The Darkest of Nights

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The Darkest of Nights

by Subspace_Adventurer

Summary

Morrotober week 2: Despair || Dreams

"Lloyd is in a coma."

Those were the last words Morro expected to hear from his aunt.

Happens from before Reality Check to Reality Check chapter 5

"Lloyd is in a coma."

For the first time in a long time, unbridled fear stabbed its ugly tendrils right through Morro's heart. Those were the last words he expected to hear from his aunt, and the sole reason he was currently sprinting from his workplace to the Ninjago City Hospital. He was out of breath by the time he reached the facility, but he pushed on, panting heavily when he finally arrived at the reception desk. "Where's…Lloyd Gar…madon's…room?"

The woman at the desk looked confused, and Morro steadied his breathing before repeating the question, slamming his fists on the smooth countertop. "Where's Lloyd Garmadon's room?!" Startled and stuttering, she typed something out on her keyboard and rambled off a room number on the second floor. She yelled something after him when he took off again, but he didn't take time to pay attention to what it was.

He needed to see his cousin for himself.

Finding the elevators, he pushed the call button several times before growing impatient and heading to the stairs. They would be faster anyway. His heart pounded as loudly in his chest as his feet did on the steps, and he burst through the hallway door before finally coming to a stop in front of a room at the beginning of the hall.

Taking a few seconds to try and compose himself, he reached out to open the door when he realized his hands were shaking.

He was terrified.

His little ~~brother~~ cousin had been seriously injured, *and Morro hadn't been there to protect him.*

He swore to protect Lloyd ***and he wasn't there.***

~~Wasn't strong enough. Wasn't smart enough.~~

~~Just another thing ripped away from him.~~

He bit the bullet and grabbed the handle, carefully pushing the heavy door open. The sight inside was simultaneously nothing and everything that he had imagined on his way over. Koko sat in a chair next to the bed, tears still streaming down her face as she looked up at his entrance. On the bed itself was Lloyd, pale and still in the afternoon sunlight. An oxygen mask sat over his nose and mouth, and a thick bandage was wrapped around his temple with several more visible on his arms and hands.

"Who did this to him."

It came out less as a question and more as a promise of vengeance. The fear in his chest gave way to fury, for he knew of the tribulations the younger one suffered on a daily basis. Morro

was no longer the scrawny kid with an aversion to fighting, especially when it's purpose was to protect or avenge those he cared about, and already his mind was running through several ways to make use of everything he knew and inflict the worst amount of pain and suffering the culprit could imagine.

His aunt choked back a sob as she held on to one of Lloyd's hands, rubbing it gently. "It was the Garmadon attack. He got hit by flying debris." She dabbed at her eyes with a tissue, taking a shuddery breath and softly squeezing the bandaged hand. "One of the ninja found him and brought him straight here."

All of the plans of revenge fizzled from Morro's mind at the name of his untouchable uncle. Lloyd was the Green Ninja. Flying debris was the cover story the teen had come up with to keep Koko from finding out in case an unfortunate accident happened while he wore the gi, meaning he had probably been injured while fighting against the warlord. *Lloyd's own father had done this to him* and the man probably didn't even care. Morro's hands clenched so tightly that his nails dug into his palms, and he fought to think of any way he could get back at Garmadon that wouldn't end as a suicide mission. He might be able to whip up a computer virus to shut down the volcano's systems, but with the warlord's extensive team of… everything and his access to seemingly infinite resources, it would only be a two to three day inconvenience at most.

When he kept drawing a blank on any successful ideas, he yelled out a string of curses, each one slowly getting softer until the loudest he could speak was a strangled whisper, his throat tight with grief and anguish. Finally he sank onto the edge of the bed and held his head in his hands, and Koko gently put her hand on his knee out of sympathy. "I know, Morro. I know."

He couldn't stop the tears from spilling out.

~~He didn't deserve to cry. He could have prevented this. Should have been more prepared.~~

The two of them sat there for quite a while, silently consoling each other until Morro couldn't take it anymore. He was itching to do something, and sitting around the hospital wasn't easing that itch. He stood up and scrubbed at his eyes, then quickly strode over to the door before his emotions could take hold again. "I need to let off some steam. Call me as soon as there's any change."

Koko gave him a sad smile and wiped her own tears. "I will, but don't tear yourself apart in the meantime. There's nothing you could've done."

He strongly disagreed, but he didn't voice that thought as he left the room. "Take care of yourself too."

The walk back to his workplace only served to encourage the festering frustration. Pulling up the footage of that morning's attack, Morro watched as Garmadon's octopus mech grabbed Lloyd's green dragon mid-flight and flung it deeper into the city, causing it to crash through several buildings before it was no longer visible to the camera.

He ran through several scenarios of ways he could've helped, could've made it in time to save Lloyd or keep Garmadon from throwing him around in the first place, but ultimately none of

them panned out. A cold feeling of helplessness settled in his stomach as he realized that Koko might have been right; there really *wasn't* anything he could have done, and he hated that. Helplessness meant weakness. Weakness meant lack of control. Lack of control meant that someone or something else was in charge, and he'd already had his fill of those times. From poverty, illiteracy, even the man he called his father.

Having already taken the rest of the day off of work as soon as he got the call from Koko, he retrieved his motorcycle and made his way to a secluded training ground in the Jungle of Lost Souls. He couldn't use his element in public, but here, out in nature where his only company was the trees and wild animals? He let it fill him, flow around him, and explode outward with his direction.

Too fast, too wild. Again.

Not enough precision. *Again.*

Lack of control. ***Again.***

He cursed at himself for letting himself go so long without training. It was times like these that he wished Wu had never told him about how his predecessor died; that he hadn't made that promise to hide his element under myths and unconfirmed rumors of the Ghost Ninja's secret ability. But if there was anything that scared him as much as losing someone close, it was the thought of losing his connection to the wind. Ironic, that one of the most fickle elements of the natural world was what had given him the most stability throughout his life. Even now, though it often faded comfortably into the realm of background noise, the wind was happily whispering its secrets and gossip to him.

It was long past dark when he finally made it back to his apartment, and he spent most of that night restlessly tossing and turning. The little sleep he did get wasn't much better, filled with dreams of Lloyd's screams for help and his own inability to save his cousin.

During his waking hours, he began to immerse himself into his current work case; gathering information on a street gang called the Sons of the Oni. He obsessively followed every digital trail, every casual rumor on the streets, every crumb of a possible master plan. If he couldn't take his anger out on Garmadon, then he would just have to funnel it through a more productive target. ~~He ignored how similar his thinking was to the way the city treated his cousin. These people deserved it; Lloyd didn't.~~

He visited the hospital several more times before Koko called him at the two week mark to relay the doctor's warning.

If there continues to be no improvement in his condition, Lloyd might never recover.

Every single ounce of his attention was now focused on taking down the Sons. The more time spent on cracking them open, the less time he had to think about…less pleasant things. ~~Lloyd couldn't die, he *couldn't!*~~ He even went so far as to take on a week-long no-contact mission to scout out possible base locations and confirm involvement of any known criminals.

Yes, he knew he was running himself ragged, but what other choice did he have?

He was so desperate to focus on something else that he nearly missed Koko's call several days later, and he fumbled around with his cell phone before answering. "Koko! Please tell me there's good news!"

There was a short silence on the other end of the phone before he heard her quietly swear. "I'm so sorry Morro, I tried calling several times last week but the line was dead and this week has been so busy that it slipped my mind. Lloyd is fine now; he's awake and healthy and out of the hospital. But that's also why I'm calling you now."

His mind reeled at the information. Lloyd was out of the hospital? Already? And Koko had tried calling him last week…which was while he was out on that mission. Relief, anger, and frustration filled his chest, and he had to steer his thoughts back to the conversation. "Oh thank goodness. But you said he's been discharged already? How?"

"I don't know, but it's nothing short of a miracle." Then her tone changed to something much more urgent. "The main reason I called though is because he texted me a couple hours ago that he was on his way home, but he hasn't gotten back yet. I'm worried that he ran into trouble."

Instantly he went into Lloyd protection mode as he grabbed his leather jacket and motorcycle helmet. "Already on it. Don't worry, I'll bring him back. Stay by the door and have the first aid kit ready just in case. We'll see you soon." He hung up and ran down the stairs to his bike. Starting the engine, he let it idle for a bit while he listened for his element. "Lloyd, where are you?" Soon the inaudible voices began whispering of a scared boy lost among the factories, and he slipped his helmet over his head and patted the motorcycle beneath him.

"Come on Banshee, we've got a bean sprout to save."

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