

A broken heart, a broken soul, a broken everything

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by [MrSpockify](#)

Summary

Guillermo and Nandor discover a side-effect of having Van Helsing blood running through your veins, and it puts a damper on the whole "turning you into a vampire under the moonlight along the banks of the river Tigris" plan.

Notes

Title from "Better Version of Me" by Autoheart.

It happened on a night like any other.

They were travelling through Europe on their way to what used to be Al Quolanudar and had stopped in Turkey while they waited for their next train. It was nearly four in the morning, perfect for a quiet stroll through the narrow streets of Ankara, side-by-side under the dark sky.

A chill ran through the air, and Guillermo shivered slightly, hugging his coat tighter to his body. In response, the heavy cloth of Nandor's cape was draped over his shoulders, and he felt the vampire's arm pull him in closer while he muttered something about his "pesky human sensitivity." A smile played at the edge of Guillermo's mouth.

It was funny how quickly they had fallen into this arrangement, growing closer every night as they worked their way through Europe bit by bit. A quiet stay at a hotel in Barcelona had turned into a midnight trip to the coast where Guillermo taught Nandor how to build his first sandcastle, an unsteady and ugly thing of which they'd proudly taken a thousand photos. A hike through a set of small fjords in Marseilles turned into Nandor taking a tumble over the steep cliffs into the frigid sea, which then in turn became Guillermo drying the frazzled vampire off and insisting he was laughing *with* him, he swears. Nandor had clearly not been convinced, but the mirth behind his eyes had told Guillermo he wasn't in trouble.

A freezing night spent together in a shitty hotel near Venice, a beautiful view from a bell tower somewhere in Slovenia, some casual murder in Sarajevo, and introducing Nandor to his new favorite song while in Istanbul. Every night seemed better than the last, in Guillermo's opinion, but maybe because it always seemed to end like this, with the two of them pressed together under Nandor's cape, walking along a cobblestone path in the quiet, empty streets. Like it was just the two of them and no one else in the world.

Maybe Guillermo was too caught up in the idea that they were living in a peaceful, lonely world, and that's why he didn't notice the shadow looming over them until it was too late.

A dark mist shrouded them for just a second before forming into a tall, skeletal vampire right in front of them. Guillermo only had enough time to look up into his eyes and see his pupils blown wide before being shoved backward, falling out from underneath Nandor's cape and sprawling back onto the cobblestone with a grunt.

His brain had a split second to wonder how on earth Vampiric Council assassins had managed to track them down this far, then suddenly, the offending vampire was on him, pinning him to the ground and hissing in his face.

Oh. He wasn't after Nandor.

Guillermo fumbled around the collar of his own shirt, searching for the chain that held the silver crucifix he always wore, all the while trying not to stare at the sharp fangs hanging inches from his face.

Before he had a chance to pull out his cross, the vampire was yanked unceremoniously from his body. He looked up to see Nandor holding him in the air, fangs bared and face marred with a type of fury Guillermo had never seen before. *Nandor the Relentless, who leaves entire cities stained red in his wake*, echoed vaguely in the back of his mind.

Nandor's fingers tightened on the other vampire's robes, and with a growl rumbling dangerously in his throat he tossed him across the alleyway. Before the vampire could hit the wall, he formed once again into a black mist. The swath of dark vapor tore through the air, passing over Nandor and settling back around Guillermo.

The mist swirled around his body for a moment, then there were hands on his body, tugging him up into a standing position and holding him tightly to a bony, unfamiliar body. Guillermo squirmed, freeing one arm and starting to twist his body out of the hold. Then he felt it.

Well, first he heard a shout from Nandor, raw and primal and filled with so much rage that he himself felt a pang of fear in his chest.

Then he felt it. A cold shock ran through his entire body, freezing him in place and drawing a whimper from his lips. The sharp pain radiating from his neck drew his attention, and if he had to describe what it felt like to be bit by a vampire, he'd say it felt pretty much like someone biting your neck with two very sharp fangs, which is to say, it *fucking hurt*.

He cried out suddenly as the pressure on his throat increased, and he could actually feel the vampire suck, the visceral and terrifying sensation of blood being drawn from his body making him panic.

Nandor was on them in a second, and up close Guillermo could see that he was panicking, too. Nandor reached out to free Guillermo, but before he could, the other vampire ripped himself away from Guillermo with a loud, painful wail and stumbled away a few steps before falling to the ground.

Guillermo felt Nandor's arms wrap around him protectively, and together they backed away from the scene, watching with fear, confusion, and some morbid fascination.

The vampire writhed on the ground, gagging and spitting as if he was trying to puke up whatever blood he managed to drink. When nothing came up, he fell to his side, convulsing for a few seconds before falling eerily still.

The only sound in the air was Guillermo's quick, heavy breaths. Cold arms tightened their grip around him, and he could feel Nandor's long hair tickle the sides of his face.

Then, as quickly as he had fallen still, the vampire jolted awake and sucked in a deep, ragged breath. He looked around wildly, hyperventilating so loudly he was drowning out the sound of Guillermo's breaths.

Which, okay, that's weird, Guillermo thought, his brain quickly reminding him that vampires definitely didn't need to breathe and—

Nandor's fingers gripped his arms tightly, pulling him back so roughly Guillermo tripped and nearly fell.

"Let's go," he ordered, leaving Guillermo no room to argue as he was suddenly grabbed and pulled into the air. They flew off into the night, hovering above the panicked vampire just long enough for Guillermo to catch one last glimpse.

Staring up at the retreating strangers let the vampire's face be illuminated by the moonlight, and with his mouth open and panting, the light glinted off his teeth to reveal a distinct lack of fangs.

What the fuck.

What the *fuck*.

What the fuck.

Guillermo's mind reeled the entire flight back to their hotel, and he struggled to speak until they entered the window and settled into their room, after which he was finally able to verbalize his thoughts.

"What the fuck," he yelled, staring at Nandor and trying to decipher the unreadable expression on the vampire's face.

Nandor, who was usually so easy to read with his dramatic hissing and exaggerated sneering, looked unnervingly blank-faced. Guillermo had never seen him so carefully guarded. It made him nervous.

The vampire stepped closer, his eyes glancing down. A hand reached out, but stopped just before touching, so close that Guillermo could feel cold fingertips hovering over the skin of his neck.

Right. He was probably still bleeding.

Guillermo made his way to the bathroom, grateful to focus on something else so he didn't have to look at Nandor's vacant face anymore. Instead, he looked at himself in the mirror, wincing at the purple bruise blossoming around two pin-prick marks on his throat. He reached up and gingerly ran a finger over the lines of indentions left in his skin from the blunt teeth that had clamped down around the area. It had mostly stopped bleeding, but a red streak had stained his skin and left a trail down to the collar of his shirt, which was soiled with his blood.

He saw nothing in the mirror, but felt a presence appear behind him that indicated Nandor had joined him in the bathroom. A cool hand pulled his own away from his throat, and he watched in the mirror as a rag, floating freely in the air, wet itself in the sink and pressed against the wound.

Guillermo wanted to say something, or turn around and bury himself in Nandor's cape, or do anything really, but found himself locked in place. It was Nandor who eventually broke the

tense silence.

“There are stories,” he said, disembodied voice low and steady from where he stood behind Guillermo, “of what Van Helsing was capable of doing to vampires.” The cloth dragged gently across the bite mark, wiping away blood with extreme care. “*Reversion*,” he explained, enunciating every syllable. “Turning an immortal being mortal. The worst thing that could happen to a vampire.” He sounded almost reverential, voice growing softer and rag stilling on Guillermo’s neck.

“Why didn’t you say anything before?” Guillermo asked tightly, barely concealed irritation slipping through the cracks. This didn’t seem like some irrelevant detail to keep hidden.

This changed everything.

“That’s all they were, Guillermo. Stories.” The rag pulled away and rinsed itself under the faucet, twisting out pink-tinged water. “No living vampire has ever witnessed it.”

Until now, Guillermo thought. Until some random, unlucky vampire sunk his teeth into the neck of an unsuspecting human who just so happened to have cursed blood running through his veins, and now that *vampire* was a *human* and this changed *everything*.

Frustration boiled under his skin. A familiar voice in the back of his mind reminded him that he had dedicated more than a decade of his life to this, the promise of being turned a constant lure dangling in front of his nose to keep him coming back again and again. The lure had drawn closer and closer, and he had finally had it within reach, had finally had ahold of it and had learned that the vampire on the other end was Nandor, *his* Nandor.

Now that lure had been ripped away entirely. And it was gone forever.

A stinging sensation behind his eyes just frustrated him more, and Guillermo turned around and barreled past Nandor out of the bathroom, ignoring his soft protest claiming that he wasn’t finished yet.

His eyes found the digital clock on the bedside table, small and black and flashing red numbers across the face announcing that it was six in the morning.

“It’s almost sunrise,” he muttered. “You should get to bed.”

Wordlessly, Guillermo started pinning up heavy, blackout curtains over the flimsy ones that came with the room, giving them a slight tug to ensure they wouldn’t fall down in the middle of the day. He tossed the blue JanSport filled with dirt underneath Nandor’s side of the bed, and finally hooked a “do not disturb” sign on the doorknob.

Nandor, who hadn’t said anything and who still wore an impenetrable expression, simply made his way to the bed and gracefully collapsed, spreading his limbs out like a starfish.

“You should rest, too, Guillermo,” he mumbled, eyes closed and sounding half-asleep already.

Guillermo didn't reply, but bit back a soft sob. He breathed deeply, pushing the sorrow down as far as he possibly could, until he was sure he wasn't about to make a fool of himself. He kicked off his shoes and crawled under the covers, careful not to disturb Nandor.

Guillermo tried desperately to ignore the throbbing pain in his neck that threatened to unravel everything he had been working for his whole life, but wasn't having much luck. With his face smushed into his pillow, he closed his eyes and tried to sleep.

Their travels continued on after that as if nothing had happened at all. Night came again, the two woke from their slumber, and Guillermo promptly packed their things and found their next train tickets so they could be on their way.

It was silent and tense at first—at least in Guillermo's opinion; he still couldn't tell what Nandor was thinking. The vampire seemed to be avoiding looking in his direction, and Guillermo wondered if it was the open wound still bruised and smeared with a little dried blood on his neck. He cleaned it up and covered it in a gauze bandage, and that seemed to do the trick. Nandor smiled at him and gestured to the door so they could go on their way.

They spent longer traveling through this area, stopping more frequently and taking detours at Nandor's insistence. It seemed like the closer they got to his homeland, the slower he wanted to travel. Guillermo let him take his time, but mostly because he didn't want it to end. He didn't know how it would end anymore, and he wasn't sure he wanted to admit reality just yet.

So he followed Nandor dutifully throughout the country of Iran, travelling to small cities he'd never heard of and listening to tales of long-dead and forgotten people who used to live there. Friends, foes, family, it didn't matter. Nandor could talk for hours about the people he knew and how they had spent their days long ago.

They toured ancient, run-down buildings that Nandor recognized—sometimes claiming to be the one who ran it down in the first place. When they found these places, Nandor would grab Guillermo around the middle and fly them up to the top so they could overlook the whole area and he could explain in detail all of his battle strategies.

They found local restaurants where Nandor insisted Guillermo sample everything on the menu just so he could describe the taste. From memory, Nandor sometimes tried to guess what the taste would be, and Guillermo would rate him by his accuracy. It was a silly game, but it took up time and seemed to entertain Nandor to no end.

At one point, they stumbled across an old, tattered grave etched with the name of one of his children. They spent a while there that night.

The nostalgia could only take up so much time, however. Eventually they made it to southwest Iran, over a week later than they had planned, and Nandor proudly announced that they were on his home soil of Al Quolanudar. They spent one night there taking in random sights and reliving Nandor's glory days.

The very next night, Nandor took him to the banks of the Tigris River.

A bitter taste lingered on Guillermo's tongue, but he tried to push it away and enjoy the night anyway. It had been amazing so far, and he continuously reminded himself of that. He'd seen so many new places, had so many good experiences on this journey. And it was ending the way they had planned it: Here on the banks of an ancient river, under the stars, side-by-side and weary from their long travels. There was just one giant wrench thrown into the plans that changed it a little bit.

So he wasn't ending this trip as a vampire. So he was *never* going to be a vampire. That was fine. Everything was fine. He was still here with Nandor, and the night was still young and beautiful. He could enjoy it for what it was.

Nandor removed his shoes and walked up to the river, seating himself at the edge and dipping his feet in. Guillermo followed him over and sat beside him, but kept his shoes on and his feet out of the freezing water. Vampire perks, he thought, watching Nandor wiggle his toes in the flowing stream.

"This place is beautiful, Nandor," Guillermo said quietly. And, truly, it was. The moonlight swathed the world around them in cold, still light. The stars filled the entire sky, reflecting across the water and twinkling like lights as the river rippled along. Trees along the banks danced softly and filled the air with a quiet, constant rustling like waves on a beach.

Nandor hummed beside him. As he moved his head to look up, a breath caught in Guillermo's throat. Nandor's face, bathed in the moonlight and surrounded by an endless array of stars, was worth the entire trip. He followed the planes of Nandor's profile, over the expanse of his nose, down the swells of his lips and over the thick hair of his beard, and thought it must feel the same as coasting lazily down the Tigris River.

They stayed like that for a while, taking in the sites and letting the night wash comfortably over them. Eventually, although he hated doing it more than usual, Guillermo looked at the time and knew he needed to bring the night to an end if they were to make it back to their hotel in time.

"We should go," Guillermo whispered, ignoring the knot in his throat. "Before it gets too close to sunrise."

Nandor just hummed again, staring at the sky like it was everything to him. Guillermo could see the stars reflected in his eyes.

"It is as beautiful as I remember," Nandor said, voice heavy with awe. "It has been so long since I have seen the stars from here." He splashed a foot on the water, sending out a ripple that was quickly swallowed by the flow of the river. "It smells the same."

Guillermo reached over and took his hand in his own, giving a small squeeze that was immediately reciprocated. Nandor's gaze finally left the sky and landed on Guillermo, though the wonder didn't leave his eyes.

"The sunrise here is even more breathtaking," he explained. "The sun is so bright it turns the sky red. I used to make my soldiers wait for the sun to rise after a good battle, just so I could tell them we made that happen." A familiar gleam in his eyes returned, but flickered out just

as quickly as it came. “I can’t remember when I last saw one,” Nandor continued, turning away again. “I can’t remember my last sunrise in Al Quolanudar.”

Guillermo frowned. He felt like he needed to do damage control before anything got too out of hand.

“I’m glad you got to see the stars again,” he said. “It was beautiful.” He moved to stand up, tugging Nandor along with him, but was gently pulled back down.

Nandor looked into his eyes, and suddenly Guillermo could read everything again. Nandor was happy. He was excited and relieved and at ease, seemingly for the first time since he’d met him.

“I want to see the sunrise again,” Nandor said, sounding so sure of himself that Guillermo almost didn’t register the words at first. When the words finally arranged themselves in his mind to make sense, he almost scoffed.

“You’ll die,” he explained, like he was explaining to a toddler why he couldn’t touch a hot stove. He tried to stand again, but Nandor pulled him back again, more insistently this time.

“I don’t have to,” Nandor replied, looking at him with a new intensity. When Guillermo clenched his teeth in frustration, Nandor lifted his hand to set it gently along his jaw. A cold thumb ran over his cheek. “My dear Guillermo,” he said quietly, tilting his head and looking almost amused. “You thought we would come here so I could give you the gift of eternal life.”

“Yeah,” Guillermo spat, pain lacing his voice, “that was the plan.” He wasn’t sure why Nandor was choosing now to be so cruel.

“It’s *you* who has the gift,” Nandor whispered. His hand traced down Guillermo’s face to land on his throat, fingers touching the spot where a bruise was still just barely painting the skin a sickly green and two identical marks were fading quickly away.

Guillermo wrenched himself away from the touch like he had been burned and looked at Nandor, searching his face for any trace of humor.

“Are you serious right now?” The moment the words left his mouth, he knew the answer. There were no hints in Nandor’s face that suggested anything but complete sincerity.

Still, the vampire nodded earnestly.

“I want to watch the sky turn with the morning sun,” Nandor said. “Right here, with you.”

Guillermo felt a lump forming in his throat and he was finding it harder and harder to breathe around it. When the tears came silently falling down his cheeks, Nandor didn’t react, like he had been expecting it.

None of this was how he had planned. He’d spent so much of his life picturing his future, sure that he would be turned into a vampire just like he had always dreamed. So much of

even these past few months were spent with that idea bouncing around in his head, filling him with a light, giddy feeling.

All of that had been ripped away just days ago.

But then he thought about the rest of his time over the past decade, and the one thing that remained constant was the man sitting beside him, who had promised the world and travelled it with him. Nandor had shown him everything he could ever dream of and more.

How could he refuse him a simple sunrise?

Guillermo wiped away his tears, allowed himself a few seconds to calm down, and looked at Nandor.

“Okay,” he said, nodding resolutely. “Yes.”

Nandor’s eyes grew wide, shining under the moonlight. “Really?” His voice was so quiet it was nearly swept away by the wind.

Guillermo lifted his chin slightly to give access to his throat. Nandor’s cold touch was there in an instant, settling on the side of his neck that hadn’t already been chewed on by a random vampire. His fingers ghosted over the space and he stared at it like he was looking at the most beautiful site in the world. Guillermo figured he must be imagining the sunrise.

Nandor leaned in.

“Thank you,” he whispered, the breath tickling Guillermo’s neck like frost in the winter.

Nandor’s lips, when they caressed the skin of his throat, were even colder than his hands. The cool touch was grounding, however, which was nice because he sort of felt like he was floating away.

Guillermo rested his hands on Nandor’s arms, holding tight to keep himself steady. He looked up at the stars and the moon and tried not to get too lost in them. Besides, the sky was fading from the deep black that it had been moments ago. If he looked down, over the trees in the distance, he could see an inkling of soft yellow hovering on the horizon.

Nandor’s fangs grazed his throat, and Guillermo’s heart stuttered in excitement. As teeth sank into his skin, gentler than he expected, he felt tears spring into his eyes once more.

He couldn’t wait to see the sunrise.

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