

Relations

Von Khaosprinz

Relations

If someone had told Nero that some day, the people of Fortuna wouldn't try to burn him at the stake for seeing his demonic right arm, he would have laughed like a madman and shown them the finger. But somewhere along the way, Lady Fate had apparently been feeling cheeky enough to actually make that happen. And that was the exact reason why he was standing in front of a run-down shop, a neon sign saying *Devil May Cry* glaring down at him. His demonic arm, no longer covered by anything else but the sleeve of his denim coat, was glowing more brightly than usual due to the proximity of another demon. It seemed to be vibrating with energy and he flexed his fingers while giving it a thoughtful look. He sighed and dragged his human hand through his hair, messing it up. He was still getting flustered just thinking about why he was standing here now.

Forcing those thoughts away, he pushed the heavy wooden doors open and was greeted by an interior that didn't look any less run-down. He snorted in mild amusement before letting his blue eyes take in the mess presenting itself in front of him. There were some bottles of Jack Daniels scattered across the room, not to mention the piles of both new and less-than-new pizza boxes and more than a few magazines with questionable content. Finally, his gaze settled on the figure sitting behind the desk, feet propped up on the wood and a barely clad woman presenting her... appendages at a place he'd normally be looking into storm-coloured eyes if not for the paper hiding them. One hand rose from the other's stomach and pointed to a wooden door near the stairs before dropping down again.

"Toilet's in the back."

Nero snorted again at the 'greeting' before moving closer to the other devil hunter.

"Sorry, but I didn't come all this way here just to check out your bathroom... Dante."

A smirk played at his lips when the figure in front of him went still for a second before a gloved hand came up to remove the magazine hiding the other's face. He was met with a surprised, but somewhat pleased half-grin.

"Nero! What do I owe this pleasure?", he asked, lifting his booted feet off the desk and letting them fall to the ground with a heavy thud. Nero shrugged before taking his trusted sword off his back and dropping down on the ancient couch to the left of

the room. He figured that if Dante put his feet on his desk, he wouldn't mind Nero making himself comfortable as well, and with that, he put his own feet on the miserable looking coffee table. He eyed it warily when it began to creak under the weight of his boots before he decided to give a slightly more elaborate answer.

"Had to get out of Fortuna, stayed on the road for a while and finally decided that since you're the reason I had to go, I might as well pay you a visit."

He watched as Dante put his arms on the desk, propping his chin on one hand and looking at the younger hunter with something akin to confusion, although only slightly.

"Huh... and how is it my fault that you had to leave?"

Not really in the mood for sharing that particular bit of information just now, Nero merely shrugged before crossing his arms behind his head. He gave the shop another once over, his eyes taking in the multitude of demons nailed to the walls with weapons that didn't strike him as exactly human. He felt slightly awed- those sure were a lot... But then again, as much as he hated to admit (and he never would out loud), Dante *had* kind of kicked his ass back then. Talk about his ego getting a blow. Good thing he had mostly recovered by now and simply placed all the blame on Dante being at least two hundred years older than him and therefore having a huge advantage when it came to experience. Yeah, that was all.

His blue eyes wandered back to the older half-devil who was still looking at him calculatingly. Nero gave him a pointed look back, and after a short staring match, Dante just started laughing before standing up. He gestured with one hand to the young man occupying his couch.

"Sure, whatever floats your boat. Did you plan to stay in this city?"

Nero gave an affirmative nod.

"You got any plans yet where you'll be staying?"

This time, his answer was a shake of a head. Something strange seemed to be shining in the other's eyes and Dante had to let out another short laugh.

"So you invited yourself to stay here?"

Nero shrugged, but he couldn't keep the grin off his face entirely. Now Dante recognised what he was seeing in the other's eyes- it was mischief. Now the older half-devil was sure that something had happened- Nero seemed to be way too comfortable around him, even if they did have that initial bond of (probably) being the only two part-devils in existence. And saving the world together, of course. He barked in amusement before turning around and heading for a door behind him, waving the other over his shoulder. Now he was curious.

"Well, I guess you can stay here for a while. Just don't expect me to fluff your pillows

every morning, kid, I'm no hotel. And while you're here, feel free to make yourself useful. Care for a beer?"

"Handing out alcohol to a minor? I'm shocked."

Dante stopped in the doorway before turning halfway around to look at the other. He felt another grin tearing at his lips when he saw how Nero hadn't wasted any second to make himself comfortable on his couch, the way he was sprawled over it now.

"You're no minor in my book, kid. Which reminds me- how old are you, by the way?"

It was hard to tell just by looking at him or hearing him talk. On one hand, he still looked so young, but the confidence he practically oozed out of every pore, the way he held himself and the way he talked suggested otherwise. He could be anything from 15 to 25.

"Give me a few more weeks and it'll be 18."

Inwardly, Dante whistled. He hadn't been that young when he had saved the world for the first time. On the outside, however, he merely gave a nonchalant wave and started again for what was supposed to be the kitchen. He soon reappeared with a six-pack of beer in each hand, tossing one to the young man lounging on his couch who caught it easily with his demonic arm.

"Like I said, no minor in my book. Besides, in this city beer's for everyone who's reached the ripe age of 16, and you're free to do whatever you want at 18. Welcome to the big city life."

With that, he let himself fall back into his chair again, throwing his feet onto the desk in the same motion and opened the first can.

Nero, whose coat and hoodie were now draped over the back of the couch, gave a low whistle while opening his own beer.

"Wow. In Fortuna, you're of age at 21 and you're basically not allowed to do shit before that. Apart from killing things, that is. Kinda fucked up if you ask me."

He received a low chuckle in response but nothing else. Despite his mocking protest about not being allowed to drink any alcohol, he was no stranger to it. He wouldn't quite call it teenage rebellion, but if most of the city looked at you warily it was pretty easy to do whatever the hell you wanted. At least before the whole Saviour incident and after that... well. It certainly hadn't gotten harder.

He was nursing his second can of beer when Dante spoke up again, interrupting his thoughts.

"I know I just said I won't pry as to why you left that city of yours, but I can't help but feel like you know something I don't. So, spill. Why did you leave and come here, of all places?"

Nero shortly considered simply not answering, but then his brain did some strange

turns at odd places and he thought *Why the hell not?*

"Well... basically, people made the connection. How that old geezer wanted you, the Son of Sparda, as the Saviour's core, but then settled for me."

Dante did a strange mixture of a frown and a suppressed laugh.

"So they figured out you're related to their 'God'?"

Nero groaned but nodded.

"They went batshit crazy, I swear. As soon as they connected the dots, I basically had people fall on their knees in front of me every damn minute. They would start praying and shit like I was some sort of saint. The even started putting sculptures of me around town."

Dante started to laugh at the image. At least that was a different experience than from what he always got, what with demons always wanting to make him pay for the things his father had done. Hearing the other growling and chucking an empty can at him wasn't helping.

"It's not funny, old man! They even started giving Kyrie shit, just because we were close. They would go all-", he suddenly started screeching in imitation of an overbearing old woman, "STAY AWAY FROM THE SAVIOUR!"

The older hunter choked on his beer as he howled at the hilarity. He practically had to smash a fist into his mouth to keep himself in check at least a little, although that wasn't helping with his lack of air at all. He felt another can of beer hitting his head and he only laughed harder. His chest was starting to hurt from the spasms of laughing, choking and wheezing at the same time, but right now he certainly didn't give a damn. When he heard the safety of a revolver being released, however, he forced his amusement down and coughed. His face was still being split in half by a grin, but he bit down on his tongue to reign his laughter in. He looked over at Nero who was glaring at him half-heartedly, *Blue Rose* aimed directly at him.

As soon as Nero felt like the other had calmed down enough, he continued in an exasperated voice. But not before downing another can of beer in one go.

"So yeah. I wasn't going to put up with that shit, and Kyrie couldn't really deal with being scorned like that, so I decided to leave."

"Did you tell them?"

"Nah. They would have dragged me back and... chained me to the wall in the church, or some shit like that."

"And your girl- Kyrie?"

Nero was silent for a moment, eyes fixed on the empty can of beer in his hand. He

crushed it before answering in a sombre tone.

"I left her a letter. She wouldn't have let me go, either, but I couldn't stand the townspeople looking at her like that... like how they used to look at *me*. I know she would be hurting, but she belongs there, while I... don't. Not sure I ever did."

His blue eyes wandered across the room to settle on Dante. There was an unasked question in the room he didn't want to voice out loud but wanted to be answered nevertheless. Instead of granting him this answer, however, the older half-demon met his meaningful gaze with an untelling one of his own. Nero felt the first hints of anger rising in his chest- why wouldn't Dante... *react*? Swallowing his temper, the young man threw himself back onto the couch, his left hand fishing for another beer. He was sure he was basically oozing frustration, but he didn't want to voice the matter. The fire burning inside him that he couldn't quite stop from slowly growing seemed to disagree, though.

Dante, however, carefully observed the other half-devil who was muttering silent curses into his beer. He had a good idea what the other wanted to hear, but he didn't quite feel like bringing it up himself. He was... *uncomfortable* due to reasons he didn't quite fancy naming, much less saying out loud, so instead he decided to sit the tension out until his young companion would finally crack to his own temper. Admitting that he was quite eager to see that happen was another thing he refused to say out loud, even if that was mostly because he had concerns about his personal health. So instead, he leant back into his chair, ignored the creaking wood and downed another can. He could be patient if he wanted to.

Striking up some nonchalant idle talk, Dante watched in amusement how the other seemed to get more agitated by the minute. There was clearly something bothering him deeply, and it was only a matter of time until he would probably yell out something along the lines of "Fuck this shit" and throw something away before finally blowing up on him.

Amazingly, Nero didn't break as soon as either of them had expected. He lasted long enough for them to empty their beer, order a pizza along with some new beverages ("Don't get used to me paying, kid." "Don't worry, I'm not planning on mooching off you, old man.") and it wasn't until they had devoured about half of the Italian treat in silence that Nero broke. He suddenly yelled "Fuck this shit!" and forcefully slammed the slice of pizza he had been holding in his hand back into the box, spraying tomato sauce and toppings everywhere. He fixed a glare on the older hunter, who was still marvelling at the fact that his prediction had come true quite literally.

"Why the hell don't you care?! I mean, it's not like I can look into your head or something, I don't even want to know what kind of jizz is going on in there, but still! You can't tell me you haven't made the connection if those stupid bastards in Fortuna did!" He pointed an accusing finger at the older hunter who watched him in mild interest and neatly hidden amusement.

"We're related, somehow. And while I don't know what *you* think about all this, *I* was floored when I realised I had a living relative that I could actually get in touch with. I

grew up in an orphanage which wasn't fun at all when you're treated like you had some kind of disease. Why the fuck do you think did I come here? And here you are, acting like you don't give a *fucking damn*-"

"Do you think I would just everyone who walked through that door offer to stay?"

Nero blinked when he was interrupted mid-rant and it took a moment to understand the meaning of the words offered. He didn't even notice the beer covering his demonic arm from when he had crushed his still filled can of beer in his rage. He could feel his anger dissolving surprisingly fast when he processed the meaning, embarrassment taking its place. He couldn't bring himself to say something though and instead looked pointedly away, glaring half-heartedly at the desk his companion was sitting at.

"I did figure it out, alright? I wasn't sure if you wanted to act on it, so I didn't, either. Look, kid, I actually got used to the thought of being the last of my family long ago, so it took some time to wrap my head around it as well. But here we are now, both you and me, enjoying some pizza and beer under the same roof, so I wouldn't quite say that 'I don't give a damn' because obviously, I do."

Silence settled around them and Nero felt incredibly awkward for blowing up like that, even if one part of him still stubbornly insisted that he was in the right to do so. He carefully tilted his head to watch the other hunter through his bangs, observing him calmly eating his pizza while flipping through some magazine. One word, in particular, had hit a sore spot for Nero though- family. They barely knew each other, how could Dante just go and use a word as strong as that? He awkwardly cleared his throat, picking up his abused slice of pizza again.

"Okay, then... I guess I should apologise for exploding on you."

Dante, however, just waved his hand in dismissal.

"Don't sweat it. It's not like I don't understand."

Nero just gave a short nod and leant back on the couch. Now that they were, um, clear on that, a tonne of questions was trying to make their way out of his mouth. Hesitantly, he opened it to voice the first of them, but before he had the chance, Dante spoke up again.

"Kid, I'm... not exactly good with all this stuff, but I'll try. You're family, and while you might not know just by looking at me, but family is important. That's why I didn't even hesitate to offer you to stay here and all. And quite frankly, I don't give a damn about how we even *could* be related-"

Curiosity got the better of Nero and he couldn't keep himself from bursting out: "But... do you have an idea about the... how?"

The older hunter hummed and put the magazine away. He looked thoughtful for a moment before shrugging.

"Not really, no. You're 17, right? I guess you could technically be my son-" Nero started choking on plain air at that but gestured for the other to continue with wide eyes, "-but I really doubt it. Vergil doesn't really strike me as a possibility, either, but then again, it's been almost thirty years since I was last able to tell what he was thinking." *Apart from the whole I need more power ordeal, that is*, he added silently. He looked over to the younger half-devil who was fumbling with the scales of his demonic arm. A somewhat nervous gaze met his.

"So, you don't know, either?"

Dante shook his head but flashed his young friend- relative- *whatever* a smile.

"Nope. But like I said, I don't really give a damn if you're my nephew, my son or my cousin thirty times removed- heck, you could be my half-brother, for all we know. The only thing that matters to me is that you're family, and that's that."

They were silent for a while. Dante picked his magazine back up and reached for another can of beer. Nero, however, looked even more thoughtful than before. A strange feeling had taken over inside of him, and he wasn't quite sure where to place or even how to name it. It wasn't bad, though. It took him a while to find his words again, but when he did, his gaze shifted over to the other once more. He waited until his- uncle, cousin, father (*ohmygod*) or whatever met his eyes before giving a small, but genuine smile. The kind that only Kyrie had seen in the past few years.

"Family, huh... thanks."

Instead of a real answer, Dante merely waved a two-fingered salute at him, something akin to a smile playing at his lips.