Eclipse 3: Confronting a God

B: Mare – feat. Cazador (Pacifist) – First Encounter

Cazador normally likes the ocean. It is one of his favorite places to see: peaceful, relaxing, serene, even when looking at the unnaturally dark and glassy surface…

Most of the time, at least, Right now, however, he was pretty sure he was going to drown at the hands of a giant dead horse god and the last thing he told his wife was that he would do the dishes later, the idiot-

Caz writhed as her boney hands grip at him, pulling him deeper and deeper into the water, past depths that even if he broke free he wouldn't possibly have enough air to swim back to the surface. He activates his mutation to burn at her hands, the water boiling around his fingers, but all it did was make Mare squeeze him tighter, bubbles of air that he was desperately trying to hold onto slipping past his clenched teeth. He can't hold his concentration for long enough, the panic of drowning starting to creep into him, darkness seeping into the edges of his vision (not that *that* really mattered either – it was too dark down here to see anyway.)

He tries for as long as he can but the burning of his lungs is too much for him to bear, and he exhales and gasps for a new breath.

He can breathe somehow. His lungs fill normally, and he can breathe. Should have known this wouldn't be like the reality that he was used to.

The haunting sound of whales combined with Mare's sobs fill his ears the closer to the sea floor he sinks. It's dark, but his eyes start to acclimate and take in the space around him – including the vast ocean of skeletal remains along the sea floor. He was certain he was going to die before when facing Lapsus, but *now he was 100% absolutely going to die*.

Cazador is pulled to the sandy floor, somehow freed of her boney grasp as he scrambles back away from the long-deceased residents of the graveyard he has found himself in. The morbid scene leads his eye towards the mountain of bones, and at the top rested Mare. Even without a face, he felt like her haunting gaze was filled with scrutiny and judgement, not that he really understood what he was being judged for. She shifted on her throne, the heavy weight of her corpse cracking the smaller bones beneath her, and Cazador couldn't help but take a small step back in preparation for a lunge.

Her movement bares a bleeding hole in her chest, one that he might have missed if he was intent of slaying the god. She cranes her massive body over him, hollow eyes still expressive enough for Caz to know he was still being watched, and for a long moment he remained still, both individuals waiting for the other to make a move. This was clearly a weak point for her, and perhaps this was her way of judging his intentions through his actions – but the will of the deity was strong enough to impart what she wanted even without words.

Cazador reached up and held his hands to the wound, the blue liquid rushing between his fingers, and he's shared the memories of Mare through that single action.

Watching the steady change of their relationship as the unrest in Lapsus grew was heartbreaking. He knew how this story ended, and it pained him to see how much Mare still tried her best to assuage him of whatever he was going through – until finally Lapsus lashed out in their final encounter and Mare was killed at his hand, Cazador reflexively trying to stop the scene from playing out in front of him as if he could do something, *anything*, to change what had happened.

He shuddered, dropping his head as the memories fade, but the sorrow and pain lingered as if the wound Mare carried was now his own. There were too many similarities to what Lapsus and Mare went through to his own history, his own boiling rage in his youth reminding him too much of Lapsus. He pushed away and hurt anyone who could have possibly cared for him, and in that moment, he felt an immense amount of regret. Even now he still could see himself in some of the actions that Lapsus had done, could see similarities and justifications for what Lapsus had done based on what he was trying to achieve. But seeing Mare's perspective from this way, seeing how much she had tried to save him from himself, and she still ended up as his most tragic victim…

The grief of the goddess was more than he could bear, and all Cazador could do in the moment was utter apologies to her, as if he were the one that had betrayed her, as if his words and sorrow and regret could provide her an ounce of relief.

And perhaps that's all he could offer – not pity, but empathy. Someone to share her pain with to make it less heavy. There was no possible way that he was going to be able to do anything to hurt the creature that embodied suffering in this way, so he resigned himself to remain until her grief wasn't drowning them both.