

When You Fall, I'll Pick You Back Up

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/1793038) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/1793038>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	The Legend of the Sun Knight
Characters:	Chasel Judgment , Lesus Judgment , Neo Sun , Grisia Sun
Additional Tags:	word count: 1000-5000 - Freeform , Father's Day , set during v7 , spoilers up to v7
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2014-06-16 Words: 1,460 Chapters: 1/1

When You Fall, I'll Pick You Back Up

by [lucathia](#)

Summary

When you fall, Child, I'll be here to pick you back up. Set during V7. Neo and Chasel go out on the battlefield to protect their students.

Notes

Inspired by 100thangel and Kiyutsuna!

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

Across the campfire, Neo was cleaning his sword. I watched him hold the sword in place with his booted foot and wipe the blade clean with his hand. Aldrizzt offered to help, but Neo shooed him away, claiming that he had no need of a mage taking care of his blade.

Neo, you really haven't changed. He was still as headstrong as ever, refusing to appear weak. When I first saw Neo without his right arm, I could not even bring myself to berate him for being careless. He merely stared at me belligerently, challenging me to say something about it. In the grand scheme of things, an arm was not the gravest thing to lose. The world around us would soon be submerged in darkness, cities turned barren, overtaken by death. Too many lives blinked out each day, ended before their time, so what was an arm? At least we were alive and fighting. We had hope yet.

What was an arm...

Neo still fought brilliantly, jumping right into the fray and cutting down all of the undead before him. He reveled in the fighting, wide grin on his face, and if there *were* any pauses in his fighting, Aldrizzt immediately covered for him with his magic. They worked together seamlessly, like how Neo and I had in the past. Perhaps even more seamlessly. I had never been much of a fighter.

No, an arm was not the gravest thing to lose. What was graver was the loss of our students' lives.

Now, stay calm, Chasel. Elmairy told me that Lesus died-

What?

Lesus? Dead? My student. My child. My ever so serious child whom I had forced to squash his smiles, to hide his feelings, to repeat my follies? Who, in turn, made me feel that all would be okay with the world as long as he was there?

No, no, he did die, but he's fine now! Grisia resurrected him just like how he resurrected Elmairy!

Lesus, let Teacher take a look at you.

Teacher, I'm okay, really.

Child, you are an adult now. I know. Your face is sharp and angular, your shoulders broad. You stand tall and proud, meeting my gaze head on. You no longer balk at interrogations when you used to grab fistfuls of my robes as you hid behind me. You are an adult now, I know, but you will always be my child too.

Child, do what you must, but know that when you fall, Teacher will be here to pick you back up. You've chosen a hard life, and I did nothing to stop you from it. In fact, I paved your harsh path for you. You will fall. My heart will ache, but I will be here. Teacher is sorry he can't do more. You did much more for Teacher than Teacher ever did for you. You gave me

hope for the future. You made me want to push myself all the more so that you would have a good example. I had no need for a son. I already had you.

Child, how did you die?

I... It was my own fault, Teacher. I was too hasty. Teacher Neo and I wanted to-

...Neo, you say?

I'd confronted Neo after that, but my words withered before they even left my mouth. Neo had his left hand resting against his sword while the sleeve of his dominant arm flapped uselessly in the wind. If not because I had sought him out, Neo wouldn't have even told me about it.

"A little girl cut it off," was all he said as an explanation. Brusque. Dismissive.

I gave him a look. "Neo, you know me better than that."

In the end, it was Aldrizzt who told me, with Neo's ambiguous go ahead. Neo scowled. "It was my choice, okay? Don't you go hating on my student. You better not breathe a word about this to him!"

Do you think so little of me, Neo?

I understand. They're our children. What wouldn't we do for them?

When Leaf Bud City had become infested with undead creatures, occupied by one of the demon king candidates wanting to wage an all out battle, I had evacuated from Leaf Bud City along with the citizens. I lent a hand to the vice-captains of our students, doing what little I could to help them maintain order. The moment we received word that it was okay to return, we breathed a sigh of relief and started making our way home.

But things were far from over.

"The Cathedral of the Shadow God and the Kingdom of Kissinger want Grisia dead?" I asked Lesus outside the door. Through the crack, I could see Neo by Grisia's bedside, head bowed.

Teacher, will you come? Grisia... died. The Pope brought him back, but...

Lesus gave a nod.

I laid a hand on Lesus's shoulder and squeezed it. He swallowed thickly.

Grisia recognized none of us, his words delusional whenever he woke up. When Neo entered the room, Grisia even bit his own tongue, and we'd hastily gagged him to prevent it from happening again. Blood soaked bandages lay on the table, a harsh reminder that Grisia had come too close to dying again.

I did it. It was all me. Everything was me!

Grisia, Child, whatever you did, there is no need to blame yourself so harshly. Let us pick up the pieces for you.

Lesus. Grisia. You are our children. Us adults should never have to see our children die before us. You are the future. You are meant to *live*, to *thrive*. Your hair shouldn't be turning white before ours. We shouldn't be keeping vigil by your bedsides.

On the other side of the door, Neo slammed the wall.

"Damn it, Grisia! You imbecile! Why were you so trusting? Never turn your back on anyone!"

Thump. The walls shook.

"Aren't you supposed to be shameless? Yet you always let me bully you around. Why did you let me leave? I should have known something was up. Ask for help, damn it! Stop being so damn considerate, taking everything on by yourself! I hate that personality of yours!"

Slam. The door creaked open from the force.

"D-Damn it, why wasn't I there..."

Through the door, Neo had his fist clenched tightly. Blood dripped down from it. I watched on, all too familiar with the anguish that plagued Neo.

We shouldn't be keeping vigil by your bedsides, but we will. No matter what you put us through, we will be here. *Use* us. We will be here for you whenever you fall, because fall you will.

"Lesus, what do you need us to do?" I asked.

"The Holy Temple will be sending out forces to subdue the undead creatures across the continent. I know you have already retired, Teacher, but..."

Lesus glanced toward the door.

I know you can't leave him, Lesus.

I know you wish to be here, by his bedside.

He needs you too.

He'll wake, and when he does, you should be here.

"You don't even have to ask," I murmured. "Let us teachers take the battlefield in your stead."

I had never been much of a fighter, but there are some battles that must be fought. I sent word. Wen was the first to answer.

I'm never letting harm come to Elmairy again!

The others followed right after, and soon all twelve of us were united, brought together once more for a common cause.

"To battle!" Neo roared, sword raised high in the air.

We all raised our weapons. "To battle!"

Neo relished dismembering his opponents. He slashed at the endless skeletons, blowing them into smithereens with the force of his swings. He grinned wildly, his fighting prowess still eons above mine even with his handicap. The undead creatures stood no chance.

How could they, when Neo's child had fallen? There was nothing Neo could do about what had already happened to Grisia, but here in battle we could let loose our fury and unease, our regrets and frustrations. Here, we could still make a difference, taking care of these meaningless battles that our students shouldn't have to spend any time worrying over. Our students' vice-captains took up arms along with us, protecting the people we cared most about.

The world around us burned, encroached by death, but even I didn't really care, throwing myself into the heat of the moment.

The Cathedral of the Shadow God and the Kingdom of Kissinger want Grisia dead? The kingdoms are pressuring our students to hand Grisia over?

Don't even make me laugh.

One of us growled, "You want to mess with our students?"

Our children?

"You better be prepared to deal with *us* first!"

I couldn't agree more.

End Notes

The teachers are awesome. That is all. Happy Father's Day! \o\

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