

you're in the walls that I made with crosses and frames // hanging upside down

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by [orioncataclysmic](#)

Summary

Because Ash is the God of Nothing Good, of glitches and scams and trickery; things that show up quite frequently in the business world. It's a good arrangement they have, especially on mornings like this, when Redd gets to wake up with a slightly-less-divine body next to him. They cut the whole holy appearance shtick short when Redd got tired of eye and ear and nose and mouth blood, and Ash got tired of healing him up.

MCYT aro week day two - loveless

Notes

It has become a running habit for almost every fic I write on here to have an autistic coded POV character, and it has happened again. Reddoons, you're autistic now. Sorry

Prompts for this day were loveless / AU and honestly. Both of them came into play

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

It's not necessarily . . . *common* , to be close with a God. If you're lucky, they'll answer your prayers, maybe give you a talisman or token if you've really caught their favour.

Redd is, perhaps, uniquely lucky, to have not only seen a god face-to-face, but also to have become business partners with one. It's not like Ash gave him much say in the matter, appearing in a mess of glitches and pixels, speaking to Redd in a voice that made his ears bleed, but the effectiveness of it all works quite well.

See, he deals with Ash's Temple, with the supplicants and their wants and needs and desires, sorts out which requests are good and which are bad. He sifts through papers and looks at intent, at reasonable probability, at cause. It's bureaucracy, done in the only way Redd knows how to do it, and it makes Ash's life so much easier. That was why he sought Redd out in the first place.

He chooses to ignore the stories Ash told him of people who went mad from simply seeing his true form, who shattered apart into pixels and glitches, speaking in a language not known to man. They screamed, and cried, and pissed themselves at Ash's appearance; apparently Redd's casual, "I'm not taking any meetings today," was enough to convince Ash he was meant for the job.

It isn't all paperwork and sorting either—even if he enjoys it far more than he probably should. In return for being Ash's one-man manager of all things divine bureaucracy, he finds that deals tend to go his way more often. People tend to skim over the more, well, *unfair* parts of the agreements and contracts he proposes, give him more grace, and his technology breaks a lot less often.

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Because not only is Ash a good business partner, quick-witted and sharp-tongued, but he also makes for a handsome man, all long limbs and dark brown skin, a grin with too many teeth paired with eyes that never look quite right. Coexisting with him isn't much work at all, even if he eats all of Redd's food despite not *needing* to eat, and makes a mess of his—their— *his* apartment.

He's not fooling anyone. They live together, when Ash is tired of the holy plane, and they eat together, and they exist together. It's practically their place, especially when it's Ash's favour and influence that has gotten him enough money and power to even consider living here. It's a huge ass apartment, near the top of a skyscraper, and if he times it right, sometimes he can open his window and see nothing but clouds. It's almost like a dream.

He's wondered before what keeps Ash around. It's not like he couldn't rope Redd into an unfair bargain, a contract that he couldn't escape, and keep him working forever. He's a God.

he doesn't have to have morals. He could make Redd do whatever he wanted him to, but instead, he puts up with his workaholic tendencies, all of the picky, pedantic parts of his nature, and the emotional unavailability that has made an unreasonable amount of partners break up with him.

But then again, Ash is a God. He doesn't adhere to moral rules. He probably doesn't even notice that Redd is different from the norm—at least, not in the ways that matter. They both know that Redd is not one of Ash's devotees, one of the many supplicants that come to his Temple and give him gifts and beg for his favour. He doesn't love Ash the way they do, if it can even be called love.

Devotion, maybe. Obsession, probably. Love? Well, Redd's never been that educated on the subject. It's a cliché and all; the cold, heartless businessman, no room in his heart for love.

That reason is exactly why Redd knows, in an inexplicable, almost certainly exploitable way, that his relationship with Ash is different than the rest. He's no supplicant, no devout believer. Hell, he doesn't even really think Ash being godly is all that special. He's simply Ash's business partner, one who's grown used to the divinity. He's bulletproof, unfazed by any potential posturing and power that could be sent his way.

Maybe that's why when Ash wakes up next to him, hair falling out of his braid and eyes still heavy with sleep, he doesn't react. Not all that much, anyways. He's still *Ash*, the man Redd finds his way home to after all of the conning and stealing and contracts he fills his days with, shirtless and in his bed.

It's second nature for Redd to lean over to where Ash is blinking himself awake in order to brush some loose hair out of his braid, tapping him on the nose for a little bit of extra annoyance factor. There's a cup of coffee on the nightstand next to him, a newspaper on his lap, and a headboard hard against his back, a tried and true morning routine that even Ash cannot disturb. He checks the news, looks at the stocks and the trends and any particularly interesting article there is, and slowly wakes himself up.

Ash, on the other hand, hisses out a series of snaps and crackles from a mouth that isn't fully rendered in, throwing an arm over his eyes. For a God that does not need to sleep, not really, he sure does enjoy leaning into the whole human thing, right down to the morning crankiness. Instead of poking him again, Redd shakes out his newspaper, and flips to the next page. He'll have to get up soon, go to the kitchen and start looking through all of the prayers and questions that came in overnight. Nobody ever said it was easy work, doing divine bureaucracy, but it has made a routine that Redd can follow without deviation.

When he looks over at Ash again, halfway through his page, he's greeted with the sight of a body very clearly trying not to pull itself apart, and grimaces, pressure building behind his eyes. He was looking for an excuse to grab his sunglasses, so Ash's loose hold on his physical form works perfectly. The paper goes down onto his lap, and he leans over to rummage through his nightstand, fingers trailing over reading glasses and regular glasses before landing on his trusty sunglasses, which are almost always on his face.

He slips them on, letting himself get a proper look at Ash almost immediately after. He usually gets *weird* about staring, which Redd would argue is not very rational, when you're a

God that everyone wants to get a piece of, but he digresses. In mortal form, Ash is just as loud as his divinity, though his pixelated wings and constantly glitching frame have been swapped for a heavy purple and black tattoo of seraphim wings that takes up his whole back, and a body that Redd has spent more than enough nights memorizing under his hands.

Piercings made of metals Redd doesn't even know the *name* of grace his body, an oil slick of purple and black slipping across the rows of rings punched through his eyebrows, seven on one side, eight on the other. When Redd has asked him why the asymmetry, Ash has just laughed, and said "I'm a God. Why the fuck not?"

Purple gems drip from the very end of his eyebrows, the same colour as the ones hanging from his ears and his septum, almost a dozen other rings and studs and bars in each ear. Redd's a personal fan of his bridge piercing and how it almost curves up and into his tear ducts, a trick of the light and of his divinity. Ash is decked in piercings and jewellery and metal, a mortal homage to his glory, and Redd cannot get enough of it.

The jewellery, at the very least, comes off when they're sleeping, which is for the best. Redd might have a heart attack if he woke up with what is most definitely divine jewellery scattered all across his bed. He's bold, but he isn't *that* bold. He can call Ash a bitch, and bicker with him until they're both blue in the face, but he will not be touching any sort of ornamentation that belongs to a God. That's how you get turned into a turkey and live roasted over a fire.

Still, despite all of the warning signs and flashing red lights and *so, you found yourself chatting with a God* manuals, Redd leans over and runs gentle fingers over Ash's arm, smiling when he grumbles something profane under his breath. He just wants to see Ash's face, maybe look at his lips a bit; take advantage of the chance to simply stare.

People have made murals and renditions of what Ash looks like, have tried to capture him in divine and in mortal form, but no image will live up to the real thing. His skin hisses and pops under Redd's touch, almost breaking apart and reshaping under careful fingers. Ash always has a hard time holding onto a human form when he's tired, or upset, or so full of emotion that his near-immaculate control slips. It's sweet.

"Hey, handsome," Redd whispers, before he can quite stop himself. It's early, and he's run out of all of his leftover thought inhibitors, because he can't take meds on an empty stomach, and without his meds, he gets real impulsive.

Because he can't make the situation any worse, he leans over, and presses a quick kiss to Ash's forehead, lips crackling like a livewire when he pulls back. It's clearly more than enough to get Ash's attention, to drag him out of that groggy state where he's thinking more about the warmth of the blankets and the softness of the bed than anything else.

With the hand not over his face, Ash throws Redd a middle finger, the painted-purple of his nail sparking into the air. It makes him laugh, and he kisses Ash again, a quick brush against his chin, before pulling back. He's more than content to go back to his articles, drink his lukewarm coffee, and wait for the both of them to be ready to face the day.

But Ash pulls his arm off of his face, and Redd finds himself incapable of thinking about the newspaper. Hair curls around his face like a halo, mixed shades of purple and brown and black that are too vivid to even be human, and Redd can't help the way that he reaches out, brushing a few loose curls of hair out of Ash's face. He'll have to redo Ash's braid later, when he's running through the colour-coded, Reddoons-approved piles of people begging for his gifts, his favour, his mercy.

Doing his hair is almost like Redd's own form of worship, if he stops to think about it long enough. Ash isn't his *God*, but he's *Ash*, and that's more than enough for Redd, really. They coexist in the same space. They're business partners. Ash is a *God*. Of course Redd is going to be getting in his good graces. It also doesn't hurt that he doesn't mind doing it, he supposes.

"Hey, Redd?" Ash asks, when he's finally awake enough to do more than flip Redd off and complain in a voice made of errors. His voice is still glitchy, the Ash version of a rough morning voice, and the sound warms Redd's chest a little, familiar and comforting.

His voice is perhaps a little fonder than he would rather it be when he responds. "Yeah?"

"I love you," Ash says, and Redd goes cold. His stomach, usually made of iron, goes weak, threatens to bring up the half-cup of coffee he's managed to drink so far. *Love*. Ash loves him.

The thought makes him sick.

It's not like it should be much of a *surprise*, really. Ash has stuck around long enough for there to be a reason behind it, far more hands-on than any God would be. He sleeps in Redd's bed, and eats his food, and acts as though they've known each other forever. Of course there was something more behind Ash's behaviour, a motivation greater than falling into bed with each other.

He knows how these kinds of relationships work. One person is never satisfied with the other's behaviour, with their level of involvement. Someone always has to love more, and Redd is never on the side of love. It's why he hasn't had a stable relationship in *years*, has kept himself busy with his business, and doing Ash's divine bureaucracy. It's easier than anything else.

Ash is an outlier in that way. He hasn't demanded anything of Redd, not the way his former partners did. He doesn't want to be taken out on dates, or wooed with flowers. He doesn't want love poems, and morning texts, and all of these unspoken little rituals Redd could never understand. Ash was simply *there*, someone Redd could be close to, bumping shoulders and cracking jokes and spelling out all of his latest plans as Ash reads them for filth.

He hasn't bothered to love Ash, because he's never really done that for *anyone*. It's not even like he needs to love Ash in the first place, because he's a God. He has more than enough people there to love him, to want him, to throw themselves on the ground and crawl a million miles just to get Ash to look at them. Redd doesn't need to lower himself, to play at yet another front of polite behaviour that he slips onto his face like a mask.

He doesn't want to love Ash. Maybe that makes him a selfish, cold-hearted bastard. He's heard that one before, a couple thousand times. *You take from others, and do not give them anything in return. You are a cold lover, a horrible person, impossible to love.*

Maybe it would be easier if he were impossible to love. Maybe then he wouldn't break himself open at the altars of people who want something from him he doesn't know how to give. Maybe then he wouldn't be forced to make constant eye contact, forced to say platitudes that feel wrong on his tongue. What even is the obsession with I love you? What is it even supposed to mean, beyond a wrong, nauseating void in the chest?

It's the same with relationships. People always seem to want something tooth-rotting, so sweet it makes them sick. They want to take things out of the bedroom and onto the streets, making it their whole life, their whole *being*. Sex isn't enough. The connection forged from being nothing but themselves, stripped down to their truest form is not enough. Sex is intimacy in its rawest form. Nothing else should be needed.

"Hey," Ash says, waving a hand in front of Redd's face rather aggressively. He's still got his sleepy voice, though it's more human now, settling back into its usual cadence. "Did you fucking hear me? I love you, stupid mortal."

Hearing the words again drops a boulder into the lake that is Redd's chest, hollowing him out to the core. This is, like, the big anime betrayal. This is the moment when everything gets fucked up beyond repair. This is when Ash realizes that he has sunk years of his time into the wrong person, because Redd can't worship him in the ways he demands.

Still, he can't lie. Not to Ash.

"I don't want you to," he says, simply, looking at Ash out of the corner of his eye. He doesn't seem *too* mad, doesn't seem like anything at all. It's not the reaction Redd usually gets.

Ash blinks once, and then rolls over to face Redd properly. His muscles shift and flex, roiling like a predator trapped underneath skin. He could rip Redd apart in seconds, if he truly wanted. Ash is powerful.

He props himself up on one elbow, and looks at Redd with an indifferent expression, loose braid falling over his shoulder. Between the piercings, the strong line of his nose, and the disapproving curve of his lips, he really does look divine, made from something *more*.

He looks like, well, a *God*. Someone who could have anything he wants, no matter what.

"You know that there are people who would kill for me to love them, right?" Ash asks, enunciation careful. "That there are people who would sell away their souls and more for this?"

"Yeah," he says, shrugging idly. "Guess I'm not one of them."

Maybe Ash is threatening him. Maybe he's trying to give Redd a warning, to let him know that he has one more chance to give out the right answer. Not many people will tell a God no in the first place, and even less will tell someone like *Ash* no, because he's known for his

fickle temper and cruel punishments. It's not Redd's issue, though. If Ash wanted someone to love him, he could have picked one of his supplicants. He could have picked one of the people who begs and pleads and cries for his favour.

Redd is not one of those people. Ash had to have known that fact coming in. He's, like, a fucking *God*. There's no way he didn't know.

Redd's never been particularly devout, and it's not like he's ever been subtle about his distaste for love. He chooses his words carefully, winces when someone uses *love* in his general direction, and never has anyone on his arm. He's always been single, standing on his own. He's never done romance. Ash should have never had any other impression.

A hand lands on Redd's bare arm, nails dragging their way from his bicep down to the curve of his elbow. It stings, almost enough to rip his skin raw, and he can't quite tell what it says about Ash's mood. His voice, when he speaks, doesn't help much either. Low, and indiscernible, Ash says, "Are you sure about that, Reddoons?"

"Sure as I can be, Ashswag. I'm not gonna lie to you and say I do." He doesn't love people. He doesn't want to be loved. Pick your poison, and make it your reason to hate him. He can't bring himself to care. If Ash wants to put him in the torment nexus for the rest of his life, then Ash can do that. It won't change what they shared.

"Wise man, Reddoons," Ash says, grabbing his wrist and yanking his hand off to the side. He flicks Redd's hand back and forth for a second before pulling it closer to him, to his body. Soft lips brush against the back of Redd's knuckles, and Ash looks at him with a heavy expression, like he's trying to read through the code of his body. "Don't you *ever* dare lie to me."

"Now why would I bother to do that, Ash, sweetheart?" He has no need to lie to Ash, not when the truth comes easy, and he has no desire to censor his words. It fucked him over in meetings until he learnt how to speak their language, how to twist meanings and say half-truths. It sits just as false on his tongue as the word *love* does, and maybe that's why it's so easy to tell Ash the truth. They are blunt, candid, unashamed. They do not hide their true nature.

Redd knows that Ash is a God, and he has no qualms about all of the unsavoury, complex things that it comes with. If Ash wants to torment and trick and enslave people, then that is his right as a God. He does not follow human morals, and in return, Redd fears nothing when he tells the truth. He can be himself; all of the authentic, jarring parts that humans flinch away from. Ash has never once removed his stare.

Ash snorts, presses a lazy kiss to the back of Redd's hand before dropping it back to the bed. "You are a strange mortal. Alright, Redd. I don't love you. I will not worship at your altar like devoted swine the way people worship at mine. I am no supplicant."

"No," Redd says, watching how the sheets shift and twist around Ash's body as he sits up. A mostly-solid hand shoves at the newspaper on Redd's lap until it flutters to the floor, pages drifting apart, and then Ash is taking its place. Instinctively, Redd's hands land on his hips, warm from the sheets. "You are the God of Nothing Good."

“And you are my highest of priests.”

“You are Ashswag,” Redd returns, dropping all pretense. Ash is a God, but he is also Redd’s, in all of the horrible, dirty, mortal ways that matter. “My Ashswag.”

“And you are my consort,” Ash says, then shoots Redd a smug little grin. “Or am I yours, Reddoons?”

End Notes

I Think I can safely say that this is my favourite day of the whole week, partly because of the worldbuilding, and mostly because it is so fucking FUN to write characters who are like me. Loveless aro gang rise up :]

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