

The Best Gifts in Life are Free

He's pale enough as it is, I never dreamed he could look more so. But as I look down upon his sleeping form, he's nearly lost in those stark white sheets. Frail they call you. I know better. I do not know many who could have done what you did and survive, let alone get up and continue the battle. You even hid how bad it was from me, that in and of itself is a feat unmatched. I look angrily at the bandage around your middle. Knowing that there is and even angrier looking puncture wound underneath. If I had only been a few minutes faster, perhaps this would not have happened. But I cannot second guess myself. Maybe if I had been there, I might have distracted you and lost you for good. So I will not dwell on the 'what ifs', I can't. I can only dwell on the tomorrow, and hope and pray I see those eyes, those bottomless pools of shimmering blue green fire, looking at me again, the only eyes that have ever seen right through me. I was lost to you the instant I looked into them, and saw myself staring back. And you know, you always know. So you must know this, I love you, I need you to stay with me. So cease this haunted sleep that is robbing you of the life that infects us all and come back to me, come back to us Quatre.

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He's here, I can feel him by my side. Why can't I open my eyes? I will myself to open them and gaze upon him. Yet, nothing happens. He's worried, I can feel it. No, he's not worried, he's afraid. Afraid of the bitter cold, that black demon called loneliness. I made a vow Trowa, maybe I should have told you about it before. But once, not long after I found you again, I swore I'd never let that evil swallow you again. I plan on keeping that vow. Now and forever. He loves me, If only I could find the words to tell you how much I love him in return. But it's one thing to share these feelings together. Quite another to get you to cast away that fearful barrier and let me in long enough to tell you. I know how badly you've been hurt. Now is not the time to rush into anything. We first have to heal your soul, then and only then can I tell you what you truly mean to me. Damn my eyes, damn my limbs. If only I could respond to my will and end this ache you feel. I will not give up Trowa. I will come back to you, I will not break my vow.

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It's been three days, three of the longest days of my life. She came in today. And it took every ounce of my will power not to strangle her for doing this to him. But I knew Quatre, I knew he had forgiven her, and I knew I'd only upset him later if I reacted. As it was, I thought I saw him grimace when the initial rage upon seeing her entered my mind. Once I squashed it, that serene look returned to his countenance. I did get a cheap thrill however out of her visit. Thanks to an unlikely source. At times he can be irritating, others, like today, he's a godsend. Leave it to One Duo Maxwell to say what only others think, but dare not say. After is first "What the Fuck are you doing here?" To his "Did anyone ever tell you, that whole bitch persona pisses people off?" I could have kissed that braided fool.

We'd spent a lot of time together these past three days. He was still hanging about MO2 as well. Waiting for 'his patient' to get the all clear so he could 'take her home'. I finally got to meet Hilde and I thanked her for

all the trouble she went through. I remembered Quatre making a point of mentioning to Duo that the data she smuggled out was indispensable. She blushed, smiled a most engaging smile, and shrugged it off. Her sincerity was what really touched me though. Not in her words perhaps, she was a bad as Duo with the jabber. It was in her eyes, I knew that look. I'd seen it someone's else's eyes before. She looked to Duo the way Quatre did to me. Did I look like Duo when I gazed back at Quatre? Duo hid from his emotions like I did. Not in the same way of course, we were like those theatre playbills you saw. Whereas Duo was comedy, I knew I was tragedy. It was the coward's way out. It was easier to pull on the shroud, than to put in all that effort to smile all the time. But having said that, when it mattered, when it really mattered. Even Duo could not keep on his mask. And when he looked at Hilde, you knew. Love speaks louder than words. And in his eyes, there was a reflection of love that out shone the very stars. Did I show Quatre those same stars? Was I that transparent too when it really mattered? God I hoped so.

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I felt as weak as a newborn, but elated. I finally managed to get my body to respond somewhat to my will and I opened my eyes. Only to find darkness. Leave it to me to wake up in the middle of the night. As my eyes adjusted to the dim luminescence of the stars outside my window, I saw him there. Curled up like a cat in the chair beside my bed. Limber was a tame way to describe the position he was in. My mind, oh my evil mind! Sometimes I shocked myself with some of the things I thought about. I just knew I turned a thousand shades of red. Now I was GLAD it was the middle of the night, and he could not see. I feared sometimes if he could read my thoughts, he'd think I was only after him for one thing. And that was most definitely NOT the case. But I had to admit, in all honesty. I thought about other things, quite a bit. I wanted him so badly I could barely breathe.

He stirred and cracked open one of those emeralds he tried to pass off as eyes. And then, then he gave me perhaps the greatest gift I'd ever received. He smiled. And not just any smile. Not one of those tight, slightly upturned at the corners, patented Trowa smile that's not quite a frown smile. No, this one lit up his whole face. We're talking ear to ear, flash me those pearly whites, beaming smiles. It was Trowa transformed. He has been breathtaking before. Now, he was radiance personified. I squeaked. I felt like an idiot. He really caught me off guard with that. But my heart was racing so fast, breathing was just a chore. My pulse quickened instantly, he had never before looked so wonderful to my eyes. And the gift of that smile would stay with me forever. Because I knew it was for me. It's true what they say. The greatest gifts in life are free. With all my riches, I could not have paid for that one gesture. I fell in love with him all over again.

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I had been half asleep, when my senses became alert. My soldier's sixth sense told me something in the room had changed. I slowly cracked open one eye to see in the shadows those limpid pools staring at me. He was awake! Quatre had come back to me. I couldn't stop it, the relief and the joy I felt manifested itself before I could gain control, and a smile spread across my face. He squeaked. I had to chuckle. So, a smile has this effect on him? I should smile more. I think I will smile more, even if I do try to keep them in check. He brings out things in me against my will on a regular basis, why should this be any different? He does quite a few things to me against my will I wish sometimes he didn't. Because before, it was always at the very worst

of times. He had horrible timing when it came to doing something that would unconsciously set me on fire. He had no idea how absolutely gorgeous he was. Total lack of anything remote resembling vanity. He was just one hundred percent naturally obtuse when it came to his sensuality. He radiated charm, and he sucked me in whole. I hung on every word he uttered, every gesture he made. And all I can do is sit and stare at him. Say something Trowa, anything! Don't be an idiot! Why does my ability to function cease in his presence? Every time, I am reduced to a puddle of congealed ooze who can only hem and haw like an illiterate buffoon.

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I've got to say something. But What? Why is he just staring at me like this? Allah, but he has gorgeous eyes. I want to touch you, I want you to touch me. Please, please touch me.

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I'm melting, I have no will of my own anymore. I have to touch you, please let me touch you.

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I can't wait anymore, please take my hand. I reach out to him, at the same moment he reaches for me. I'm so weak, I can barely lift my hand from the bed. But it does not matter. For he is at my side in an instant breaking that eternity of silent looks we just shared. He's touching me, he lifts me just enough to wrap his arms around me in an embrace I've so longed for. I have no strength, but I do manage to entwine my arms around his waist in return, and he rests my head against his shoulder. Now the silence begins again. But this time, I want it to last an eternity. I am being held in his arms. This moment could last forever for me. I'm overflowing with happiness.

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He's so weak, like a kitten. But I know it's only temporary. Soon he'll be back the way he was before. The Quatre I know and love. The lion dressed as the lamb. People underestimate him greatly. Yes, I admit he does look like a strong breeze could blow him over. But it took him being run through with a rapier to even begin to slow down. And he fought on after that. But that's just his physical strength. What he has that's even stronger is his will and his mind. Zechs was right, Quatre always was the brains, he figured out the whole meaning behind things well before any of the rest of us did. It's because of Quatre we all stopped being single minded entities and united together. It was Quatre who directed the dance of battle that brought us to victory, and it was Quatre who taught us it was not a soldier's lot to be used and discarded. It was not a

soldier's duty to cease being human. For when we did detach ourselves, when we stopped feeling, we were really no better than mobile dolls. I almost learned that lesson too late. It took almost losing the one thing in this world I care about to make me realize that. It took almost losing him. I am never letting go again. I promise to learn Quatre, if you promise to continue to be my teacher. Hold me, mold me, change me, improve me Quatre. I am your clay, use those artistic hands and shape me the way you need me.

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Thank Allah, I can feel the walls crumbling. He has torn them down before me and he's weeping into my hair as he clutches me ever tighter. His emotions are raw before me, and I gather them together and cling to them gently. I won't try to change him, I cannot improve on the masterpiece that is already there. He's like a diamond in the rough, all it takes to make him shine is a little polishing. The flaws are only in his spirit now. Those will mend themselves in time on their own. Lean on me Trowa, let me be your rock in times of need, just as I know you will be mine when I falter. His breath tickles my ear, and my heart stops it beating, time itself grinds to a halt as I hear him utter words I have, until this point, only ever dreamed I'd hear him say aloud. He tells me he loves me. I sigh audibly I can't help it. I look up into those bright eyes still glistening with tears. I tell him at last, that I love him too.

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He loves me too, My Quatre love me. I knew he did, but still hearing the words themselves are a gift I will treasure always. I cannot fight the urge anymore. And Neither can he, I can see it in his eyes. Together we close the final inches of space between us, and I can taste his tears on his lips as they meet my own. There our tears mingle and mesh together, upon our cheeks, and our lips. Mixing as one, just as our souls blend together to form one entity comprised of two forms. It's now I realize how much a part of me he truly is, how I know in this startling flash of clarity, that I will never again be I. I no longer exists, the loneliness is forever abandoned. For the I is now WE. We will face this world together. Where he stands, I stand. Where I am, he will be. I can feel the demon screeching his defeat. And I revel in the Joy that this new consciousness brings to me. The Greatest gifts in life are free. And I had it all along. I have finally reached out from my perch on the carousel, and closed my fingers around that brass ring. My failed attempts at reaching it left me afraid to try again. But I did it this time. Because this time, the Ring reached for me in return. We have met, we have connected. We will never be separated again.

He's sleeping again, so weary. I lay him back against his pillow and I curl up beside him. This time when I fall asleep. The demon has vanished. In his place is a golden angel, that brass ring is his halo. I fold into his embrace, and for the first time in my life. I dream. I dream of hope, and of peace. I dream of my angel, my Quatre.

Fini

“To Sleep, perchance to Dream”

and the Greatest Gifts in Life are free. We just have to open our eyes to see them.

Happy Birthday Ashura,

All My Love!

My Sister in Spirit!