

*Setting: Royal Knight Barracks & Radiant's quarters, Nighttime*

*Timeframe in story: Radiant has been Mateo's personal knight for a few months now, but the two haven't become very close during that time. Predates the fall of the Kingdom of the Sun by about nine months.*

*Royal Knight Barracks hallway, directly outside of Radiant's quarters. A dark, underground hallway made of stone with simple wooden doors leading to different rooms.*

*Mateo is pacing outside of Radiant's door. He is deep in thought and frustrated.*

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling]* What, five months now? And I'm too scared to just knock on his door! It was clearly explained to the both of us what his duties entail and those duties include ensuring a prosperous life and I like to think this qualifies as ensuring a prosperous life! By the grace of Nebula's gifts you would think I would have enough of a spine to just communicate with him!

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling, but a little louder]* I mean how do you even communicate with a guy that doesn't even talk! Knight's code my ass, don't I have the right to know what the guy sounds like, especially since he's with me every waking moment!?

*He stops pacing. He looks at the door and slowly walks up to it.*

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling]* The worst he can do is give me a funny look then drag me back upstairs to my quarters. There's no harm in just talking to the guy. He's meant to be scary, it's reasonable to be scared of him!

*He raises a fist to knock, but hesitates. After a moment, he knocks.*

**MATEO:** Excuse me, Knight of Radiant Sun? May I talk to you for a minute?

*Silence.*

**MATEO:** Listen, I know I shouldn't be up right now, and especially shouldn't be down here, but there's something that's been bothering me that I can't exactly discuss with father. Could you please let me in?

*Silence again. Mateo becomes less nervous and more frustrated.*

**MATEO:** I know you're not asleep you know, I can see the light coming from under your door. A response would be nice.

*A slight shifting of a chair can be heard, but silence follows. Mateo grows angry.*

**MATEO:** Can you please come out here and at least face me!

**MATEO:** You would think a prince's personal knight would be a bit more willing to open a door.

*A frantic shuffling can be heard, but Mateo is too immersed in his anger to hear it. He knocks on the door once again.*

**MATEO:** Are you even in there? I'm sure you are, what else do you have to do but watch me and write up reports?

**MATEO:** Fine. It's whatever. I'll go back to my quarters like a good prince that doesn't complain or go into the Knight's barracks at midnight to seek simple counsel from someone who's-

*The door flies open. A frantic looking Radiant stands in the opening. He is dressed in a white, long sleeve cotton shirt and brown canvas pants. He wears two pieces of his armor, his helmet, and his helmet's visor, which have clearly been put on in a hurry. He steps back and to the side to let Mateo in, acting as if nothing is wrong.*

*Radiant's Quarters. A small room with an armor stand, a desk covered in papers with a chair shoved in a corner, and a bed centered against the back wall of the room.*

*Author's note: Anything in this font is written, not spoken.*

*A surprised Mateo and a stoic Radiant step into the room. Mateo sits at the foot of the bed, while Radiant turns around the chair at the desk to face Mateo, and sits in it.*

**MATEO:** I... didn't think you would actually open the door. Hm.

*Radiant's head tilts slightly to the right.*

**MATEO:** Oh come on, you might be my knight but I don't really know you! Besides, I'm supposed to be asleep upstairs, I thought you would just— pick me up like I weigh nothing and throw me back into my bed.

*Radiant leans forward and tilts his head to the left.*

**MATEO:** You would! You would do that! You did it before during training!

*Radiant leans back and crosses his arms.*

**MATEO:** Fine. It was for safety. Whatever. But you still did it, which means you could do it again!

*Radiant tilts his head to the left once again.*

**MATEO:** Okay, I get it, you weren't going to do that.

**MATEO:** Can we move on to what I wanted to talk about?

*Radiant nods.*

**MATEO:** Right.

**MATEO:** How do I even begin to explain this...

**MATEO:** Well, I'm sure you know that my father is in talks to find someone for me to marry.

**MATEO:** There's no rush, as my father still has a long life ahead of him, but it's tradition to find a lover for the heir to the throne when they turn twenty.

**MATEO:** Sort of like a weird, kind-of messed up birthday gift.

*Radiant nods, and tilts his head to the right.*

**MATEO:** Well, you see, uh, here's the thing.

**MATEO:** I'm not in any rush to find love, and I know that everyone my father will be searching for will be women.

**MATEO:** I've never found myself interested in any girls, but a few guys have... caught my fancy over the years.

**MATEO:** If he knew of my favor for men rather than women, I know he would be more than happy to find potential male suitors, but I don't know if I really want that either way.

**MATEO:** I want to find someone in my own way on my own time, and not be... forced into these things.

**MATEO:** Besides, who wants a lover that's only there because you're royalty? If I'm going to be with someone, I want to know that they're there because they love me, not because they love the title I happen to have.

*Radiant gets up and sits next to Mateo on the bed. They stare at each other for a moment.*

**MATEO:** *[Speaking Softly]* It's a bit stupid to be up at midnight over these things, isn't it?

**MATEO:** Sorry for bothering you. I'm sure the last thing you want to hear are the details of my sorry love life.

*Mateo gets up and begins to leave, but Radiant grabs his wrist and shakes his head from side to side.*

**MATEO:** ...Do you want me to stay?

*Radiant nods.*

**MATEO:** Why?

*Radiant looks around, trying to figure out how to explain himself. His head turns to the desk. He gets up, grabbing a notebook and pencil from atop the desk. Sitting back down on the bed, he flips open to an empty page and pats the spot next to him. Mateo sits down on the spot.*

*Radiant begins to write.*

**RADIANT:** *You clearly have more to say. Why not say it? I am already awake, and you have not bothered me with your troubles.*

**MATEO:** It's a little embarrassing to discuss, honestly.

**MATEO:** Are you sure you want to listen?

**RADIANT:** *I am here with you for a reason. I listen not only because it is my job to attend to you, but because I care.*

**MATEO:** Doesn't this technically break a part of your precious knight's code?

**RADIANT:** *Please do not mock the code, but yes, it technically does. Although, no part of the code says written communication is forbidden, only spoken communication. There is a lack of specification I am exploiting here.*

**MATEO:** Oh, so you only follow the rules exactly as they're written. Malicious compliance.

*Radiant tilts his head to the left and leans forward towards Mateo's face.*

**MATEO:** O-Okay! Okay! I'll stop making fun of you.

**MATEO:** Sorry.

*Radiant returns to his original position.*

**RADIANT:** *I am willing to do these things when it is needed. You need help from someone who can respond to you, and I have found a way to respond without breaking my code. That is all there is to this.*

**MATEO:** Right. Okay.

**MATEO:** Honestly, my biggest issue is that I've never been... involved with someone else.

**MATEO:** I was never told I couldn't date, but it was always a bit of a natural assumption from my father, and myself honestly, that I would keep away from romance to focus on my studies and royal duties.

**MATEO:** But now that the time is coming up, even if it's months away, I feel so... nervous. How can I love someone properly if I've never had the chance, and never got to see it growing up?

**MATEO:** My father is a great man, a wonderful man, but asking him about romance is far too embarrassing.

**MATEO:** Lately, I've been praying to Lady Nebula to allow me to speak to my mother so I can discuss this whole situation.

**MATEO:** I've been allowed to speak with her spirit before, but it seems my prayers aren't going through this time.

*Mateo sighs, and seems to stare off into the distance.*

**MATEO:** Sorry. I miss her.

**RADIANT:** *I know. If there is anything I can do to help relieve you of your pain, please let me know.*

**MATEO:** Thank you.

**MATEO:** *[Sighs]* But I didn't come down here to talk about my mother.

**MATEO:** Honestly- I'm more frustrated with it all if anything.

**RADIANT:** *Why so?*

*Mateo looks at his hands, then brings his knees to his chest. Radiant sits cross-legged with his notebook in his lap, hands folded neatly over it.*

**MATEO:** I... well, it's hard to explain.

**MATEO:** I want someone to care about me in such a special way that we belong to each other. That they reserve things just for me.

**MATEO:** I want to love someone, and have that love be returned every day.

**MATEO:** It all sounds so silly when I say it out loud.

**MATEO:** I want someone to love, and I want someone to love me. I don't want it to be forced. I want someone to choose me, and keep choosing me.

**MATEO:** An arranged relationship is the last thing I want. It forces the both of us to choose without meaning.

**MATEO:** Without love.

*Mateo brings his knees even closer to his chest, and stares solemnly into nothing. Radiant begins to write.*

**RADIANT:** *I know that you will find someone eventually. It's just a matter of patience.*

**RADIANT:** *Your personality shines brightly, and your kindness and careful consideration for those around you shows through your actions.*

**RADIANT:** *A man would be a fool to not love you.*

**MATEO:** ...You think so?

**RADIANT:** *I do.*

**MATEO:** *[Sighs]* And yet, I'm still alone.

**RADIANT:** *If it offers you any comfort, I will always be with you.*

*Mateo lets out a light laugh. He scoots closer to Radiant and leans his head against his shoulder.*

**MATEO:** It's not like I have a choice with you, though, huh?

**MATEO:** But...

**MATEO:** *[Softly]* Thank you.

*They sit in a comfortable silence for a time. It's broken by the sound of pencil on paper.*

**RADIANT:** *Might I ask, why did you trust me with this information?*

**MATEO:** Well, you're probably the only person awake at this hour.

**MATEO:** And, well... honestly I'm not too sure.

**MATEO:** We need to get along more, yeah?

**MATEO:** And I should probably get used to opening up, I guess.

*Silence. Mateo unfolds his legs, but keeps his head on Radiant's shoulder. They sit for awhile. Mateo begins to doze off. Radiant begins to write.*

**RADIANT:** *You need rest, your majesty.*

**RADIANT:** *If we are done talking for the night, I must request that you return to your chambers and sleep.*

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling]* I don't want to walk back to my room...

**RADIANT:** *And yet you must.*

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling]* Do I really...

**RADIANT:** *Yes.*

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling]* What if you just... *[Yawn]* Carry me instead...

**RADIANT:** *With all due respect, your majesty, your legs are perfectly capable of carrying you to your chambers.*

**MATEO:** Nooo they're nooooooot... Carry me up there...

**RADIANT:** *No. You are able to walk yourself.*

**MATEO:** Carry... me up... That's an order...

*Mateo continues to doze off. Radiant angrily shuts his notebook, but doesn't slam it. He slides Mateo off his shoulder and lays him down on the bed, then stands up and puts the notebook back in its original spot.*

*He carefully picks up Mateo, and holds him in a bridal carry.*

**MATEO:** *[Giggling]* You're actually going to carry me?

*Radiant looks down at Mateo.*

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling]* Not complaining... not at all.

*Radiant shakes his head, and walks out of his quarters with a half-asleep Mateo in his arms.*

*Mateo's Chambers. A large room with a glass-dome ceiling. Hanging from the ceiling are all kinds of lamps, emitting soft, golden light. Moonlight shines through the ceiling, and a canopy bed is placed in the center under the dome.*

*Radiant walks into Mateo's chambers with a now fully asleep Mateo in his arms. He gently places Mateo onto his bed, and tucks him in. He stares at him for a moment, admiring him, then turns to leave. He takes one step before Mateo grabs his wrist.*

**MATEO:** *[Mumbling]* Thank you, Radiant.

*Mateo smiles at him. Radiant holds Mateo's hand tenderly. He bends down to one knee, and raises Mateo's hand to the mouthpiece of his helmet. Mateo laughs.*

**MATEO:** Always so formal.

**MATEO:** Goodnight, my dear knight.

*Mateo retracts his hand and pulls his comforter forward to cover his shoulders. Radiant gets up, and opens the door to leave. He looks back at Mateo.*

**RADIANT:** *[Softly]* Goodnight, my dear prince.