

San Francisco was beautiful at night. She looked out over the streets, a sudden itch between her fingers signaling a need for a cigarette she hadn't smoked for even her last five years of living. It was at points like these that the urge came back, even though the time without cigarettes had far outlived the days with them. She was pretty sure she couldn't enjoy one even if she had one to smoke nowadays.

The tiles under her were cold but she no longer felt it. The wind whispering in her hair was cutting, but it no longer felt as sharp knives across her exposed skin. She could not help but appreciate it: the problem of freezing to death in a back alley was now gone, the nature no longer death in disguise. She stared down over the edge, down at the streets down below. The fall was long, and she would land hard, but even a jump of the building would no longer be a certain death. The fall would take longer than three seconds, her fastest time to change form. It would be maximum effort but for survival, no price was too large. Turning in to a bird and use the momentum to fly away, she would survive.

Someone sits down by her side, taking her itching hand and lacing their cold fingers together. A careful head tilt makes the long, black hair spread along her side, the head a light weight on her shoulder. *"What are you brooding about this time?"* She snorts but smiles nonetheless. *"I do not brood"* is the simple answer. *"Oh really?"* is the sarcastic response. Silence falls between them once more, like static along a landline. Like her friend knows that given time, she will formulate what she wants to say. Even then, she hesitates a long time before adding, *"I'm happy I didn't meet the wraith today"* The silence stretches out a bit longer between them. *"Why?"* She hesitates once more, opening up is never easy, not even after 137 years together. *"You know, you give me way too much credit. For you it was so easy, you stood firm, never taking the deal. I..."* the sentence falls to silence. Suddenly the head is off her shoulder and her hand is squeezed, hard. *"You know, you give yourself way too little credit. You are a good person, you know."* She makes a pained face at her friend's claims. *"I'm really not though"* The hands between them fall apart. *"The only reason I'm even close to good is because of you. I don't want to make you disappointed in me"* she continues while once again wishing for a cigarette between her fingers. She looks down onto the street once more. The people far below has no way of spotting the two dark figures on the rooftop. *"I'm just grateful that I did not meet that demon tonight, because I have no guarantee that I wouldn't have failed you"* That, however, did not seem to deserve a response. *"Well, I can see that you obviously still is sulking and in some kind of a mood. Since nothing I say seem to get to you I'll just leave you to it then"* You can't lie in thought. She could hear the bitter undertone in her friend's voice, as if she had been caught red-handed in a lie. Except it was not possible. She did not lie, even though it seemed her friend thought so. *"Well, whatever makes you sleep at day"* was her answer to her friend as the black-haired woman found her way back to the staircase to the roof. She wasn't dignified with a response.

She did not return to the safety of the house until just before dawn, the ominous thought of the dawn eventually too hard to ignore. The night had been spent on the roof, thoughts swirling around in her mind. She had wanted to leave this place about a thousand times since dusk, leaving this god awful city, from which nothing good had ever come to her, flying away and flee from her problems once more. It was way too easy for her to fall back into old habits, running away from problems as they arose. It was that thought that eventually had made her to stay. The thought of once again run, this time with even more problems did not feel right. That and the thought of disappointing Amethyst. That and the beauty of the city by the bay. The shining lights from street lamps and windows, reflections in the waters around the city. It truly was a beautiful city at night.