we were looking for something to believe, we were looking for something to understand (our twisted senses of loyalty was getting so out of hand)

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we were looking for something to believe, we were looking for something to understand (our twisted senses of loyalty was getting so out of hand)

by knighthoodie (excelestial)

Summary

we loved under atomic skies

or, alternatively, a short story about a sad boy who accidentally summons a demon by singing.
and no maker made me (i will never be hijacked by the fairytale)

His visits to the human world have been for a flurry of reasons. Each one left him a bit shaken in some way- he’s never seen humans in the light they appear to see him in. Granted, Shane isn’t going to complain about being glorified and feared by all mortals when they end up at his feet. It didn’t matter millennia ago when he had Socrates kneeling, seeking his divine wisdom and searching for his truths. It didn’t matter centuries ago when a girl that barely met his bony knees asked to Shane to save her dying mother. It didn’t matter back when the world was barely more than a speck of dust and Shane was picking his canines clean with a rib-bone atop the molehills soon to be mountains. It didn’t matter when Shane broke off part of one of his horns because he refused to deal with a bratty teenage boy who just wanted to show off to his equally bratty friends.

But this- this is something entirely different. Shane cocks his head to the side, a bemused smirk tugging his lips tight. Even though the table creaks as he sits upon it, the human remains oblivious to Shane's spontaneous appearance.

It’s almost saddening how obviously this poor mortal doesn’t know the words leaving his mouth, doesn’t recognize the situation he’s put himself in by merely crooning to himself. Shane flicks his tail in the air, he can almost feel the electricity dancing on his hot flesh as it crackles silently.

The human has his back to Shane, the height difference almost laughable as the demon eyes the swaying body before him. Hair like crushed black velvet spills just over the man's ears- he's recently taken a shower judging by the iridescent water droplets on his warm neck. A sugary purr swells in Shane's chest as his gaze sweeps along the broad definition of the man's shoulders and arm, relishing in the dips and curves of the masculine form before him. His hips cant easily to the tune he's singing to himself and Shane cannot help how his eyes are so eagerly following the dance.

Shane's mouth burns intoxicatingly around the syllables as they slip like silk, almost like a dream.

“Ryan Bergara.”

If Shane hadn't known it was a human before him, the scream that follows would have made him think that Ryan was a banshee.
without habitation, you'll never find a soul inside (no life, but nothing's died)

The silence filling the kitchenette is honestly horrific. Ryan's eyes are a soulful ocean, the bottom of which swallows Shane completely, but they reveal nothing to the demon. Shane has seen fear as it slowly drained from a severed limb, thick as it bubbled with blood. Shane has seen desperation, the flushed cheeks of a poverty-stricken mother cradling her dead newborn as her tears soak the blanket in her shaking arms. Shane has seen greed in the blackened heart of a man who was eager to sell his soul and pride for a life of ostentatious luxury and decadence.

But this man is giving him nothing. Just an astonishing emptiness that makes Shane shudder and his tail curl in on itself. Shane plants his feet squarely on the cool floor but hesitates to move from his spot on the table.

"What are you...?" Ryan's voice is small, like a child scared of being reprimanded by their parents. Limply, Ryan's arms hang by his side and Shane feels his chest ache to see the leisurely sway once more.

“I’m a...” Shane furrows his brow, eyes like coal igniting under a red hot brand. “I... I am a demon.” A lopsided grin twirls on his lips as he motions towards his horns- or, at least, what he has remaining of them- and draws a sharpened claw along the jagged edge of his left horn, now a forever memory. A soft clink is heard as Shane taps on his horns. In fervent honesty, he’s one of the lesser eccentric demons of the world when it comes to his appearance but Shane wouldn’t dare complain. He’s never been a fan of hooves.

“But...” the words seem to fail Ryan in the moment they escape his mouth, falling idly. There’s an indistinguishable feature on his face, something Shane can only describe as a macabre cross between need and sorrow. Ryan suddenly raises his head, jaw tightly clenched as he meets Shane’s gaze.

“But why are you here. In my house.”

There’s a benign innocence to Ryan’s words, one that has the demon’s skin crawling because this isn’t right- he shouldn’t be here. In the kitchenette, the lights are low but he’s sure Ryan can see the flash of galaxies spinning in the emptiness of Shane’s eyes as he maintains a level stare. A quiet chuckle rumbles out of Shane, brassy and flowing like a brook.

“Because you’re the first human I’ve ever met that’s managed to fuck up Snow’s Informer so badly that they managed to summon a demon and, really, I have to give you props for that.”

It’s meant to be a lighthearted comment to ease the human a bit- Shane can spy the undercover tension coiling in Ryan’s sculpted arms and momentarily wonders why he hasn’t sought help but Shane begins to wonder if maybe he’s reading this entire situation incorrectly. Ryan’s cheeks are dusted pink as he blinks back what Shane thinks to be tears and suddenly the demon is wishing that maybe his original theory was right.
"Do you know what loneliness feels like?"

Ryan's question is stated so calmly that the demon barely registers it as being directed towards him. The gentle buzz of the refrigerator sounds explosive in the silence that follows.

"I guess," Shane's mouth feels full of cotton, dry and like static is flickering on his heavy tongue. He pauses to begrudgingly, solemnly gaze at his slender, razorlike claws and how they glimmer as if glossy with long-dried blood. Slowly, the demon runs the tip of a claw along his inner wrist before meeting the human's soft, honeyed eyes that haven't yet left Shane's face. "Loneliness is like one of those snowmen you humans like to build in your youth," a saddened fondness shadows Shane's steeled face, "created by someone else and left to die in the same environment it was raised in. Where you're constantly unsure if your safety has run out and second-guessing every snowflake you see swirling past your face."

A quiet hiss escapes Ryan as he nods, letting the demon's words sink into him as if they were a scalpel carving each letter into his flesh. No longer is Ryan's body taut like wire, he's softened and Shane can't help but envy the relaxed stance Ryan has adapted. Shane arches an eyebrow as he watches Ryan suddenly fall to the floor, back to the stove and pulling his knees to his chest. The human swallows and Shane watches with afire eyes, unsure of how this situation is supposed to be played out.

There's an elegance to the almost obscene length of Shane's long legs as they cross- Ryan is suddenly made aware that the demon does not have human legs, at least not below the knee. Where skin should be peeking out, an inky matting of fur clings tight to the well-maintained muscles of the demon's calves, almost naturally transitioning into a sturdy, aged hoof. "You do understand how this is going to have to work? Right?" Ryan is taken aback by the calm voice the demon uses, something lacking the malice his brain was anticipating.

Breathily, Ryan huffs. "I don't... I don't think I really do- considering I didn't anticipate you being here. I never meant to summon a damn demon but go figure, I guess," laments Ryan lamely and it twists Shane's chest all the wrong ways as he spies the human's illuminated amber eyes fog over. Ryan stares blankly forward, seemingly getting lost in a hazy world unknown to Shane, almost as if he's forgotten the hellfire creation seated on his kitchen table.

"We're going to have to make a deal. Before I can leave. You can call me Shane, by the way."
nobody can poison my feelings if they're never revealed (i'll watch others live in loudness and i'll destroy the chaos in my way)

The colour of the man's face drains, the rosy hue lost as Shane's words begin to truly sink in. "A... a deal?" Ryan stammers, disbelief etched so clearly on his face that the demon knows Michelangelo would've envied such an evolving expression.

Huffing in mock exasperation, Shane rolls his eyes while absently picking some dried gunk he preferred not to think about from beneath his nails. "You know how this goes, buddy. You sacrifice something of value to me, I make your wildest dreams a reality."

"I don't... I don't have much..." utters Ryan, voice wavering slightly in fear.

Shane couldn't even entertain the idea that it was a lie- the apartment he appeared in probably hasn't been properly cleaned and cared for since its construction. It is not a farfetched statement to say the demon is out of touch with humanity, but he is plenty aware that this isn't the ideal lifestyle. That the walls shouldn't be covered with thin posters because of flagrant graffiti or that the dishes piled in the sink look more like they'd be better as a church window than as a single, mismatched set. That the one other room in the apartment doesn't have a bed, this poor human sleeps on a couch because he's given his heart to a passion that might never come to fruition- it shows in the bags hanging under Ryan's eyes like burnt rose petals clinging desperately to life.

"When you live as long as I have," there is an icy undertone to Shane's voice as he stares blankly at the bubbles beginning to frantically pop along the rim of the battered pot still boiling. The sizzling of the stovetop sounds like crackling thunder in the following moments of silence until Ryan reaches up from his slump to turn it off, no longer wishing to attend to his cooking. "You come to learn that sacrifice can mean more than the empty dichotomous idea of whether you keep something or let it go."

"What does that even mean?" An air of confusion surrounds the human, obviously unsure as to the metaphors being strung together by Shane. Ryan maintains crouched against the stove, trembling as he listens in an almost mocking quietude and studies the torn up carpeting that has been stained by things he never wants to think about.

"Sometimes it's the will to keep going," Shane smiles idly while he passes his clawed finger across the already scratched surface of the kitchen table he remains seated atop. "Sometimes it is the hunger you've been ignoring for years out of fear, maybe of the repercussions or of yourself. It has the potential to be the last light you will ever know before being consumed by the nightmare you never knew you were living in. It can be like plunging the knife into the back of a past lover or as if tearing the wings from a butterfly, fully knowing you're ruining its life forever. Never assume you know what you value, human- you never truly value it until it is being burnt to ash right before your eyes. What do you desire so strongly that you'd let me take whatever I'd wish, Ryan Bergara?"

Suddenly the tautness returns to his small body, curling his muscles tighter until Shane can almost hear them threatening to pop. Raspy, Ryan refuses to lift his gaze from the ratty flooring when he whimpers. "My life."

Shane barks out a harsh laugh, throwing back his head as his knuckles bleed white around the edge of the table from holding himself upright. The table groans and splinters under his grip. Slowly the wooden fragments start to sizzle beneath the demon's touch, an unearthly smile draped in silken warmth upon his sharp features. The demon is quick, gracefully unfolding his legs as he slides across
the tiny kitchen, letting the charred pieces of wood fall to the floor. He refuses to take his eyes from Ryan's body, taking in how the human keeps his gaze low—how Ryan seems somehow simultaneously at ease yet on a razor's edge. Kneeling before the human, a soft hum rolls out of Shane as he draws the back of his hand tenderly along the cool heat of Ryan's damp cheek.

"You humans cannot fool me anymore," Shane breathes out, piecemeal, as he crooks a talon underneath Ryan's jaw and forces him to look into the demon's frighteningly soothing gaze. Tears have soaked into the collar of Ryan's shirt, slicking his face with a sickly sheen that momentarily reminds Shane of gold. "It is not your wish for me to give you your life back, Ryan. Is it?"
a boy in a shell, the chains around your wings (to block your integrity before they will be amputated)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The tears are fat, heavy with the burden of thoughts unimaginable and torturous; they sound like thunder as they drop to the tattered floor. But as Shane returns from the bathroom, arms filled with necessary paraphernalia, he cannot deny the slight tweak in Ryan's peach lips as they curl into a smile.

It's violent, the anguish in Ryan's eyes. There's crashing waves of separation and desire, the shore a long lost hope for redemption. A ship destined for disaster because the lighthouse, the only saviour and beacon of hope, has long since burnt out. There's so much emptiness and sorrow. Shane can practically taste it.

Kneeling upon the floor, Shane begins to shake a canister of shaving cream. The demon always found it so funny, the human movies always depict a sigil made of blood- enough blood to have a dead body attached. Don't they know you can use any viscous material? Sweeping his long arm across the floor, shaving cream begins to swirl into an intricate design. Shane is no longer looking at his handiwork, instead going from memory, finding it better to focus on Ryan.

"Are you sure you want this, Ryan? There is no coming back from this, once the spell is complete."
Shane is quiet, there is no force in his voice when he speaks up. He knows of the horror endured by humans but it is not his jurisdiction to right the wrongs. He is not meant to meddle with forces bigger than he. That doesn't mean he won't help though.

No longer is there any sadness or reservations shadowing Ryan, there's just a coldness- a steel that stings Shane in some way he cannot describe. No longer is there the human fear of longing, it's the human craving of compassion and acceptance. No longer does Ryan have tears on his face, but a brilliant grin full of teeth. No longer does Shane worry.

Shane easily rises to his feet, cloven hooves tapping softly on the floor. "Come, human. It is time to pay your sacrifice." It's almost robotic, the way Ryan glides to his feet, almost comically floating in front of the demon. A tenderness overcomes Shane, his talons caressing the soft flesh of Ryan's face one last time with an admiration, "maybe you will miss this life, maybe you will not. Either way, it will not miss you." Ryan's eyes flicker, his resolve faltering for just a moment before rebuilding.

Finding his way back to the rickety table, Shane perches himself atop it once again. Idly, he gestures to the sigil of shaving cream with a solemn smile, "Kneel, human, and we shall seal your deal." The shakiness Ryan once embodied, a goal unable to steady itself, is gone- now he steps easily into the ring before falling to his knees, a graceful descent like the takedown of a lion after a kill.

It's remarkable, really. There is no shame found on Ryan, his body relaxed and at ease, accepting his fate and whatever is to come. The soft lines of his body are no longer tensed, they've found refuge in the silence of the sigil. Shane stands up.

Quietly, Shane stalks over to Ryan- the thump of his hooves upon the ground like the crying of gods. Shane tilts Ryan's head back, speaking in tongues unknown to human ears. The room chills but Ryan is enraptured by the beast before him far too much to care. Too caught up in the soft expression upon the human likeness of Shane's face to care when Shane raises his other hand and brings it down swiftly.
Ryan doesn't make a sound when he registers the stroke of the razor claw across his throat. He merely stares up at Shane, bewildered and confused, as his hands fly up to his throat, coughing and gurgling. Even as the blood bubbles and pools in the corner of his lips, he smiles. Shane watches at a distance as the color begins to fade, the humanity escaping Ryan - the little that was left. It sounds like a hellhound, the spluttering as Ryan keels over, blood foaming from his mouth as he spits it upon the floor.

Shane always wondered what would happen should an angel fall to become a demon, to willingly invoke the agony of transformation that dances with devils and lines a back with the scratches of succubi. He's met fallen angels, those condemned by their own hand for crimes and atrocities. He's met demons that sing about heaven and repentance. He never met an angel without wings so desperate to throw it all away just to feel whole again.

There's silence in the house, a crawling silence that digs into your head and rattles around inside of you. It feels stunted and hungry and no one knows why. Shane gathers the materials back up and shuffles back to the bathroom. It only takes a few minutes but he can hear the ragged breathing in the kitchen, a dying symphony at the end of a performance. A shaky, garbled, 'thank you' swallowed up by the flooring.

Walking back out to the scene, Shane takes a moment to breathe it all in. Ryan is collapsed, blood gelling on the floor around the gaping wound on his throat. The blood will sink into the floorboards, Shane knows this, the memory of this moment will not be so easily forgotten. Not by this house, not by them. Ryan is unmoving, a glossy look in the dead eyes as if though he's made peace in his final moments. It smells like burnt leather, a beast trying to final a quiet resting place for its final days.

"Now you'll always be with me, Ryan. By my side, you'll never be alone again. Now come, I have so much to teach you, brother." A hand adorned in cold scales and tipped with sharp claws slinks into Shane's waiting hand.

Chapter End Notes

If anyone is interested, I'd be willing to make a little spin-off series based on their adventures in their summons. I'd even take requests on various summons they might get. If anyone is interested, of course.

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