

## first prayers (in a very long time)

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by [Felix\\_J](#)

### Summary

Red, the temple, smiles with the mouth of Red, the body. They are one and the same. That can't work anymore, but he suspends his disbelief for the sake of the dream, as in a dream he must do.

roses and smoke week, day 3: myths | **gods**

### Notes

here is your goddoons!! red was worshipped at the beginning of his first season and then everyone forgot. results: forgotten god reddsups Thumbsup

ever so slightly inspired by tgcf i Would have made a fusion but i haven't reread it still

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

He is in his temple, with the soles of the feet stepping on the tiles that aren't *his*, and the old candles that grew over with wax bloom. He's in every temple — he means every ruin, and he's in his body, the bones that will always grow back, that he can trust more than anything.

He twitches, in his bed, and he thinks he dreams, or has a nightmare.

The nightmare isn't *bad* per se, it's not about blood, and he *loves* blood when it's not in the context of people he wants safe, and he does have nightmares about that. It's not about the gore he's seen and the people he'll ultimately always lose, soldiers and loved ones. It's about the past.

It will never happen again. Which is why it hurts.

Red dreams of having a follower.

It's one of the older, no, oldest buildings, of the ones he built up with his hands, he and the people he used to call his friends, and he *has* returned to be less than what he was back then. His body is not there. He can't lead the person that came in through the cracked, open frame of the temple, can't guide them. Red has no power... no power *of this* anymore.

He's the strongest general a human leader has seen in their lifetime, because he recognises his *strength*, but he's not a god.

He has no place in a temple of a warlord.

It's his temple. It's him. He is only here because he used to be something the person that's walked in is looking for. Or maybe he's mistaken, and what they're looking for is shelter, or a way out.

He can't control the dream.

Whoever it is in the dark steps quietly, and then their hand moves, up, until they shout-whisper a swear and hide their... he presumes hand, back, searching around, click a flint and steel. The wick of a candle sizzles and dies out instantly.

Red, the temple, smiles with the mouth of Red, the body. They are one and the same. That can't work anymore, but he suspends his disbelief for the sake of the dream, as in a dream he must do.

It feels too natural.

The... *follower*, the person in the long dark robes, mumbles then, clasping their hands together, and Red feels the fondness long before he begins to recognise *why*.

"Okay, if you're not going to keep your lights in check, don't think of complaining about *this*."

The fire is in their hands, lighting up the face of a young man, and the name is on the tip of his tongue, but the thought's blurred out. He'll probably remember it in the morning or realise it was never anyone he knew.

The skin being lit up purple with the lights, moving and warping like they're unstable, already adds to the illusionary feeling of it all, and Red *almost* feels safe, except that he remembers how many things his mind can throw at him. He's a... he's been many things, and that leaves just the number of scars.

Hands swing open, and the light covers the room like constellations of stars, or clouds, or nebulae.

"You there?" It's quiet, like a rasp. He throws the hood of his cape off and turns on his heels, *sharp*, but whatever he hears Red knows is not there, because Red *is* everything there. The stranger... he *can't* call him a stranger. The name slips just out of his mind, he scrambles for it, and it *aches* back, feels *wrong*.

He's safe there, with Red. In Red's *mind*, in his *dream*. It's common courtesy, and Red feels that it's right he should be, overwhelmingly so.

If there's one thing Red can't do, though, it's answer him.

"*Reddoons!*" The man shouts, and he *doesn't* look anything like a late follower anymore, Red isn't even sure why he thought it in the first place- and just, that's *his name*.

It's just because of the *dream*, he knows, but the pulse of anxiety stays.

"I didn't come all this way into your stupid... one of your stupid temples for you to just... ghost me." The voice jumps. "You're still there, right. You would be stubborn enough..." He gulps, then takes a few steps to the side, slides a hand against some shelves. It comes up just slightly dusty, making him wipe it off in just one jerk.

Red sits in the silence with him.

"Red?" It's small. Red thinks that's because it's disappointed.

"Do you want me to pray for you, Red? Is *that* what you want?"

It's what a deity needs and asks for, and he isn't one, the young *follower* should know that if he knows his name, he thinks sadly.

He has his hands held up, palms open and empty, and the purple lights that are too sharp like they'll cut to be stars circle around him as a halo, like he's something that doesn't belong to the mortal world himself, at all, and Red's felt that for a while, that's right. He wants to repeat that his dreams are becoming stranger by day, and that it's better than other things they could've been, but instead he thinks he *almost* remembers — the man sinks on his knees *like he is a god* and presses his hands together in the most openly feigning way.

*It comes as a nagging at the back of his brain, for all they glorify it, a deep scratch. There's a smile, and determination, and still hesitation, and he can read well enough the person praying, and they're too deep for him to understand.*

*He stands on the stairs of his new, small temple, and he listens and tries, anyway. It bubbles up against the line of their throat, and they're not sure what they want.*

*He's a war god — it feels strange to say, but he's neither human anymore nor deaf to prayers, so he is.*

*He doesn't think about who the other is, it should be one of- What's important is their want, if it's worthy of being satisfied.*

*He smiles, anyway.*

*He can only hear the voice faintly except in his head, but there they're clear, with the grin. "Hey, god. Do you hear me." They say carefully, chewing on their lip, and there's laughter bubbling up in their throat, and it's the first thing Red actually feels, and the way it feels is just so complete.*

*He takes a step up, and it's almost hard to concentrate on his body, but he knows he has to, it's how this works, how he's wanted it for a long time, and that with time it's going to get better.*

*"Hey." Ash repeats. "I wanna be a god."*

*Red's voice echoes in a way his doesn't, more, stronger, amplified because every stone put together with his hands is just the same as the muscles of his throat. "Well then, I say you cover lands with blood, and bring me destruction, if you're praying to War. Then we'll see." He stops. Ash doesn't bother turning.*

*"Did you just hear that from all the way out there." Ash says with no particular emotion, like he doesn't believe it yet, even knowing it's supposed to have worked, they've put in so much that it would. Red slides his hand along one of the tables against the wall as he walks further in, and he shakes his head, which Ash can't see.*

*"Yeah, definitely." The smile doesn't go off his face.*

*Ash's eyes light up slowly, with a half-nod first, then to a full realisation.*

*Red leans against the offering stone right next to him.*

*"You're so full of shit." Ash says, and his voice's inexplicably fond.*

*"Be careful saying that to a god."*

*Red squeezes his hands clasped in a prayer, breaking the limp grip. Ash keeps cackling, quietly. "Oh no." He says. "I'm so scared now."*

*He's gonna go out shouting in a moment, Red, both of them really, and make it a competition to tell the others, and it will be a long day — he'll train, and listen, and there'll be so many people more than Ash, and by that he means not that many because making friends's fucking hard and he's not sure how they stick with him, but sure they do. For now, he splits the seconds of happiness with Ash, and one or two that he probably doesn't of bitter thought that Ash deserves this too, but it'll have to be alright, and Ash's happy for him.*

*"What are you thinking of again?" Ash huffs, staring.*

*"That... that it wouldn't have happened without you, I think." Red answers, and just because it's a bit of a lie doesn't mean he isn't correct.*

*The huff turns into a laugh again. "Sure, praise me, I'm taking all of that."*

*Red nods. "This's why you were a god long before me. Taking prayers? Call Ashswag for the general experience..." Ash pushes him slightly.*

*"Do you feel different?" He demands.*

*"I dunno." Red stares down at his hands. He can start to feel the cracks on them if he concentrates, and their feet on the floors, and the wax of the candles slowly wasting away. "Maybe it comes with time. I can... I need to train." It comes out a bit tired, right now.*

*Ash nods silently.*

*"I hope this doesn't smite me on the spot now." He mutters, puts his hands on Red's that have him hugging himself. They lean in both, and the way Ash kisses's testing, soft but not because he's scared, he never is. Red has his eyes half-closed, and he can see every little ridged scar on Ash's cheeks like through a magnifier, on his fingers, knows how his shoulder blades twitch.*

*"Don't think it did." Ash mutters, putting a finger up to his mouth, and his breath's hitched, but Red's not sure at all when he can regain his balance.*

*He laughs in a slight rattle and tilts his head to the side. "I'm not so sure, you know. Fancy trying again?"*

"Come back." He says, like a tired *order*. "I'm telling... you to come back. Reddoons."

Red sees his look from all angles, and it could cut if there was anything to.

"Fucking please." He adds, and *that's* raw now, like the words hurt to say, high.

Red feels like he wants to come up to him, and he has *somewhere* to lead him still, but he's no god anymore, and this is not his place.

Reddoons the temple is cracked and broken. Reddoons the person, the body will never be human anymore, but he's not been *more* for whole lifetimes.

The halo, the purple lights full of angles that have stilled with their creator, creep over, forward, as if without his leading, because he has his head hung and eyes almost closed, looking at the floor. He only looks up when they buzz against the stone, and the ridges of it look so familiar to Red.

They burn, against the candles, not quite touching them.

Ash, *Ash, Ash*, stares openly, and the flares that are red now, like just fires, reflect in his eyes.

"Red." He mutters, shudders quietly, full-body.

Red is not there. Red is waking up, in the small room that's only his for the night, in the way the temple's not.

Nonsense, really. It stopped being his, being *him*, a long time ago.

## End Notes

i feel it with my skin i've seen somewhere ash saying to red "you're so full of shit" but it's just Not in any of my fics so i give up. 50/50 it's just my delirious subconsciousness

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