

When the Moon and the Sun meet

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When the Moon and the Sun meet

by [shadowchan93](#)

Summary

After Bakura is gone, Malik tries to get him back. When the Gods see his despair, they offer their help, allowing Malik to meet his love on the day when the moon and the sun meet. Separated from his love for sometimes years in a row, Malik tries to live a normal life, always looking forward to the day when they will be reunited again.

Notes

I felt a sudden urge to write a thing. I have a thing for sad and bittersweet stories, so here you go. You have been warned.

(I actually drew the picture at the beginning for another fanfic by another author, but the sun and moon theme fit quite well, so I also included it here)

Thanks a whole lot to Tia-Lewise for beta'ing my story!



[\(source\)](#)

When the moon and the sun meet

Malik had known of Bakura's foolish plans. He had known and he had tried to stop him, but it had all been in vain. It should have been clear from the start that Bakura wouldn't be able to win, and Malik didn't know why, but he had hoped for his love until the very end.

But the moment Malik saw Ryou in Bakura's coat after the final RPG, he knew that his friend had not only lost the game to the pharaoh, but probably also his life.

Malik tried to keep his composure, not allowing himself to crumble in front of the victorious pharaoh. Unable to speak, he gulped hard against the lump in his throat. Thankfully, Isis took over the speech for him.

The following night, Malik still felt like he was in shock, functioning on autopilot and only speaking the most necessary things. Again, he was thankful for Isis taking care of most of the talking. The next day, they brought the pharaoh to the site of his last ceremonial duel that would open the path into the Fields for him. Malik watched the duel with blank eyes, not really interested in the game itself. When the gate opened for the pharaoh, Malik was glad to have him *gone*. Glad that the person he had hated for most of his life was finally out of this plane. But he also didn't fail to notice that he hadn't seen Bakura in the Fields the moment the gates opened for them to look inside. No, instead Aknadin had been there, happily reunited with his brother and the pharaoh now too.

Malik grit his teeth. Bakura told him the story about the creation of the Items and the man behind it. Why, then, was Aknadin forgiven and allowed to be there, while Bakura was not? Bile soured Malik's mouth as he realized that not only had his friend lost the shadow game, but that he'd probably be trapped in the shadows forever now too.

As the others cheerfully celebrated their victory, Malik left them. He couldn't stand being with them for a moment longer. He didn't get very far before his body started shaking violently. He leaned his weight against the wall for support, but his legs gave in underneath him anyways.

Malik ended up sitting on the stairs that led to the surface he had never been intended to see. Something in him broke as he finally allowed himself to grieve. Tears that he hadn't allowed himself to shed ran over his cheeks and darkened the sand where they fell.

Malik wept because of his past, because of the pain Rishid experienced due to his foolishness, because of his abusive father, because of Isis' sorrows, and most of all because he had lost the only person in the world whom he had ever truly loved. Bakura had been the only one who accepted Malik for who he was, and not for who he pretended to be. He had been the only one to understand Malik's pain, and now he was gone. He was gone forever, lost to the shadows.

A person approached, sand crunching underneath their shoes.

Malik told them to go away, to leave him alone, but the person was stubborn.

"You don't look so well, and you're shaking," Ryou stated with a frown as he knelt next to Malik. "Are you cold? Is this better?" The boy took off his coat and hung it around Malik's shoulders.

Malik held his breath as he stared at the coat, *Bakura's* coat. He knew Ryou just wanted to be nice, but he had *no idea* how much worse this just made it. Malik didn't want Bakura's coat or the person who looked *exactly like him* just now. He knew it was unfair towards Ryou. After all, this was *his* body. But still Malik couldn't help wishing the spirit back. He wanted his friend back and nothing more.

Malik didn't register a lot after that. He just knew that he wept and wept, and that Ryou tried to comfort him. In the end he had gotten Malik's siblings and they had also tried to calm him down. But neither of them managed.

When they asked about it again the day afterwards, Malik claimed he had just been overwhelmed by the fact that the pharaoh had finally moved on and relieved them from their ancient duties, that what had been a big part in their lives was now gone, and that he didn't know how to deal with it yet. None of them would understand him anyways. They willingly bought his excuse and believed him.

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Malik brought Yugi and his friends to the airport with a smile, promising to visit them soon again. None of them knew that Malik smiled because he was happy to have them gone. The faster they were gone, the better.

Malik tried to get over his loss and his traumas. In the end, he realized he might need professional help, but the doctors he tried were useless. How could he explain everything to them without seeming like a total lunatic? Who of them would believe his talks about shadow magic? And so he tried on his own again. It was a hard way, but he'd make it with the help of his siblings.

Years afterwards, Malik thought he was finally over it when Yugi and his friends came for a visit again. He realized he still could not look into Ryou's face without feeling like his heart would break. Malik felt bad for treating Ryou this way, but he also knew that he couldn't change the way he felt.

That night, Malik grabbed the biggest flashlight he owned and drove his bike through the sandy dunes to the tombs again. He hadn't been there ever since *that* day, and his stomach clenched at the thought of descending into the darkness. But he wouldn't back off now. He couldn't. This was something he had to do.

He went through scroll after scroll, book after book in the archives of their clan. Papers and parchments lay scattered everywhere, and the torches on the wall burned low. Dark bags shadowed Malik's eyes by the time he found what he had been looking for.

Carefully Malik freed the spell book from the dust that it had collected over the years. This was it. There had to be something useful in this. He skipped over the pages, his eyes already burning from exhaustion by the time he reached the spell he had been searching for.

Malik took a deep breath as he started to prepare everything for the spell and then spoke the magical incantations. Energy flowed inside of him as his *heka* started to build up and swirl around him. The whole room began to spin and blur.

The blond screwed his eyes shut and held his head as he waited for the dizziness to pass. When he opened his eyes again, he found himself in a huge hall. The floor and ceiling was made of huge sand stones that had been carefully polished and cut into shape, the walls covered in artistic depictions of the Gods and their stories. Huge pillars framed the sides of the halls, all of them also covered in beautiful carvings and paintings. The room was lit by

torches and Malik gaped at what he saw at the end of the corridor on the opposite side of the hall. Instead of the shadows, the spell had transported him right to the ceremonial tribunal of the Gods.

The Gods sat atop their thrones high above him. Their eyes bore through him and Malik's breath caught in his throat.

"Come forth," a voice thundered through the room.

Malik hesitated before he obliged. He stood in front of the Gods, answering their stares with his own. Malik wouldn't back down now.

"I cannot find your name anywhere on our list, human." The voice came from Thoth, the God with the head of an ibis. He sat behind a paper covered desk to the right. "You're not due here yet."

"No, I'm not," Malik retorted bluntly. He didn't have anything to lose anymore, so why should he be afraid of the gods?

"Then why are you here?" Anubis, the jackal headed god, frowned.

Malik's mind raced. If the spells from the tombs couldn't help, maybe the Gods could? He stood tall as he replied, "I demand that you give my friend the tribunal that he deserves."

Shrill laughter came from Sekhmet, the sharp fangs of the lioness glistening in the torchlight. "He *demands*. Isn't that cute?"

"I'd call it disrespectful," another one hissed next to her. "Know your place."

"Shut up, Horus," Bastet interjected. "He's here to save a friend, and he has the guts to face us Gods to do so. Not just anyone could do that. Maybe we should give him a chance." She gazed at Malik kindly. "Who's your friend, sweetie?"

Malik didn't waver as he looked up at her. "You're the Gods - you should know that."

Sekhmet bared her teeth in a grin again. "Could it be he wants the thief? But why?"

"Because he wants to defy the pharaoh whose tombs he was obliged to guard, by giving justice to his enemy?" That was Mafdet, the third feline Goddess, executioner of criminals and protector of the King's chambers.

"Because he thinks he still owes him?" the Goddess Ma'at suggested.

"You're fools! The answer is for love!" Sekhmet's features softened, her face morphing into Hathor's.

"How romantic!" Bastet exclaimed as she clasped her hands together.

"The thief has chosen his path. And he chose the darkness," Horus hissed. "And now begone, mortal."

“No.” Malik surprised himself at his own confidence while he faced the Gods and stood his ground.

“What was that?” The falcon headed god growled at him.

“I said no,” Malik repeated again. “He hasn’t chosen this path. The path was chosen for him, and you should be fair enough to give him a chance to weight his heart at least.”

Horus rose from his throne, his hands clenching to fists. “How dare you...”

Before he could continue, Anubis cut him off by stretching his arm out in front of the other God. “Horus, shut up, I want to hear what he has to say. He might be right.”

Malik nodded towards Anubis before he started to explain his reasoning.

The people of Kul Elna were forced into thievery because the royal family could not pay them. In their despair, they resorted to robbing the very tombs they had built. After Aknadin massacred their village, Bakura had no choice but to continue their legacy, and the grief of losing his family made him do terrible things. The Gods hadn’t been there for him in his time of need, so he turned to the darkness in order to survive.

Malik’s voice shook the more he spoke. His first arguments had been well thought out, but the more he talked the more he felt another mental breakdown coming up. Couldn’t they understand that he just wanted his friend to get the treatment he deserved, after they had pushed him down over and over again?

Malik fell to his knees. In the end, nothing of his previous confidence remained as he knelt on the floor and begged the Gods for their help.

A light hand rested on his shoulder, and when he looked up, he stared into a pair of glowing cat eyes.

“Now, now, sweetheart, don’t cry,” Bastet cooed. She looked up to her fellow Gods. “Is there nothing we can do?”

Thoth set the quill with which he had been writing down on his desk. He furrowed his brow. “I do feel bad for the thief. After all, his village had been chosen as a target just because I had blessed it with my magic.” He sighed heavily. “If I had known it would cause such big trouble, I would have thought twice about it. And if I could, I would change how things went. But alas, the past cannot be changed anymore, and what is done is done.”

Horus crossed his arms over his chest. “The thief made a pact with the dark lord. There’s no way we could get him back.”

Thoth nodded, a sad expression crossing his face. “I’m afraid your thief and the dark lord have merged to a level where it is hard to separate them permanently – even for us gods. If we bring him back, we must bring the dark lord back as well. We cannot rescue the thief alone.”

Malik's heart sank in his chest. So it was really that bad? There was really no way to save him?

A sudden bright light made him gasp and screw his eyes shut as Ra himself joined the round, a regal glow surrounding him. "Thoth speaks the truth. Not even a God is strong enough to separate them. Permanently, that is." He reached out to Malik with his hand and combed it softly through his hair. "You are one of my children, and you have endured enough in your short life. I do not want to see you suffering any longer." The God turned to Thoth. "Even if we cannot judge him and let him pass to the fields, we can still do something. If we combine our powers, we should be able to let the boy see his thief again."

Bastet clapped her hands and jumped up. "Wonderful!" she exclaimed before returning to her throne.

Malik stared at the sun god in awe. "Really? You would do that?"

Horus inhaled deeply to protest, but Anubis stepped on his foot to shut him up. Afterwards he grinned at the falcon with a smug smirk.

Thoth held up his index finger. "This is a very powerful spell that requires a lot of energy. You will meet your thief again on the day when the moon and the sun meet." He picked up his quill again and made a swift movement with it. The moment he noted the last letter down, the room started to swirl around Malik again and he found himself back in the tombs.

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The experience had been so surreal, Malik already started to question his sanity again. Maybe his mind had just played a trick on him? Maybe he had fallen asleep over the books and only dreamt everything? Malik wasn't sure anymore. He felt exhausted, drained of all energy, and he barely made it home before collapsing on his bed and drifting off to sleep.

The next morning, Malik got up, still wondering about what he witnessed the previous night. Thinking about it now, when his head was clear again, he came to the conclusion that it must've been a dream, right? Right?

A light breeze of wind came through the open window and dishevelled the papers on his desk. Malik cursed as he ran to collect the documents that had been blown away. He bent down to pick up the small calendar that had fallen off the edge of the desk, and then hesitated.

Instead of the current date, the calendar showed a date four weeks from now. A small symbol in the corner of the page indicated that there would be a solar eclipse.

You will meet your thief again on the day when the moon and the sun meet. The words of the God echoed through Malik's mind again. *When the moon and the sun meet.*

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Malik paced up and down his room and fiddled with the hem of shirt. It was the night before the solar eclipse, and even if Malik wasn't sure if it had just been a dream or not, he wouldn't want to waste the chance of seeing Bakura again.

Thoth had said they'd meet again on the day of the solar eclipse. Nervously, Malik's eyes darted to the clock on the wall every few seconds. Soon it'd be midnight and the new day would start. The day of the eclipse.

Malik held his breath when the clock struck twelve, and looked around his room. Nothing happened. He sighed. Of course nothing would happen, how could he be stupid enough to believe in such things? Nevertheless, he stayed up for three more hours just to be sure, before he fell asleep on the couch.

The light started to warm Malik's face as the sun slowly rose in the sky. He cooed and leaned into hand combing through his hair.

Wait.

Malik slowly lifted his head. His eyes widened as he stared at the person in front of him.

Bakura was bathed in ethereal light as he knelt in front of him, his appearance still similar to Ryou's – a remnant of his soul's corruption by Zorc. His features were soft as he stroked through Malik's hair.

Their eyes locked and the moment Bakura realized Malik wasn't sleeping anymore, he retreated his hand and swiftly got to his feet. "Finally awake I see, Ishtar, eh?" His trademark grin returned to his face.

"Bakura!" Malik exclaimed as he pushed himself up. "You're really back!"

Bakura snorted and lifted his arm into the ray of sunlight, showing that he was half see-through. "More or less, I suppose. Was about time someone got me out of there, Ishtar."

Malik leapt forward, hugging Bakura's waist and burying his face in the other's shirt. He had almost expected to fall right through the spirit and was incredibly relieved as he found a hold on him. "I tried what I could, I really did. But in the end, the Gods only granted you one day."

Bakura inhaled sharply by the sudden embrace. He let out a barking laugh that could've just as well been a loud gasp. "A day you say? Pah, the Gods are just as stingy as they've always been with me." His voice held a bitter note, and Malik could feel Bakura's hand shaking as he placed it on his shoulder. Bakura's fingers found their way back to Malik's hair again as he softly brushed the golden locks out of the other's face. "If I only have one day, then let's put it to good use and not waste it crying. I don't want to see you sad." He tilted the other's head upwards and bent down to place a kiss on his lips.

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They lay together, arm in arm. Bakura inhaled the scent of Malik's hair, trying to memorize everything bit by bit. His love smelled of desert and sand, of lavender and sun. His love smelled like family, like home.

Gently, Bakura ran his fingers over the marks of his nails on Malik's skin. They'd been anything but gentle with each other and Bakura felt a strange comfort knowing that his marks would stay with Malik - at least until the next day, until after he was gone again. A reminder to the blond that this had been real.

He closed his eyes again as he rested his head in the crook of Malik's neck. He wanted this to never end, but eventually the sun began to set.

Malik let out a scream as his love started to turn see-through again and fade away in front of him.

"NO!" The blond called out as he held onto Bakura. "Don't go now!"

Bakura twisted his face in pain. "Malik, don't make this any more difficult."

"We'll find a way to keep you here! There must be a way!" Malik's voice rose in despair.

Bakura shook his head. No. He knew there wouldn't be another way. This day was all the Gods had given them. He placed a last kiss on Malik's lips and then he disappeared.

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Even days afterwards, Malik was devastated over his loss once more. But just as the scratches on his skin faded with time, so did his pain, though that one never faded completely.

He tried to live a normal life afterwards, telling himself that he had needed this encounter to finally close that chapter of his life, but he knew it was a lie to himself.

Malik found himself checking the calendar frequently for more solar eclipses. He did some research and figured that there could be smaller, partial eclipses multiple times per year, but none of them had brought his lover back.

Resigned, Malik tried to find his place in life, taking an education and a job that Isis suggested to him, leading a normal existence with his siblings.

A year later, the news came that there would be another big solar eclipse happening, one that could only be seen from a place far away overseas. Malik's mind went back to that one day. That one day on which he truly felt happiness. Little did he know that once more, the Gods would have mercy on them.

As the sun rose, tears welled up in Malik's eyes again as a figure started to take shape in front of him.

A grin formed on Bakura's grin as he approached Malik. "Missed me, Ishtar?"

"Fool." Malik brushed his tears away before he pulled Bakura in for a kiss. "Of course I did."

Unlike last time, Malik made sure to take it slow. He wanted to savour each moment, as if it could be their last. Afterwards, instead of falling asleep like last time, he shook Bakura awake. His lover grumbled but didn't protest.

"Bakura, I want to talk," Malik spoke as he placed a few more kisses down Bakura's cheek.

"About what?"

"I don't know. Tell me anything you want." They leaned against the headboard of the bed as Malik embraced Bakura. "I love you, and I want to love all of you, but I barely know you. So tell me." He saw Bakura's frown and that he didn't know where to start. "What's it like in the shadows?"

Bakura scrunched up his nose. "It's a shitty place. I'd rather not speak of that."

"What would you like to talk about, then?"

A silence followed. Bakura thought for a moment and his expression softened, similar to how he had looked at Malik on that morning of the first eclipse. "My family... I'd like to talk about my family. I want someone in this world to know who these people were that were sacrificed to create the Items."

"I'll make sure to mention each and every one of them in the scriptures of the tombs."

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It would take three more years until they saw each other again. This time, Malik had been prepared. Instead of staying inside the whole day, he took Bakura outside. He wanted his love to feel the sun and to breathe the fresh air. He wanted his love to be free at least for a single day.

They rode Malik's bike to a forest further away and there they took a walk in the woods. It was springtime and the flowers were in full bloom. They found a meadow near a lake where they chose to take a break.

Their feet hurt from walking, so they sat on a large boulder, their feet hanging into the cold water of the lake. Malik told Bakura of his life now as it was, and of his family.

Bakura watched the surface of the lake as he skimmed stones over it. "I can't believe how many years have passed already. Time stops in the shadows."

"Yeah, it's incredible how fast time flies by. Rishid got married and is about to start his own family, can you believe it? And Isis is already pregnant with her second child. I'm gonna be an uncle again. Next time, you should meet my nieces and nephews," Malik proclaimed proudly as he watched the clouds drift by.

Bakura smiled at him, but then frowned. "And what about you, Malik? Don't you want a family of your own as well?"

Malik blinked at him, taken aback by surprise. "I have my siblings and I have you, that's enough for me. I don't need more."

Bakura's face twisted in pain. "Malik, don't fool yourself. I'm nothing but a shadow. I cannot exist in this plane for more than one day every few years." Tears streamed down his face as he continued. "I don't want your life to be ruined because of me."

Malik shook his head, making his golden hair whip around his face. "No, don't say that. I'm happy as it is."

Bakura grit his teeth. "Malik, this won't work. You deserve better than this!" He looked down to his hands, voice quiet when he spoke again. "Really, Malik...I would understand if you wanted to have a partner who can bring you the happiness you deserve each day. You should live your life to its fullest. Don't think about me. I want you to be happy and if that includes you finding someone else, then so be it."

Bakura's words hurt and Malik refused to see the truth behind them. Malik buried his face in his hands as he shook his head again. No. "But I *AM* happy with you! I'm happy as it is right now!" He finally screamed as he removed the hands from his face. But it was too late, Bakura had already vanished before his words could reach him.

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The next time, Malik lay in hospital. Speeding on his motorbike, it slipped on the wet street and he lost control. He broke several bones, and his initial condition after the accident was bad. The doctors put him into an artificial coma and did the best they could to keep him alive. They were able to stabilize his body, but none of them were sure if he'd ever wake up again. Isis and her children came by every day, as well as Rishid with his wife. All of them hoped for the best.

Bakura spent the day of the eclipse sitting next to Malik's bed, softly rubbing his thumb over the other's hand and whispering sweet words into his ear.

That evening, Malik awoke. The first thing he saw was the smile on Bakura's face, moments before his love vanished again.

On that day, Malik decided that life was too short to waste it, and he did his best to live it as good as he could, just as Bakura suggested. He quit his job in favour of another, more interesting one. He travelled the world, wanting to see everything. He started dating, though every relationship seemed to be short-lived. But he wouldn't want to miss any experience he gained from it, and he'd treasure every memory of his journeys and the people he'd met there.

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The next time Bakura appeared, he seemed worried about Malik. The blond didn't understand why at first, but then remembered that for Bakura, no time passed in the shadows, whereas Malik had already long since recovered from his stay in hospital. He assured Bakura that everything was alright as he kissed his sorrows away. He told him of his travels to lands far away while Bakura listened with great interest. In exchange, Bakura offered one or the other story of his life as King of Thieves.

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Many years had passed by now. And even if they couldn't see each other sometimes for years in a row, they were happy. Sometimes they'd go out and do something fun, other times they'd stay home and in bed the whole day. One time Malik took Bakura to meet his family. Isis had been hysterical when she found out, but in the end she understood and welcomed Bakura with a warm embrace.

Now, they lay in bed again, Bakura running his fingers through Malik's hair, liquid gold, but he didn't fail to notice the silver streaking through it, and neither did he miss the crow's feet forming in the corners of Malik's eyes. Bakura rarely asked how much time had passed, since time was of no concern to him. But he saw that Malik was getting old...he must've been at the end of his forties by now. And with that, the realization hit that Malik would grow older and die, while Bakura would spend the rest of eternity in the shadows.

Malik noticed Bakura staring at him and raised an eyebrow. "Hm?"

Bakura shook his head. "Nothing." He placed a kiss on Malik's lips. "You're beautiful."

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Many more years passed, and they found themselves sitting on the bench occupying the porch of Malik's house, reflecting over their past and remembering the good old times. They laughed as they shared stories and mocked the pharaoh and his "new court". Now, they could just laugh about their past mistakes and behaviour.

They remembered the time they'd met, their duel against Malik's darker half, the end of Battle City, their first kiss back when Bakura had been in Egypt to prepare the final RPG, their argument shortly before Bakura had departed, and the first solar eclipse that they spent together.

They remembered the one time Malik bought Bakura a cake, claiming they should celebrated his birthday at least once, even if neither of them knew exactly when it was. They remembered how they spent the better part of that afternoon just dancing together.

Bakura remembered the smile on Malik's face when they went to the aquarium to watch the fish.

Malik remembered how Bakura had taken him to visit Ryou and talk things out. Afterwards everything had been a lot better between them, and Malik could look at Ryou again, seeing him for who he was and not for the spirit that once inhabited his body.

They remembered how proud everyone had been when Malik's oldest nephew graduated from school, and how happy everyone had been when Malik's niece announced her engagement.

Malik remembered how happy he felt when Bakura told him that his mother and father would've loved him like their own son.

They also remembered the bad times, like when the solar eclipse fell onto Malik's hated birthday, the storm that caused a power shortage where Malik had been so afraid of the darkness, and Rishid's funeral some years ago.

They remembered the good times, the bad times and many more.

Bakura noticed how hard it was for Malik now to get up from his seat and walk around the house, so he offered to fetch him another blanket and some tea. Carefully he tugged the blanket around Malik, making sure he wouldn't get cold.

Bakura knelt in front of his love. He took both of Malik's hands in his and looked up at him. "It's time for me to go." His voice was hoarse.

Malik squeezed his hands and smiled back at him, the skin around his eyes wrinkling in deep crow's feet. "I know."

A minute of silence passed without either of them moving.

Bakura kissed Malik's knuckles. "I'll see you again, I promise."

Malik's smile widened. "I'll look forward to it." He didn't fail to notice that Bakura had said 'I'll see you again,' instead of 'I'll see you again *next time*.'

They both knew that Malik didn't have much time left, that he wouldn't live to see the next solar eclipse.

Bakura leaned forward and kissed Malik's lips. "I love you. Goodbye."

Malik repeated Bakura's words before he saw his lover vanish before him again. He sighed and watched as the rest of the sun disappeared behind the horizon and dyed the sky bright red. He closed his eyes to rest, knowing that he wouldn't open them again.

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Malik found himself once again in the great hall of the holy tribunal. He looked left and right, still amazed by the beauty of the paintings and carvings of the pillars and the walls. The shadows and lights of the fires that lit his pathway made them look mesmerizing.

Malik faced forward and paced through the middle corridor with his head held high. The Gods sat on their thrones and watched him silently as he approached. They towered above him and Malik knew that this time, he would be judged.

Once there had been a time when Malik foolishly thought of himself as a god, or at least a king, but he was older and wiser now.. Humbly, he knelt in front of them and lowered his head. "Gods of the holy tribunal. I ask for your judgement."

Thoth's quill scratched over the parchment. It stopped as the God looked up from his papers towards the human in front of him. "Ah, so we meet once more. I wondered when we would see each other again." He nodded towards his fellow Gods. "His time has come now. Let him have his negative confessions, and weigh his heart."

Anubis and Ma'at rose from their chairs. Their steps echoed loudly off the stone walls as they descended the stairs leading to their thrones.

"Well, then." Anubis's voice filled the room. "Say your confessions."

Malik's mouth ran dry. He cleared his throat before he started his negative confessions, as his people had done for thousands of years. He knew he had done many bad things in his life, so there were things that he could not deny. But in the end, he had come to peace with them.

Bastet listened closely. "Do you regret to have sworn your love to the man in the shadows?"

Malik lifted his head up at that. He met her gaze with his own, his voice determined. "No. I cannot choose who I love, and I do not regret losing my heart to him."

A small smile formed itself on Bastet's lips. "He's ready for the weighing."

Anubis held up his hand and a scale appeared in his grasp.

Ma'at started to glow in a bright light. Her shape distorted and morphed into that of an ostrich feather that gently fell down on one side of the scale.

Malik braced himself and held his breath as the jackal headed God approached him. He gasped as his chest was torn open by the God's claws and Anubis held his still beating heart, his *ib*, in his hand.

He placed the heart on the scales. They wavered, going up and down for a moment before finding their balance.

Malik let out another breath he hadn't even noticed he'd been holding. His *ib* was lighter than the feather; he'd passed the test.

The feather started to glow again as Ma'at morphed back into her humanized form. "Well done."

The snout of the jackal God transformed into something alike of a grin. "We knew you'd pass. You've changed a lot in your life. Enough to make up for the crimes of your youth. You've proven yourself worthy of the Fields."

And with those words, the doors behind the tribunal opened and rays of bright light shone through them.

Bastet got up from her throne now as well, her tail twitched behind her as she approached Malik. She helped him back onto his feet and gave him a tight hug. "You've made it. Welcome to the Fields, where you'll never need to be afraid of the dark anymore. Find happiness."

Malik stared at the gate to the other world. If someone had told him there was a place without darkness when he had been younger, he would've been glad to go there. But not anymore. Now he knew that there were things much worse than darkness alone.

He felt his throat getting even dryer than before. He freed himself from Bastet's embrace and held her at arm's length. "Tell me, Goddess...in a world of everlasting day, there is no need for the moon to illuminate the night. My moon will not be there, will he?"

The smile on Bastet's face faded. Thoth answered in her stead. "There will be a moon if you wish so, but it will not be yours."

Malik let go of the cat Goddess and turned his back towards the gods and the gate. "Then I must decline."

Bastet's face twisted in shock. "You cannot be serious! After all we did for you?!"

Malik glanced over his shoulder. "I've lived my life to its fullest, and I've had my time in the light. I've travelled the world, seen everything there is to see, and I've felt every emotion

there is. I've spent my time with my family, I've seen my nephews and nieces growing up and having their own families. Life has given me everything there is. Your Field has nothing to offer that I didn't already have. If moving into the shadows is the sacrifice I'll have to make to be with my love, then I won't have any regrets."

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