

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

A/N: Taking stock and taking things slow.

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Amadeus gets to feel smug about his idea for all of a moment before Grayfia goes and bursts his bubble with a grimace and shake of her head.

“It... won’t be that simple, Master.”

Huffing, he crosses his arms over his chest and narrows his eyes. This is as good a time as any to push things a bit further in the direction he wants them, isn’t it?

“You know, now that we’ve had sex, you don’t have to call me Master every single damn time. You can call me Amadeus now and again. Like you did when I was making you climax over and over, for instance.”

Heat rises to her cheeks, but Grayfia quickly regains her composure... though while she had fixed her skirt, her breasts are still out. Upon realizing this, she begins to fix up the buttons on her maid uniform while giving him a distinctly dry look.

“It wouldn’t be appropriate for me to get so familiar with you, Master.”

He wasn’t going to stand for that.

“And is fucking my maid right after waking up from a five hundred year coma ‘appropriate’ behavior, Grayfia?”

She goes completely still while on her last button and Amadeus just snorts.

“I’m not an idiot you know. I might be young, but I’m not stupid. I don’t mind us being unconventional; to be clear... but I also want to hear you say my name

from time to time. Especially when its just the two of us. And I want you to feel like you can speak your mind as well. I don't need a sycophant, Grayfia, even if you are my Head Maid."

There's a pause as Grayfia processes all of this... before finally nodding.

"Very well. However, I must still address you as Lord Valefor in unfamiliar company and Master Amadeus in familiar company as is proper."

Amadeus rolls his eyes but also smiles and nods.

"As is proper, yes. But right now..."

Grayfia hesitates for only a moment longer before nodding decisively.

"Yes. Right now, since its just the two of us... I am forced to admit that your plan of stealing a set of Evil Pieces is likely to be doomed from the start, Amadeus."

Grinning now, Amadeus cocks a brow.

"And do tell why that is."

"Well... there are a number of reasons. But they're all tied to the same exact man... the Super Devil known as Ajuka Beelzebub."

The inventor of the Evil Pieces, right. Amadeus gestures with his hand for Grayfia to elaborate.

"... Essentially, as one of the Four Great Satans and specifically the one who created the Evil Pieces in the first place, Beelzebub has total control over the production and storage of new Evil Pieces. Meaning that they're all stored in his territory under lock and key."

Amadeus hums.

“We already know that ‘lock and key’ won’t mean much to me, Grayfia. But I see why we can’t just run off to go and pick up a set of Evil Pieces right this moment. Not if we don’t want to run face first into the angry Super Devil we’re plotting to steal from. And I suspect there’s more than just that he hoards them like a dragon, isn’t there?”

Grayfia just nods.

“Yes. The other major issue, beyond the Evil Pieces being stored somewhere in Beelzebub’s territory, is that the only way to actually bind a set of Evil Pieces to you is to interact with a specific structure... also in the Satan Beelzebub’s territory. As far as I understand it, the structure is a monument of sorts where you are registered as a ‘King’ and therefore able to use your specific set of Evil Pieces as you like. Until registering at the monument, the Evil Pieces are nothing but so much crystal. Nobody has ever been able to figure out how Ajuka connects other Devils through said monument either, at least to my knowledge.”

Here, Grayfia’s shoulders slump.

“In truth, the monument is our biggest stumbling block, Amadeus. I confess, I do not know much about how it actually works. If the process is automated, maybe we would be fine. But if it in any way needs to go through the Great Satan himself...”

She trails off and Amadeus finishes the thought for her.

“We’d be serving ourselves up on a silver platter by going for it.”

Grayfia nods, biting her lower lip. Amadeus has to admit, she’s probably right to be discouraged. And yet... he’s not going to back down. He wants his own set of Evil Pieces for a very, very good reason (at least in his totally unbiased opinion) and he was going to get them one way or another.

“Well. We’ll burn that bridge when we come to it. For right now, let’s go over our resources. First, we have you. A powerful Ultimate-Class Devil who nobody knows is still alive. You’re our main source of strength.”

Grayfia flushes a little bit at the compliment.

“Then we have me, the last of an extinct clan, one who took their true capabilities to their graves. With the Power of Unlock, I suppose that I’ll be our ace in the hole.”

Amadeus looks around the bedroom and then finally to the door. He starts walking towards it, feeling as Grayfia quickly follows at his heels, taking up a position to his right two paces behind him. Just as a Head Maid should, no doubt.

As they exit into a stately, pristine-looking hallway, Amadeus glances back over his shoulder.

“Grayfia, you’ve been taking care of this safehouse for five hundred years. And the place is spotless, let me tell you.”

“... Thank you, Master.”

Yeah, he wasn’t going to ever get her to fully stop using that title, now was he? Ah well, the things he did for love.

“Tell me, is there anything interesting stored here?”

“... Yes. There is one thing of note, though admittedly I cannot claim with one hundred percent certainty that it is valuable.”

Amadeus gives her a curious look, prompting her to gesture for him to follow her instead. She leads him to a small storage area... where a glittering gilded chest with an enormous, almost ridiculous-looking padlock sits on a table.

“This chest... I’ve never been able to open it, truth be told. From what I could tell, I didn’t have the authority for one thing, but also even the basic intelligence behind the Valefor Defenses couldn’t open it either. I suspect... that only one person in all the Underworld can unlock it, Amadeus.”

Yes. He suspected much the same as soon as he laid his eyes on it. Approaching the chest, Amadeus hums as he reaches out and runs his fingers over the gaudy, massive padlock. After a moment, he shakes his head. That part is just for show, really. The chest is sealed beyond a simple lock. Its sealed magically. And yet...

For the first time in his life, Amadeus reaches out and uses his innate Clan Trait. Unlock works rather intuitively as it turns out. All he has to do is focus on what he wants to open and...

Click.

The padlock falls away and the chest pops open half an inch. Unable to fully contain his excitement, Amadeus shoots Grayfia a grin as he pulls the lid of the chest up, curious to see what lies inside. To be fair, there's always a chance of it being nothing, or even something rather useless at the moment like money.

However... in the end, that's not the case at all. Amadeus sucks in a sharp breath as he beholds what treasure lies within the unsealed chest. Reverently, he reaches in and pulls out a shimmering cloak, nodding appreciatively.

"I didn't know if I would ever get to see one of these. They were talked about in the tomes I read growing up, but none of those books described how to actually make one."

Grayfia peers at it, curiously.

"What is it, Amadeus?"

"A Valefor Cloak."

With that he swishes the cloak over his shoulders, pulling the shimmering material around him. Then, he puts up the hood... and Grayfia's breath hitches as he no doubt vanishes from her sight. She can still hear him though.

“This is one of the many tools that my ancestors used to carry out their... skullduggery. In hindsight, it makes sense that the Valefor Clan Trait wasn't something to do with Stealth, because if it was, they wouldn't have needed these beauties.”

He flicks back the hood, revealing himself again a moment later and shooting Grayfia a big wide grin. His maid-lover nods slowly, clearly impressed. She's caught off guard, however, when Amadeus suddenly takes the Valefor Cloak off and holds it out to her.

“You'll need this to scout out the Satan Beelzebub's territory, Grayfia.”

She takes it hesitantly even as she straightens up, her eyes lighting up in understanding.

“You want me to go and find out what we need to know, Master?”

Nodding sharply, Amadeus grimaces.

“I'd love to go myself... or even go with you. But I know there's a lot of risk. It's better if it's just you for the scouting mission. I know you can handle it. However, I also know that when the time comes for the actual theft, we're going to need me on site to provide Unlock so things go smoothly. That's why I'm ordering you to only scout and answer our most pressing questions like where the sets of Evil Pieces are stored. You are not allowed to take matters into your own hands and go beyond your mission parameters, do you understand?”

Grayfia looks a little caught out, as though she might have been considering doing exactly that. Still, straightening up she nods in response.

“Yes sir. I won't let you down either... while this cloak will be a very useful tool, I have my own ability to... move without being perceived.”

Hm? Before Amadeus can ask Grayfia what she means, she gives him a demonstration of her own accord. It's... strange. It's not invisibility like the Valefor Cloak provides, but something else entirely. Amadeus can still see

Grayfia, however her presence has diminished to practically nothing. It's like she's both there and not at the same time.

“What are you doing, Grayfia? Is this some sort of Lucifuge Technique I didn't know about?”

Smirking rather smugly, Grayfia shakes her head.

“No... this is all mine. After all, a maid should only be seen and heard when she's needed by her Lord and Master. Outside of that, a maid should always be able to fade into the background without issue.”

Oh. Huh, so that was what she was doing. Now that she'd described it, he understands a bit better. And he gets why she'd used a word like 'perceived' rather than something like 'seen'.

Basically, Grayfia was quite powerful in her own right. And while her level of strength came with an equal level of control that made sure her power was contained, so long as someone were strong enough, they could sense how much stronger she was than them in turn.

Amadeus, for instance, was quite aware of how much more powerful Grayfia was, compared to him. He was High-Class, maybe even Upper High Class, but she... she was Upper Ultimate-Class. As such, he could feel the difference in their strength always lingering in the back of his mind.

But not anymore. Grayfia's obsession with all things 'maid' alongside five hundred years of isolation had apparently led to her developing a technique where she could hide her true power completely and utterly and all but vanish from the perception of most people.

Right now she felt like a powerless, insignificant bystander, someone to be dismissed as unthreatening and unimportant. Someone whose eyes would just... glide right over. When she combines her technique with the Valefor Cloak by putting it on and flicking the hood up a moment later, Amadeus can't help but laugh in wonder.

“Oh... oh that’s excellent, Grayfia. Most excellent. You, my dear, are amazing.”

Grayfia pulls back the hood of the cloak after a moment, looking extremely pleased with his praise but also a somewhat shy and embarrassed. Amadeus resolves to shower her with even more praise and compliments going forward. Every last one that comes to mind, even.

For now, Amadeus opens his mouth to send Grayfia off on her way, wanting nothing more than to prioritize the Evil Pieces Heist above all else. However, before he can do so... they’re interrupted by a loud gurgling sound. Both of them look down at Amadeus’ abdomen at the same time, even as he flushes and coughs lightly.

“... I will prepare a meal for you before I depart, Master.”

Right. The place would have to be stocked with food for Grayfia to feed herself after all... and she WAS his only servant so if anyone was going to make him a meal, it would have to be her...

“Ahem. Yes... that would be fine. Something simple though please, I did just get up from a long nap.”

Grayfia nods and departs for the kitchen immediately. Having not much better to do, Amadeus follows after her.

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A short time later, Amadeus finds himself alone holding what Grayfia had named a ‘sandwich’ aloft in his hand. Bringing it to his lips, he takes a nice big bite of the already half-eaten ‘sandwich’ and hums in appreciation. Meat, cheese, vegetables, and bread... what’s not to like? It’s absolutely delicious and so easy to hold in just one hand!

Grayfia, meanwhile, has departed on his orders. He has no clue how long her scouting of Satan Beelzebub’s territory will take, so better to have her start

sooner rather than later. After all, those Evil Pieces aren't going to steal themselves.

That said, all alone now, Amadeus finds himself looking for something to do even as he continues to devour his sandwich. Moving through the hallways of the safehouse, checking out each and every room, he catalogues what he finds along the way. There's his bedroom of course, then there's the storage room where the chest had been held. Then there's Grayfia's bedroom, the kitchen, another storage room, a- oh, what's this?

Amadeus stops in the doorway and just stares in surprise, even forgetting to chew for a moment. Then, he swallows down his latest bite as he steps further into the room. It's filled from wall to wall... with musical instruments.

There's everything he could imagine... and plenty he doesn't even recognize, truth be told. There are instruments he learned to play throughout his childhood, there are instruments he doesn't recognize but can see the inspiration from, and then there are instruments that are completely new to him.

Grayfia must have done this. She of all people would know that at his heart, Amadeus was an artist. He loved to play music, he loved to sing, he loved to paint and draw. 'Making merry', they'd called it back in the day... albeit most of the time with some amount of derision. They were all Devil Nobility after all, and Amadeus was supposed to be Lord Valefor. Getting taken in by the arts was... supposed to be beneath him.

Lord Lucifuge had never made any effort to curtail his 'unnatural' interests, but others had certainly disdained him for it. Grayfia's brother Euclid, for instance, had always looked down on Amadeus for his artistic pursuits. After all, if it couldn't kill the enemy better, then what was the point?

... It was that kind of thinking that had led to the Civil War and the dissolution of the Lucifuge Clan, Amadeus can't help but ruefully think. He wonders where Euclid is now and what he's doing... but only for a moment before putting the other Devil out of his mind.

Finishing off the rest of his sandwich in three quick bites, Amadeus moves further into the room full of instruments and tries to decide where to start. After all, he has time to kill while he waits for Grayfia to return...

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Remember to go back and VOTE!