Bring Me A Dream

by mevermind (Razapaz)

Summary

The Master of Death was not prepared for this.

Notes

This literally came out of nowhere. The idea just popped into my head last night, and I ran with it, so I'm basically gonna write it for as long as it amuses me. I'm optimistic, though.
"Master, I think I'm in love."

"Not with me, I hope," comes the immediate response, delivered rather dryly by a youthful, green-eyed man. 'Man' being a loose term, but Harry isn't concerned much with semantics. Not anymore. "No offense, but you're not my type."

Beside him, the cloaked figure gasps a laugh, which is quite impressive given her lack of lungs. He laughs with her.

After the rattling noise fades into the abyss, she says, "Don't flatter yourself, it doesn't suit you."

"Love doesn't suit you," he retorts shrewdly, eyes sharp and humor gone. "If I'm not mistaken, Death has no business favoring one being above all others."

Death tilts her head, calling her scythe into existence. He feels oddly like a voyeur as she strokes the handle intimately. He shifts away uncomfortably. "And what would you know of my business, young Master?"

The air between them grows cold with tension, with the blatant challenge, but Harry isn't so easily cowed. He's become inured to his companion's temper tantrums, rare though they were, so he won't waste the energy getting worked up over nothing. Casting her a flat look, he dispels her tool with nary a thought - she takes it in stride, clasping her suddenly empty hands together reservedly.

"I know enough."

"Naive," she scoffs, equal parts fond and sorrowful, and he resists the urge to roll his eyes. She can be incredibly dramatic, in her own way, and he thinks this whole 'love' thing may be a part of it.

"Perhaps I am," he allows, staring off into their realm. "But you still answer to me."

Turning empty eye sockets towards him, Death gives him what he thinks is meant to be a long-suffering look. "How troubling that you should have ultimate power over me."

"Didn't ask for it," Harry replies, and there isn't too much bitterness biting his words. Huh. Must be a good day.

"Be that as it may, you are Master," the primordial being slithers closer, attitude shifting towards something sly. Her movements are smooth and coaxing as she approaches him with a lithe grace he could never mimic, nevermind his modest athletic build. Remarkably, he successfully refrains from flinching when she lays a cool, skeletal hand on his arm, all but purring her enthusiasm. He dreads what will follow. "As such, you may grant me passage to the mortal realm."

"Why would I do such a thing?" he asks, feigning ignorance.

Death's grip tightens on his arm. "So that I may meet my beloved for more than thirty seconds at a time."

It's odd, the way she phrases it, so Harry directs a questioning glance at her. What sort of mortal has the ability to meet with Death in her own realm, regularly enough to capture and maintain her interest? He knows that several mortal realms have variants of humans with special abilities, his own world of wizards included, so it isn't that much of a stretch to assume that her mortal is superhuman.
Even so, the only way a human could visit Death is if they actually die, super or not. So his assumption is moot.

As if she hears his thoughts, which isn’t entirely out of the question, she bares her teeth in a parody of a smile. "He dies enough that we’ve gotten to know each other. Sometimes, he visits me simply because he misses me."

Harry stares for a moment, letting it process that, apparently, there’s a human who repeatedly dies and doesn’t stay dead. He should know about that sort of thing, right? Perhaps there’s some merit behind Death’s calling him naive. Then he pauses, blinking as his mind registers her last sentence. "He commits suicide. To see you."

"Yes. Isn’t that romantic?"

He chokes back on a hysteric laugh, unsure why he’s surprised by her definition of romance. "Well, at least you haven’t fallen for that Thanos fellow. Bit obsessive, isn’t he?"

Death visibly recoils, intoning crisply, “That fool lusts for my power - I’m not so superficial to accept his ‘gifts’ as the tokens of devotion he claims them to be. No, the only one who truly appreciates me is my sweet Wade."

"Of course,” Harry nods sympathetically, nurturing this new-found bud of kinship with Death. After all, he’s no stranger to people becoming enamored with his potential, rather than his scrappy, cheeky personality. It was their loss.

"So you’ll allow it?"

It’s a decision he really shouldn’t make lightly, but Harry finds himself faltering beneath the weight of hopefulness that colors Death’s tone. They have a strange relationship - certainly not one befitting of the traditional master-servant bond that his job description implies - and it wouldn’t be the first time he’s indulged in her passing whimsies, if only because his latent paternal instincts insist that her personality is nearly identical to his daughter’s. Both of them share an unparalleled serenity, even during times of challenge and mass despair; a witty, if dry, sense of humor that compliments his own; and an uncanny ability to push his buttons. He wonders whether he should be concerned that his daughter and Death would likely be great friends.

"Master?"

Harry sighs, rubbing the bridge of his nose tiredly. "Are you certain about this?"

"Yes," she says simply, and that is that.

She’s serious about this human, whoever the unfortunate lad is. He silently vows to find a punishment worse than death, should this Wade person dare to break Death’s heart. That is, if she doesn’t get her bony claws into him first.

"Alright," he decides, elegantly dropping to the ground to lay on his back. Tucking his hands beneath his head and staring up at the illusion of a sky, he beckons Death to join him, smiling patiently. "Tell me more about him."
Secret Vampire Spy Hungry For Canadian Mincemeat!

(That guy is totally ogling our ass.) Yellow crows.

Wade snorts in response, taking another mouthful of mystery-meat taco, and sneaks a peek at the little weirdo who'd been staring at him for the better part of an hour. The dude barely seemed out of his baby-fat years and was so pale the mercenary thought he might sparkle, if he stepped outside the Mexican joint they were in. Come to think of it, the dark-haired kid was sitting in a booth suspiciously shaded in indirect sunlight, and it looks like he's only ordered a glass of water. Maybe he's set his vamp sights on Wade's innocent buns?

(Don't be ridiculous. Vampires don't like munching on Americans.)

(We're Canadian, dumb-ass.)

(He doesn't know that.)

"Unless he's a spy," Wade manages to say around his half-chewed food, spittle flying onto the table. A passing waitress tosses him a dirty look, and he gives her his best shit-eating grin. She just about turns green at the sight but, in true New York fashion, flips him the bird before huffing away to deal with other customers. He decides he'll leave her an extra large tip. "That'd make him the worst spy ever!"

(Eh, I liked it better when I thought he was checking us out.)

(That's because you think with our dick, whereas I, the rational one -)

(You mean the boring one -)

"Ladies, ladies," he interrupts, spreading his hands out imploringly. "Can't a guy enjoy his tacos in peace anymore?"

(Oh, the humanity.) White snarks. (What difference does it make if the kid won't stop staring?)

(I bet he's just looking at our scars, anyway. Wouldn't be the first time.)

(Yeah right, no one could look at our mug for that long unless they want to kill it.)

(You have a point there!)

"I'll just ask him," he exclaims brightly, grabbing up the rest of his tacos and skipping his way across the room. You really can't miss where he's heading - no matter how jaded, the people of this city are still wary of anyone sporting a full-spandex ensemble making a beeline for them - but the maybe-spy keeps staring at him, apparently unconcerned that his mark has identified him. Sliding into the other side of the booth, Wade settles in and smiles. "So, you a vampire or a spy?"

The kid blinks. "Neither. I presume you're Wade Wilson?"

(Hey, he sounds like Francis!)

"Who's asking?" Wade finishes off a taco, licking his fingers obscenely. "I like to know who's out to get me, you know? Put names to the faces that pop up in my fantasies or my To-Kill list, but you look a little too young for either one of those. They just keep getting younger and younger, don't
"They?" he shakes his head in dramatic dismay, cursing the heavens and squeezing the life out of an innocent taco. He wipes the mess on the table and mentally raises the tip he's going to leave.

"I deeply regret coming here," the kid says candidly, looking cool as a cucumber.

"Well, you wouldn't be here if you didn't have to be, right? Don't worry, I get that all the time!" Wade waves a hand carelessly, gesturing vaguely to the empty space between them, and his voice unintentionally gains a hard edge to it. "But this won't turn out well if you're here to ice me, kid."

"Not today," the little guy responds mildly, as if he's talking about his awesome rock collection and not premeditated homicide.

(He's giving us the creeps,) White grumbles, none too happy about it. (We should just get rid of him.)

Wade tilts his head, ignoring the voice. "What's your name, kid? You wouldn't happen to be a 'Francis', would you? You sound like a 'Francis', and I don't have a good history with sissy-named British guys."

Said British guy raises a brow. "I'm Harry."

"Oh thank baby Jesus! The last thing I needed was a mini-Francis on my case. Seriously, that guy was an ass in my pain."

"I can imagine," Harry deadpans, delicately folding his hands beneath the table. Wade spares a moment to wonder whether the guy's holding a gun to his nads, Han Solo-style, and is understandably relieved when he just pulls up a single sheet of paper. Really, he doesn't want to ruin his three month no-kill streak - Spidey wouldn't hesitate to turn him over to the authorities or worse: revoke their bestie status. Then what would he have done about his pre-ordered friendship bracelets? At least he got free shipping. #AmazonPrime!

(Pay attention, you're missing the plot.)

"- and then I'll be on my way." Whoa, whoa, is he being hired for something? He really should work on making a better impression, but that could just be the author losing sight of his characterization. "What an amateur," Wade giggles to himself.

"Pardon?" Harry frowns.

"I didn't hear a word you said, Twilight," he admits, finally getting back on track. "You might wanna run that by me again."

The man's vacant expression doesn't reveal anything, and the mercenary finds himself a wee bit disappointed. Half the fun in interacting with other people is riling them up! Not Harry though, this guy seems like he has a stick up where the sun don't shine. Must be a British thing.

His attention is drawn to the sheet when the man slides it over. "Please fill out this questionnaire."

(A questionnaire? Boooring.)

(To think, we were actually intimidated by this kid.)

"Pffft," Wade stuffs his mouth with his last taco, chewing with his mouth open. "Won't make that mistake again."
"Have you filled out many questionnaires?" Harry drawls, crossing his arms. He resists the urge to
giggle because, really, it isn't Harry's fault that he doesn't know about the boxes. "It won't take more
than five minutes. Then we can both go our separate ways." He doesn't see where the kid pulls out a
foot-long feather, the end sharpened to a tip, but he suspects it's not sanitary.

"Whoa now, don't tell that came from your -"

"The quicker you fill this out, the quicker I can leave. Please answer honestly."

Wade snickers to himself, taking the feather pen and trying to read the chicken scratch on the page.
After a minute of turning the sheet this way and that, he ultimately gives up, shrugging to himself,
and decides to just start doodling to fill in the empty spaces. By the time he gets to the bottom of the
page, he's only answered two or three questions - and really, he doesn't know what's so interesting
about which mythical creatures he prefers or what he thinks about the apparent 'missing bees' crisis -
while the rest of it is covered in kick-ass drawings.

"There, my masterpiece!"

Harry snatches the page from his hands, folding it into a square and tucking it away without looking.
"Thank you. I appreciate your cooperation."

Wade blinks at the suddenly empty air in front of him.

(I knew he was creepy.)
Aside from packing up and moving to a new home, the reason this chapter has been delayed is because I'd been feeling rather uninspired. But good news! Inspiration hit me like a truck last night, and I'd been working nonstop since then to get this puppy out there. Hope you enjoy :)

"Your beloved is... different."

Death gives him as flat a stare an empty skull can manage which, not to anyone's surprise, is quite impressive and mildly terrifying to be subjected to. He thinks his unease isn't showing, but he's long since learned that no one can call bullshit on a poker face like a being without a face. It's a wonder that Harry even tries, really, but his stubbornness isn't a thing to thumb your nose at. Measuring up to Death, he can almost beat her patience through sheer will.

So it seems like a small eternity passes when Harry finally crumbles under the weight of her expectant gaze. He sighs. "Alright. I hated him."

She bares her teeth in a parody of a smile, being the soulless creature she is. "Really. How unexpected."

"You're doing this to spite me, aren't you?" Harry groans, collapsing (un)gracefully onto the ground. Beneath him, the imitation of grass shrivels into gray strands that disintegrates into dust. He absently reaches a hand to scoop the remains, letting the grains slide through his fingers, and smiles wistfully despite himself. "I already had one daughter go through the rebellious stage; I don't need you to remind me how traumatic that can be."

"Don't associate me with your brood," she retorts, shuddering as if the thought disturbs her personally. His expression does something odd in response - he isn't sure whether to be proud or offended, and it depends on the day, really - but that doesn't stop Death from continuing, "I deal with enough horrors. Your descendants cause even more trouble than you did in your youth, and they don't have a Dark Lord to worry about."

That drags a laugh from his throat. Proud, then! "It's a part of our Potter charm!"

"If that's what you want to call it," he's sure she would roll her eyes if she had any. As it is, Death ambles closer and primly seats herself next to him, widening the radius of decay and producing more gray powder. "Now, have you made a decision about Wade?"

Harry hums, closing his eyes. "I'll need more time to make an informed decision."

The air between them goes subzero.

He peeks at her, gauging her reaction.

"There's not many things I ask of you," Death says calmly, and her relaxed posture remains just as innocuous. He knows better than to accept that nonchalance at face value but oddly enough, it isn't a cover for seething rage, as he expects. No, it's something... melancholy.
Harry waits to see if there's anything else she wants to add, but she simply stares out into the distance. 'The distance' consists of what appears to be a small field now covered in frost, dotted with sad frozen trees and not much else, which gradually fades into a white abyss that stretches outward forever. This realm, their realm, usually takes such a form for Harry's benefit - even after all this time he still retains some human characteristics; one of those being that he finds eternal nothingness deeply unsettling on a primal level - if there isn't something there to distract his otherwise human mind, he'll likely go mad within the hour.

He exhales, ignoring the puff of white, and pulls out a square sheet of paper from the void.

"Would you like to see how your beloved fared against my test?"

Death takes it coolly, but her composure slips away as she opens it. "Oh, my sweet," she all but caresses the childish doodles, and it's all he can do to keep from laughing hysterically. For Merlin's sake, there were taco stains on it. "There isn't a thing in all of Creation that can compare to how your mind works."

Harry makes a face. "Well, you're not wrong."

She gives him a look from beneath her cowl, all shadows and desolation, and he wisely refrains from making any more comments that would result in a sudden job opening for one Master of Death. Carefully tucking the sheet into her cloak, where it may never again see the light of day, she muses, "So I assume he failed your asinine test."

"No."

He's surprised her, he knows, and his green eyes undoubtedly shine with triumph. It isn't everyday you pull one over on Death, after all, and the only other person to do so is one of his ancestors - speaking of which, he should really visit Ignotus again, perhaps compare victories -

"Master?"

The uncertainty and budding hope in her tone is something no one else is privy to - to anyone else, Death must always remain stoic and wise and untouchable. She usually is all of those things, and more (or less depending on your perspective), but the fact that a human is able to make her vulnerable enough to express such weaknesses to her master - well. Even though Death has eons of time and experience, she doesn't understand what it means to have parental instincts.

And he's foolish enough to have grown paternal at some point.

"I don't hate him," Harry sighs at length, giving her a fond smile. "I hate what he could potentially do to you."

"He couldn't do anything against me, even if he so desired," Death scoffs as she stares him down, no doubt trying to figure out his motives. She even tilts her head a little, as if a different angle would reveal some secret of his that she doesn't already know. If she finds anything, she keeps the discovery to herself, as Death is usually wont to do. "I believe I understand the sentiment, however."

"I certainly hope not," he jokes, raising his chin imperiously. "Don't think your master is growing soft, now."

"Of course," she says, the picture of a demure lady. You know, if ladies lacked skin and muscle and happened to collect souls. "I wouldn't expect anything less."

A roguish smile curls Harry's lips as he all but chirps, "Good! Then you'll also understand that I'll be
conducting *supervised* visits, won't you?"

Death pauses. "Supervised visits?"

"Just because I don't hate him doesn't mean I *trust* him," Harry grumbles by way of response, leaning backwards to stare at the semblance of a sky. "I mean, aside from having atrocious eating habits, questionable morals and an even *more* questionable mental state, he doesn't seem like the type who'll settle down for a monogamous relationship. I need to know if he'll be as dedicated to you as you seem to be for him."

"What a strange little Master I have," Death sounds amused, like she's humoring him. She very well could be, for all he's concerned, but that doesn't bother him as much as it might have in the beginning. "Guarding my interests so fiercely. If only you were so motivated in your other duties."

"Anyway," Harry pointedly ignores the jab, feeling his magic beginning to stir in preparation for what he has in mind. "You'll need a makeover, if you're going to 'mingle with the commoners', so to speak. Try not to move, if you please."

The wind picks up between them as his magic *flows*, sparking, twisting from his fingertips to caress Death's still form and slowly encasing her in a bubble of softly shining gold - the area rapidly becomes so saturated with his magic that the air thins, so he stops breathing altogether to focus. His forehead crinkles in mild concentration as he works, carefully guiding his magic *this* way instead of *that* way, unaware that, to the outside observer, Harry very much resembles an ethereal figure worthy of such power and various appellations. With glowing green eyes eerily set in a face made of porcelain, he watches as the bubble occasionally sends out a blinding pulse in time with each change he makes, obeying his intentions. Another small eternity passes in this fashion until the undulation of pulses start coming quicker and quicker, to the point where there's no gap between them, and Death is simply burning bright like a star gone supernova -

With an ear-popping crack of a thousand lightning strikes, his magic coalesces to fit Death's new silhouette, pulsing once more before it fades into her newly minted skin. With her hood still casting her face in shadows, he can only see a pair of dark, onyx-like eyes peering at him. The rest of her is suitably woman-shaped, if her curving hour-glass figure and the swell of her modest breasts is anything to go by. He's relatively sure she could pass for a female human.

Harry smiles in satisfaction, conjuring a full-length mirror and excitedly gesturing towards it. "Tell me what you think! And take down that cowl, let's have a proper look at you."

She wordlessly reaches out and two bone-white arms emerge, revealing a strange pattern of whirling, black rune-like designs that travels from her shoulders, down her thin arms, past her delicate wrists, and tapering off the back of her hands. It earns a raised, befuddled brow from Harry but he easily dismisses it as residual marks from his magic; if anything, they could pass it off as a tattoo. Shrugging away the feeling that something is off, he waits with baited breath as her elegant fingers grasp the edge of her hood, smoothly pushing it back and letting it fall to rest lightly on her shoulders.

He stares.

He notices two things.

The second thing he notices is how silky and stark white her hair is, tumbling down in loose curls that stop at her mid-back. It really is quite a lovely mane, for all that it's bleached of color, and it somehow seems more manageable than his own crow's nest of stubborn cowlicks.
The first thing he notices, however, is how the tattoo-like designs on her shoulders most definitely continues upward - all the way up to her face, where it boldly outlines her features into the unmistakable shape of a skull. The whole area around both her eyes is completely inked black in an imitation of empty sockets, trimming with half-circles and dots that is remarkably feminine; at the end of her rounded nose, her nostrils are darkened to depict an equally empty nasal cavity; her lips have a black horizontal line between them, with vertical slashes that must represent teeth, stretching out toward both her cheekbones before thinning out into whirling designs and more decorative dots. Honestly, it's reminiscent of a Día de los Muertos makeup.

Though it may lend her a rather macabre look, Harry finds it strangely beautiful. And fitting, to say the least.

He waits patiently as Death reviews her reflection in silence, almost clinically cataloging the changes. Her attention, ultimately, is drawn to her face - she turns her head both ways to get a better look at the unintentional marks permanently etched onto her skin. She even lifts a hand to trace some of the lines, something like wonder sparking in her dark eyes as she finishes her perusal, and her lips twitch upward to form her first, true smile.

It's somewhat jarring to actually see emotion from her, rather than guessing, but Harry takes it all in stride. He joins her with his own quiet grin. "Well?"

Death turns to face him fully, her smile widening to bare her teeth in a manner that would be inappropriate to anyone else, but comes as familiar to him.

"It's perfect."
Death Goes to the Human World

Chapter Summary

Back from the abyss with a small chapter.

Perhaps it isn't too late to find a quaint little farm somewhere, Harry thinks as he leads Death down the streets of New York with their arms linked together. They don't draw too many raised brows, at least not from locals, but there is the occasional ooh-ing and ah-ing from passing tourists. He ignores them in favor of chasing his wistful daydreams. Raise some cattle, tend to my own garden -

"We are what comes after," Death says a bit reproachfully. "It isn't our responsibility to care for the living."

"Except for Wade Wilson, of course," Harry grins widely, waggling his brows at her and discreetly raising his mental barriers. She could be so nosy. "Besides, don't you think I'd make a wonderful farmer? I already have enough experience reaping souls, crops can't be much different." Several passersby give him a strange look for that last one. He waves at them cheerfully.

"Do what you will, so long as you complete your duties."

"Isn't it my duty to give you orders?"

Her lips twitch in what could've been a smile. "You've yet to do so, Master."

"Well, I'll have to rectify that, won't I?" Harry retorts, rolling his eyes. "Ask and you shall receive, my dear."

They continue down their path in companionable silence, Harry taking in the sights of a bustling city and Death uninterested in the oddities he points out to her. Really, he doesn't understand why she doesn't share in his curiosity when, look, a street performer is juggling six turtles! While hopping! Or look, look, there's an apparent car chase rushing past them, complete with blaring police sirens and gunfire! And now there's a red-and-blue dressed man swinging after that, holding a few pizza boxes in hand!

"Look at them go!" Harry exclaims, eyes twinkling. "What sort of human do you suppose that was?"

"A mutant," Death deadpans, raising a brow as if to say 'you should know this'. "Not unlike my beloved."

At the not-so-subtle reminder of their current mission, Harry smothers a laugh at the impatient look that crosses her features. He takes a moment to admire his handiwork - because Death really is quite the stunning woman, from an abstract, paternal sort of perspective - then Harry acquiesces and gets back on track. After that, they don't come across any more noteworthy oddities until they arrive at their destination, where Wade himself is lingering just outside a questionable Mexican establishment. The human is just across the street and hasn't noticed them yet, gesturing wildly and (most likely) arguing with himself.

Harry hears Death's breath hitch, and he ignores how her hold on his arm tightens enough so that her nails dig burrows into his skin.
"Wait here," he orders smugly.

Her head whips toward him in an unnaturally quick motion, more birdlike than human, and it does more to convey her incredulity than she likely realizes.

"Don't get your panties in a twist," he manages to utter, gleeful despite the roiling uneasiness taking refuge in his stomach. It's worth it. "You'll meet your beloved in a few minutes. Just let me introduce you."

Death inclines her head, calming even as her eyes seem smug. "As you say, Master."

"That was weird," Harry makes a face, extracting his much abused arm from her vice-like grip. "You actually listening to me - it feels weird. I don't like it."

"How peculiar," she smiles secretively, the barest amount of teeth glinting.

Feeling very much like the butt of a joke, Harry narrows his eyes. He makes a v-sign with his forefinger and middle finger, raising it to his eyes then back at her in the universal 'I'm watching you' gesture, but then sighs in defeat. He nearly throws his hands in the air, but he's lost enough dignity today. "Alright, alright, you've made your point. Even the Master of Death cannot fully command you."

Death's smile eases into something softer, almost fond. "As you say, Master."

The way she says it is odd, but Harry brushes it off and says, "Well, come on then. Let's go claim your human."

Said human is pacing back and forth, muttering to himself, as they make their way across the street. Harry manages to catch the tail end of it.

"- let us do that. We're besties!" There's a pause, and Wade tilts his head like he's listening to someone. Then he snickers. "As long as we don't kill anybody, we're golden! Spidey never said anything about maiming -"

He cuts himself off when he turns and sees Harry first.

"You!"

Before he can respond, Death steps forward with a pointed focus he's only ever seen when she's personally reaping a soul.

Understandably enough, the human seems to have instinctively frozen in place, masked eyes comically wide as Death continues forward, raising her arms to rest her hands against his too-still chest. Wade visibly begins trembling the moment she touches him, and the man's breathing kicks up a notch as her fingers elegantly glide up to cradle his masked face. Death pets her human gently, as if frightened he would vanish at any moment, and her expression suitably matches her wonder.

"Wade," She breathes the name like a caress, eyes fluttering and lips curving shyly. "I thought it was about time I paid you a visit."

Death pushes his mask up to his nose, exposing diseased skin, and kisses him.

And the human promptly collapses, dead.

A breathless moment passes before Death slowly turns to face him and raises a brow, one of the
human gestures she's grown particularly fond of, and he feels a chill run down his spine. Harry petulantly thinks that he might've done too well with her features - while distinctly feminine, her expressions do well to convey the sharpness and intensity that he only sensed before she had a face. In short, Death is somehow more intimidating now that he can see and feel her displeasure.

Nervously glancing between Death and her human's corpse, he winces.

"I can fix it."
Death's Problem Is Harry's Problem

Chapter Notes

It's been almost a year and this is what I have to show for it. Whelp.

On the bright side, I'm finally in university and I tend to write more during the school year so, more shenanigans to come. Probably.

The air thins around them.

"I didn't know that was going to happen!"

Innocent bystanders start choking.

"How was I supposed to know your touch was deadly? It didn't do anything to me."

Cold, coal-black eyes stare at the corpse.

"I said I can fix it, and I will, so there's no need for such dramatics, really."

The bystanders try crawling away, faces purpling.

"He should be coming back soon anyway, right?" Harry tries to reason, feeling a bit of apprehension mix in with his guilt. Just how long does it take for this man to revive? Does it matter that his cause of death is Death herself? Surely that wouldn't make it permanent.

He's becoming less sure of it the longer they stand there, staring at the mercenary, no hint of life forthcoming, and a useless apology gets lodged in his throat. He doesn't think it'll be appreciated.

Nervously glancing between Death's unnaturally still form and Deadpool's body sprawled out on the sidewalk, he thinks he'd better retreat to some deep, dark hole in some deep, dark dimension where he can hide for the next century or so. That ought to cool her temper a bit, Harry hopes silently as he takes slow steps away from Death.

But then -

"Urrrrk," the mercenary thankfully gurgles, fingers twitching.

"Oh merciful Merlin," Harry exclaims in relief, bounding up to Death and nudging her arm. "See, he's fine. No damage done, eh?"

Death gives him a look of such disdain that something shrivels up and turns to dust inside him. He tries not to take it personally, considering her 'one true love' is currently drooling all over the pavement as his motor functions return to him, but he knows how wrathful Death can be when she wants to be. And she certainly looks like she wants to decorate this dimension with his ashes.

"What I want," Death says, pinning him in place with her dark, simmering gaze. "Is to touch my beloved without killing him."

Harry winces, nodding quickly, and summons his magic for a quick diagnostic. While that's going,
he gently takes one of her tattooed arms, inspecting the dark, swirling runes branded there and tries to make sense of the elegant lines. Runes has never been his best subject, even now, and he knows this is one of the pitfalls of performing magic with nothing more than intuition. Trying to unravel what he'd done instinctively would take some time... "Yes, right, I'll just have to -"

"Wooowza!" Deadpool slurs, head lolling as he heaves himself onto his elbows. Harry lifts an eyebrow at the loopy grin that stretches across diseased skin, wondering how the man could possibly find this situation at all pleasing. "What kind of supernatural smooch was that? Because hot damn, lady, I'm ready for another hit!"

Ah, a masochist.

Death sends him a flat look and Harry abandons his mental shields because, obviously, they're useless at the moment. He's too distracted with trying to make sense of these blasted runes, he can't concentrate on keeping his shields in place.

"Allow me to make it easier," Death intones, shaking off his grip with ease, and glides over to the downed mercenary.

Scoffing, Harry watches her kneel by the man's side, very pointedly not touching him, and she begins whispering in a soothing tone he's never heard before. He watches as something lights up inside her, her features coming alive and warm, a soft smile gracing her lips for the ridiculous man who whispers back with a besotted aurora about him. They only have eyes for each other and, absurdly, it makes him nostalgic about his own wife - he remembers what it's like to look at someone like they're the only thing that matters, like they complete a part of you you didn't know was missing, like they're the moon and stars. Looking at them, at how brightly they shine together, Harry knows it would be a crime to snuff out such a deep, innocent love.

Try as he might, he can't help the fondness or the protectiveness that buds in his chest for them. Of course, as he'll come to learn, such sentiments don't survive very long in the presence of Wade Wilson.

"You mean we can't bang?" Deadpool whines. "No sexy times?"

Harry takes a breath and resists the urge to strangle the man.

Death solemnly shakes her head. "No, my sweet."

"How about Netflix and chill, or some aggressive cuddling?"

"No."

"We could polish the unicorn's horn, or slam the clam!"

"I'm afraid not."

"No adult nap-time? Peeling the banana? Poking the Wookie? Oh, wait, you know you wanna ride the Bony Express! Come on, baby, let's get biblical!"

"Not until my master has gotten rid of this abhorrent affliction," Death gestures to her skin, then throws an accusing look Harry's way. Following her stare, the red-spandex man rolls his head around to give him a sharp grin that holds the promise of pain, and, if that wasn't enough, his voice comes out gravelly and dark.

"Master, huh? Sounds kinky, but I'm not angling for a threesome with discount Radcliffe over here."
Raising an eyebrow at that, *and* the violent and possessive thoughts being broadcast rather loudly, along with an extra voice or two, Harry looks down at the mortal with all the weight of his disinterest. "You needn't worry about that, Mr. Wilson, I assure you." Turning to Death, he softens and sighs for the umpteenth time. "It may take a bit of time, but I can fix this. I promise."

"How long," she states more than asks, but at least she seems mollified.

Opening his mouth to respond, ready to reassure Death that it shouldn't take too long, Harry catches the hopeful way Deadpool is holding himself. A terrible idea sinks its claws into him before he can stop it. His lips curl mischievously. "Can't say. I'll need to do some research. Could be months. Maybe even years."

"Oh come on," Deadpool groans, dropping back onto the pavement with an audible *thunk*.

Harry smiles.
Studying runes in Wilson's frankly sickening apartment isn't exactly how Harry thought he'd be spending his afternoon but, then again, he did set himself up for it.

Staring blankly at a page halfway through *Ancient Runes Made Easy*, book held tightly in hand and unsure of what he'd actually read in the last few minutes, Harry suddenly remembers why he hadn't taken Ancient Runes when he was a boy. Apart from the fact that he'd been trying to learn as much as he could to defeat the Dark Lord, leaning towards subjects like Charms and Defence, he'd never been a very good student when it came to theory. Practical learning is more his forte, especially considering that, presently, his magic is more instinctual than anything. Up until now that has always been a good thing. Now...

"'Need to do some research', I said," Harry grumbles as he tries to focus, flipping through pages and pages of unrelenting blocks of text. It makes his eyes want to bleed. "'Could be months, maybe even years', I said! Ugh, what a twat."

Now he needs to read up on the history of runes, learn which groups of ætt they belong to, learn every possible meaning each rune has (including their reversals), learn which runes should go together or should never go together, learn what those particular combinations mean when grouped together, and that was just to start. He hasn't even had a chance to give more than a quick glance over the tattooed runes on Death's skin, and he definitely won't be able to anytime soon.

Glancing up from his book, Harry eyes the ominously closed door of Deadpool's bedroom.

It didn't help that, earlier, Death had fluttered her lashes at him and requested that he cast a *Muffliato* so that she and her beloved could have some 'privacy'. Harry hadn't liked the way Wilson was blatantly leering through his mask, giggling and making some disturbing hand gestures, but he trusted Death enough to know what she was doing. And cast it he did. He'd cast the most saturated and secure *Muffliato* he'd ever done, enough so that the buzzing makes his ears want to bleed as much as his eyes.

They've been holed up in there for hours since then, while Harry had filtered through several texts on runes, and he isn't naive enough to misunderstand just what the pair of them were up to. It couldn't be all that much, considering they couldn't actually touch each other -

Harry's suddenly assaulted by truly *unholy* images of Death and images of Wilson, and images of *Death and Wilson together*. 
He gags in utter disgust, his entire being recoiling from that, and he's in sudden need of at least two Firewhisky bottles: one to drown in his sorrows and another to pour directly onto his poor brain. "That was cruel and unusual and entirely unnecessary!" he shouts at the bedroom door.

Well, you were wondering.

"I was not!" Harry slams his mental barriers down against the mischievous, slightly sultry, thought that invades his pure, innocent mind, blushing furiously and desperately trying not to think about why Death's mental voice sounds so breathy -

And he's not thinking about it. Nope. He's thinking about runes. Reading about magic and runes. Magical runes and theory. Ah yes, beautiful, boring theory that uses old Norse words like Hávamál and talks about how significant the number nine is when casting spells with runes. Yes, it's all very interesting and most certainly worth all of his attention.

With a put-on sigh, Harry slides further down on his comfortable, conjured chaise - because the only surfaces he's willing touch in this place are his own creations - and studiously bookmarks each section of the book that could offer some insight into this predicament, all the while suspiciously checking his barriers. This was most definitely not how he'd planned on spending his afternoon.

It isn't until another couple of hours later that the door finally opens just enough to allow Death to slink through.

Harry raises his book to block her from view.

"There's no need for that, Master. I'm decent."

"Oh right," Harry says, a touch sarcastic, and peeks over the top. "You'd just show me anyway, hmm?"

Thankfully true to her word, she's wearing her normal robes along with the most nauseatingly smug grin he's ever seen. Even her eyes are twinkling!

Harry blinks out of his outrage the moment he registers that and really looks at her. There's a lively flush across what skin he can see, her posture more relaxed than he'd ever seen, and her grin is slowly forming into an honest-to-goodness smile. She allows him his scrutiny with quiet amusement, and even that feels more sunny and chaste than her usual dry, sardonic humor! He stares at Death in the face and all he can see is such a genuine, shining happiness that he can't help the tingling warmth of paternal satisfaction. Which is honestly such a ridiculous thing to feel, considering she is Death and he has an actual daughter.

Bah, he's getting far too sentimental with age. Clearing his throat and ignoring the knowing expression on her face, Harry looks back at his book and grumbles, "You're enjoying this very much, aren't you."

From the corner of his eye, Death shrugs. "Perhaps. But I've never lived before today, so I think I can indulge."

There's a beat of silence for Harry to process that short statement and -

Oh.

"I'm sorry," he says quietly, meeting her curious gaze. "I... hadn't thought of it like that."

She glides over and comes to sit next to him, patting his hand. "Worry not, little Master," her soft
words hang in the air for a moment, a solemnly resigned thing, before her lip curls up in what could almost be a sneer. It's relieving to see something so familiar, and the tone that follows is as welcome as it is aggravating. "I'm not so delicate that your small-mindedness can hope to shatter my sensibilities."

"Wasn't aware you had sensibilities," Harry says coolly.

"Wade found them for me," she purrs in reply, raising a sly brow.

"Oh stop it," he nearly adds a desperate please, but only just. "It's awkward enough having you ask me to cast the Muffliato."

"That was for your benefit. If you like, we could do without -"

"For Merlin's sake, no, no," Harry shudders, wincing. "Forget what I said, it's not awkward at all. Please, ask away."

"As you say, Master," Death smiles her skeleton-grin. "Now, have you made any progress on these?" She doesn't need raise her arms in gesture for Harry to know what she means, but she does and he valiantly ignores the bruise-like marks proudly displayed there. Were those - How did they even manage -

No, no he does not want to know.

He glares at her, gritting through his teeth. "Not as such."

"Hmm," Death leans back on her arms, tilting her head to reveal even more horrifying marks. On her neck. "Such a shame."

"You have no shame," Harry growls, picking up his book, shielding himself from her undoubtedly pleased expression. Such a cruel creature. He doesn't dare to look at her again, doesn't think his sensibilities can handle much more, and simply waves his hand in a 'shoo'-ing motion. "Please, continue snogging your human and leave me in peace."

She only laughs and saunters away.

His unfortunate ears catch an enthusiastic, "Oh baby, back for more, eh?" and a girlish giggle before he reinforces the Muffliato with extreme prejudice.

Harry sighs in relief at the buzzing in his ears and collapses against his chaise, feeling strangely drained and exhausted by the whole interaction. He lets himself lie there for a moment, staring at the stained ceiling, before he comes to the dignified conclusion that there is absolutely no fucking way he can keep this up. This whole 'I need to research' affair was meant to make Wilson suffer and, by the look and sound of it, Harry is suffering more than anyone. And there are better things he could do than listen to Death fondle her human.

To save himself from further indignities and embarrassment, he'll have to fix Death's fatal touch sooner rather than later. No doubt Wilson will be ecstatic about that, but their current predicament doesn't seem to be hindering their... activities.

"Ugh," Harry chokes. "I need help."

There isn't a chance he could possibly figure it all out on his own. Not before he either throws Wilson or himself through a wormhole.
He needs someone who can understand runes and possibly examine Death with him. He needs someone he can trust with that, someone who knows him better than he knows himself, someone who isn't afraid of his power. There are a few he can think of at the top of head who could be up to the task, but only one person who could do it the best. He needs the best right now.

"Morgana's sagging tit," Harry curses in despair. "I'm going to have to consult her, aren't I?"
Harry Learns a Thing

Harry eyes the door to Wade's bedroom warily. He knows the Muffliato is in full effect, if his buzzing ears are any indication, but he still hesitates before knocking three times. He waits with baited breath for a response, desperately hoping Death isn't in a teasing mood to send him something indecent, but, thankfully, only the image of Death with her eyes closed emerges.

Taking that as a sign to continue, Harry enters slowly.

He's still paranoid that he'll find the lovesick pair in a compromising situation - he wouldn't put it past them - but he finds something arguably worse.

Lying on a ratty mattress with her back leaning against the wall, Death is holding her sleeping beloved in an embrace so tender Harry nearly walks right back out the way he came. He might have done too, if she hadn't opened her eyes and smiled at him with a look so peaceful and happy it roots him in place. Death looks so damn pleased where she is, one ivory-tattooed hand cradling Wilson's head just below her chin while the other traces lazy patterns against whatever costume-clad limb she can reach. It's almost ridiculous how natural they look together, how the mercenary curls around Death, how the sunset shining through the window casts a glow about them that seems too idyllic and so disgustingly romantic. Ugh.

"Is my master jealous?" Death says wryly, amused.

It takes physical effort to not roll his eyes. "I see your sense of humor is growing."

"One of the many delights of living."

"... Right," Harry fiddles with his hands nervously. Now or never. Dear Merlin, he isn't looking forward to this. "About that."

The amusement disappears.

"Er, I think I've found a way to help with, well with this," Harry hurries to explain, gesturing to the tattooed runes. "Just hear me out."

He explains how the runes are beyond his abilities to understand or mess about with, and that he'd need outside assistance to gain some much-needed clarity on just what he'd done. That assistance, of course, could only be found in the underworld. From his daughter.

She raises a brow. "You would go to such lengths?"

Harry thinks about the joyful halo surrounding Death and her beloved, about the way they seem to unconsciously gravitate toward each other (even now, Wilson's minuscule shifts in movement are responses to her), and it warms the part of him that is largely human. He's no stranger to love, or how wonderful it is to be loved, and he won't deprive her of that.
He also thinks about what happened earlier, when he was dejectedly studying runes while Death mercilessly sent him images of - yeah, no. No thank you. He's glad to bring them together and leave them be and not have to see any of it. Chaperone my ass, Potter, what were you thinking? "Of course, anything for you two... delightful lovebirds."

Death smiles knowingly.

It's an unsettling thing that should make his skin crawl, but Harry's long since grown used to the sight. Honestly, he kind of misses her skeletal form - that was much more effective and intimidating.

"Well, thought I'd let you know," Harry rocks back on his heels, slowly moving backwards. "Time runs differently in the underworld and I'm not sure how long it'll take for me to gather the information I need. I'll be back as soon as I do."

"Thank you, Master," Death says the words quietly. She meets his gaze. "Truly."

Harry blinks at the genuine gratitude he sees. Then his lips pull up into a fond smile because, really, Death isn't that different from any other human looking for happiness. It might have happened in the unconventional form of a mentally unstable mercenary (one of these days Harry would like to sit them down and ask them when love came into it), but it happened. And now here they are.

"Of course," Harry says again, nodding.

He gets one last look at the couple - it says something about him that he now views them as a singular unit - and he feels little more than fond exasperation. He knows Wilson will infuriate him just by his own nature and Death will only indulge him, but so long as he makes Death happy...

Well, he thinks he can endure it. If not, there's never a shortage of wormholes.
All it takes is for Harry to turn on his heel and he's stepping through the fabric of the universe. The journey happens in the blink of an eye and, when he comes out the other side in a clearing surrounded by heavily-wooded landscape, he finds himself in full regalia.
Harry closes his eyes with a sigh, bowing his head as the cloak settles over him like an old friend and he doesn't have to look to know that it shimmers with an unearthly sheen that any mortal would recoil from, an instinctive reaction to run from unseen danger. The ring fits perfectly on his third finger, long since replacing his wedding ring, warming his skin in gentle pulses and urging him to admire the obsidian-dark stone set in the center. Finally the wand appears in his hand eagerly, feeling more like an extension of his arm, and his magic rejoices at having all the missing pieces of his power together again.

It feels like coming home.

Harry allows himself to bask in the sensation a moment longer, letting the wave of it wash over him without taking him down the rabbit hole. He knows full well how dangerous it would be to accept it, to let that all-encompassing feeling of comfort and home and unyielding power consume him. He never does, not once in all his years, no matter how sweetly the Hallows call to him.

With a heaviness he knows doesn't belong to him, but feels all the same, Harry dismisses the Hallows. They reluctantly fade into whatever void they retreat to whenever he rejects them and he doesn't care enough to find out where that might be (if he does, they might entice him to follow). He ignores the emptiness they leave behind, familiar enough with the loss to focus on what he came here to do.

Right. Runes expert. Lily.

Harry opens his eyes. He's not at all surprised to see the half-living, half-dead gatekeeper standing before him and studying him dispassionately, which never fails to impress upon him her impartial nature. Named 'Hel' after the same dimension she's tasked with guarding, Hel is as stoic and detached as could be.

Lovely company to chat with.

"My lord," she greets him blandly.

"Just Harry is fine, thanks," he sighs in resignation.

"Of course, my lord."

It's the same exchange they share every time he comes here and it's more a habit than anything to try and convince Hel to call him by his name. Nothing will work, as far as he can tell, but Gryffindors do tend to be a stubborn bunch.

"To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?"

"I need to see someone."

"Another ancestor?"

Harry thinks he might've seen her lip twitch. Or it could be his mind playing tricks on him; the underworld does weird things to his mental state (one of the many reasons he tries not to linger here).

"Not this time. I'm... here to see my daughter, actually."

Hel nods regally. "Very well."

To his right, trees wither and disperse into dust in a clear path. He starts walking toward it without another word, knowing Hel wouldn't respond to his thanks or anything else he can think to say. If he
tries, she'd just stare at him with her unnerving milky gaze until he gives up.

Harry isn't in the mood to deal with that today. He's too anxious. He hasn't been to visit his daughter, or any of his children really, in ages. Partially because the last time he'd been here, he'd gotten into a row with his wife before storming off. He doesn't even remember what they'd been on about, just that they'd had some sort of disagreement.

Lily had always been more sensitive to that kind of thing, given her cheerful disposition. She nearly always took his side, which drove Ginny up walls, but last time... last time she'd sided with her mother.

He wonders if she's still upset with him.

Harry tries not to think about it too much as he walks down the ashy path. He doesn't know how long he walks - the landscape barely changes around him, no indicators there - but, before he knows it, he ends up coming upon another clearing. His breath catches when he sees her.

He knows that Lily had lived well into her hundreds, a great-grandmother with plenty of family to comfort her in her final moments but, to Harry, she looks like the mischievous seven-year old he thinks of her as. She's sitting in the middle of the empty field, staring up at the grey cloudless sky, and doesn't even spare him a glance when he finally makes his cautious approach.

"Mum's not happy with you," she tells him when he sits next to her.

Harry wants to hug her. He crosses his arms, grimacing. "I was hoping she wouldn't be. And you? Are you not happy with me?"

Lily shrugs, her lips forming a childish pout.

Ah. It'll be one of those talks, then.

"For what it's worth, I'm sorry," Harry apologizes quietly.

Lily glances down at the ground, hair falling to curtain around her face. He tries looking for any sign that she might've accepted his apology, but his daughter only plays around with strands of grass. Breathing evenly through his nose, Harry tries to keep his worry at bay. What could have been so horrible that he wouldn't be forgiven? What did he do?

"I know... know I'm doing something wrong," Harry begins slowly, trying to work through it. Lily pauses. "I know you and your mother are upset with me. With something I've done or am doing. I don't mean to make you unhappy, sweetheart, really. I'm trying my best, but I... I don't know how to fix this."

The words linger in the air.

"Do you remember?" She asks him suddenly, high-pitched voice cutting and sharp, and glances up at him. He almost doesn't recognize her. Lily's beautiful blue eyes tear into his heart and there's an urgency to them he doesn't understand.

Harry frowns, unease creeping along his senses. He feels like he's on the verge of something, like he's standing on the edge of a cliff he can't see. He can't pinpoint it. "No, I - sorry love, I think it's been longer for me than it's been for you - it's been too long."

Lily visibly deflates, but she smiles at him. It a sorrowful thing and she looks on the verge of tears, so he can't help but gather her up in his arms. She lets him hold her, even wraps her arms around him,
and Harry feels like he can breathe again. There's still a sense that something's amiss, that he's missing something important, but the worry slips from his mind when Lily speaks, soothing him. "It's okay Daddy. I forgive you. Mum forgives you too."

He feels the relief like a weight being lifted.

They stay in that embrace for a while, simply taking comfort in each other, and the time ticks away. He knows he should probably get a move on and do what he came here to do, but... but he hasn't seen his daughter in so long. He just wants this moment to last a little bit longer.

"You came here for something, didn't you?"

Harry curses, forgetting how perceptive his daughter could be. Her tutor was Hermione, for Merlin's sake. Really, he should've known he couldn't hide anything from her for long.

"No," he tries anyway.

"C'mon dad," Lily pulls away from him, a giggle escaping her. The sadness lingers on the corners of her lips, but it's quickly fading. "You're not that good at lying, you know."

"Well, it's not good to be good at lying."

"Still trying to lecture me," she rolls her eyes.

"You're still my daughter, aren't you?" Harry swipes at the tip of her nose with his finger. He watches as her nose scrunches up adorably. He sighs wistfully, wishing he could keep the pretense longer. But... he sighs heavily. "You are right, though. I need your help with something. Runes."

Lily brightens up at the notion of helping. "Really? What are they for?"

"That's what I need your help with, love. I'm not sure what the runes mean or what their purpose is, but I need to find out so I can fix an error," here Harry pauses, before conjuring a sheet of paper with a copy of the tattoo design. He hands it over to his daughter. "These are the runes. I'd cast a spell and these appeared as a result."

She studies the design with a keen eye, making a humming noise now and then as her eyes skim from one rune to another. He lets her inspect it as much as she needs to, answering any question she thinks to ask him, and generally tries not to disturb her as she works.

It's a small eternity before something happens.

"I don't understand." Lily says.

Harry meets her troubled gaze with his own. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, it doesn't make sense," she groans, frustrated and glaring at the sheet of paper. "These runes and their placement are conflicting with each other. They shouldn't work together. Life and death aren't things that you can slap together into one thing," Lily stops abruptly, giving him an appraising look. "Well. Not usually."

"Right," Harry agrees, chuckling. "So what are these runes telling you then? Don't worry if it doesn't make sense."

"I think you should worry," his daughter retorts solemnly. "Because if this is what I think it is, then it's a very big problem."
"Why?"

"The way these runes are arranged... it seems like you're trying to make life where there shouldn't be and take death out of where it should be," at his flat stare, Lily's chubby face pinches into a scowl. "It's too convoluted to try a direct translation but, basically, these runes either say something like from death a rebirth or new life births death. In the context of their arrangement, it implies you're transforming death into something else, something living. You'd be taking death and reversing it, really."

Harry stares at Lily. Lily stares right back at him.

Reversing... Death?

"I've never lived before today."

Harry feels light-headed with the implications. What... he only meant to give Death a body, a vessel, to travel to the mortal plane, not... not bring her to life! Death is a primordial force of nature! Harry doesn't, can't, have the power to give her life, right? That, that would be...

"One of the many delights of living."

Catastrophic. Without Death in the universe, the repercussions would be too great to fathom.

Fuck.

"Dad, you didn't make Inferi with runes, did you?"

Lily stares up at him with renewed worry.

Harry tries to muster up a smile. "No, sweetheart."

No, he thinks. I might've done something worse.

Chapter End Notes

So I may actually have a plot now? And let me know if you guys want more pictures, I could probably do a couple more.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!