

"This isn't the person I fell in love with." Moon x **Darkness**

A deep, resounding chuckle traveled up Darkness's throat at her words. He wished to lash out, to scream, and to get as far away from this place as he could. But where could he go that her all-seeing light couldn't touch? Where could he go that he wouldn't soon yearn to be next to her once again?

"Love?" he questions, raising a brow and fixing his glare on Moon's still form, "what would your kind know of love? You see me as the villain, as the disgusting parasite that must be eradicated. You know nothing of love. You know only pain."

"Do not throw your insecurities onto me. I am not your personal mirror," she growls, her form growing and towering over him. He could meet her, or at least try in stature, but he doubted it. But this is what she wanted, wasn't it? To see him below her, groveling and asking for forgiveness. He starts to prepare a quip when she transforms, her soft hands meeting his cheeks as her hypnotic eyes stare into his. He was breathless, unsure of what to do or say.

"Why did you do it?" she questions, her tone pleading for an answer, "just tell me why. Help me understand."

He pushes away, his body immediately whimpering at the loss of touch. She was so warm and inviting, an embrace that he craved and wanted to experience. A light that did not burn and felt as if it could be his as if it wanted to envelop him just as much as he wished to exist among it.

"You don't want to understand. You want to condemn me. Admit this, and you will understand it all. You say that I'm not the same person you fell in love with, which is true. You fell in love with a part of me that doesn't truly exist. A shadow that thought it could walk freely, refusing to accept the fact that it would never be uncovered."

Moon reached out, but Darkness sent a chaotic stream of energy her way, cringing when he heard her yelp in pain. He turned to see her holding her hand, a ghostly steam rising from it as she eyed him in sadness. Before he could truly regret it, she disappeared, turning into a retreating star that, even when attempting, failed to blend in with the others due to its brilliance.

His heart's purity went with her, his entire form wishing to disappear, to become what it was meant to be - chaos. Unshackled and liberated. A chaos that would burn this world but not before destroying him. He welcomed it. They would never see more, and neither would she.

He released a scream that shook the earth, and if he had the power, he would shake the heavens. His body was in pain. He wanted it to end. A being such as he wasn't meant to hold emotions like this. He wasn't supposed to feel a heavenly touch or know the loving embrace of a goddess. He could not have her, and the thought tore him asunder.

"Ah, it was all my fault. Wasn't it?" **Chris** x Roe

There was no answer, and that bothered Chris more than it should. If Roe had said yes, then it would've been just that, and he would one day learn to get over it. If Roe had said no, even if he didn't believe it, then he would at least know that not all was lost. That even if for another, there was hope for him. But no answer at all? It broke him apart, reduced him to nothing, and made it feel as if he was forced to stare into a fractured mirror. His reflection peers back and laughs, throwing their head back as they say again and again, 'I told you so.'

"Fuck, Roe," he growls, "say something." The tears were brimming the edge of his eyes, and everything came tumbling down again. "Tell me I'm not a fuck up. Please. I don't care if some of it was my fault. Just tell me that it wasn't *all* me. Tell me that there were some good. That this wasn't me playing myself. Fuck, just tell me you don't want to ever see me again. Tell me that I'm a fucking worthless asshole, and it would've never worked out. Do anything but sit there."

Silence.

More silence. Just silence.

The same silence that gnaws at his heart, whose voice was so loud and so many that he could no longer decipher them. He broke.

*"Do you hear me?! I don't deserve this." **Jeff***

"I don't. I'm done. I'm done with this bullshit. I'm fucking done with you and your bullshit. I deserve love and to be held by the man I love. I deserve to be able to mourn my child without worrying about if motherfucking Jeff is coherent enough to not piss himself. To not have to worry if I can pay the bills because Jeff spent it all on alcohol. I'm tired of this. I'm so sick and tired of all of it. You're a dick. You're a good-for-nothing alcoholic prick, and I'm done. I'm done. Drink yourself to death. I don't care anymore. Fucking die in your own piss and vomit if that's what you like. But I'm done giving a shit about you when you obviously don't give a shit about yourself or anyone else. Have a fucking nice life."

One bottle.

And the pain slightly goes away. The taste is what he notices first, the burn as it races down his throat. It's disgusting. He needs something heavier.

Two bottles.

And there's a hum, a sharp hum in his left ... no right lobe. It wants to reach out, but it's too weak. It needs more.

Three and then four.

He barely registers the taste, but he feels the burn. He actually likes the burn. He also likes the hum. That sweet melody repeatedly plays in his mind. It goes away, her words, her face, and her actions. It makes it all go away. He forgets about that child ... what was their name? Does it matter? He forgets about the dying woman that looks like him, she's dying and asks for him, but he can't recall her words. He just knows that her eyes are soft and sad, and they look like his. He forgets it all. But it's not enough. Not just yet.

Five and many more.

He's lost. But he feels so found. He's exactly where he wants to be. Right here, in darkness's embrace. It understands him. The demons know his woes, and they can relate. They joke and laugh with him. They whisper in his ear and caress his ego.

You're not a failure; everyone else is. They left you. They gave up on you. But they won't, will they? Him and his demons, that's all he needed.

"One of these days you'll realize that you're the monster everyone is afraid of." Rahim x Sydero

"Shut up!" Sydero screams, launching herself at her twin brother but he was much too fast for her. Instead of making contact with him, she found herself hitting that of the concrete, gritting her teeth as she slid.

"Leave, Sydero."

"Give her back!" Syd shouts, "she's my mother too. All my fucking life you've treated me like a pest."

"Don't lie to yourself to make yourself feel better," Rahim growls, "both of us know that I've tried my hardest. Even when you came back home and led the demons straight to our home. Even the multiple times that you've come to me asking for my help. I've always tried to do right by you. But there's only so much someone can do."

"Where's your audience, Rahim?" she questions, sitting up but deciding not to move. "There's no one here to hear your self-righteous speech. The only person listening is the one who knows damn well that you're lying. If you could've, you would've ratted me out yourself to my dad just so I'd disappear."

"If I could go back. I would." Sydero schools her face, refusing to let his words get to her. But, she felt that her raging emotions had betrayed her because Rahim smirks, a sad note to his eyes. "Our mother didn't deserve what happened to her. And she doesn't deserve what you're trying to make her go through. Syd," he takes a step closer to her, "if you love her then you'll leave her be."

"Shut the fuck up. You really think you're innocent in all of this and it's sickening. You walk around playing the dutiful son when we all know it's a front. Your dad is worse than mine. And the only reason why he hasn't struck down is because you have some kind of deal."

"Shut your mouth," Rahim barks, "you have no idea what you're talking about."

"Don't I?" she questions with a smirk, spitting out a wad of built up blood, her eyes lingering on it before meeting Rahim's once again. "You really think you're the only person with a brain around here."

"I'm done talking to you. Stay away from mom or there will be consequences." Syd closes her eyes, rocking back and forth on her heels. Perhaps he was right. Perhaps she should walk away from this. The wrath of a nephilim wasn't wise to incur, even if she knew all his tricks. But more so, perhaps he was right. Perhaps she was the monster that she desperately tried to prove she wasn't. Her mother had paid enough, why continue that torture?

But then years. Years of being the child that all looked down upon. Being labeled a monster and a demon and never having a chance. All of it came back to her, rushing into her like a freak storm.

With her eyes closed, she shoots her hand out, sending a blast of black and crimson energy right into Rahim's chest. The force launches him off the ground and into the nearest house. It was wise to come and have this clash in the middle of an abandoned neighborhood. With a grumble, Rahim righted himself, his blade materializing in his hands.

"For once in your life, Sydero, listen to me. Stop this, now." Sydero rises to her feet and cocks her head, wiping a mix of sweat and blood from her brow.

Never.

"Welcome home." Doran x **Sral**

My heart thumps rapidly as I look over my Lord, trying to look past his gentle smile and his even more calm demeanor. There was no way he was okay with me having failed. No, he should be furious, threatening me right now if even that. Similar to the entire ride over, the thoughts of him killing me enter and flourish. Questioning the chances and which of my breaths would be the last.

"My apologies," I say, knowing that wouldn't change anything.

"For what?" he questions, rising and going to the nearest window. Was he seeing how far up we were? Was he planning to push me into the abyss? Was the castle even surrounded by an abyss. I highly doubt it but my mind was picturing a chasm and how it would joyously swallow me.

"I have failed you." What would appease him? Excuses would not but that was all that I had. Doran was fickle. Giving him an excuse would upset him but staying quiet and not offering up an explanation could anger him just as easily.

"You tried your best, did you not?"

"I did." I wish he would just kill me. The torture of imagining what he would do to me and pondering when my end would come was killing me. What if he did nothing? What if that was his plan? To pause his judging hand and let the paranoia build. To let it infect and destroy me? Was I prepared for this? I was not. Even now I found myself shivering profusely, my body and mind warring as to when the killing blow would strike me.

"Then you did not fail me? The mission now must be shifted and thought anew." He retakes his seat, "no harm done."

His voice was calm. Too calm. His eyes were kind, have they ever been kind? When was the last time I failed? Was this due to our relationship? I knew his reaction would differ due to our shared time but I doubted it meant enough to keep him from striking me. His entire plan of takeover was now ruined. All because I failed to win the heart of a boyish prince.

He laughs, opening his arms to me. Cautiously, I step in them, letting his warmth wash over me. Despite the situation, I had missed this. I had missed him. I had missed his velvety voice and his touch. I bury my face into his chest and silently thank him for his subtlety. For I don't feel my life force draining until it was far too late.

"Welcome home, Sral."

*"Hate is spitting out each other's mouths. But we're still sleeping like we're lovers." Nyx de Azoulay x **MC Aleyn-Saugem**
Inspired by Daughter's Song "Still"*

She stood with her back to me, quietly looking out over what used to be her home. From our current position, we could see the reconstruction teams deep in their work, attempting to bring back the magnificence that I can only imagine was Nyx's palace. I wonder how it would've looked in it's mightier days, Nyx's words couldn't possibly do it much justice.

My eyes move to the woman that I have come to love, my heart shifting uncomfortably. With everything that has happened between us, I don't know where we stand. I loved her, only the Divines knew how much I loved her, but I was broken with her. I was unsure of how I felt and what it meant. Being around her still caused my heart to skip a beat, a smile to crawl onto my face, but it also caused all those memories to come crawling back, to cause me to shiver and want to curl up and cry at night.

"I ... feel like you know why I called you here," she begins and turns to me, trying to stand tall but failing. Her eyes told the same story my heart did, and though I didn't know why she had called me, I now did. I take a step towards her, looking at her in confusion.

"Don't." Is all I can muster as I close the gap more, resting my forehead on hers and she allowing it. She picks up her head ever so slightly so that we were staring into each other's eyes, her hand finding and grasping mine.

"I won't, if you tell me that you don't feel it too." The fact that I knew exactly what she was referring to cause my knees to go weak. I would never say it aloud, knowing what it would mean for our future. But, it hurt not to. Knowing that my heart breaks whenever she is around, reminding me of everything that I lost.

Our eyes meet, and I don't have to answer her for her to know what my answer was. She tears her gaze from mine, trying to quash her whimpers but being unable to.

"I love you," she blurts out, sobbing as she clenches my hands, "I really do but I can't. Every time I look at you I remember, I remember what I lost and what I did, and I ... I can't forgive you or me." It sounds like she was literally saying what was on my mind, broadcasting it for both of us. I gently lift her chin so that she was looking at me, the sight of her crying causing everything in me to crumble. Most of the time, her tears were caused by something else and I was the one thing that could keep them at bay. But now, now they were because of me.

"I love you too," I tell her and pull her into a tight hug, wishing to never let her go.

We stand like this for a while before she finally pulls back, allowing her fingers to lightly trace my cheek and wipe away any stray tears. She gives me a gentle kiss on the lips, one that was so light that I felt I was imagining it. My heart screamed as she took a step back, releasing my hands. The look on her face was stoic, her emotions slowly being pushed to the side as a mask that I haven't seen in forever covers her face.

"Goodbye," she tells me and without a second word, walks past me.

Stop her. Grab her. I tell myself, but I stand perfectly still, listening to her footsteps carry her away, my heart thrashing around in my chest. My resolve crumbles and my knees give out as I fall to the ground, sobbing uncontrollably.

This is for the best, you know that. You knew this would happen, if not her then you would've done it. The words are true, but they don't make me feel any better. If anything, I sob more, knowing that this was unavoidable. Knowing that no matter what happened, this scene – it would always play. My chest hurts and my head throbs as my insides battle against what it wants and what it needs. It wanted

to feel Nyx's touch, to feel her soft lips. But it needed to be away from her, to know that the likelihood of ever seeing her again wasn't possible.

I loved her, she loved me . . . and maybe that's why we had to let each other go. Because otherwise we would never get over it, not until it destorys us.