

A mouse of a dark, steel grey complexion, standing no more than 5'4, sat across a small table, pushing her spectacles towards her sore, red eyes. She shook in her seat, tears streaming down her cheeks as she looked towards the center of the table, where her outstretched arms were, holding the larger hands of an even larger, shiny, ruby and pearl Simian Jackal, standing at a staggering 7'3. He had some more composure over the whole situation or so it seemed. His eyes may not have been sore, but releasing tears, they were.

They shared some silence together for a good few minutes before the jackal spoke in a gentle, quiet tone to her, not in an attempt to soothe her or calm her down, but, rather be honest with her with a full heart. "Marley. This is a lot harder to say than what you may believe. But through these soon to be four years, I have enjoyed myself in your company, from day one, and from then to now, you have given a piece of me back, even if that piece comes in pieces. I-In those years, you taught me to love, show compassion, how to be empathetic. You are the sole reason I am so happy any more. I know that sounds like a contradiction to why I'm leaving, but truly, you've made me the happiest I've been in centuries. Had we not crossed paths, I know that I certainly wouldn't have found peace. My boyfriend had two souls, his mind was. Or wasn't, rather, all there. He was a tether and made me happy, sure, but he wasn't healthy. Not by the time my relationship started with him."

He continued after lifting one of his hands for a drink, "Marley. It's not that I'm not happy, it's just that the melancholy that's plagued me in the last couple years outweighs it. But, Miss Willows, I **am** happy. Happy to have been given a heart so that I may live normally again. To love and have loved, to be loved and to feel it."

"All things aside, I am happy. But truly there is no use for me anymore. The agony I caused and continue to cause for my son and the fact that I can only simply sit idle for you, Amelia, and all those who dwell in these walls. I am still alone within these walls. Yes, you still come to me and speak, and we continue to have our deep conversations. But, you have Haydreus now, and he needs you more than ever in his time of grieving, and you need him to fill that gap in your heart that Kurry left." His hands loosed their grip as he pulled them to the center of the table, the mousey's hands sliding into her lap.

Her lips a'quiverin' and her voice a'shakin', she spoke to Red, pulling the glasses from her stout to wipe her eyes with her jacket's sleeve, "S-So, where do you plan to go.? H-How do you plan to stay.?"

"I-I'll stay with you. Just not in a state you're familiar with." He said, speaking almost in an air of confidence.

Stuttering through her tears, she managed to force, "How so?"

"I. You know I have power over most things, myself included. I'll just. Turn myself into a statue, a small one. One you can carry in a bag. Maybe. Make myself of Copper or Onyx. I'll reach my

inanimate peace, trust me, but I won't be gone either. You'll still be able to call on me if you'd ever need me. I just won't be walking about moping in my meloncholy any further. I know you hate seeing it just as much as the next person. I'm doing it for all of us. Not just for myself." Red took a breath, pushed himself away from the table, and with a smile, sincere and pure, tears streaming down his cheeks, "A-Any last requests, Miss Willows?"

The mouse sat in her chair for what felt like several moments, fidgeted a little as she averted her gaze to her glasses, looked up to him and his slightly blurred face as the corner of her lips sank into a frown that she hadn't made in ages, "A-A h-ug?" Marley's breaths began to hitch as she choked on her own words. Red obliged her request, forcing the table to the side, scooting himself onto the ground and in front of her, his head still resting above her's.

She embraced him as he did her, head resting on his shoulder, and cheek resting on her head, where she bawled openly to him while he wept silently to her. As it felt, to him, he was saying "goodbye" to his only true child, and to her, it was losing an old friend she never had. Before long, their last embrace ended, the jackal took a far less organic form, as well as a much smaller and lighter form. His legs forever crossed over one another, eyes closed and holding two arms above his head, two hands in front of his heart holding a sun, and two arms outstretched, suggesting a hug, all made from gnarled Maple roots... Or what looked to be so... Red was at peace.