

The Promise of a Name
Musings from "The Plague"
by Brit

There's only a thin piece of glass separating the two of us, but it might as well have been a concrete wall a mile thick. I've seen you asleep before - you look like a little kid, all innocent, and somehow the cares of the world that you somehow manage to carry on your shoulders day in and day out fall away. But not this time. Not now. Your sleep is restless, I can tell you're hurting. That crease you get between your brows seems permanently stuck there and you're tossing and turning like the devil's after you.

Maybe he is. You're too good a person for this crummy world, but I can't imagine being here in this sewer of a city without you.

I can't wait here much longer. I was hoping to get a chance to talk to you, but you probably need your sleep—whatever sleep you're really getting. It's hard being out there by myself, pal. Especially when so much is at stake—since *you're* what's at stake. The Doc's not getting anywhere, so I guess it's up to me to find Callendar, find the cure before the devil that's chasing you around in your dreams catches you.

I won't give up, Hutch. I swear on my father's grave I won't quit. I won't stop until I find him and save you. *Save us. Because without you...*

I think I know now a little of what you were feeling eleven months ago when I was missing. Time wasn't on our side then either. You said that you felt like the devil was on your heels then too, trying to find me—save me.

How long did it take to get over the nightmares? I think yours lasted as long as mine did. And how long did it take for you to get past the image of my name written in blood on a bathroom mirror? I kind of remember the night you told me it was that bloody scrawl that kept you running through the long hours of searching for me. You said that was one of the most surreal moments of your life - looking at the mirror, seeing my name in blood running down the glass with your distorted image looking back at you. You said some other weird psychological stuff to me about it, but the meds I was on were knocking me for a loop and you lost me somewhere along the way. All I know is that from the moment you saw my name, as gory as it was, it set you off running and made you hang on when it seemed the world was crumbling beneath your feet.

Well partner, that's what I'm hoping my name will do this time, too. My name again—red on glass. But this time it's a promise that *I'll* keep on running when the world is crumbling beneath our feet. That *I'll* keep on searching for a way to save you....*save us.* And that we'll beat back that devil one more time.

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