

“We’re used to having enemies in other dimensions, honestly.”

“Yeah, we’re literally the product of four hundred years of shamans holding off a Demon King. And that culminated in one of us eating the Demon King so... bring it on?”

“Sounds to me like we really do need to conquer the world then! Maybe that world instead of this one?”

Zoey’s cheery tone keeps them all from processing her suggestion for a second but when they do, Rumi and Mira both groan out her name in unison.

““Zooooey...””

Amadeus, meanwhile, shakes his head with a grimace.

“Err, actually... the other side are kind of the good guys.”

That gets their attention in a big way and Amadeus holds up his hands in surrender at just how intense their gazes are.

“Not that Grayfia and I are the bad guys, to be clear! Because we’re not! We just... wound up on the wrong side of the war. But basically, the new leadership... might actually be fairer and kinder and all around nicer than the old leadership was.”

As the girls process this, Grayfia clears her throat.

“My Master is forgetting that one of those new leaders nearly killed him for no other reason than she is a hag who deserves to be put down like the rabid bitch she is. No matter the current or past state of the Underworld... we cannot trust the current leadership to treat us fairly. Therefore, we must remain hidden, full stop.”

Rumi, Mira, and Zoey all look alarmed by Grayfia’s characterization of Lucrezah Gremory, now Lucrezah Lucifer. Amadeus lets out a sigh and shakes his head. He probably SHOULD try to set the record straight and explain that Lucrezah didn’t actually intend to kill him... but she had been trying to kill Grayfia in that moment five hundred years ago, so he wasn’t really feeling generous. Especially since for him it was mere weeks ago.

“So... what about us then? Do we need to disappear too? Just... give up our human lives?”

Zoey’s concerned question draws equally concerned glances from her fellow musicians, but Amadeus is quick to nip that in the bud.

“No, I don’t think so. I’m pretty sure that would definitely do more harm than good, right Grayfia? If these three are famous in both the human world and the

Underworld like you said, them suddenly vanishing would only draw attention we don't want."

Grayfia slowly nods.

"My Lord is indeed correct. You three... I'm honestly surprised no Devil has ever tried to turn you before. Then again, knowing what I know now, I suspect you were left alone to continue dealing with this Demon King that's been mentioned. He and his ilk were probably a nuisance nobody wanted getting loose."

The trio of self-proclaimed Demon Hunters exchange further looks at that.

"... You're saying that we weren't approached with an offer before because... what, the devils were using us as their neighborhood exterminators or something?"

Grayfia nods easily.

"Yes, that's exactly right. Having you continue to perform should keep up the ruse. More than that however... Master, we now have a new path to power for you."

Wait, what? Amadeus glances over to Grayfia curiously, prompting her to adopt a small yet thoroughly satisfied smirk.

"These three are no longer tied to anything but you. However, the techniques they were trained in remain. Without the need for a barrier to power, they can utilize those techniques to empower themselves instead. And by empowering themselves, they empower their King in turn. A rising tide lifts all ships after all."

Mira narrows her eyes and leans forward.

"You're talking about the fans. You want us to drain our fans for energy and feed it to Amadeus instead of the Honmoon."

Grayfia meets Mira's gaze evenly without a single ounce of shame.

“Correct.”

Amadeus can tell that the idea doesn't fully sit right with his new servants. To be fair, it makes him a little uneasy too. But then, to be doubly fair, things had gotten rather out of hand tonight. He'd gone from answering a simple summoning to converting his first peerage members.

“I swear to you three, I won't do anything that requires you to harm innocents. I'm not that kind of devil... more than that, I'm not that kind of man.”

His heartfelt words seem to set Huntrix at ease, their shoulders slumping in visible relief as he makes his pledge. Grayfia, meanwhile, just huffs.

“It wouldn't hurt your fans anyways. Not anymore than the Honmoon 'hurt' your fans.”

Rumi squawks.

“The Honmoon didn't hurt anyone! It protected people!”

“Precisely.”

Grayfia's response causes the three girls to fall quiet in the face of her logic. Amadeus isn't so sure that said logic is infallible though... he really has no clue if the sort of power that Rumi and the others would collect for him would be the same as what they collected for the Honmoon.

“It wouldn't be difficult either. Just a simple bit of fine print added to all ticket and merchandise sales would be enough to start granting slivers of power to you three as well as your King. Nothing that even a weak mortal would feel or care about, to be clear.”

“... Not even the sickly ones? I've done WAY too many Make A Wish visits to want to risk siphoning off the last bit of life force from our most vulnerable fans.”

But Grayfia shakes her head.

“No, they would have to be mere seconds away from death for the amount of power I’m talking about to have an impact on their health. Even then... I mean it when I say we’re talking slivers. Splinters, even. Grains of sand works too, if it makes you feel better. But millions of grains of sand can add up, can’t they?”

Amadeus can tell that the girls still aren’t fully convinced. But since he himself still isn’t fully convinced, he decides it might be time to change the subject anyways. Clapping his hands together and drawing all of their attention back to him, he smiles.

“Let’s forget about all of that for now, yeah? This is a time of celebration. Rumi is going to live, after all. So... I hope it’s not too much of an imposition... but do you think I could hear some of your music? It’s just that I’ve been dying to ever since I found out you were musicians!”

His smile and energy proves infectious as Huntrix all begin to smile back, looking at each other and sharing nods.

However, before they can actually do anything aside from Rumi and Mira standing up to join Zoey... there’s a sudden ‘ding!’ in the air that causes all three of them to freeze in place and whip their heads towards a golden set of metal doors on the others side of the room.

Amadeus looks over as well just in time to see the metal doors begin to slide open...

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