

LEGENDARY QUESTLINE PART 2 STORY PROMPT

They are different now. It is an innate knowledge, and for those craving power they instinctively know they have obtained it, an ability to not just see nightmares but manipulate the essence within it. And in the back of their mind, they can feel a stronger connection to the Nightmare Tree, as it gives them three simple rules to abide by for the exchange of power. The first, to always protect the tree, and all those that dwell within its reach. The second, to continue creating more nightmares to strengthen the tree itself, and the third-

- You cannot destroy another Stygian.

It isn't like the mere concept of killing, like observing in multiple, multiple nightmares a subject dying over and over. This awareness is beyond that, it is the understanding that destroy would cease the existence of another Stygian all together. They had the power to do that now, to simply take those weaker and simply tear them apart until even figments of them were too weak to join together again.

This was absolutely forbidden and they knew, without a doubt, if they ever tried, they would lose all connection with the tree eternally, forced to wander the realm, powerless, unable to ever consume nightmares again.

Power was not something that Nebulous had ever considered before; at least, not seriously. It was a highly subjective term, as far as he was concerned, for a great deal of reasons. If he took all of his concoctions and mixtures and used them for a use other than experimental, was that considered power? If he threatened E - anyone - with one of his less than pleasant vials of potions, was that considered powerful, even if the threat was meaningless and therefore would cause no great harm?

Alchemy was not a thing to be toyed with. Nebulous had no intentions of using it as such, and so therefore a desire for power had not ever occurred to him. He was, in all honesty, quite content to sit and mix and stare up at the stars without so much as a backwards glance at anything else.

Even if it felt - somehow -

wrong -

He wouldn't think of that now. Not when he was wrapped in the space that had come to meet him, not when he felt as though he was breathing in the colors that had exploded around him in the most gentle of embraces, spanning above his head in great, breathless clusters that Nebulous wanted to shroud himself away in. He had not felt this

fulfilled in so long; had not felt as though he belonged, not truly, not in any way that counted.

Not in the way that he wanted to, with a desperation that sometimes choked at his throat. It was still there, that desperation, along with the loneliness that he could not fully rid himself of, nor the fear that lingered at the edges of his mind. This would be taken away from him at any moment, he could feel it - the Nightmare Tree would take away this gift that it had given him - however frightening - and leave him as he had been, drifting from day to day with nothing to do.

I am not the one you meant to choose.

He pushed these thoughts away. He was here, the Tree's voice in his head, and that had to mean *something*. It had to mean that this was something that was meant to be, that it was something that was not a mistake. He was *not* a mistake.

Nebulous could feel the promises weighing in on him, sinking into him with the feeling of sinking into water, submerged under both the pressure and the sense of calm that always came with it. To protect the Tree was an honor, one that had been given to him with the sort of expectation that indicated he would do well not to let it down. He would protect it, and he would -

No, he thought, closing his eyes against the colors that still swirled above him in the sky, mingled oranges and blues and purples. *No, I have never - I have not -*

It was an easy promise to make because the alternative was to spend an eternity alone and lost. Nebulous felt, with a sudden sense of immense relief - and a little despair, a mocking laugh nearly escaping him - that he had already experienced that before, was experiencing it now, in fact. He would not let himself feel that way again. He would not put himself into that manner of life once more.

He could do this. He was *meant* for this. This was a gift that he had been given, and he was going to honor both it and the Nightmare Tree. For the first time in his existence, he could find a purpose that was not himself, staring into nothingness.

He could finally *be* something to someone. To *something*.

The nebulae circled slowly above his head, never ceasing.