

Alone he stood, next to the tall tree on his home's cliff. He faced the open sea, as waves crashed against the rocks below, and avians squawked in fishing delight. Red eyes took in the sights, trying to savor their every moment as if it was their last. The ocean breeze caressed his skin and the salty air filled his senses. This...this was his home. This was what he wanted.

“Darling, are you alright?”

Her sweet, angelic voice broke his tension. Her arms reached around his waist, holding him closer to her, as her head cradled into his back. A smile cascaded across his face as he savored her loving embrace.

“My dear, this...this is everything I could have ever asked for. I could live in this moment forever. No more patients. No more theories, or experiments, or any of it. Just you, and our children, in our home. Together.”

Rhylance barely recognized the words coming from his lips. Could they truly belong to him?

“Rhylance, this is everything. You can stay here, forever, with us. You’ve done enough. Helped enough people. Earned more than enough credits. Just live here. Be here with us, if that is your heart's desire.”

Lucine was his angel. His very reason for existing. She was more than he could ever hope to deserve. He turned and leaned down to capture her lips with his own. He kissed her for so long he forgot how to breathe.

“If this is but a dream I wish to never awaken. If ever there was perfection in life, I have found it. Here with you, my darling bride. With our son, tbd, who has your fire, and my genius. And our daughter, tbd, who, like you, is beauty personified. This home, this world, this life. I would give anything to never be away from it.” Rhylance could feel his chest tightening and his grip refused to let his love go.

“Darling, why are you saying all of this. Is there something wrong? Talk to me. Let me help you.”

“Here, I live with no war. With no...” Images of ancient deities and their followers flashed behind his eyes. “With no gods. With no Brotherhood, or Clan to defend. This world full of only peace and love. Any hero worth his weight would give up anything for this. This truly amazing happiest of endings.”

“What are you talking about, Rhylance? You’re scaring me.” Lucine’s eyes widened as she tried to softly pull back. But Rhylance shook as he refused to let her go. “You ARE a hero. You have helped so many people with your works. You’ve earned your happiness.”

Rhylance was silent as his head dropped. He couldn’t bear to look into her emerald eyes.

“My dear, I will never be seen a hero. I will always be the villain. It matters not how many I save. How many lives are protected by my advancements. How many theories and experiments create new medicines, weapons, shields, anything. No matter the good that my actions bring, I will forever be the villain. I know that now. And I accept it. I am a villain.”

“Rhy...my love...I don't understand.” Lucine looked afraid. She'd never heard her husband speak of such things. She was clueless to what his words meant. “Why are you saying these things?”

Rhylance's body went still, and his right hand dropped to his side. He still held her with his left. Looking back to her fear filled orbs, the Chiss captured her in another kiss. A kiss filled with all the passion which he could muster in this moment. When their lips finally broke, his left hand cupped the back of her neck and help her calmed body to his chest.

“Because...a villain will never get a happy ending.”

Lucine gasped as a sharp blade pierced her gut. A blade held by her husband. Rhylance knew the blade's angle. He knew its positioning. He lacerated multiple critical organs, leaving no chance of her survival. Tears filled his fiery eyes. Lucines face became a snarl and her eyes turned black.

“You fool! You could have had everything! Even if for a moment!”

“I will live by no lie. And you will suffer for offering me this life...this falsehood. I will relish taking you apart...piece by piece...while you can do nothing but watch. That is the only truth you will know.”

As Rhylance ripped the blade from his “wife's” body, and her blood bathed the grass below, the entity left her body. He saw her fear. The betrayal she felt. But none of it was real. He knew he needed to let go of it, so he pushed her. The terrified shriek of the woman he loved plunging into the waves below filled his soul, and he swore vengeance over whoever was responsible. He had broken free, and now the true world would feel what had happened to him this day.