

...Worse Than Death?

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A different idea as to what happened to Fratley in Final Fantasy IX. Characters copyright to Squaresoft (Square-Enix)

Freya stood in the remains of the throne room; rain coming down as it usually did, hitting the stone roof of the castle, some coming down through holes in the tall stone ceiling. It was late, the sun set about an hour ago and a slight chill came into the stone room. Freya pulled her large red coat closer to keep out the chill as she lit the torches that were left in the room. As the torches began to give off their glow, she pulled a piece of parchment from her coat.

'Dearest Freya,

It has been too long since we have been together. I want to see you again, this evening in the throne room. There is something I have to tell you, and something to give you...

Sir Fratley'

"How long do I have to wait to see you again my dearest?" Freya asked herself. It had been two months since the two met in the doomed city of Cleyna, where Fratley reappeared, but she discovered that the man she loved and had been searching for these many years had forgotten her. When Freya received the letter in Lindbulm, she was shocked and dumbfounded that Fratley would send her such a message. Could it be that he regained what he had lost?

That was something she wished for with all her heart.

Freya looked around the remains of the once great throne room. The torches left shadows all over the room and with the rocky remains and cracks it gave the room a frightening appearance. Freya had to admit that she was a bit nervous.

"Freya..."

Freya almost jumped when the voice came out of nowhere. She spun around, looking for the owner of the voice when she saw a form slowly emerge from the shadows. She couldn't hold back the gasp of surprise. "Sir Fratley..."

Fratley slowly walked out of the shadows, his hat casting a shadow over his eyes. "It's been sometime dear Freya..."

She didn't know how to react; mixed feeling began to rush to her mind. She just stood there, realizing her love now stood before. "Oh Fratley...it is you, it is truly you. I've searched everywhere you went...I almost lost all hope when we last met in Cleyna, I feared the worst...that you might have died at Cleyna..." Tears began to form in her eyes, "But now, you stand before me..."

"That's what I wanted to tell you Freya..." There was something in his voice that scared her. "You see...I did die..."

"What...?" She couldn't believe what she just heard. "What do you mean?"

"It was almost a year ago...but I was fatally wounded in a battle with an large and strong creature. Evening came fast and I was slowly dying, I knew that, but I couldn't leave...not without seeing you. I prayed to every god to give me something that would allow me to see you...then she came..."

"Fratley, wh...what are you saying...?"

"...she promised me that if I allowed her to take me in...I would get to see you again...and that was all I really cared about...not knowing what her dark gift would also bring me." Fratley stared at her through the shadows, sending a thrill through her. "I am immortal, Freya, but there is more to it than

you may know..."

Now she was scared. What had happened to Fratley? Was this the same man she fell in love with those years ago?

"When we met in Cleyra, I lied about my amnesia, I couldn't bare to tell you the truth, not then when so much was at stake. But now...I have learned more about what I am capable of, and there is one thing I have learned over the year, the thing that could ensure our happiness, was that I can share my immortality as well, I can give you the 'dark kiss', Freya...you and I can live forever..."

Freya wasn't able to say anything, she couldn't do anything, and she didn't know what to feel. Too many different feelings hit her at once. She just stood there frozen and in that instant, Fratley had vanished before her eyes. Freya gasped and managed to take a step forward when she felt something behind her, she knew who it was.

Fratley opened his mouth; his canines extended, and he took hold of her, knocking her helm to the ground. Before the hat hit the ground, he had taken a hold of her neck.

Her breath caught in her throat as a strange feeling entered her body, one she had never experienced before. It was painful and yet pleasant at the same time. She tried to gasp, but nothing came out. She felt her life slowly escape her body as Fratley drained her lifeblood until finally her beloved released her and lowered her to the ground. Reality seemed indifferent to her; her vision was blurry, and she couldn't grasp the sense of sanity. Her life was slipping away.

Fratley brought a claw to his wrist and made a deep cut, letting blood flow down and dripped some into Freya's mouth. She licked it from her lips and she began to feel something else, a strange and deep hunger. Fratley lowered his wrist to her mouth; she took hold of his arm and began to drink the red fluid from the wound. As she drank, she felt her body beginning to get warmer, something seemed to take hold of her and she continued to drain the blood from his wrist. Fratley seemed to be feeling something, his face showed a mixture of pain and pleasure.

It took some effort, but Fratley managed to pull his arm away from her. Freya's body began to convulse, scalding pain filled her body, preventing her from doing anything until finally it had ended. She lied there on the dusty stone floor, breathing heavily.

Fratley rose from where he laid, his hat falling to the ground, causing his hair fall about his shoulders. He looked over and watched as Freya rose slowly. She looked around the throne room. Somehow, the world seemed to have changed in her eyes, yet it didn't change at all.

She looked down at her hands, which seemed to have grown cold, "What...what has happened to me?"

"You are now the same as I, my love. We are of the Night Walkers, we are vampires."

The words sounded cold to her and she wrapped her arms around herself.

"We will live forever, but we will have to feed on the blood of others." She knew this already, and her heart sank at the thought.

"But is it not a price to pay for our eternal love?" The question seemed to shake her. Freya looked up into the eyes of her beloved Fratley; they still had the same dark blue color that comforted her. She felt something else now, a strange calm entered her body. Now they would be together, until the end of time.