

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

**A/N: HEIST TIME!**

**-x-X-x-**

“We’ll go at night then.”

Grayfia isn’t wrong that he likes that option best. Still, Amadeus can’t help but feel a little obligated to explain his reasoning to her.

“I think it best to minimize the victims at this point. Mugging a courier or a recently promoted High-Class Devil puts too much heat on us. But stealing a set of Evil Pieces directly from the source... well, if we do it right, they might not even know we were ever there at all.”

Admittedly, Amadeus knows that probably isn’t true. The Beelzebub and his subordinates would have to be downright complacent to not even realize that they were missing a set of Evil Pieces. Still, it might take them a while to realize a set is gone... longer than a mugging being reported would take, especially since Amadeus has no desire to kill anyone... or let Grayfia kill anyone in his name either.

Smiling, Grayfia inclines her head.

“You don’t need to explain anything to me, as I already said. Though may I make one request, Master?”

Huffing, Amadeus waves a hand through the air.

“Of course you may, Grayfia.”

“Do not go alone. I know you are considering it... after all, there is only one Valefor Cloak. But even if you intend to skulk in as a thief in the night, the

possibility of a Satan showing up in this case is never zero. You might have need of my strength, as you mentioned before.”

... She knew him all too well. Amadeus smiles crookedly, tilting his head to the side.

“I can’t get anything past you, can I? Still, I would be sneakier if it was just me...”

But Grayfia shakes her head.

“You know of my capabilities, Master. Please trust that even without a Valefor Cloak of my own, I will be able to go unnoticed. If we are caught, it will not solely be because of my presence, I assure you.”

Hm, that’s a big promise to make... and ultimately, Amadeus is convinced by it. He can tell that leaving Grayfia behind would almost certainly do more harm than good. Even if nothing goes wrong, she’ll still have to stress over his absence the entire time. And if something does go wrong and she’s not there... well, Amadeus dreads to think what sort of havoc she would wreak on the Underworld in a bid to either retrieve him or avenge him.

“Very well. Though just so we’re clear, if we are caught and it turns out to be because of your presence, I will have to bend you over my knee and paddle your backside. You know, as punishment.”

He means it as a joke to be clear. His tone is one of complete and utter jest. So of course Grayfia looks dead serious despite her red cheeks as she nods resolutely.

“Yes Master. That would only be fair.”

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They depart to the Satan Beelzebub’s territory the very next night after planning out the heist the next day over a map Grayfia crafts from memory of all the

relevant buildings and the layout of the area. Leaving the safe house feels strange to Amadeus, admittedly... but also rather freeing.

Of course, his lands have certainly seen better days. The place is a damn wasteland due to the battles fought over the territory during the Devil Civil War and all of Grayfia's efforts to keep anyone from developing anything new on the land.

On the one hand, he was eternally grateful to Grayfia for watching over him and keeping him safe for the past five hundred years. On the other hand, seeing his family's old lands in such a desolate state... well, it did hurt a little bit.

He could see to dealing with that later though... maybe. Perhaps if he amassed enough power, he could reveal himself without repercussions? Well, only time would tell. For now, Amadeus focuses on the task at hand.

They arrive outside of the facilities Grayfia had scouted late in the dead of night, when nobody has any reason to be up and about and the offices and exam centers and even the monument have been completely shut down. With Amadeus under the Valefor Cloak and Grayfia suppressing her presence to that of an unobtrusive pinprick, they go unnoticed by the patrols in the area.

That doesn't mean they just rush right in, of course. The Devils running security for the facilities might not look like much, but Amadeus still wants to avoid an altercation if at all possible. He keeps Grayfia at his side as they stay back for a moment, eyeing the Devils coming and going and watching their patrols.

Eventually...

"I've found a hole in their coverage. Get ready to move in the next five minutes, Grayfia."

"Understood, Master."

Those quiet words are the only ones exchanged as seconds drag into minutes until finally...

“Now.”

They move as one, the two of them zipping forward. The gap in the security patrols is actually rather large, over five minutes before the next patrol will show up, but admittedly Amadeus doesn't know what lies on the other side of the door they'll be entering through, so best to be safe.

The door itself... he's not too worried about. Arriving in front of it, it certainly looks secure and like it's made of tough materials. Grayfia would likely have no problem breaking through given her Ultimate-Class Strength, but that would in turn activate who knew how many wards and defensive spells.

Amadeus though reaches forward and uses Unlock.

With a satisfying, nearly silent click... the door opens in front of them. Feeling rather pleased with himself; Amadeus slips inside and holds the door for Grayfia to do the same. Then, he closes back up behind them, leaving no sign that anything is wrong.

“If they hold the Evil Pieces overnight, Master, it will likely be in the basement storage.”

“Understood, let's find the stairs.”

Fortunately, there doesn't actually seem to be any security personnel in the building itself. A bit of an oversight in Amadeus' opinion. But there's likely a lot of faith placed in the magical security, which his Clan Trait allows him to override with a single touch.

They make their way downstairs without attracting any attention, eventually arriving in front of a larger door that almost looks more like a vault. Certainly, it seems to be the kind of place where valuable items are kept. Staring at the quasi-vault door, Amadeus wonders briefly if his Clan Trait is about to face its first test.

After all, there's no way Unlock can just... work on any lock, right? Heh, only way to find out. Reaching out with both hands, running them over the door, Amadeus closes his eyes and focuses.

*Unlock.*

Something shifts within the door. Something grinds. Amadeus holds his breath as the heavy quasi-vault door creaks open a lot louder than the previous one did. He shoots a glance upwards as Grayfia does the same, his loyal Head Maid immediately moving to the stairs to watch carefully and make sure no one is coming to check out that noise.

But as loud as the door was, there was no living ears within the building itself... and whatever layers of magical security existed, Amadeus had just bypassed them with a single thought.

... He was starting to understand just why his family had the reputation it had, truth be told. Frankly, he could scarcely believe the Valefor Clan had kept this a secret from everyone else for so long.

With the door open, Amadeus steps inside to the room beyond, looking around carefully. There's no gold or treasure or anything like that... but frankly, he thinks that bodes well. Because instead, there are rows and rows of storage racks... and on those racks are black rectangular cases set an inch or so apart from one another. Dozens upon dozens of the things... maybe even hundreds.

At a glance, it certainly seems like they've found exactly what they came for. But of course, Amadeus isn't so foolish as to just assume. Moving forward carefully, he picks out a case at random and stops in front of it. As expected, its sealed tightly shut on its own merits... an additional level of security that would at least annoy any would be burglars who made it this far. Or maybe it just needs to be sealed for some other reason.

In the end, it doesn't matter. Another use of Unlock and he's able to carefully open the lid... and expose rows of chess pieces.

“Grayfia... are these it? Are these ‘Evil Pieces?’”

He picks up the Queen Piece as he questions her, feeling the strange crystalline material it appears to be made out of with his fingers. His thumb rubs against the head of the Queen even as Grayfia steps up alongside him and nods.

“Yes Master. At least as far as I can tell... I’ve only seen them a few times in my life, admittedly. But they look like the real deal. And these cases are precisely what the High-Class Devils who used the Monument while I watched were holding. How many sets do you wish to steal?”

How many? Amadeus wrinkles his nose at that, glancing around the room at all of the sealed cases. He could take them all, couldn’t he? But what would be the point? One needed the monument to register them and from what he understood, only one set could be registered to one Devil at a time. And given he wasn’t trying to draw any attention at this point, the absolute most he would be willing to take would be...

“Two? One for me, one for you?”

Grayfia rears back as if struck before quickly shaking her head.

“I... if you demand it of me, I will take a set for myself Master. But if you would allow me to beseech you... please do not make me. I have no desire to be a King. I have no desire to have my own peerage. My sole purpose in life is serving you. I will be quite happy if I spend the rest of my life as your maid with not a single Evil Piece to my name.”

Ah... well, that was fine truth be told. In fact, hearing Grayfia say that makes Amadeus feel a little good. Part of him, a particularly possessive part, didn’t like the idea of Grayfia being anything but his either. Brushing his thumb across the Queen Piece in his palm one more time, he sets it back in the case and nods.

“Understood. Then we’ll take just the one. No reason to draw more attention to us than absolutely needed.”

“As you say, Master.”

Closing the case up and pulling it off of the rack, Amadeus slips it under the Valefor Cloak, letting the magical invisibility hide it from view along with the rest of his body.

“... Time for the monument, I suppose.”

“... Indeed, Master.”

Hah, Grayfia sounds just as nervous as he does. Admittedly, this next part was the part Amadeus really wasn't sure about. This was the part where it might all... fall apart.

But he didn't come this far to get cold feet. Stepping out of the vault and carefully closing the door behind them once more, Amadeus leads the way back out of the building's basement. From there, they go in the opposite direction from where they came in, as the door they used to enter the building was on the edge of things... while the Monument is located in the center of the Satan Beelzebub's territory.

With another use of Unlock, they peek out of another door entirely that will take them directly to the monument. Fortunately, the coast is clear so they quickly hurry through the door and out into the open. Even with the Valefor Cloak, Amadeus feels a bit exposed as he and Grayfia slink along towards the monument.

But nobody catches them. Nobody sees them. They make it to Ajuka Beelzebub's Monument unmolested and undetected and soon enough Amadeus is standing in front of the thing he needs to use to connect to the Evil Pieces he's stolen.

“They all just held the cases of Evil Pieces at their sides while placing their hand on the Monument, Master. Anything else... I don't know.”

Hm. Well... nothing ventured, nothing gained. Reaching out, Amadeus places his hand on the Monument and focuses on wanting to 'register' his Evil Pieces and bind them to him. The hope is that it might be as easy as that.

Of course... it's not obviously. He immediately feels a resistance answer him, as though the Monument has some kind of basic intelligence of its own... and whatever controls it knows that there should be nobody trying to use it's powers at this time of night.

Panicking just a little bit, Amadeus reacts without thinking. He does the only thing he can do. He uses his Clan Trait.

*Unlock.*

For the first time however, Amadeus can tell that it doesn't work. Or rather, it doesn't work entirely. In that brief moment after he uses his ability, Amadeus gets a peak behind the curtain that is the Monument's Inner Workings... and its mind boggling in its complexity.

Fortunately, his use of Unlock is not a full misfire. It still works enough that the very first layer of the Monument's functionality DOES unlock for him... and that first layer of functionality is precisely what allows a High-Class Devil to attune themselves to a specific set of Evil Pieces.

Amadeus clenches his teeth as he feels a surge rush through his hand and up his arm and then across his torso, through his other arm, and down into the case he's holding. In that moment, he can feel it clicking into place... these Evil Pieces are his. They belong to him now. They are bound to him.

As soon as he senses that, Amadeus removes his hand from the Monument like it's been burned. Grayfia notes the urgency and leans in closer.

"Master? Are you alr- Master! You're bleeding!"

Blinking, he brings his free hand to his nose and wipes away the blood drooling out of one of his nostrils. Now isn't the time to worry about such things though. They aren't in the clear yet.

“I’m fine, Grayfia. Just stared into the Abyss for a second. The current Beelzebub is no joke. Let’s get out of here before we get caught.”

“... As you wish, Master.”

With that, they flee into the night, escaping back to the safe house with no pursuit that either of them can sense or see. A complete success, it would seem.

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**Remember to go back and VOTE!**