

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

**A/N: Celine...**

**-x-X-x-**

The elevator doors open and Grayfia sighs as Celine steps out into the penthouse's common area. If only it were Bobby... but alas, she readies herself for a proper freak out.

And of course, she gets one. Celine looks around for a moment before her eyes finally land on the cuddle pile taking place on the couch. She looks strangely soft for a split second before she catches sight of Amadeus' face amid the others. And then her face scrunches up in anger and she starts to stomp forward.

Her mouth opens, likely to shout something like 'What the hell is going on here?!' at the top of her lungs... but of course, Grayfia has already acted to keep Celine from disturbing her Master's rest. He deserves to be allowed to nap as long as he wants with his peerage members.

It takes a split second for the human woman to realize that no sound is coming from her lips due to the silencing spell Grayfia has cast on her. When she finally does, her eyes widen and she brings her hands up to touch her lips in disbelief, confusion, and anger.

Before she can do the next most sensible thing and try to wake the sleeping foursome up physically, Grayfia reveals herself to Celine, stepping in front of her with narrowed eyes and a whispered command.

"You will not disturb their rest."

She's expecting the outrage and anger that she sees in Celine's face. What she's not expecting is for Celine to foolishly try to attack her. The older human

woman immediately drops into a fighting stance and then throws a perfectly executed kick at her face.

A foolish move to be sure. As things stand, Grayfia catches Celine by the ankle as she goes for a roundhouse kick to the side of Grayfia's head. Her movements are probably quite fast by human standards... but Grayfia is not human.

The thing is, Celine should know that. Why she's decided to attack anyways... is beyond Grayfia.

Well aware that she needs to tread carefully lest she manage to earn another punishment from her Lord, Grayfia nevertheless makes an executive decision in that moment... and teleports both her and Celine away so that Amadeus and Huntrix can continue resting.

They appear a moment later inside of the Valefor Safehouse in the Underworld, where Grayfia finally lets go of Celine's ankle, letting the other woman draw back and stare wildly at her surroundings. Now that she can no longer cause problems, Grayfia also removes the silencing spell. Immediately, the sound of Celine's elevated breathing fills the room.

"You can speak now."

Eyes whipping back to Grayfia, Celine grits her teeth.

"... Where have you taken me? Bring me back!"

"No."

Celine bristles angrily at Grayfia's answer... and then, to Grayfia's mild surprise, she deflates right then and there.

"Please. I need to..."

She trails off, prompting Grayfia to raise a brow. She never would have expected Celine to say please to her. That was interesting.

“You need to what?”

“... I need to speak with Rumi. It's important.”

Grayfia hums.

“You may speak to Rumi if that is what *she* wants after the four of them are done sleeping. Disturbing their rest now may have negative effects on their health.”

Celine's mouth opens and closes wordlessly for a moment, though Grayfia has not cast another silencing spell. Finally, she makes a noise of frustration in the back of her throat, her eyes glistening with unshed tears.

“I'm not... I can do nothing to stop you or your Master at this point. Even my best efforts to try and force your own government to reign you in have turned up nothing. All of this... isn't necessary.”

Grayfia furrows her brow, a little confused by what Celine is talking about.

“Explain what you mean by that. What are these 'best efforts'?”

Celine's shoulders slump a bit more and she sighs.

“We had a treaty with your kind. You Devils weren't allowed to come after us, specifically you weren't allowed to reincarnate our Hunters into Devils. When your Master turned Rumi and the others into Devils, he broke that treaty. So I tried to complain. I sent a message. But there's been no response.”

Alarmed now, Grayfia finds herself panicking for a moment. What if Celine's little complaint was merely lost in the bureaucracy of the Underworld and just waiting to arrive on the desk of someone important? What if Lucrezah found out about it? That thought brings anger along with panic. How dare Celine endanger her Master like this?!

... But then reason reasserts itself as Grayfia thinks for a second longer and comes to a realization based on everything she already knows. It wouldn't be Lucrezah's desk that Celine's complaint would end up on because Lucrezah Lucifer wasn't in charge of the Underworld's Foreign Affairs.

No, that role lay with... Serafall Leviathan. Suddenly, Grayfia understands how the Satan had managed to track them down. Celine's complaint must have reached Serafall down in the Underworld, leading the Leviathan to investigate personally. However, Serafall wasn't the type who would have gone in completely blind so...

Grayfia peers a bit more closely at Celine... and sees it. It's not easy to notice of course, especially since it was cast by Serafall, a very powerful Devil, but Grayfia herself isn't half-bad in the power department. That said, she can definitely tell... Celine's memory has been modified.

No doubt Serafall had stopped by, heard all of Celine's complaints, learned that Huntrix had been reincarnated as Devils... and then wiped Celine's mind of the conversation so she could go and try to take advantage of the situation herself.

Of course, Serafall hadn't anticipated Grayfia or Amadeus being involved, so she'd been caught rather flat footed and had to improvise. Still, the memory modification she'd performed on Celine remained intact.

For a moment, Grayfia considers removing it for the other woman... but in the end, she doesn't bother. Not only would she not do something like that without her Lord and Master's permission... she also isn't sure Celine deserves such a gesture from her either.

Instead, she focuses back on everything else Celine had just said.

"This treaty of yours... there's no way the Underworld would give you such concessions for nothing."

Celine bristles at that.

“Of course not! Your kind didn’t want Gwi-Ma and his ilk getting out anymore than we did! We maintained the Honmoon and kept Gwi-Ma at bay and you lot stayed away. That was the deal!”

... Does she truly not hear what she’s saying? Grayfia slowly blinks, waiting a moment to see if Celine would realize it without her having to spell it out to her. When that doesn’t happen, she finally just says it.

“Gwi-Ma is dead, correct?”

“... Yes but-!”

“And the Honmoon is gone as well.”

“That’s-!”

“The treaty that your forebearers made with the Underworld is no longer applicable.”

Celine crosses her arms over her chest defensively at that, growling.

“Gwi-Ma might not be permanently dead! He could still come back and without a Honmoon, he would run rampant until a new one can be made! He could already be in the Demon Realm right now building up his strength to strike!”

That... honestly, Grayfia wouldn’t have thought it possible but she’s starting to pity this woman.

“Gwi-Ma is not coming back. We have been to the Demon Realm; there is nothing there. What little remains of the demon population have scattered to the four corners of that realm in fear of us.”

Celine looks taken aback by that revelation.

“What? What are you talking about? You can’t just... walk into the Demon Realm like that! Even back before the Honmoon was created, to enter the Demon Realm was to lose your humanity, all of the ancient stories say so!”

... Okay this woman was almost painfully obtuse. At least this time when Grayfia gives her a moment to realize what she’s just said, Celine actually pauses and then grimaces as she catches her own mistake. Because... no humans had entered the Demon Realm even now. Just a whole bunch of Devils, reincarnated or otherwise.

Rather than call her out on her prejudiced mistake, Grayfia just shrugs.

“Rumi is able to bring us there. We’ve been using the Demon Realm as a training ground away from any prying eyes. It’s a desolate place... not good for much else.”

Celine stares at her for a long moment after hearing that.

“... Training ground. You’re using Gwi-Ma’s Realm as a... training ground.”

She sounds faint... and looks like she might be about to pass out. She’d best not because Grayfia certainly isn’t going to catch her if she does.

But to the human’s credit, she manages to keep her feet under her, even if she does sway a little bit for a moment. Finally though, she just gives up and looks for a nearby chair before sinking into it and dropping her head into her hands.

Hm... awkward. On the one hand, Grayfia really wasn’t interested in helping this woman come to terms with the fact that her world was changing. On the other hand, it would be a massive help to her Master if she could convince Celine to stop hounding Amadeus for transforming her students into Devils.

“It would seem to me that all avenues save for one have been closed to you.”

Celine looks up at that, blinking owlshly.

“Excuse me?”

Grayfia shrugs her shoulders.

“You seek redress for my Master’s actions even though what he did quite literally saved your charge’s life. And yet... there is nothing you can do to get back at him. Instead, it seems to me that your only path forward... is acceptance.”

“I... I’m not angry that he saved Rumi’s life! I’m angry that he convinced Mira and Zoey to give up their humanity in the process! There was no reason for either of them to become Devils!”

“I concur.”

Grayfia watches, mildly amused, as Celine looks entirely thrown by her response.

“You... concur?”

Sniffing haughtily, Grayfia looks down her nose at the human woman.

“Do you understand how it is we Devils reincarnate you humans? Its not free by any means. Lord Amadeus has a set amount of pieces available to him. He used one of the more valuable pieces to save Rumi, which I don’t necessarily think was a mistake on his part. However, even if I believe them to both be potential assets going forward, there’s no denying that my Master wasted his lesser pieces reincarnating Mira and Zoey. As they were those two simply weren’t nearly valuable enough for him to spend anything on them.”

As she explains all of this, Celine gawks for a moment... before getting angry all over again.

“How dare you?! Those girls have given their lives to fighting demons! They’ve put all their hearts into facing the darkness and coming out on top! Blood, sweat, and tears! How dare you say they aren’t valuable or worthy?!”

Grayfia smiles thinly.

“I said what I said. Fortunately for their sake, it is not my opinion that matters in this instance. My Master cared not for the value of his pieces... instead, he saw an opportunity to keep their friendships whole. By reincarnating every member of Huntrix, he has granted them the same incredibly long lifespans... so that Rumi does not have to watch her friends grow old and die long before she would.”

It's clear Celine hadn't thought about it from that angle. She looks flummoxed for a moment. Perhaps... well, perhaps something can be achieved here.

“Do you wish for their happiness?”

Her eyes snap to Grayfia's, going sharp as she growls.

“Of course I do!”

Tell me... did they not look happy back there, in the penthouse?”

Before Celine can respond, Grayfia casts a quick scry spell and makes the results appear between them, letting them both look in on the foursome. Fortunately Grayfia had gotten the chance to clean them all up before Celine arrived, because this point wouldn't have nearly the impact if the human woman had seen her charges all naked with Grayfia's Master.

Instead, Amadeus and Huntrix are all cozy and warm and cuddling together happily. Zoey has her face in Mira's neck, Mira has her arm wrapped around Zoey's shoulders, and both of them are laid halfway across Amadeus as he sleeps peacefully.

Most importantly of all, at least where Celine is concerned, is Rumi. Rumi, who is resting in the crook of Amadeus' neck and has a satisfied, contented smile on her lips as she dozes the day away.

Grayfia watches Celine's anger and indignation slowly melt away as she stares at the image in silence for several long moments.

"I just... I promised Rumi's mother I would protect her. That I would keep her safe. And I failed... every step of the way."

Ah. That confession... hm, Grayfia finds herself feeling a strange kernel of kinship with Celine at that.

"Let me tell you about my own failures then... and in doing so, perhaps you will learn what sort of man my Lord and Master truly is."

As she begins to speak on events that took place five hundred years ago, Celine... actually does listen, seeming to hang off of every word. Perhaps there's something to be salvaged here after all.

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