There are Stars in Your Eyes

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There are Stars in Your Eyes

by Metronome_I_Hear

Summary

Sawada Nana was always a bit off. (Therein lay the dangers of open eyes) Was it ever any surprise her son was too? (When everyone else was completely blind)

Tsuna has always been able to see things no one else could. This changes things. AU
Sweet little Sawada Nana, with her soft brown hair and her sad brown eyes. I heard she did something strange again today, did you hear it as well?

“There has always been something off with that one,” the people of Namimori whisper. Even before she took the name Sawada, even before she became who she was today, she always was an odd one--never quite there--but still so strangely observant.

(“Maybe she isn’t right in the head,” they said when they thought no other could hear. “Maybe something has taken root there, rotted away her thoughts until there was nothing but a strange empty shell left.”)

It shouldn’t have been a surprise, and indeed it wasn’t to all those who knew her, that Sawada Nana’s only son didn’t turn out quite right either.

…

“Did you know you have stars in your eyes?” A quiet voice spoke behind him. Kyoya turned, fingers twitching to reach for his tonfas, and looked to see who had spoken.

It was a tiny thing, a boy with fluffy brown hair that stuck up in every way and brown brown brown (orange) eyes. Those eyes seemed to stare at him--indeed, straight through him--and it left an odd feeling in Kyoya’s gut.

Nothing more than a tiny herbivore. Just two or three years younger than him, still so fragile in the face of the world. And yet, and yet--there was something about him that made Kyoya pause, something in those eyes that made Kyoya want to listen.

It wasn’t a feeling he was used to. He hardly spoke with anyone, and listened to even fewer. He hated humans (herbivores groveling, begging, pleading on the ground) crowding around him (too tight, too tight, too tight!) and closing in. They were weak, pathetic fools, breaking the laws of society as they pleased for their own ends. They didn’t understand what to do when a carnivore stood before them, couldn’t comprehend it, and for that he sought to teach them.

(Crack, bones broke with a satisfying crush. Ah, so sweet, such music too his ears)

People avoided him nowadays, even though he had yet to finish elementary school. Already people whispered his name with fear, already his reputation for viciousness had spread. There was even an organization forming in his name, made of herbivorous delinquents who had recognized his strength and vowed their loyalty to him. A disciplinary committee, they were, so Hibari Kyoya had decreed.

Few dared approach him these days, let alone one as young as this. How long had it been since someone approached him last?

How surprising, he mused, grey eyes taking in every detail of the boy before him. Such a small boy he was.

(Later, Kyoya would look back on that moment and laugh. Approaching him was hardly the most
“Herbivore,” Kyoya spoke, eyes narrowed, hackles raised. “What are you doing?”

The herbivore blinked at him, eyes wide, hands clasped behind his back. “Asking you a question,” he stated, as if it was obvious, as if anyone would walk up to him and ask him something as strange as what he had.

( “Did you know you have stars in your eyes?” )

He looked rather harmless, Kyoya thought, gaze settled on those smoky, distant eyes of his. Like a small fluffy animal, oblivious to the dangers of the world and staring foolishly out into the abyss.

( Or perhaps it was the abyss which had always followed young Tsunayoshi around, baring all its secrets before his mind )

“Herbivore,” Kyoya said, annoyance bubbling up from deep within.

“Yes?” Came the response, so simple, so innocent, like a small animal that didn’t know any better.

“Leave.” One chance, just one, and if the herbivore wouldn’t leave, Kyoya wouldn’t hold back.

Sawada Tsunayoshi smiled then, distant and strange, a smile full of secrets just out of reach. He nodded happily, seemingly satisfied, and turned to walk away. He walked and walked and walked with a sort of skip in his step, and for some reason, Kyoya couldn’t tear his gaze away.

“Watch out for the fox dancing on the back of a man, Hibari-san!” The herbivore threw one last call over his shoulder, a secretive smile stretched oh so wide, before disappearing around the bend.

Kyoya watched that corner for a moment longer, lingering for reasons unknown, before he dismissed the creature, dismissed the encounter, and went on with his day.

( A knife swung, narrowly missed, a slice across his chest, with red red red blood dripping to the ground. Revenge, the man’s eyes all but screamed, for the comrades Kyoya had felled. Kyoya cared not, and knocked him to the ground.

The body fell, a soft thud in his ears, and Kyoya paused upon seeing something he hadn’t quite expected.

The jacket the man wore had a picture of a fox dancing on it’s back )

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
The world, with all it’s vastness, with all it’s space, was full of color and color and color.

The world was beautiful and complex, intricate in it’s beauty. Sawada Tsunayoshi saw this, saw it more than anyone else. He saw the strange lights that flickered in shadows where light shouldn’t reach, the wisps of color that danced a swirling dance at his feet, the things floating around in the air like soap bubbles or Kitsune-bi, invisible to all eyes but his.

( And his mother’s. But that was beside the point )

It was a wondrous, awe inspiring thing. So beautiful--

( Sometimes it killed him, watching watching watching everything flicker by, the wheel ever turning, breaking building, the world’s movements telegraphed before him in neon signs, it blinded him so )

( There were other times, still, when he wished it would glow brighter )

…

Tsuna sat and waited, listening to the thrum of the energy in the air, the quiet chatter of the fae, the cacophony of noise his classmates carried, but never voiced. ( To none but him, who could see what lay beyond their fleshy masks ) There was something coming, someone coming, someone powerful and age old, like the spirits of the Other come to stand before him. He waited waited waited, and then, they came.

The door slammed open, purpose confidence poise pouring like a wave from the one who stood there. Songs crescendoed in Tsuna’s ears, a symphony of music like bloodlust and battle, like gunfire, smoke, and screams. The teacher froze, the room froze, and indeed the world seemed to still. The teacher’s eyes widened, fear coursing through their veins, like ice freezing their lungs until each breath was gasping and aching and slowing slowing slowing. He turned, as did the rest, to look at the door.

( It was he who stood there that froze them, that commanded their attention with but a glance )

Tsuna merely smiled at the black haired, grey eyed boy with galaxies in his irises, and the spirit of war settled like a morbid shawl across his shoulders. War grinned, a grin wide and full of teeth, and the spirits all seemed to shudder.

One step, then two, each one louder than the last, echoing like canonfire in the room. His eyes rolled over the students, rested on Tsuna, and Tsuna returned the gaze unflinching.

“Sawada Tsunayoshi,” Hibari Kyoya spoke, the name rolling off his tongue, steady, sure, and strong.

“Hibari-san,” Sawada Tsunayoshi greeted, standing from his seat. He walked ( unwavering, unyielding ) towards him, towards this incarnation of warring chaos and law.

The world shifted again, and Tsuna could feel it in his bones, in his being, like all the realms had
held a collective breath and released it just then. Hibari turned on his heel and walked away, confident Tsuna would follow. And so he did.

( *Fire licked at Hibari’s heels, climbing higher higher higher* )

They wandered ( *walking slowly quickly slowly quickly slowly quickly, run run run!* ) toward the room Hibari had commandeered for his base of operations. They went inside, into this room of dulled grey, decorated with ghosts ( *fragments of violence* ) that lingered here, settled here, had made this place their home.

( *They were soldiers, comforted so by the presence of a General* )

“Sit.”

A command, Tsuna thought, so casually spoken, so easily stated, by this Hibari Kyoya who stood before him, this boy who held so much power in his hands, clutched it, gripped it, and never let it go. Tsuna took a seat, his head bowed ( *Honor to the General, to this man hidden in a boy, this child surrounded by fire* ) and watched with the edges of his vision as Hibari took his seat across from him.

It seemed the world held it’s breath once more, the song coming to a strange sort of lull, like a temporary cease fire mid-war. Then, when so long had passed ( *an instant, an eternity, and infinity lost between* ), Hibari Kyoya spoke.

“Herbivore,” he said, something odd in those eyes, in those swirling galaxies, those sparkling stars.

“Yes?” Tsuna responded, raising his head and meeting Hibari’s gaze with his own.

( *How strange was it? The same words as before, the same simple phrases, spoken in such different places. The streets versus the office, home ground versus the front lines* )

“The fox dancing on the back of a man.” He sounded like he was puzzled by something, like a cat playing with a mouse not behaving as expected. His eyes were narrowed, his arms were crossed. The spirits growled, raged, and stirred, even as Hibari sat like ice. ( *A cold chill sinking into your bones, numbing your fingers, killing your toes* ) “Explain.”

Tsuna hummed and thought. How to explain, how to tell? How to try and make him comprehend? How to show him what he could not see, explain to him what could not be understood?

“The river--” Tsuna started, the words coming unbidden ( *like ghosts whispering in his ears, say this, say this!* ) “--flows in many directions, Hibari-san. To you who speak in tune with the symphony of Ares--” ( *Who had battle in their blood, violence in their veins* ) “--the river cannot be forced to flow what way others would have them run. So I spoke to warn you, lest they try to cage you.” For that would never have ended well.

Clouds simply weren’t meant to be chained.

Cold, it crept over his skin, like thin early winter frost. Everything stilled, like insects trapped in golden amber, and Tsuna held his tongue so as to not break the silence. Stars swirled in Hibari Kyoya’s eyes, dancing an endless dance. Tsuna watched them, fascinated to see the cogs of the universe as they turned and turned and turned.

( *It was beautiful. So many things were beautiful. It was such a shame no one else would watch it with him* )
“River?” Something like curiosity tainted the General’s tone.

“Hm hmm, the river.” Tsuna held his breath, his fingers curling in his lap. How would this meeting go? What decision would the General come to?

Then, a star burst within those grey eyes across from him, and Hibari Kyoya’s mouth twitched upwards into a smirk. “Hn.”
Tetsuya looked at his boss, at his friend, (the boy he was willing to do anything for) and wondered exactly how this could have come about.

There was something between amusement and bloodlust swirling in his eyes, deadly and calm. (Like a cat about to pounce) Standing there, with that gaze settled on him, Tetsuya couldn’t help but feel like prey trapped under the gaze of a much stronger predator.

But that was what Hibari Kyoya was, wasn’t he? (A predator, a Carnivore, a Lion on the prowl) Kyo-san had always craved violence, breathed it like none other that Tetsuya had ever known, even Kyo-san’s parents and family. He was a cut above the rest, and the only person Tetsuya had ever seen match him—even surpass him—was Kyo-san’s uncle, Fon.

(But Fon was another matter entirely. Tetsuya wasn’t even sure Fon was completely human. He made Tetsuya think back on those stories his grandmother used to tell—the ones about spirits that roamed the nights, tricking unsuspecting passers-by)

And yet—there was something different about him now. Like Kyo-san had been wearing skin too tight for him, like he was slightly off kilter, like something hadn’t been quite right. Now he seemed almost…settled.

“Look out for a wandering Frog,” Hibari Kyoya spoke, a pleased curl to his lips, a smirk dancing on his face. Sunlight streamed in from the window behind him, darkening his expression.

It wasn’t the first time Kyo-san had ever said anything strange, and Tetsuya doubted it would be the last, but it sounded distinctly like something Sawada Tsunayoshi would say. (Something half mad and crazed) Tetsuya knew that well enough, since Sawada Tsunayoshi had, against all odds, become the latest member of Hibari Kyoya’s pack. Before then, that pack had consisted solely of Tetsuya. No longer was that so.

No one, not even Tetsuya, who was Kyo-san’s right hand man, knew how that had come about. The only thing known was that Tsuna had been taken to the Disciplinary Committee's office by Kyo-san—who had shown up in the middle of Tsuna’s math class, and provided exactly zero explanation as to why he was taking Tsuna—and that by the end of it the two has somehow become friends.

Tetsuya had been out. There was a disciplinary committee mater that needed to be overseen personally by him, so he’d been supervising and delivering orders. He hadn’t returned until later in the afternoon, and he’d found Kyoya working on paperwork while Tsuna happily (quietly) chatted with something Tetsuya couldn’t see beside him.

He’d kept showing up after that. During breaks, in the morning, in the afternoon. They appeared so often together, though they rarely actually did much, that it became somewhat commonplace to see Kyo-san napping under a tree and spot Tsuna messing around in the branches above.

And now it seemed his boss was repeating things Tsuna had said to him.

Tetsuya wondered if madness was contagious.
They did find a wandering frog, later that week. The resulting fight had taken days to clean up after...

The street was quiet when he walked down it, baseball bag in one hand and school bag in the other. It was the street he always walked down to get home, one lines with larger, more sturdy trees that had been planted some years ago. He smiled (why are you smiling? There’s no one here) and hummed a soft tune, ignoring the ache in his chest at the thought of returning to home when his mother would no longer be there.

“If you keep running towards the fall, you’ll snap.”

Yamamoto Takeshi turned towards the source of the voice, eyes sharp. What he found made him pause. Sawada Tsunayoshi hung there, upside down, from the branch of one of the trees he’d been passing.

“Wha…?” Takeshi mumbled, off kilter, stunned. (What reason does he have? Why would he be here?)

“The fall,” Tsuna answered, as if Takeshi had asked a question, as if Takeshi wasn’t still reeling from finding a classmate hanging randomly from a tree. “You’re going rather fast, and the vines really aren’t helping.” Tsuna pouted, which looked rather strange upside down. “They’re quite mischievous, didn’t you know? The vines that are. They like to make people trip, and it’s never pretty when they manage it.”

(THEY were broken broken broken, shattered apart, snapped in two, and thrown about. Beaten, kicked, slaughtered, shaken--until naught but a stain could be found)

Takeshi blinked at Tsuna, for lack of any other reaction. What were you supposed to do in this situation? And what on earth did he mean by what he said? He wasn’t sure why this was happening to him, of all people. Here he was, heading home from baseball practice, when Hibari Kyoya’s only friend comes up behind him in a tree, and starts talking about vines of all things.

There really was no normal way to take any of this.

“Er…” Takeshi scrambled from something to say. He was usually better at this. “That’s nice?” Great. Wonderful. Truly original there, Takeshi. Your mother would be proud--

(“Great job Takeshi! I knew you could do it!” Laughter, bright and happy, brown eyes so alive and--they were gone now; dead and gone, trapped in a casket six feet below ground)

Tsuna beamed. It was a smile that lit up his whole face, even if his eye retained that strange smokey distance they always held. “Isn’t it?” He said happily. Then he paused, as if remembering something. (Noticing something unseen) “You should take off the paint, by the way. It doesn’t look very good, and eventually it’ll stain. No doubt the robins will like it better, too.”

Aaaaaand Takeshi still didn’t understand. He blinked at Tsuna, smile still plastered on his face. “I will?” he said, even if he wasn’t quite sure what paint Tsuna was talking about.

Tsuna nodded. He twisted upwards so he was sitting on the branch rather than hanging by his legs, and glanced back over his shoulder. “I have to go now. Storm clouds are coming, and I wanna see Hatter’s fight. They’re always entertaining, even if they don’t always make much sense.”

(Relality twisting, glitching, wavering--someone was yelling, shouting, screaming. Oh! It was him)
Then he promptly leapt off the branch, landing in a crouch, and walked away, humming a nonsensical tune as he went. Takeshi stared after him for a while, still not entirely sure what to make of the encounter, before dismissing it. It was Crazy Tsuna, after all, and Crazy Tsuna was Crazy.

He left.

( Several years later, when Yamamoto Takeshi stood on the roof of the middle school, one arm in a sling and his dreams lying broken on the ground, he would look back on the conversation and smile bitterly )

( Crazy Tsuna was right. He really should have stopped running and tried to wash off the paint )

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
Tsuna stood. He stood as cracks spread out across the ground (breaking the concrete) beneath him. He stood as the grass and flowers (chrysanthemums and marigolds) withered around him, the trees dying dying dying, all the life in the world vanishing into the darkness of the eternal abyss. Clouds, dark and ominous, (full of the promise of troubled times ahead) covered the entirety of the sky, blocking the sun from reaching the ground. Thunder rumbled in the distant, sudden and warning like a great beast’s growl.

(Quiet Quiet, the beast is coming! Prowling down the planes. His growl like thunder, his teeth like swords, he’ll chase you when you run)

Tsuna saw it all. He looked up and around him, at the people surrounding him, the soldiers, the civilians, the artisans, the farmers, the workers, the kings. He looked and he saw. The world was ending, and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

The screams of the dying rung in his ears. He breathed--desperate--and choked when foul, polluted (trapped in his throat, killing him) air was all that reached his lungs. He shook his head, his body shaking near uncontrollably.

(The end was nigh, the world but a drop away from falling into the river styx, from being claimed by Death’s deft hand. The world had been knocked on it’s axis, thrown, and--)

(Everyone was doomed)

Before him stood the General, stood Hibari Kyoya, stood Tsuna’s only friend, the Milky Way in his eyes glimmering with a grim sort of determination. Tsuna couldn’t bare it, couldn’t take it, couldn’t let it happen, even if it was inevitable. In the face of such odds, in the face of such a fate, Tsuna wished to do anything. (Even that which was normally inconceivable)

“You musn’t go!” he cried, though he knew it would do little good. Not with the General, not with this man hidden in a child, his boy surrounded by fire. “A guardian must never leave their subordinates to the wrath of the banshees! If you go they’ll be left to the mercy of the widows!”

(Sweet smelling smoke, with whispers of dark promise, “Welcome to my parlor, said the spider to the fly.” A wide smile like Yokos, like foxes, like tricks not yet played and just out of sight)

Kyoya nodded, his eyes narrowed as he listened to the words, hearing them like no one Tsuna had ever spoken to before. Tsuna was grateful for that--so, so grateful. He always smiled when people dismissed his warnings, but despite that he wished that people would look and see the world like he did for once. Even if it was just once and never again--he wished they would see it. He wished that they could look and see the way the Everything shined and it was all so beautiful and confusing and ugly and no one ever saw any of it.

Ares let out a cry and Kyoya came to a decision. Even before he spoke, Tsuna knew what would be said. He had known it from the beginning, and what Tsuna wanted to happen was inconceivable. More than that, he saw the way the fire at Kyoya’s feet flickered, dimming until they were but embers, drifting away from their birthplace and towards the apocalypse.

“It is the natural progression of things, Tsunayoshi.” The General’s voice was steady as the world
stilled to listen to his every breath. “It cannot be avoided.”

Tsuna hung his head. He could not argue with the decision, could not protest. (Not to this man. Not to the General. Never to the General who floated so freely, to this boy with stars in his eyes)

He could still wish, though. He could wish for another way, send a plea to the Realm of the Other, beg the courts for another fate. That Kyoya didn’t have to march off to war, didn’t have to follow the lines of trenches and breathe in the deadly, mustard gas creeping down the streets (clinging to all the broken broken broken glass). He could wish that Hibari didn’t have to watch the brave men get into their planes, to be the last person still on solid ground to see the Kamikaze before they flew to their deaths.

It was not possible. The fae would not listen, would not be kind. The waves of time do not stop just because one asks. The sun will always set no matter how much one wishes the hours would last.

(In the background, Kusakabe Tetsuya watched the exchange and sweatdropped at the dramatics)

(“It’s only graduation…”)

Hibari Kyoya graduated Namimori Elementary, and moved onward to the Middle School. The Elementary sighed with relief, and the Namimori Middle waited with terrified breath for Hibari’s reign to begin.

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
The Sound of Drums

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

*Da dum da dum da dum*

Tsuna wavered with the beat.

*Da dum da dum da dum*

A heart beat like drums, loud and clear it rung in his ears, and lights flashed. He was warm, very warm, and bright. Like summer sunlight burning in an oasis in the Sahara, a passionate flame that refused to go out no matter how much the wind blew.

( *But then Sasagawa Ryohei had always lived by the day, moving like a wildfire in a dry grass field* )

The general didn’t like the beat much. The drums sounded out of tune with the symphony that Hibari Kyoya sung too, the music far more suited for betting rings and wild parties. Tsuna liked it though, no matter how much Hibari growled and groaned whenever the drums came around.

“Hibari! Join the boxing club!”

“Herbivore, I’ll bite you to death!”

( *It was an argument often heard, ever since a young Sasagawa Ryohei was late to class and an equally young Hibari Kyoya found him running in* )

And next to Tsuna the lieutenant stood, back straight and exasperated. The general was ready for war, he had no time for the frivolities of chicken fights and bear baiting, be they noble or common. The lieutenant just wished the game of chase would stop. He had no wish to clean up more rubble, to scrub clean the bloodstained streets.

“Ne ne, Kusakabe-san.” Tsuna prompted the lieutenant when dandelions strung forth, blooming even where civilization met madness and the underground saw light.

“Yes Tsuna-san?” The lieutenant asked, breath like Morpheus. A crash sounded, interrupting the beat, but it quickly started again, louder than before.

“Join the boxing club!”

“No!”

“Don’t you just love music?” Tsuna smiled, still waving his head and tapping his feet to the beat.

*Da dum da dum da dum*

( *And Kusakabe Tetsuya looked down at Sawada Tsunayoshi and wondered if he was the only sane person present* )

( *He probably was, he silently cried* )
Sawada Nana looked up suddenly from where she stood in the kitchen of her house. The house stilled, usually so very busy and bright and bustling. It grew quiet and not a thing spoke, all shadows no longer writhing and lights all dimming and plants not growing. Sawada Nana breathed in, air from the world beyond, eyes widening as she saw it.

( Dark clouds, rumbling softly in the distance. It glowed the unnatural colors that signaled its purpose, so different from the natural storms )

"Oh dear," she murmured, wondering what to do. She pursed her lips and tilted her head to one side, watching the distance with smoky eyes not unlike her son's. "I guess I better sign Tsuna up for some self defense classes…"

( A great storm was brewing. Already ravens flew east and west, seeking shelter before the winds grew too high. Sins were gathering, one three five seven, and a cradle rocks softly. )

The summer neared its end as Sawada Nana watched the distance, pondering upon the matter of fire, children, and rainbows.

( Beware of the hurricane coming )

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
Take a step and breathe in, the colors of the world swirled at his feet and he listened to their screams as they whispered their every secret. It swirled up like a typhoon, a hurricane surrounding only him that only he could see. It flooded his senses and slithered down his throat, choking him until he couldn’t breathe.

Da dum da dum da dum

And the beat of the drums sang, speaking of heat and sand and summer days. It whirled around him, dragging him to his feet even as Amaterasu curled around Tsuna so snuggly, refusing to let go.

He felt rather faint.

(Today was not a good day to be outside, even as the trees had giggled and whispered about games and fun)

“LOOK OUUUUT!” The voice echoed by drums bellowed even as captive wolves ran past, chasing after the distant wilderness and the freedom that their ancestors had once relished in.

Tsuna blinked at them, suddenly not bothered by the way that the Everything seemed to swirl up against him, the way that Amaterasu seemed to smile so brightly that day. The wolves were running and the beat of the drums were chasing after them, after the leads that so dragged on the floor behind them.

“Onii-san! Hurry! They’re getting away!”

“Right! I’ll catch the dogs to the EXTREME!” And the drum beat speed up, steady and strong in it’s excitement.

Da dum da dum da dum

Tsuna paused to watch and a smile spread out across his face. Ahhh, and two suns ran through the streets after the wilderness, chasing after the tamed.

Sasagawa Kyoko slowed to a stop beside Tsuna, bending over to catch her breath, clearly having been running for quite a while. She wasn’t like Sasagawa Ryohei and Hibari Kyoya in that battle ran in her blood, that the world had taken notice of her talents and gifted her with the will to run and chase and hunt.

(But then again, there was a hint of something there, the faintest of whispers of chaos like that which followed Hibari Kyoya so closely, that Sasagawa Ryohei sought after so vigorously. Perhaps, she just hadn’t found it quite yet)

“Why are you running?” Tsuna questioned, watching her shadow curiously as it twisted at her feet, clinging to her soles and attempting to climb higher. Would she run into trouble? Chase after the wild as her brother did and get into danger? Tsuna didn’t know, all he knew was that something would happen, no matter how far away it seemed it would be before the waves came crashing to the shore.
Kyoko looked up, looking slightly startled at his question, “Huh? Oh… Well Onii-san and I were watching our neighbor's dogs and they managed to get loose… We need to get them back before they come home, or we’ll be in trouble.”

*(She didn’t really know why she was telling Crazy-Tsuna this, even as his fuzzy and blurry eyes seemed to sharpen ever so slightly when she spoke)*

“Oh. Well in that case you just need to go.”

“Go?”

Tsuna nodded, looking pleased with himself, “Go where the wolves like to wait, follow the trails where they used to run.”

“Trails?”

Kyoko looked hopelessly confused and Tsuna felt the urge to sigh. Instead he merely nodded again, “The trails. I can show you if you’d like.”

Sasagawa Kyoko looked hesitant to follow him, no doubt thinking upon his reputation and worrying about the brother who had long since disappeared over the horizon, but she eventually nodded, something strange in her eyes as that hint of chaos that hung around her (*only ever the slightest of hints*) seemed to grow and swirl and laugh.

So Tsuna took off, in the opposite direction that the wolves had ran. He went down an alleyway and wandered quickly through the paths, listening for the howls of the hunt and the wild. Kyoko followed behind him, looking ever the more confused and just a little bit frustrated when he took a rather strange path.

*(He climbed over walls where there had once been great stones and circled around poles where there had once stood a forest, a place for the powerful and the wild, where only gods and demons would roam)*

*(The great empire of the eastern gods had spread out far and wide, their members as terrible as they were great)*

Finally he reached the place of resting, where a hundred thousand years before had once lain a pool of water, the place where the wolves would no doubt wander if the way the earth seemed to speak was any indication.

*Da dum da dum da dum*

The beat of the drums became loud as the wolves ran closer, Sasagawa Ryohei on their heels and gaining. Tsuna merely whistled, high pitched like the hunters once did, and opened his arms. He caught one wolf turned tame by hundreds of years and human hands and Kyoko caught the other.

The chase was over.

“Ah! Sawada! What are you extremely doing here?!” Ryohei came to a stop before them, and Kyoko took the liberty to speak before Tsuna could.

“We ran past him earlier and he offered to help after I explained the situation.”

“I see! That was extremely kind of you Sawada!”
Tsuna smiled at them, holding out the tiny beast in his arms towards the one who claimed it as his charge for him to take, “Not a problem. I’m glad to chase the wolves any day. Running as spirits once did is always great fun!”

Ryohei blinked at him, an utterly lost look on his face, “I extremely don’t understand!”

“No problem! Most people don’t,” Tsuna told him.

The lost look did not abate, so Tsuna merely smiled again and started walking away, waving good bye to the siblings as he went.

(It really was great fun, though, and Tsuna was glad that he bore with the heat and the water. Chasing after wolves with the beat of drums at his back was something he’d gladly do again)

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
People watched with confused eyes as Sawada Tsunayoshi ran up to Hibari Kyoya and handed him an umbrella.

“Here! Mama said she heard the heavens are holding a funeral today, so I thought you should have this.”

Hibari Kyoya accepted it without a word and the middle-school students who were watching looked at them curiously.

(The skies were clear and no one had said anything about rain)

…

It was pouring.

Pouring down like it really shouldn’t have been, considering the forecast for clear sunny skies. The only person who had an umbrella was Crazy Tsuna, whom had apparently gone and given an umbrella to Hibari over at the Middle school and told him about the rain, if rumors were any indication. The rain left Mochida Kensuke in a bit of a bind. His house was quite a ways away and he needed to get home soon. Doing so in the rain was a pain, but he would have to make do.

(And shadows stirred, fae laughing at the movement within them. Something moved and moved, the sharp gleam of light on metal visible even in the pits)

“Mochida-san!

Tsuna ran up to him, his eyes holding an odd gleam to them, visible even through the smoke that always seemed to cloud them.

“What?” Kensuke couldn’t help but snap, far too irritated to deal with the madness that always seemed to follow Tsuna around. It was far too well known that Tsuna only ever spoke in riddles, and that trying to decipher what he was saying was a task delegated only to those who claimed Tsuna as a friend.

(A cloud drifted freely freely freely, drifting freely to and fro)

“I wouldn’t follow the village path. Walk the long walk instead. I don’t want to see a Samurai fall.”

Tsuna looked at him, the gleam ever brighter as he spoke. It seemed to Kensuke that Tsuna looked at him but saw past him, seeing what was real and what wasn’t all at once, lost in that world that only he seemed to be privy to.

“No,” Kensuke said, eyes narrowed as he showed how frustrated he was. He needed to go home soon and taking the long way home was suicide in this weather. And Samurai? What was that about?

(Tsuna watched as armor gleamed, sword by his side and hazes of what resembled scales shifting)
“Look,” Kensuke looked Tsuna straight in the eye, “I’m in a bit of a rush, so I don’t have time to
deal with your craziness. If you want to bother someone, go bother Hibari. He seems to like you.”

Tsuna looked disappointed for a moment, but it disappeared quickly, leaving Kensuke to wonder if
it hadn’t been his imagination. Kensuke turned and walked out from under the alcove and into the
rain, rushing forward as to get the long walk over with as soon as possible.

( It happened not long after and Mochida Kensuke really shouldn’t have been surprised. But he
walked home with a limp that day, cuts in his skin and bruises littering his limbs like tattoos,
vowing not to dismiss Tsuna’s warnings should he get them again )

( Who would have imagined he’d run into the Yakuza? )

…

Rain fell and fell and fell. Spirits scattered, leaving only the river dancers to dance down the
streets.

“Kyo-san?” Tsuna asked, eyes watching the way some of the meaner fae giggled and laughed,
gossiping about broken bones and blood running in streams.

“Hn?” The general looked over at Tsuna, galaxies swirling when the boy registered the melancholy
in his tone. They were walking, patrolling hunting prowling, and Tsuna usually stayed quiet during
these trips, leaving the Lieutenant to give the reports and fill the silence with something other than
screams.

“Thank you.”

( Thank you for listening. Thank you for understanding. Thank you for everything. )

Hibari Kyoya watched the child ( for that was all Tsuna was, really, a child who saw far far too
much ) with dimmed eyes. The fires flickering at his feet flared once, twice, then quieted again,
burning even in the heavy rain.

“Tsunayoshi. Stop worrying about the herbivores.”

Tsuna’s lips twitched upwards into a smile with no mirth, “Because they aren’t pack, right?”

“Hn.”

Tsuna shook his head, smoky eyes distant and sad, “I know.”

( He should know. He knew he knew he knew, but it killed him anyways )

Chapter End Notes
It seemed that the world was in a chatter when Tsuna woke to the sound of his mother calling in the morning. The wisps that hung around the ceiling fan seemed to be jumping about in excitement, the robin that had been following him around ever since his encounter with Yamamoto Takeshi was singing louder than it was before, and the spirit flowers that grew from his window, spreading outwards across the walls and clinging to the furniture, seemed to glow especially bright that morning.

Tsuna sat up in bed, still a bit dazed from the remnants of the dream he had last night. He couldn’t quite remember what it had been about, only that it had involved the color yellow and the scent of sweets.

( “Honestly! You’ll never get your work done if you keep eating all the cakes.” )

( “But they’re soo good! And paperwork is soo boring!” )

He yawned and stretched, eyes lingering briefly on a small spirit that had wandered through the walls. It squeaked when it noticed Tsuna watching, and disappeared onto the road Between. He got up and did his daily routine, lazily talking note that he had woken up a bit later than usual and ought to hurry up so that he wasn’t late to school. He was a middle school student now, after all, and that meant going to school with the General again and if there was one thing that the General did not tolerate, it was lateness.

So Tsuna hurried down the steps, waved good bye to his mother ( Even as she was chatting with a tiny fae, gossiping about whatever the trees fancied speaking of ) and headed off to school.

It was only as he entered the gates that he heard the first hints of it.

( The sound of rattling chains echoed softly )

…

When Reborn had been asked to tutor one Sawada Tsunayoshi to be the Tenth Generation Boss to Vongola, he had expected to be given a civilian boy with no knowledge of the Mafia to train up. He had expected a boy not unlike how Dino had been when Reborn had first gotten his hands on him, if not a bit more ignorant and naive than Dino had been due to the difference in upbringing.

Reborn had requested all the information Vongola and the CEDEF had on the boy so that he could have a starting point. Some of the information on the sheets made him raise a brow, but notes like his nickname of ‘Crazy-Tsuna’ and his acquaintance with a member of the Hibari family, who were known to be related to Fon and to have a distant relation to the first generation Vongola cloud guardian, did little to change his initial assessment of the boy. His main focus was on his grades, which were clearly dying a slow and painful death, and on the recorded personality of the boy.

“Generally outgoing, but bad at making friends. Easily distracted and has a habit of speaking in riddles. Sometimes seen speaking to nothing. Possible that Vongola Hyper Intuition is active.”

The first few notes were annoying, but workable. An outgoing kid would just mean that Reborn would have an easier time introducing guardians to the kid, even if the bad at making friends
portion of the notes might make it a bit more difficult to make the potential guardians stay. The
notes about speaking in riddles and the fact that the boy was easily distracted was, again,
annoying, but it wouldn’t be something that would be too difficult to beat out of the boy. Being
seen speaking to nothing was strange, but not too worrying. The last note about the Hyper Intuition
would do nothing but make Reborn’s job easier.

So really, Reborn took the next flight to Japan and arrived in Namimori thinking that this job
wouldn’t be all too difficult in the least.

( It wasn’t until he spoke with one Sawada Tsunayoshi that he changed his mind )

…

Tsuna took the flyer from his mother’s hands and gazed at the words written on the page.

“Will raise your kid to be the new leader of the Next Generation”

Tsuna read those words and felt a sense of strangeness, a disorder in the universe that settled over
his shoulders and whispered in his ears, telling tales of violence, blood, and bullets. Surely his
mother had heard it too? Ah, but there it was. Distant laughter, childlike and wild in nature,
burning with a bright orange flame.

This would certainly be interesting.

And then the world shifted. A grandfather clock chimed somewhere among the cogs of the
universe and the sound of chains rattling filled his ears. The sound of those chains had followed
him around the entire day, and no one had been able to answer him when he asked about them.

( The fae had done nothing but laugh when they were questioned )

Tsuna turned just as a child’s voice spoke up, echoed by the much deeper voice of an adult.

“Ciaossu.”

( “Chaos”, the shadowy figure spoke, smirk playing over his lips and fedora shadowing his eyes )

“I arrived 3 hours early but as a service, I’ll evaluate you now.”

( “I wonder if the reports I read are true, Crazy-Tsuna…” The shadowy figure said, eyes narrowed
and posture relaxed )

Tsuna looked and he saw, the chains that circled around the imposing figure of a man, tying that
burning spirit to the glowing yellow pacifier. They rattled and groaned even as the tiny form
bearing the pacifier seemed so relaxed, so casual in their greeting.

Tsuna had never seen anything like it.

( He blinked, staring off into the shadowy abyss, humming to songs celebrating dawn, the hour of
murder. Hear me and scream, little one. Scream scream scream it’s burning as brightly as the
closest star )

“That is a very old curse you’re under,” Tsuna spoke, eyes wide and words without thought, “Who
would have thought someone could chain the sun?”

The child froze, form stiffening.
“And what do you mean by that?” The child asked, recovering so quickly that the tenseness from before might as well have been a dream.

(“Intuition?” The shadowy figure murmured, perplexed)

“The pacifier of yours... How strong a curse that is, to be able to tame something as powerful as what is chained to it,” Tsuna told him, “You smell of smoke, did you know that? Of coffee and gunpowder.”

The child’s eyes narrowed (The shadowy figure started laughing) and he turned to Sawada Nana, who had stood still by their side. She, too, seemed fascinated by the figure chained to the pacifier, the man who echoed the child in adulthood, who all but screamed skill in darker arts.

“You are the mother that called me, correct?” The child asked. ( “The mother of the boy, hm?” The shadowy figure flickered) “May I speak to your son alone?”

Nana snapped out of her trance, coming too after getting lost in the world beyond. She smiled distantly and nodded, “Of course. Feel free to come and ask me any questions you might have.”

She left and the child and Tsuna were alone.

…

(“That is a very old curse you’re under”)

Those words seemed to echo in Reborn’s ears as Sawada Nana left the room. How could he have possibly known that? Upon first sight as well. This went beyond Hyper Intuition, beyond anything in the reports about Tsuna’s strange knowledge of things he shouldn’t know about.

Nevertheless, Reborn had a job to do.

He turned to Tsuna and stared straight into the boy’s eyes (They seemed to echo the sunset, as if someone had trapped the dying light of the world in amber and put them in the child’s eyes) “My true line of work is Assassination.”

A strange look passed over the boy’s face, visible even through the smoke that clouded Sawada Tsunayoshi’s vision.

“My real job is to make you a Mafia Boss.”

Reborn waited, half expecting some sort of reaction. (Laughter, maybe. Perhaps denial or delusion) He didn’t get any of that, though, as Tsunayoshi simply smiled gently and looked sad.

“Ah, so that’s why they were laughing,” Tsunayoshi sighed and shook his head, melancholy in his movements, “May I ask why?”

Reborn nodded and pulled out the suitcase he had brought. He took out the pictures of the three sons and placed them upon the table, as well as the family tree detailing Tsunayoshi’s relation to the Vongola Primo.

“Vongola was founded by a man named Giotto di Vongola. When he retired and passed Vongola onto his cousin, Ricardo, he moved to Japan and changed his name to Sawada Ieyasu. He was your great great great grandfather, thus giving you a right to the succession. Vongola Nono had three
sons, but all of them have died. Enrico was shot in a feud, Massimo was drowned, and Federico was found reduced to bones. That leaves you as the only candidate left.”

Tsunayoshi remained calm through the explanation, looking at the photos of the remains with a sad look, but not complaining. When Reborn finished, Tsunayoshi took a deep breath then nodded, another strange look passing over his face, “Alright. I understand.”

Then Tsunayoshi smiled, and Reborn’s breath caught as he felt Tsunayoshi’s flame for the first time since arriving.

( It was beautiful and accepting and open. It was just as strange as it was wonderful. Oddness tainted the edges, hinting at a path that lead to naught but madness )

“Do take care of me, Reborn,” Tsunayoshi bowed his head, that smile still playing on his lips, “I look forward to learning from you.”

Reborn nodded, then stood and headed out of the room. He needed to speak with the mother now, try to gather a little more information on Tsunayoshi’s strange ability.

( It was only after he had gone down the stairs that he realized it. )

( Reborn had never introduced himself. So how did Tsunayoshi know his name? )

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
Reborn hopped up from the floor and landed on the table. Nana paused from cleaning the kitchen and smiled at him, “Would you like something to drink?”

“Coffee, if you have it.” Reborn requested.

( “Espresso, maybe?”)

Nana nodded absently and went about making a cup, “What do you think of Tsu-kun?”

Reborn paused. “He’s… Strange. Does he always talk in riddles?”

Here Nana laughed. “Ah, Reborn-chan. But that's the thing… He doesn't speak in riddles. Everyone just assumes he does. You could say it's the curse of my line that we get accused of such.”

( It rotted away her brain until there was nothing but a strange shell of a woman left)

She finished making the cup and handed it to Reborn. Reborn took it gratefully and raised a brow at Nana’s statement, “Your line?”

Nana hummed and took a seat across from Reborn, “Yes. My line. We see things, you see. Always have. And sometimes we just get lost in it, because it’s so distracting.”

“Things?”

( The Everything and the Nothing. Stars as distant as the realm of the Gods, manifestations of things as familiar as love. It was Beautiful and it was Ugly. It was Chaotic and it was Orderly. It was the World in its essence, the Universe in its entirety)

Nana nodded, looking up at the ceiling and leaning back in her chair. She seemed to be watching something, something that wasn’t there.

“Behind you.” She spoke distantly distantly, “There is a shadow chained to the pacifier around your neck.”

Reborn’s eyes widened. ( The shadowy figure flickered, lowering it’s fedora and lips widening into a smirk)

“He’s tall and Italian, with dark spiky hair and onyx eyes. He’s dressed the same as you, suit, fedora, and all, and he’s smirking at me. He’s you, isn’t he? And he’s been chained down.” She sighed and it was a heavy thing, sinking to the floor like lead. “A sun that’s been blocked out from the sky.”

Reborn sat still as stone, letting the words run through his head. When his hands clutched the cup just a little bit tighter, he spoke again, “What else do you see?”

Nana smiled mysteriously, “Who’s to say? I certainly don’t know. Never have and I doubt I ever will. My mother could never figure it out either, and she could see much more clearly than I. Tsuna too…”)
She trailed off, eyes going distant again, and she seemed as if the world was lying heavily on her shoulders. “I suppose it’s a family thing, Reborn-chan.”

She stood again and left the room, leaving Reborn alone to contemplate what he heard.

…

The next morning arrived and Reborn still hadn’t gotten satisfactory answers. Questioning Sawada Nana ( “Call me Mama!” ) had lead to no answers. ( “I suppose it’s a family thing, Reborn-chan.” )

Tsunayoshi ( “Just call me Tsuna. No one ever calls me Tsuna! Do you know how annoying that is?” ) wasn’t being very forthcoming either. It seemed he didn’t know how to explain the ability, only that he could see things that no one else could.

( “It’s just the way I see things. Nothing more.” )

It was frustrating to say the least. Just about the only good thing about the situation was that Tsuna wasn’t fighting him when it came to training to become a mafia boss. No, Tsuna seemed resigned if anything else, as if he had expected something like this to happen to it, and wasn’t going to bother fighting it.

Reborn felt out of his depth.

( What he didn’t know was that it was only going to get worse )

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
Faerie Festivals

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was strange that day, the colors were especially bright. Even the sound of rattling chains could not disturb the air of the faerie’s midmorning festival. It was the eve of a day of games, the kind that left the poorer sort stumbling on the ground and moaning in pain.

Shadows withered at a girl’s feet, climbing their way past her ankles and up her legs, wrapping themselves around her throat like a rope dragging her to her death.

(They had done so before, but never so extreme. They marked her dying day, he supposed, and perhaps one day she would be wrapped in naught but shadow and would become lost among the nightly ways. Or perhaps she would come see them as he could. She would see them and take control of them, taming them to obey her whim. She would be immortal then, in spirit at least. Such a strange thing that would be)

“Danger is chasing at your heels today,” Sawada Tsunayoshi told Sasagawa Kyoko in the morning when he saw her. Tsuna saw her and he couldn’t help but stare. How could it be? Such danger that lay down the path the shades were dragging her towards, the path filled with a great many yokai’s tricks and troubles. And it seemed that those darker dwellers loved a samurai, the one who had once stood so very tall, the one who had ignored his warning just as all the other’s did, just a bit too much for Tsuna’s liking. “I would watch out for the samurai, lest he cut off your head.”

She paled at those words and looked nervous. Her grip on her bag shifted as she fiddled with her fingers.

“Do you mind if I walk to school with you?” She asked after a moment. The shadows shrank back as if struck and there was a pause in the laughter in the air, an apprehension that appeared among unseen creatures who sensed their game had a new player.

“Sure!” Tsuna chirped, “I’d love to walk with you, dear burning star. I do hope you don’t mind chaos, though. We’ll no doubt run into the General, and he doesn’t like people who don’t have battle in their blood all too much.”

(The shadowy figure who so followed the child around raised a brow at the nickname for the girl, “Burning star?” He asked, curious to the phrasing, “she’s a star?”)

“That’s fine,” Kyoko said, albeit a little nervously, “I’ll leave when he shows up if it’s too much trouble. I just…”

“It’s alright! I understand. There are none who do not fear death, not unless they have seen her and her companions.”

(It was then Kyoko wondered if she should have just kept walking. But she had seen truth in Tsuna’s warnings before, she had born witness to his ability to know what he shouldn’t be able too. She would believe him, if only because she wasn’t willing to take a chance)

(And if as she walked alongside the boy who seemed mad, she brought a hand to her throat, rubbing the phantom pain lingering there, then she chose not to think it was because she was scared)
Reborn had spent the morning observing Sawada Tsunayoshi and his actions. He seemed relatively normal on the surface, if not a bit absent minded. He had a tendency to stare at nothing, at blank spaces on the wall or on the ground, watching something Reborn now knew was there and just couldn’t be seen.

The comments Tsuna had given to Sasagawa were curious and Reborn wondered on their meaning. Stars? Samurai? Chaos? Reborn knew from the reports he had gotten that the General was a nickname Tsuna often used for Hibari Kyoya, but there had never been any mention of the other terms Tsuna had used.

(He was starting to wonder if he shouldn’t just start taking notes in an attempt to organize all the different phrases Sawada Tsunayoshi said. Perhaps doing so would make things a bit less confusing)

They walked to the school gates mostly in silence. Kyoko clearly had no knowledge of Reborn observing them, for he stayed hidden as to watch the situation play out without his interference, but Tsuna kept glancing in his direction, eyes flashing orange whenever he did so.

Reborn already knew he was shadowed by the figure of his past self, that there was a distinctive sound and smell following him around. It wasn’t surprising then that Sawada Tsunayoshi would be able to find him with relative ease given Reborn had no means to hide these tells from the boy. But the orange… That was interesting. Was it possible the blood of Vongola was somehow tied to the ability Tsuna had inherited from his mother?

(The ability to intuitively know everything granted by the Vongola Hyper Intuition and the ability to see things unseen that revealed hidden knowledge about the world… Those two abilities combining into one… What a terrifying thought)

The gates to the school were free from any perfects, the ones who often patrolled the gates to catch students running late and those with obvious breaks in dress code regulations. Tsuna didn’t seem surprised by this- instead his gaze seemed to linger on a boy who leaned against the gates. Reborn knew the boy to be Mochida Kensuke, captain of the kendo club and a known troublemaker at the school.

(He stood there with shadows in his eyes, the weight of a thousand worries settled on his back and across his shoulders a spirit lay restlessly, scratching at the dragon scale armor that he wore with long sharp claws)

Reborn watched dispassionately as Mochida stalked forward with a casual lazy smirk on his face the moment he saw the Sasagawa girl. He sauntered up to both his student and the girl (He seemed nervous about Tsuna. Was there a past between them? Or was it merely the result of Tsuna’s association with Hibari?) and spoke to the girl.

“Kyoko!” he called out, moving in close and setting his hand upon her shoulder, “Glad to see you here today. How about we hang out later?” The girl clearly looked uncomfortable about the closeness. Her hand, the same one that had rubbed her throat earlier, seemed to twitch as if to reach up and do something. Her expression pinched and she opened her mouth to say something, perhaps stop Mochida as he continued to insist they go on a date later in the day, when Tsuna spoke up.

“Mochida-san,” Tsuna had a strange expression in his eyes, almost glowing orange at this point, as he spoke. He put his hands behind his back and rolled back and forth on his feet, “A samurai shouldn’t be so callous when dealing with stars.”
Mochida flinched.

(Oh? So there is indeed a history between them. Did it involve Hibari? No it seemed the fear was aimed at Tsuna, based off the subtle angling of Mochida’s body away from Tsuna. He moved away, twisting just a bit so his back was not exposed to Tsuna. Why? Just what had happened?)

He recovered, something flashing in his eyes. (Laughter? It carried on the wind, cheering and urging Mochida forth. Tsuna watched the poor samurai, so deeply entrenched in the faerie’s influence as he seemed to be) He glared at Tsuna, grinding his teeth and stiffening his shoulders, “Oh yeah? And how do you know that? Why are you even walking with Kyoko, anyways? The only person who likes you is Hibari.”

“Mochida!” Kyoko exclaimed, “That was uncalled for! I was the one who asked him to walk with me!”

“You did, didn’t you? And why did you do that?” Mochida snapped. There was something jerky in his movements, as if a cloud had settled over his mind and was causing him to act out. Reborn narrowed his eyes as he watched the scene play out. Obviously, Mochida wasn’t thinking straight. Was it a mist user affecting him? But that didn’t make sense. There shouldn’t have been anyone who knew about Tsuna yet. An idiot Iemitsu may be, but he was excellent at his job and protecting his family had always been one of his top priorities. Few people outside of the CEDEF’s inner circle and the top brass among Vongola even knew Iemitsu was married.

(Why am I acting this way? Mochida thought through the haze that had settled over his mind. Hibari’s going to kill me for this.)

Mochida turned to Tsuna, something feral in the way he looked at the boy, “You! You’re trying to steal her from me, aren’t you? I challenge you to a kendo match! The winner gets to keep Kyoko!”

Tsuna sighed, looking as if the weight of the world rested on his back. His eyes drifted to Mochida’s shoulders (Is there something there?) and he frowned, looking resigned.

“Okay.”

(Hibari quietly gazed down at the scene from where he watched at the window of the room he had claimed as his office. What was Tsunayoshi doing now?)

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
Bonfires

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tsunayoshi stood across from Kyoya, his eyes distant and clouded more so than they usually were. They watched something, tracing invisible strings and Kyoya absently wondered what it was the small animal saw.

("What do you see?" Kyoya asked one day)

(Tsunayoshi looked at Kyoya and smiled, “I see the world.”)

How many years had it been since Kyoya had welcomed Tsunayoshi into his pack? How many years since the day Tsunayoshi had first approached him, words of dancing foxes and war generals on his lips? He always spoke of the world with such reverence; about twisting light showers and creatures the like of which Kyoya had never seen. This world--an entire reality that Tsunayoshi saw that no one else did--sounded wild and free. Untamable and wondrous. There were times when Kyoya wished he could see it--that he could watch the lights and shadows that always captured Tsunayoshi’s attention like nothing else could, that he could see the movements of age old gods and demons as they danced across the land, causing chaos with every step they made.

Kyoya had long since resigned himself to only being able to see the mundane world. The world of the metaphysical was something that he would only ever be able to hear about through what Tsunayoshi told him. Tsunayoshi loved to tell him about it, to whisper about beings beyond mortal comprehension and to chatter about flashes of a twisted sort of time that only really made sense to Tsunayoshi. There was no sense in dwelling on what could not be when only the small animal and his mother seemed to have the ability to see.

There were other things to worry about.

(He could taste iron in his mouth. His hair was plastered to his forehead, glued there with the lifeblood of the people he cut down. His breath came quickly and he felt light--like he was full of air and could fly where ever he wished should he choose to spread his wings and take flight. But something chained him down, an impossible weight that gripped at his legs and held him to the earth)

(The weights felt like corpses)

“The herbivore challenged you.” His own voice sounded flat to his ears. Kyoya leaned back on the desk behind him, relaxed and confident in his own den. No one would dare challenge him here and his only company was a member of his pack. Tsunayoshi would allow him to unwind as much as he wished and would never see such as a weakness, the kind that Kyoya detested. No, Tsunayoshi had always respected and understood Kyoya in a way that not even Tetsuya, who he had known for almost as long as he could remember, could claim. It was one of the reasons why Kyoya trusted the small animal as much as he did.

However, as he watched the way that Tsunayoshi sighed softly with his eyes glazed over, he couldn’t help but think that he shouldn’t be relaxing here but should instead sharpening his claws and baring his fangs at the herbivore who challenged what was his.

(Crimson blossomed. Dark and bloody, it dripped down his face and bubbled up in his mouth. All
of a sudden, it was drowning him and he couldn’t breathe. It swallowed him whole and he couldn’t see anything. It slid down his throat, thick like sludge, clawing its way inside him and he couldn’t breathe he was drowning and dying and disappearing and--

(Tsunayoshi was there, smiling at him with a hand outstretched. “Sorry I’m late, Kyo-san.” )

Kyoya frowned, eyes narrowing. He knew Tsunayoshi. He had known him for several years. There wasn’t another person alive who understood the small animal as well as he did. Tsunayoshi was one of the few he dared call pack. So if some herbivore who didn’t understand his place in the hierarchy of Namimori threatened him, then Kyoya wouldn’t hesitate to strike them down and make an example of them.

The only thing that stopped him was the look in Tsunayoshi’s eyes.

(Kyoya had nightmares sometimes. Kyoya felt weak in them, and oh so strong all the same. They were dark and confusing. They reminded him of his strength. They whispered to him that he was a monster, that he wasn’t human, that he was something else. They murmured in his ears fondly, speaking words about all the death he could cause, all the ways he could kill a person. Kyoya hated them for that)

“It’s not his fault. Faeries are nasty things sometimes. I don’t know why they’ve taken such a liking to him, but they have. Kyo-san, please don’t go after him. I want to stop them and I can’t do that if you strike him down first.”

(Tsunayoshi always seemed to know when he had them, because whenever he did he always woke to the sight of sunset orange eyes)

Tsunayoshi tilted his head to one side, his expression forlorn and distant. Kyoya didn’t like it when Tsunayoshi wore an expression like that. It meant that his bleeding heart was coming out the play and the small animal always got burned when it did.

“Hn.” Kyoya resigned himself to watching his play out. The small animal could protect himself when it came down to it. Of that, Kyoya had made certain. He then smirked to himself, his eyes trailing Tsunayoshi as he left the den, thinking that if the herbivore got out of hand, Kyoya would gladly step in and bite him to death.

Until then, he would wait and see.

(They couldn’t see it, nor could they hear it, but war lingered on the horizon. Ares raised his head and smiled--gruesome, grimly, teeth sharp and dripping blood. Sheep were lined up for slaughter, and a wolf gladly stalked closer to them, fangs sharp and claws sharper)

Kyoya stepped away from the desk and walked after Tsunayoshi. The few people that were in the halls scattered when they saw the pair, and Kyoya felt a sense of satisfaction that they did so. These herbivores, at least, knew their place. The walk to the gym where the fight was taking place was quiet bar the sound of their shoes on the floor. Once they were near the gym, the sound of chatter filled his ears and Kyoya resisted the urge to bite the crowding herbivores to death. They would be allowed to gather--for now.

(No one would get away)

Tsunayoshi entered the gym and Kyoya lingered near the door, suppressing his presence as to not panic the herbivores near the back and disrupt the challenge. If Tsunayoshi wished to fight uninterrupted, then fight uninterrupted he would.
“You!” The herbivore roared, pointing his shinai at Tsunayoshi. The herbivore’s eyes were narrowed and his mouth was drawn out into a snarl—a pale imitation of a carnivore’s smile. The herbivore seemed haggard to Kyoya, as if the herbivore was under a great deal of stress. It must be the influence of the fae, Kyoya concluded despite not being able to see them. He trusted Tsunayoshi’s word and if Tsunayoshi said that the Faeries were playing games with this herbivore then Kyoya chose to believe that such was the truth.

( The samurai’s skin was stained and covered in tiny scratches, the creature stretched lazily across his shoulders not having treated the man well at all. His armor—samurai armor made from interlocking scales of a dragon slain by some distant knight in far off western lands, so different from the wise beasts who favored drifting about Asia—bore many scratches as well and his sword was nowhere to be seen )

( It was too bad. Tsuna had liked that sword )

“You scum!” The herbivore continued, “Finally decided to show up? Fine! Allow me to explain the rules of the challenge! The first person to score Ippon on the other wins. The prize… is Kyoko!”

The herbivore smirked, seemingly proud of himself, and pointed dramatically at the female herbivore that Tsunayoshi had walked to school with earlier that day. Sasagawa Kyoko her name was. She was the younger sibling of the loud herbivore who constantly came to annoy him. Kyoya remembered Tsunayoshi mentioning once that she had potential—that chaos followed her wherever she went. It made Kyoya wonder what the girl would become.

Tsunayoshi seemed resigned as the herbivore instructed the members of the Kendo Club to bring out the Kendo Club equipment. They carried a shinai and some protective gear. It seemed heavier than normal—weighted versions of the original. Kyoya narrowed his eyes, but stayed where he stood. He had promised not to interfere, so Kyoya would let Tsunayoshi do what he would.

“May I have a different shinai?” Tsunayoshi asked, clasping his hands behind his back, “The one you’ve brought seems to be broken.”

The herbivore flinched minutely, and Kyoya got a small sense of satisfaction that the herbivore hadn’t forgotten his place entirely. He seemed to be at least slightly aware that what he was doing was stepping out of line. No matter, though. It wouldn’t make his punishment after this any lighter.

The herbivore grumbled, but allowed it. A different shinai was brought out—a normal one this time. Tsunayoshi picked it up and held it gingerly. He then walked out in front of the herbivore without bothering with the armor. Smart. It would only slow Tsunayoshi down with how heavy it was. It would serve no purpose other than a restriction.

“Haha! You fool! Only an idiot would walk to a challenge without armor on!”

Tsunayoshi smiled softly even as the herbivore and those surrounding him laughed. “Perhaps,” Tsunayoshi said, “But I’ve been told many a times that I’m a fool. And I say it’s better to be a fool than to be dead.”

The herbivore flinched again, but recovered quickly. He growled and lunged forward, bringing his shinai up to attack Tsunayoshi. Tsunayoshi ducked out of the way, dodging to the side. The match continued in much the same manner, with Mochida attacking and Tsunayoshi dodging without making any move to attack him.

“Stop! Dodging!” The herbivore growled, twisting around to face Tsunayoshi when Tsunayoshi
managed to get behind him.

Tsunayoshi hummed and ducked under another swipe. As the match went onwards and the crowd watched with bated breath, Mochida’s movements got rougher and sharper. His swings grew wider and wilder. Tsunayoshi remained calm.

(“Now?” A shadowy figure asked it’s companion as Reborn prepared the sniper rifle)

(Now, Reborn thought to himself as he shot the Dying Will Bullet at his strange student)

Tsunayoshi jerked as if struck and looked up to a place in the rafters. “No!” He called, only for a shot to ring out across the room. Tsunayoshi jerked once more and then froze, unmoving.

Fire. Orange fire blossomed at his forehead and spread, catching on his hair and clothing and spreading along his skin. It didn’t burn him--no, instead it flared around him like a bonfire on a warm summer night.

(Fire fire fire --and he couldn’t breath the Everything swirled up against him he couldn’t hear the Songs of the world deafened him. He saw Everything he saw Nothing he was Everyone he was No one . The world was at his fingertips--every connection plain to see. Crisscrossing strings stretched and tore and knotted. Fate smiling cruelly at him. Laughter echoed in the loudest silence he had ever experienced it killed him help please)

(“Shhh,” a voice whispered in his ear. It was familiar, where had he heard it before? It reminded him of the color yellow and the smell of sweets)

Then it disappeared, the fire burning out as quickly as it came. Mochida gained an Ippon and Tsuna fell to the ground unconscious. The referee raised a flag in the herbivore’s favor and the crowd cheered.

Kyoya growled and stalked forward.

“Herbivore.”

The crowd went silent.

“I’ll bite you to death.”

…

Tsunayoshi stood on top of an ocean. It stretched out as far as he could see. Clouds drifted slowly above him, calm and soothing. They made him feel at peace. Underneath his feet was a symbol--one that he was unfamiliar with. Across from him stood a man.

The man was tall and looked to be somewhere in his late 20s or early 30s. His hair was blond and his facial features seemed foreign. They reminded him a bit of the way Reborn’s shadowy self appeared to him, only softer. Kinder. He wore a pinstripe suit and a black mantle over that, various trinkets decorating it. On his forehead was a flame, orange in color and flickering in a non existent wind.

“Who are you?” Tsuna questioned, a strange sense of calm still settling over his senses. It was strange. He couldn’t see all the things he normally could. There were no lights, shadows, or strings. No small creatures scrambling for the road Between nor flying fish drifting passed his head.

“Where are we?”
The blond man smiled softly and opened his mouth. He said something, but Tsuna couldn’t hear the words that were being said.

“What?” Tsuna spoke, feeling confused, “I didn’t hear you!”

The man repeated what he said before, but still the words don’t reach him. Instead the world started to tear itself away. Tsuna felt himself being yanked back and he protested the actions of the invisible hands pulling him away. “Wait!” Tsuna called, “Not yet!”

But the world disappeared and was replaced with black.

“Tsunayoshi?”

Tsuna opened his eyes to find himself lying in a bed in the nurse’s office. The General sat next to him, concern in his eyes.

“Kyo-san?” Tsuna murmured.

“What happened, Tsunayoshi?” Kyoya asked and Tsuna isn’t sure how to respond. Instead he turned his head away from the General to look out the window. The sky beyond the glass is filled with clouds, just like in the dream.

Tsuna smiled and looked back at Kyoya, “Kyo-san? I’m really glad the sky has clouds in it. Did you know that?”

The General stayed silent as stars swirled within his irises. Ares shifted on his shoulders and Tsuna wondered what has the being so restless. But instead of questioning Tsuna further, the General stood and walked towards the door, fire flaring at his feet. Just before he left, Kyoya paused and looked back.

“Your training will have to be stepped up if a herbivore can beat you.”

Then he left and Tsuna was alone again.

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
Reborn was confused.

The opportunity had been perfect. Tsuna seemed to like the Sasagawa girl, so naturally he would be inclined to help her. Not only that, but he seemed to be determined to help Mochida with his Faerie problem.

There should have been no issues. He should have gone into Dying Will Mode and defeated Mochida. But he hadn’t. Why?

Reborn frowned and observed Tsuna. He was out cold on the bed in his room, dead to the world and lost in a realm of dreams. He seemed so normal when he was asleep--no smoke in his eyes, no strange riddles, no anything.

It was disconcerting.

Why hadn’t the Dying Will Bullet worked the way it was supposed to? And the amount of fire that had appeared in response to the bullet… It was staggering. There was so much of it, much more than Tsuna should have been able to produce, especially considering the seal on Tsuna’s flames.

( Pure orange flame roaring soaring pouring into the air around him--beautiful, it sang sweet words yet unsung )

A shiver went down Reborn’s spine. Something felt wrong about everything, like he was yet again missing something crucial. It hung in the air around him, like shadows moving in the corner of his eyes only to still the moment he actually looked. It was frustrating--and potentially dangerous.

Reborn had his suspicions about Tsuna’s and Nana’s abilities. There was a possibility that the ability interacted with flames and that was the reason why the Dying Will Bullet didn’t work as it was supposed to. What would happen if he shot Tsuna again? Would there be yet another bonfire? Was it a fluke? Were there other factors at play here?

Reborn grimaced when Tsuna twisted in bed, letting out a small sound of discontentment in his slumber. Reborn needed to figure everything out, and soon. Otherwise things would get complicated very fast.

This required further testing.

…

Tsuna stood before a doorway.

( It was one that he had seen before, though he remembered no such scene. It was the door to everything, the door to nothing, the entrance to the Hall of Stars )

Vera the Star Gazer ( The Truth Seer, the Birth Mother, and the Guardian of the Doors ) bowed their head and turned, the door ( gateway ) opening with a single touch of long, spindly fingers glittering indigo ( distant space ) and violet ( like stardust shimmering ). Their form twisted as the doors opened, the blackness ( nothingness ) of the world around them splintering in the face of the
The essence of the world.

(Mother’s womb, warm and safe safe safe, the endless vast expanse of stars stretching farther than the universe may comprehend)

Light streamed through the opened gates (A grand door, wide and made with fine dark wood sprouting fairy blossoms glowing in darkened light—water did so flow through the life blood veins of the entrance to the birthplace of the World and Life and Death) and blinded Tsuna, whose physical eyes could not (would not) see the swirling galaxies of the Other.

It cleared, Vera the Star Gazer having vanished and the Hall of Stars nowhere to be seen. Instead Tsuna stood on the edge of a cliff, thunder rumbling and clouds swirling, rain falling and a storm rising.

It (a great lion, head of their pride) roared around him, lightning flashing (Thor was rebelling) and water crashing (Poseidon was raging) into the ocean below. The beat of (war) drums sounding (screaming) in time with the storm. They raged as if the very sky (Past and Future, two of the three) itself had been wronged, had been slighted in the worst possible way.

Tsuna fell to his knees—he could not stand (Defying the king) in the face of such power (Madness: it demanded he kneel) for he was (Im-) mortal unlike the faceless (Terrifying) majesty before him.

He closed his eyes (still he saw) and raged with the storm (hurricane rising), swept up in the ocean currents and tossed about without any rhyme or reason. And then, with the distant chiming of bells, (Death? Be that thou with thine paper lanterns and stone step paths?) it stopped. He heard the flapping of wings (softly, near silent) and opened his eyes to see a face decorated with feathers.

(They grew just under his eyes, framing his unique features and emphasizing the flowers crawling across his limbs)

The man smiled and fell backwards, diving into a pool (great lake) of nothingness, and an angel flying above cried, the crimson tears falling down their face.

Madness (The Monarch) swirled in the distance, anger coiling and swirling, digging deeper. It shuddered. Bonfires flared up around him, glowing a sickly shade of orange and red. Chaos called out (Skylarks answered, War Generals coming to call) and the gods (the Courts, stilling stirring staggering at the word of their heads) all screamed at the injustice.

“Tsuna,” someone whispered in his ears, distant like the voice of reason. (Reason? There is no reason, only Chaos and Order and Madness and Balance and Grief and Death and--) It was familiar, he had heard it before.

(“Stop!” He cried, “Don’t!”)

He opened his eyes (When had he closed them?) and for just a moment he saw a man with blond hair.

(He faded quickly—the color yellow and the smell of sweets vanishing—as if he had never been there. The Past was a tricky thing, even as they were loyal and brave. It was no wonder they ran at first morning light)

“Tsu-kun?” his mother questioned. Tsuna lay in his bed in his room and she gazed down at him with a worried expression. “Are you alright?”
Tsuna blinked at her, the dream fading with every second slipping by, before smiling. “I’m okay.”

Nana looked at him, considering, before nodding and accepting his answer. She smiled at him sweetly and commented, “You would do best to get up. The Fae have been chattering quite a bit recently, and not just about the Samurai. It seems something has incensed the powerful beings, and the Council is being made to call.”

Tsuna nodded, having heard it too. “The Council of Twelve... The powerful entities from the Realm of the Other...”

Nana sighed and frowned. “Do be careful, Tsu-kun. Trouble is coming if the Council is being made to call. Things will be getting dangerous in the world of the unseen.”

Tsuna sighed, leaning his head back to look at the robin fluttering about the ceiling of his bedroom. He gave his agreement. (“I will. I always am.”)

Things would be more than just ‘dangerous’ if the Council was being called.

(Ah, to be alive)

(What a terrifying state of being)

Chapter End Notes
A pool of water stretched before him. (*Infinite, grand*) A soft blue light echoed from beneath the still waters and the rest of the land lay dark.

“Ah.” He breathed out the air of the world beyond the edge, eyes opening and spirit wavering. “A storm is coming.”

It was true, though not in the strictest sense. A storm rumbled beneath the skin of a boy and clouds gathered on the distant horizon, winds stirring the fury of the Beings from Beyond. It swirled and sped up, preparing for the greatest show. Be it the courts clattering about a council having been called? But it had not happened yet (*had it?*) and it would not happen yet (*would it?*) so it must be something else.

*Not yet, not yet.* It whispered in Tsuna’s ears. *Be patient, be patient.*

His mother had spoken of something she had seen so long ago. She had warned him of ravens flocking, of fire flaring, of sins gathering.

(*Was that what was coming?*)

A storm hovered on the horizon, the air crackled with electricity. Something was burning in the background and Tsuna had never felt more alive.

...

Sawada Tsunayoshi woke, eyes burning sunset gold, liquid fire pooling in his eyes. Something hovered just on the edge of his vision--blond hair, the smell of sweets, and a distant smile.

...

The Skinwalker had looked at him strangely when Tsuna told him a storm was coming, that a hurricane hovered just over the horizon. The shadowy figure following the Skinwalker had started laughing oh, so hard.

(*“Does he know?” Reborn murmured to himself when he was certain Tsuna could not hear him. “How can he know? How far does this ability extend?”*)

Tsuna had watched and dismissed it, well aware that the shadowy figure often seemed amused by the Skinwalker. It seemed to enjoy knowing more than its smaller counterpart.

The walk to school was peaceful. Reborn remained quiet (*the shadowy figure snickered*) and none bothered Tsuna as he walked to meet the General at the gates.

Morning greetings were exchanged, as was Tsuna’s warning. “A hurricane is coming. There may be a bit of trouble when the winds blow through.”

Hibari Kyoya nodded and accepted the warning, then allowed Tsuna to walk past. The journey to the classroom was made, and Tsuna took his seat near the back of the class.

(*He could hear music. Piano, drifting distantly towards his ears from some place beyond his*
Class began with the greetings of their first teacher of the day. Then the door was opened to allow a boy (Musician) to walk right in.

He stopped at the front of the classroom, scowling and growling and bleeding from a crown of wire. It wrapped around his head, slicing into his flesh, and made his face bleed crimson. The wire wrapped around his limbs, constricting his movements and tearing into his flesh. Rivulets of blood ran down his limbs and stained his clothing. His skin was blotchy. There was ill purple decorating his body like macabre art. Slowly but surely it spread across him and Tsuna was certain that the illness was to be his death.

(The music crooned softly to the boy, reaching out and whispering, “I love you.” Tsuna wondered if the Musician--for what else could the boy be?--could hear it too)

“Poor Musician,” Tsuna murmured to himself. “Poor, poor ill Musician slowly losing his life.”

“We have a new transfer student who was studying overseas in Italy. Class, meet Gokudera Hayato.”

The Musician scowled and growled and stalked over to Tsuna’s seat. He kicked the desk, forcing Tsuna to his feet. Eyes wide, their gazes met, and the sickness (purple, blotchy, ill) claimed another victory on Gokudera Hayato’s skin.

(Whispers broke out among the students, some preparing a period of mourning. “Hibari-san’s going to kill him,” they said to one another. “Hibari-san’s going to kill him.”)

Gokudera stalked over to his seat, the words of the people around him rolling off his psyche like water off a duck’s feathers. He sat and turned to the front of the class, eyes dark and rivulets of blood drawing evermore lines down his face.

Class was long and tedious and many a time, Tsuna got distracted. The robins always fluttering about Yamamoto Takeshi (the Robin Keeper) flew about rather nervously, twittering soft little songs. The sound of chains (the Skinwalker--the shadowy figure) echoed in the background. There were sparks--fireworks setting themselves off and dancing through the air, twisting and turning in an elaborate dance. Lights, shadows, strings, and music. Crashing, bashing, lashing, laughing, and so much more.

(It clamored around him)

One world think he would be used to the chaos that came with gathering many people in a room, but even still it sought his attention and stole it away with the softest of whispers.

(Lowly, there rumbled a deep voice drawn from the earth. Rumors, the monsters gathered and changed and someone was speaking of--an angel?)

The bell tolled and the students were set free. Gokudera Hayato made his way out of the room, the movements staining his clothing all the more red. Tsuna followed him (Why do you warn him? Will he even listen? How will it help? What difference will it make?) and found him waiting behind the school.

“Gokudera-san?” Tsuna prompted, resisting the urge to reach out and pluck the crown of piano wire from the Musician’s head. He wanted to warn him, wanted to tell him about the crown of wire that was hurting him so, about the illness slowly claiming his life. I just want to help, he thought.
“I won’t accept it,” Gokudera snapped at Tsuna, eyes narrowed and hands twitching to reach for a weapon.

(A fighter? A killer? No--A survivor, not a soldier. None of the Musician was suited to a seat under Hibari Kyoya’s command, under the influence of the General. That movement was one of a caged cat who wished to be free, who despised being locked inside)

“I won’t accept someone like you—” Gokudera’s eyes darkened with an unnamable emotion. (Desperation? Fear? What sort of being hovered behind those eyes? Why would he think this to be his end? Was the reach of Vongola—something laughed, fire flaring, mantle shifting in an unseen wind—truly so great?) “-for Decimo of Vongola. You aren’t worthy of the title!”

“Did the Skinwalker tell you this?” Tsuna asked, only to pause at the confused look on Gokudera Hayato’s face. Oh, Tsuna realized. I haven’t told anyone of that name, yet, have I?

“Reborn,” Tsuna called and the chains rattled when the Skinwalker settled on his shoulder. “These are your actions?”

“Yes.” In the corner of his eyes, Tsuna saw Reborn lower his fedora to shadow his eyes. There glinted something in the depths. A test? (Something echoed—it always echoed—gunfire and explosions. This was war in the early stages, this was an experiment only just begun. Sharp eyes, a smirk and a shadowy figure watched with interest) “This is Gokudera Hayato, also known as Smokin’ Bomb Hayato.” (Piano, distant melody overlapping a song of murder. Someone was crying. Who was crying?) “He’s a member of the Mafia, I called him over from Italy.”

Gokudera narrowed his eyes and he shifted his weight to one foot. “So you’re the Ninth’s trusted assassin, Reborn? Were you kidding when you said I could become a candidate for the succession if I kill this brat?”

(He knew he was going to die because of this. But what choice did he have? No one could kill an heir and go unpunished. Blood was blood, no matter where it came from. What hope did a bastard son like him have of living through this?)

“Yes,” Reborn said, nonchalant in his delivery, giving nothing of his lies away. Everyone knew the truth despite this. They were actors in a play and none could change the lines already written. “I was speaking the truth. Kill Sawada Tsunayoshi and you will be in the running for succession.”

(He knew the moment his phone had rung with the number of the World’s Greatest Hitman that this day would be the day he drew his last breath)

“You are here to kill me?” Tsuna said. The blotches on the Musician's skin grew, sickly and disgusting in shade. They were bruises, illness, and rotting filth spread across his skin. The Musician lit a cigarette and nodded, smoke drifting about his head.

“Yes.” He pulled dynamite from their hiding places. “So do me a favor and die.”

The Skinwalker vanished. Tsuna jumped back. Chains rattled and the piano music roared to a crescendo. Dynamite flew from the fingertips of the Musician and a bang shattered the air. Chaos bloomed in the sky around Tsuna when a bullet pierced his forehead. The paton of murder hadn’t learned? Ahh, what a shame.

Tsuna moved, his body not entirely his own. The world clamored up around him, flames blooming like a bonfire across his skin. It roared (great lions) and the wind (invisible to any but him) swirled around him, guiding his movements. Something exploded to his left and Tsuna danced
around it, a beautiful waltz with Death.

( Green eyes seemed to be laughing at him, Chaos and Grief by their side. The show was all too
great, especially with Past standing just behind the boy from a line of Vera’s blessed )

It was too much. ( There was Everything ) He moved right. ( There was Nothing ) He moved left. ( There was no Breath ) He danced through the school gates and ran down the streets like the hounds guarding the boney entrance to Hell snapped at his heels. ( There was only Infinity )

He ran into a park, ( Screams of war, battle, Death, and Fire-Fire-Fire ) and turned to see the Musician ( Blood streamed in rivers, staining all the land ) standing there before him, eyes angry, ( The illness was spreading, gaining ground, winning the war ) breath heavy, ( The Musician was dying dying dying ) and aura out of control.

( Somewhere in the world, a clock rung--Tick Tock Tick Tock --and time slowly ran out. Tsuna could feel it. He could feel Fate at his back--One third of Time--and he mourned the loss of the World in the distant Past Present Future )

“Stop running, damn it!” Gokudera Hayato screamed ( shouting with a wild abandon, the storm raged in his soul and screamed out in pain. Please! Please! Please! ) “Double bomb!”

Tsuna danced, limbs pulled like a puppet on strings. Purple blotched all across the poor, poor Musician's skin. So dark it was, surely it was to mean the boy’s death.

( A string was plucked within him, the sound ringing through his being. Something was wrong wrong wrong )

Skinwalker, were was the Skinwalker? General, he stalked the school with armies at his back. Robin Keeper, he stood at the edge of a cliff, dangling just off the edge. Angel, she sung with tears falling down her face. The Sins were gathering, the Ravens were flocking and oh--

( Chains rattled and the Past clutched at Tsuna’s shoulders. “Listen to your instincts,” they whispered )

“Triple Bomb!”

( Funeral Music played ) The bombs fell from the Musician's arms. ( The shadowy figure shook his head ) The fuses burned down. ( The fae gathered and screamed ) Gokudera Hayato closed his eyes and waited for Death.

( He had known from the moment The World's Greatest Hitman had called him on his phone )

Tsuna paused and the world seemed to slow, playing at only a single frame per second. The illness spread and spread until not a patch of clean skin could still be viewed. The Musician was dying Tsuna knew. This was to be his fate.

( “NO!” ) Hands pushed Tsuna towards the open gates of the Hall of Stars. ( “SAVE HIM!” ) Tsuna listened and Tsuna heard. He was a thief ( The King of Thieves, lounging in his riches, cold eyes of molten gold glittering in the dark ) and stole the Musician from the arms of Death.

Fire flickered out and the world returned to how it normally was. Heat flared at Tsuna’s back and threw he and the one in his arms away from the epicenter of the explosion. It burned ( Hurt Hurt Hurt ) but they were safe.

( And the Past smiled and vanished )
“You-” Gokudera Hayato breathed out the word, looking up at Tsuna with wide, disbelieving eyes. “You saved me.”

Tsuna got up on shaking arms and got off of the Musician, kneeling by the side of the boy who had nearly died. The illness shrank away, vanishing like mist in the morning light.

Gokudera sat up straight and bowed to Tsuna. “Tenth! I was wrong about you!” (I’m going to live, he thought in disbelief) “I will follow you for the rest of my life!”

Gentle hands took ahold of his face and lifted it so that Tsuna might look Gokudera in the eye. Amber eyes (Liquid fire) peered into soft clover green and Sawada Tsunayoshi smiled.

“The illness is gone. I’m glad.” Sawada Tsunayoshi spoke, his voice near a whisper. And with those words, Gokudera felt something click into place and knew he had found his home.

…”

“Nono,

I have begun Tsunayoshi Sawada’s training as requested and have come across several oddities. The information I was given was not accurate, and there is something more going on here than either of us realize. Tsunayoshi appears to have an ability that allows him to see strange manifestations of abstract concepts. This includes my own curse. It appears to affect his reaction to Dying Will Flames and will affect his training in the immediate future. I will take the necessary precautions.

I highly recommend interrogating Iemitsu on this matter. His wife appears to have a similar ability to Tsunayoshi. To my understanding, the strength of Nana’s ability is weaker than Tsunayoshi’s ability, but it may give some insight into the situation.

Tsunayoshi reacts strangely to the Dying Will Bullet. I will have to find a different way to train him in the use of flames in addition to whatever changes shall be made to accommodate Tsunayoshi’s ability.

I am pleased to report Tsunayoshi has gained his second guardian. Hayato Gokudera has taken up the position of Storm Guardian. Training to make him a suitable guardian will commence as soon as the necessary preparations have been made.

I will continue to keep you informed.

With regards,

Reborn”

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr
It’s strange, the things you notice when you know you’re about to die.

( The cracks in the paint on the walls at school, near where they met the floor. How cold the air was in his room this morning when he woke up, freezing cold was his skin. The wrinkles in his father’s face, the laugh lines and the frown lines decorating his edges and corners. The calluses on his fingertips, from years of baseball practice )

He had made his decision, and he wasn’t going to back out now. He was going to jump, and there was nothing anyone could do to stop him. Not his teammates. Not his friends. Not his father.

Especially not his father.

( What would his corpse look like? He wondered... Would his eyes stare up lifelessly at the sky, forever unseeing? Would there be cracks in his skull, so similar to the ones in his arm? Would there be a lot of blood, staining the pavement below him, the cold unforgiving ground? Or would there be very little, like a smattering of droplets decorating the stone? )

Each step he took up the stairs at the school sounded loud in his ears, ringing like funeral bells.

( Like his mother’s burial day--a casket lowered into the ground )

The school was empty for the most part, this early in the morning. Hibari would be here, perhaps. Though there was always a chance he would be out patrolling one place or another. Students participating in clubs with early meetings would be here; Takeshi was certain the kendo club was here at least. They always had early morning practice. Maybe, just maybe, other students would be here as well, for one reason or another.

He reached the door to the roof. It was closed, but not locked. Just as Takashi had thought it would be, given how often Hibari and Tsuna seemed to go up there. It was why he had chosen to come here, rather than seek out one of the more popular suicide spots nearer to the city.

( Later, Yamamoto Takeshi would look back and think, that perhaps he chose that spot so someone could stop him )

The handle felt cool on his palm, and the door opened without a sound. The Disciplinary Committee kept it well maintained, knowing exactly how badly Hibari would hurt them if they let the entrance to his favorite place fall into disrepair. Takeshi still felt odd, not hearing a sound. It felt as if there should have been a screech or a squeak or some sound or another. But then again, he supposed it didn’t really matter.

The wind buffeted him when he stepped outside, ruffling his hair and chilling his skin where it wasn’t covered by his clothing. He clenched his hand, the one free from a cast and holding onto the door handle, and took a deep breath. He let go of the door handle, and took a step forward.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight steps, and he was at the fence. It stood barely waist high and looked worn. Rust gathered in corners where the chain links met, and the metal was cold to his touch.
Standing here, in that moment, the fence seemed so flimsy under his palm. And yet, despite this, it was currently the only thing keeping him from leaping off the edge. It felt superficial. This cheap, waist high fence--no matter how well maintained by the Disciplinary Committee--was the only thing keeping students like him from meeting their deaths. It would be so easy to climb over it, to make that step, to make that fall, and this--

This was the only thing in the way to stop them.

( Was this the worth of a human life? Was this the worth of his life? )

Takashi was tall enough that he could step over the fence. He did so, and stood at the edge, his toes centimeters from the fall.

He looked down at the ground to see the soft grass so many students liked to lay on. There were bushes too, evenly spaced out. They looked sparse and thin from the ground, and seemed rather small from up here.

He looked up from the ground and at the rest of the world around him. He could see buildings way off into the distance, from how high he was up. Perhaps not as far as he would be able to see in a higher building, but it was rather far. If he looked carefully, he could see his house way off in the distance.

Beyond the house and the horizon, stood the sky. It was pale blue and bright, the sun slowly rising in one direction and the rest of the sky slowly brightening with every moment. It was beautiful to see, and Takashi took a moment to breathe it in.

( It seemed wrong that the day he would die would be bright and happy )

“Are you going to jump, Robin Keeper?”

Takashi didn’t turn. He didn’t flinch, or fidget, or seem shocked. He merely leaned back on the fence, resting his free hand on the rail and threaded his fingers in the links just below. It clinked with the addition of his weight, but made no further protest than that.

“Are you here to stop me? Sawada Tsunayoshi?” Takeshi’s voice came out calm and measured. Cold too, but he thought he was within his rights if it was. He was going to die today. He could afford to let his mask slip.

( And the paint melted and burned, scarring his face. It dripped to the ground, molten drops following the lines of the vines tangling his legs )

Tsuna hummed quietly. The sound seemed to echo on the rooftop. “No,” he said. “I’m not.”

“Then why are you here? Tell me, Crazy-Tsuna, are you here to watch? To see me die?” Takeshi bit out a bitter laugh, turning to look at the boy who was behind him. Sawada Tsunayoshi stood there, uniform immaculate and eyes oddly focused. Beyond him, standing by the door, was Hibari Kyoya, ( Cold, distant, thoughtful ) and the new transfer student. ( Nervous, unsure, apprehensive )

“No,” Tsuna said, shaking his head and smiling sadly. He looked Takashi straight in the eye and said, “I’m here to listen.”

“Listen?” A sort of chill ran down his spine, tingling his hands and making his head itch. “You want to listen?”

Tsuna blinked, wide eyes appearing pale orange in the morning light. He nodded his head, slowly,
quietly. “You look like you have a story to tell. I just want to hear it. Can you tell me, Robin Keeper?”

( Robins fluttered around his head, settling on his shoulders and nesting in his hair )

A story? What story? The story of how he got here? Of why he’s jumping? Was that what he wanted to know? Did he want to hear him speak about loneliness, of solitude? Of losing everything he had? Of his mother dying giving him depression, or the relief he found in his favorite sport? Did he want to hear Takashi come up with one suicidal phrase or another, talk about how death was the only relief he had left? Did he want to hear that? What of his story? What of it?

( A robin sat with Tsunayoshi, too )

How was Takashi to speak of it, to tell this strange boy speaking of war generals and monsters lurking in the unknown? How was he supposed to convey the feelings he felt when he himself didn’t know how to express them? How was he supposed to do that?

( A pen was brought to paper--careful, poised--ink dripped on the page . Somewhere, somehow, this story was being written. And to be found, will be found, has been found, in the Library of the Other, where all stories are hidden )

“Do you understand it?” Takeshi felt his mouth speaking on it’s own. His lips were heavy when moving, and his jaw aching with every word. “The feeling of hopelessness? Of uselessness?”

“I do.” Tsuna looked to the side, reminiscing of the past. ( How often had he been ignored? ) “I know the feeling very well.” ( How often had he been forgotten? )

“Then you understand why I’m jumping? Why I want to die?” He lifted his broken arm, holding it out and smiling ( Drip... Drip... The paint slowly comes off. Drip... Drip... ) at the cast. The reason for-- no. The trigger to his coming here.

( Crack. His dreams lay broken on the ground )

“Without this arm, I’m useless. The only thing I’m good for is baseball, and now I can't even do that. My average has been slipping recently. I had wondered what to do. I thought practicing more would help me, but instead my bones broke.” Takeshi’s smile widened and he wondered when he had gotten so close to the edge. There was an entire world at his back, so much open air. All it would take would be one step… “I’ve been abandoned, you see. The baseball gods have abandoned me.”

“Why do you think baseball is the only thing you’re good for?”

Takeshi laughed. His arm ached, phantom pains emanating from the break. “Why else do people come to me? It’s not my grades. It’s not my personality. They don’t come to me because I’m me .”

( They would leave him in an instant, of this he is certain )

“I don’t have a single real friend in this place.” He realized, suddenly. The thought struck him to the core, freezing his bones and pouring ice water in his veins. “Not one.”

Tsunayoshi nodded and blinked again, slowly. His eyes glowed, Takeshi noticed. But eyes shouldn’t glow, should they? It was a very pretty glow. The color was soft, like the feel of his mother’s hands before she died.

“Not many people like me much,” Tsuna spoke, voice quiet and carrying anyway. “I don’t see...
things the way others do, and when I try and help them, they don’t like it much.”

( “If you keep running towards the fall, then you’ll snap.” )

“Sometimes things still turn out okay, without my help.” Tsuna closed his eyes and bowed his head. “Other times, I wish I could have done better.”

( “You should take off the paint, by the way. It doesn’t look very good and eventually it’ll stain.” )

Takeshi looked down at his feet. He remembered their conversation well, and the words he had spoken echoed in his head. Vines and paint… Masks and false friendships… Was that what Tsuna had meant? All that time ago?

Had Tsuna seen this coming, even way back then?

“Why did you start playing baseball?” Tsuna asked.

“My mother,” Takeshi answered. “She really liked it and she brought me to my first game.”

( “Come on, Takeshi! It’ll be fun!” )

It had been something to help him connect with her, at first. He had never had too many interests in common with her, so baseball became the one thing they could always talk about, always bond over. When she was gone, when his mother died, it became a way of honoring her memory.

It felt like he had forgotten that.

( Twisted need, plastic masks, fractured smiles, red red thread. It’s all connected, you know, the world you see. Every action has a reaction and a butterfly flaps its wings and causes a hurricane halfway across the world )

“You know…” Takeshi looked up to meet Tsuna’s gaze again when Tsuna spoke. “My mother used to tell me that if I ever started to fall, all I had to do was find someone to catch me. Sometimes, I had to find someone myself. Sometimes, someone else found me first.”

( There were voices down on the ground. Panicked whispers, surprised gasps, yells of shock. The students of the school were gathering, they had finally looked up )

Tsuna took a deep breath and walked slowly forward, step by step, toward the fence. He stopped when he wasn’t too far away from Takeshi, and simply stood there, arms behind his back. “Yamamoto-san?”

Tsuna held out a hand between them, one half of a bridge. An offering, an olive branch, another path to take.

( Takeshi could hear birds singing. High pitched and sweetly sung )

“Depart, and I will catch you. Fall, and I will fall with you. Vanish, and I will never stop searching for you. This I swear to you.”

Takeshi looked at Tsuna’s eyes--glowing orange, yet so soft all the same--and felt the word’s wash over him. There was a warmth hovering in his stomach, butterflies in his veins. The words sounded to sincere, so genuine. There was so much emotion behind those words, so many feelings lingering with them. Takeshi wondered how it was someone could speak like this.

( He couldn’t help but believe those words )
It was an odd thing to feel when hearing those words spoken by Tsuna. The two of them didn’t speak much. They hadn’t had a proper conversation since the odd exchange during primary school. Why was it Tsuna could express so much emotion, so much care, for someone he barely even knew?

( Sawada Tsunayoshi loved with his entire heart, anything and everything—even that which he knew would hurt him )

“Hahaha…” Takeshi shook his head and smiled, an amused twitch of his lips. Laughter bubbled up in his chest—real laughter. It felt… light. Feathery. Soon enough, he was laughing hard enough that he was almost afraid he was going to lose his grip on the railing and fall.

( He was afraid of falling, why was he afraid? Hadn’t he wanted to jump just moments ago? )

“You’re an odd person,” Takeshi told him. “Telling a stranger something like that. What did I do to deserve being told something like that? Shouldn’t you be telling stuff like that to your friends?”

Tsuna pouted. “But you look like you need a good friend. So I’ve decided I’m going to be your friend. If you’re my friend, there shouldn’t be any problem with me saying things like that, right?”

( Friend. He liked the sound of that )

Takeshi blinked owlishly at Tsuna, laughter bubbling up in his chest again. That smile was spreading again and Takeshi felt ridiculous. Hadn’t he just been about to jump? About to end it? How strange. “Alright. I’ll hold you to that, Tsuna.”

Tsuna smiled; distant, willowy, proud. He just stood there in the middle of the rooftop, one hand extended and his heart on his sleeve. Why would Tsuna come here? Why would Tsuna be his friend? Why was Takeshi so happy that Tsuna was willing, that Tsuna had seen when no one else had? “I know you will, Yamamoto-san.”

( Maybe it was something else, something Takeshi didn’t understand. Maybe a connection had been forged that day so long ago and it had dragged Takashi away from the edge. Maybe it was something else entirely )

There was still a heaviness in his heart, weighing him down. There was still cracks in his psyche, a break in his arm. He would heal, one day, but not today and not tomorrow. This wasn’t a perfect ending, a fairytale with no hurt and harm. It wasn’t.

But it was a start.

( All things have a beginning, just as all things have an end. Yamamoto Takeshi thought his end would be on that day, and yet someone came and dragged him away. So he took a step back, both of his feet on solid ground. It was a step, just one, but it was still a new start )

( And a new beginning was just what he needed )

Chapter End Notes

Finished! This was a tough chapter for me to write, for more reasons than one. There was a point in my life when I was suicidal, so I wanted to capture what I felt at that point in my life and transfer it into what Takeshi must have been feeling in canon. It
was a rather difficult thing to do, both emotionally and physically, because the words often escaped me and what I wrote felt... Empty. I finally managed to come up with a draft I was satisfied with, and this is what you see before you! What do you think?

Tumblr
The trees grew heavy with ripe, red fruit, the lights of the lanterns hanging from the eyes of the houses around them casting the world in color and shadow. A soft breeze blew by, the sky shadowy and swirling, smoky strands drifting through the air.

( Like incense for prayer reaching to deadened lands beyond the living’s reach, and nicotine, opium and sweet smelling, softly burning applewood smoke )

Tsuna walked through it, minding the fish that swam by and the fae that followed ( light and dark and bright and dim and beautiful for their complexity ) behind. He skipped from stone to stone, avoiding the cracks and following the lines that stretched to eternity.

A spin, a twirl, and jumping over two stones ( two precious stones ) that couldn’t be touched, hadn’t been touched, would never be touched. He paused, looking up, sunset eyes searching searching searching.

And he found it, found where he was supposed to go, found the paths to the other side that he needed to go and--

“Tsuna?”

( He found where Time's favorite toy, the glitching man, rested between worlds )

Tsuna blinked, the world vanishing around him. He smiled, sheepishly, and ducked his head at the Skinwalker, who was watching him with narrowed eyes.

“Excuses, Skinwalker. The red strings are pulling,” Tsuna observed, the shapes of the fae shifting in the room. The robin sings and sang and sung, and the faerie blossoms bloomed by the window.

Fate was such an odd thing. Time an odder thing still.

( I've never liked time, you know. Too fickle for my trust, always changing as it is )

“Hm,” the skinwalker hummed, the shadowy figure’s gaze entrapped with the window, with the way the world g L i T c H eD.

( They whispered whispered whispered still )

.  

Loading...

Loading...

Loading...

Ready to start?  

A pencil pointed to the next problem on the sheet. “Solve this problem,” Reborn commanded. And so Tsuna did.

(Once upon a time, there was a man who asked, “What is time? The passing of seconds, the continuation of existence? What separates us from now and then? What separates us from now and when? How do you bridge that gap?”)

Listen dear heart. Listen to the word as it moves forward. Listen as empires rise and fall, as Ashur tells the king to move forth and calm the cosmic chaos with their order.

Tick tick tick tick.

Listen dear heart. Listen to the ticking clocks, seconds slipping by like rain water between fingers, into the still ocean where the Past still roams.

(Always begins with a question)

(No! No! No!)

(Well--)

He was running. He ran as fast as he could, through streets paved with purple gold, and spirits lining every corner. He couldn’t see them, had only rarely ever seen them, but he knew they were there. He knew they were there because he had seen them before, had known them once (if only briefly, so briefly, before the image was gone-- and would know them again and had always known them and would never know them and-- (His mind was racing, he was getting lost. Hadn’t Tsuna-nii warned him about this?)

He knew nothing. Nothing at all.

He turned a corner that no one ever turned (the ones that lead to the Road Between and that Other realm where the stranger things lurked, waiting waiting waiting) and kept running. He ran and ran and ran until--

Until he was home again, back home again. (Where skies were bright and warm and--)

Oh. He thought, smoke whirling up around him, his body diving backwards. He could feel it, knew it in a way he knew to associate with the Other that favored their family so, understood it in a way that meant only spirits could be involved.
He fell and fell and fell and--

Lambo could feel no regret that it would end like this.

( *Not when this was the first time his sky was meeting him*-- )

( *Oh dear guardian of time, ye who holds that which cannot be held, and triumphs over fate’s unwavering whims*-- )

...

Tsuna was, easily, the strangest student Reborn had ever taken on. He had taught many in the past, though he had only ever personally tutored one other in the craft of the underworld, and Tsuna was… different.

There was resolve in his eyes when he had talked a stranger away from death, his gaze settled on something Reborn wasn’t sure he could even fathom.

( *Gokudera looked at Tsuna like it was he who commanded the sun to rise and fall. Yamamoto looked at Tsuna like it was he who hung to moon and stars and made the planets turn. A guardian bond, feeling months in age instead of a few days old* )

Reborn, patiently, went over the problems on Tsuna’s home work with him, pointing out his mistakes one by one until everything was correct. It was a slow process, as Tsuna got distracted often, ( *drifting away away away* ) but Reborn persevered.

It was odd, teaching like this. Reborn was rather used to inserting as much outrageousness into his every act as he could, but with Tsuna it--it wouldn’t work.

Not with this boy, who had dropped everything and ran, just so he could talk a stranger away from death.

( *Not with this boy who was lost to a world no one else could see, distracted by things beyond their comprehension* )

Reborn felt the cow before he saw him. Lightning flames verging on active, crackling just beneath someone’s skin. It was obvious they were young and clumsy, but they were capable of climbing the tree outside and reaching the window.

Reborn calmly started to explain how to solve the next question, watching Tsuna closely for any sort of change. Would he notice their visitor? How would he react?

( *Tick tick tick tick tick* )

Tsuna paused mid writing, to look up at the window just as the cow walked in. It was just a tiny thing, a small child of a low ranking famiglia Reborn remembered meeting at a bar once, one Reborn had anticipated following him here.

( *Dong, the grandfather clock rings, Dong* )

He had thought, once, that the boy would make a good lightning guardian for Tsuna. From what he had seen before, Reborn thought he was correct, even if his original assumptions of what Tsuna would be like were all but completely scrapped at this point. Regardless, the boy was here now. All that was left to do was wait.
( "How do you bridge that gap?" )

( Simple answer is-- )

( You don’t )

Chapter End Notes

The alternate title for this chapter is "In Which the Author Explores the Implications of Growing Up Around Stars!Tsuna and Time travel" And no, Lambo cannot see the things Tsuna can. Tsuna's just influenced him to the point where Lambo's fluent in "Tsuna speak".

I'd also like to thank all the reviewers who gave me so much support after I posted the last chapter. Funeral Bells was difficult for me to write because of the subject, so the response I received was truly wonderful. I'm blessed with the readers I have, truly.

Tumblr
Tick tick tick tick

There were days when the world passed him by without him noticing, where the universe seemed to converge and change in just the blink of an eye. An era sweeping passed, before rewinding and playing again.

Time is such a fickle thing.

It was never more obvious than in that moment, however. When the air around him glitched and shuddered, pink smoke drifting away in the wind.

("Lambo-san has appeared!" he cried, joyful and happy, sparks in his hair and code in his eyes)

“Greetings from the other side of nothingness, Young Vongola.” The voice was deep and smooth, and the smile he gave was wide and sly. I know you, he seemed to whisper, and the world around him agreed. I’ve always known you, for almost as long as I can remember.

“Of which Nothingness do you speak?” Tsuna questioned, heart racing, eyes wide. (He knows he knows he knows! ) “The eternity or the vanished? The fallen or the stars?”

Neither, both. Who is to say? Not me, not when I can’t see them like you can.” The Glitching Man smiled, his image flickering, shifting, like the matrix of the universe was infested with bugs. They crawled through the code, through the fabric of the world, eating away at the seams.

(The world is falling apart at the seams)

“Like I can?” Ye who is the beloved child of time, who falls into that darkness, into that light--

“Like Vera’s favored can,” the Glitching Man explained.

And all was quiet again. It settled, like snow, like dust, like sand.

“Mind explaining?” The Skinwalker spoke up, eyes narrowed and confusion stirring in his gaze.

(The shadowy figure murmured quietly, numbers rattling off under their breath)

The Glitching Man smirked, sticking his hands in his pockets and leaning back on the balls of his feet. He flickered again, glitching glitching glitching for he did not belong here, could not belong here, never would belong here, in this time, in this pace, before he ever existed. “Skinwalker,” he greeted. “There are more things in this world than most people realize. Spirits, maybe. Gods, ghosts, yokai… I’ve always called them fae, because that’s as good a name as any other, but it’s not really the best descriptor. Vera… Vera the Stargazer is…” he smiled, rueful, wistful, and perhaps a bit smug. “Well… Spoilers.”

A click. (Rotten, bubbling, boiled) Reborn pointed his weapon at the Glitching man’s face. “Spoil it.”

“I can’t.” Lambo sighed, his head dropping sharply to one side. He threw his hands up in the air in a ‘what can you do?’ sort of gesture, his smile speaking of secrets playing on his lips. “My future
won’t exist for much longer anyways.”

Reborn’s eyes narrowed.

( “Oh?” the shadowy figure murmured. “And what do you mean by that?” )

“It’ll disappear, won’t it?” Tsuna spoke. “The weave of events.”

“Yes,” the glitching man said. “It will.”

He vanished in a cloud of smoke.

When the smoke cleared, the future erased, tiny little Lambo, Time’s favorite child, smiled up in the glitching man’s place.

( That night, Tsuna mourned a future that would never again be seen )

…

Things never do turn out the way you expect them to. I should know this, for as long as I have been in my line of work, few times have things gone exactly as planned.

…

You blink. What happened? Where are you? You can't seem to see anything. It's all black and nothing and you don’t understand. There was a light, right? Or are you wrong about that? You like to think that you’re right, but you can’t really tell anymore. Where you ever able to tell in the first place? Who are you? You can't seem to remember. You don't remember much of anything, really. Was there even an anything before this? When is “this”? You don't know. You don’t like not knowing. You've spent your whole life knowing, right? Knowing knowing knowing. Knowing when you run, when to fight. Knowing when to stand, knowing when to hide. Knowing when to breathe and when to stop and when to live and when to die. When to bloom like a rose amidst a field of blood, like red spider lilies grown on the edge of hell, like daisies sprung up on the side of the road. So you run. You move your legs and your arms, breath coming harsh, panting gasping reaching desperately for anything, anything--and there is a gun in your hand, heavy in your hand, a weight that you have to carry and can never forget and you put the gun to your head, the metal cold in your temple and take a breath, a gasping breath, tears streaming down your face, screaming to the world because this is hard, so hard, to pull that trigger an end it all, put a stop to it, to all the horrors and monstrosities and raging roaring rampaging beasts within your mind and you can’t do it, can’t pull that trigger, no matter how much you have to, how much you want to, how much the world needs you to when it’s on its last legs beneath you, crumbling and falling apart like someone put their hands to it, and turn it to ash beneath their fingers.

Suicide.

Huh…

Hasn’t this happened before?

And so it resets, the world rewinds, days crawling backwards, sun rising and falling, stars cycling the wrong way. It stops, frozen, like that extra hour in the day, those corners of your mind that creep, the ones you don’t want anyone to see, they can never see, they must not see. Can they see? Will they ever be able to open their eyes for once in their lives and stare out into the abyss like an ocean, screaming with all of their rage, their irritation, their joy and happiness and struggles and sanity and it all slips from their fingers like fragments of a dream or sand tumbling from a broken
hourglass. It’s painful, so painful, so you wander with your head in your hands, tears blurring your vision, your ghost haunting the ground, the air, the land around you and an I’m still crawling in the mud, clawing my way up the mountain side, the rock pieces stuck beneath chipped and broken nails, scratches littering my arms, blood and dirt and sweat and tears staining my clothes and still I struggle, still I fight, with your soliloquy ringing in my ears, a lament for the damned, for the lost that you sing, why must you sing? I CAN SEE YOU, YOU KNOW. I CAN SEE. I’ve always been able to see. My innocence was lost, lost in the fire, lost in the flames that burn in my soul, smoldering like a grudge left to fester.

And you? You don’t seem to understand that. Any of that.

The glass breaks, and nothing can ever be the same again.

…

Somewhere, where no one can see, a person wakes in their cage and laughs.

Chapter End Notes

I messed up the pacing for this chapter and the last, as a result I'm not completely satisfied with this chapter. But, I know myself and if I don't get this out now, then I'll be stuck on this particular point for years on end.

Tumblr
Her Dying Day

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There are some things in this world that could not be understood. More than anyone in the world, this was something Tsuna understood. It was an unbreakable truth, a law that defied all other laws, a rule of the universe that even the Beings of the Other complied to.

_How strange_, he thought. _How strange._

(And like the blind woman taught to See, he Saw)

“So you’re Reborn’s new student,” the man trapped in the body of a toddler said to him, a hurricane (_a storm_) with lightning and thunder and pouring, raging rain all swirling around him, tightly controlled and constrained. It was like the sun, like the Skinwalker when Tsuna had first seen him, it was _impossible_.

But nothing was impossible. This, too, was something Tsuna had come to know.

And behind him stood, just as behind the Skinwalker walked, a shadow figure who smiled, a guileless, kind, and sharp eyed smile that spoke of knives and blood splattered on the ground. There was no scent of gunpowder, no smell of coffee, though the sound of chains rattled in Tsuna’s ears—it was so _loud_. So angry, this man before him was, so mad, his rage saturated the air and swirled like a beast, a dragon, like the earth, the ground, the sky it was powerful. His resemblance to the General took Tsuna’s breath away.

This was a man who did not walk in the shadows. He was not like Reborn, not like the Skinwalker who changed his face to suit the day, like the Fae who rested on his hat, the one everyone seemed to see, even if, even if (like _Kitsune were known to do, hiding, hiding, laughing, laughing, in plain sight for all to see_) it stole the soul of a chameleon to sing the symphonies of the Other to the world through.

This was a man who walked in daylight, wolf hidden among sheep.

(Like the soldiers of Qin, like legends—and in awe the people bowed)

“Carnivore…” Tsuna whispered, and the man (_storm caged and wound so tight_) who stood before him, this monster donned human skin, this being called _Fon_, merely laughed.

(In the background, Time’s Favorite Child chased the Phoenix and they played together, oblivious to the boy facing an older kind of War)

…

She shivered. Chills ran down her spine and she grimaced, hunching in further. She didn’t want this, had never wanted this, just wanted it to end. And yet it didn’t, and he stayed by her side, one arm thrown over her shoulder. Why won’t it stop? Why won’t it stop?

He was warm, so warm. Like a brand against her skin, it hurt, so hot. And still he wouldn’t _let go_.

“What’s wrong, Kyoko-chan?” he asked. So sweet, sickly sweet, like chocolate and cherries dipped in cyanide. She wanted him to leave, to go away and yet--
She opened her mouth to speak and--

( She couldn’t breathe, help help, why couldn’t she breathe, what was blocking her breath? )

“Nothing,” she said, giving him a smile. It felt false and plastic on her face, painted on by an amateur and left there to rot. “I--

( “Breathe, my dear, breathe.” )

“I’d like to go home now, Mochida.” Keep it steady, keep it strong. Just a little bit more--

“Wha-” he startled, his hold on her loosening just enough for her to slip free. She grasped at the chance and dashed out of his hold just a bit to fast. She could see the confusion in his eyes, but she doesn’t care. She’s never wanted this. Never.

“Have a nice day, Mochida.”

She ran.

She ran and her breath was cold, so cold. She trembled in the cool air, trembled as she ran, her limbs shaking, her fingers twitching. She balled them tighter to make them stop. Everything had gone wrong since then, since that day, when Crazy-Tsuna lost his fight, his challenge--

( She wished-- )

The world vanished around her, disappearing into smoke and shadows. She stopped running and spun in a circle, her feet finding purchase on a black cloud. She couldn’t see, why couldn’t she see? Where was she, she was scared, what was going on?

Arms, cold like ice and snow and blizzards raging, wrapped around her and a hand came to rest over her eyes. She breathed, harsh and deep, her lungs wracked with pain, her body ached, why did it ache? “Hush, child, shhhhh.” The voice came, and it was comforting, familiar, even when it was not. She relaxed in the beings hold, leaned back in their embrace, and closed her eyes to dream.

“You long for freedom, sweet star,” the voice whispered in her ear, echoing around her, so soft, so bright, and for once in her life she understood what Sawada Tsunayoshi had always meant by beauty .

It was so beautiful. Fields as far as the eye could see, wheat and flowers and lights and color. There were fish swimming and butterflies flying and bubbles drifting in the wind. “Such freedom,” the voice said, crooning in her ears, and she had the sudden notion that they might be dangerous. But they weren’t, couldn’t be, not to her, not when their arms were so comfortable, their hold so safe. And she felt loved and she felt accepted and she felt free.

“I could give you the freedom you seek, my favored,” they whispered. A hand grasped hers, their fingers interlaced, and she felt like a skeleton all dolled up with roses and a pretty dress. “So lucky, my favored, to wander in here.”

“Who are you?” she asked and the vision vanished, drifting away, and were replaced by shadows once more. And still she lay in their embrace, in this being, this monster, this god.

God. That felt right, to her, this word, god. A god. She felt like laughing and crying and she thought of Tsunayoshi who spoke of fae and spirits and wondered if there wasn’t some truth in all his words. Something more than cryptic warnings and unusual tales and knowledge he shouldn’t have.
“I have many names and no names, my dear. That is the nature of the beings of the Other.” The god’s words seemed to wrap around her, soothing sweet words singing soft tunes. “But should you wish to give me a name, you may call me Chaos.”

“Chaos?” It sung in her blood, ancient and old and she craved it, oh how she craved it.

“Yes,” the god purred in her ear.

“I want freedom,” she confessed, like it’s something that should not be said, cannot be said, and yet she speaks it anyways. “I don’t want to be Mochida’s trophy girlfriend. I hate it. I hate him.”

( She felt violated when he kissed her, hated it when he swung his arm around her, recoiled when he tried to hold her hand )

“Would you like him gone?”

She opened her mouth to answer, gaping open wide. She sucked in a breath, her chest hurt, but she could breathe, she could breathe and--

“Yes.”

Chapter End Notes

You know, I foreshadowed this. I wonder if any of you remember it.

Tumblr
What happens when you aren’t looking? When you blink, does the world stop? Or does it keep on turning, no matter what?

Dawn rose over the horizon, and the sky shuddered a light, baby blue. The air was cold like winter, though it hovered in autumn yet. Breath was cold, the chill flowed down people’s spines, and something ancient, something old and ageless and heady settled over the city.

A boy woke in bed, and turned his orange eyes toward the new dawn, a sense of foreboding hovering in his mind. Something was wrong. Very very wrong. But what?

The flowers grown across the wall glowed with gentle light, shifting in an unseen wind. The world was quiet, as if they were trapped between one breath and the next. The shadows lay still, the land did not shift. And yet, something moved, something other than ethereal flowers grown on a plane unseen by mortal eyes. It moved and slinked and hid and shot and Tsuna, as he sat up in his bed and did not move his gaze from the distant dawn, felt it, knew it (like winter knew frost, like summer knew sun), and waited.

Rebon did not wake, asleep amidst his traps and tripwires, did not move. In another room, two children slept (where fire burned so bright and she who was reborn eternal and he who skipped through time rested together), and in one more room entirely, a final one slept. The mother. So nurturer, the watcher, the one who waited and waited and waited, listening to faerie song--

“Death?” Tsuna whispered, feeling creeping dust and cracking bones inch across the floor, leaving rot and mold behind. He breathed and felt the being around him, surrounding him, comforting and terrifying all at once.

“They come,” the being whispered, before they vanished into the ether, ash clouding around him, frozen, drifting, in pale sunlight through the window. Like the world was in slow motion, why was everything so slow? Between one frame and the next.

Where was the bird song, the laughter? The whispers heard where whispers shouldn’t be?

(Run, something in him said, a voice he could not ignore, yet could not hear. Run)

And so Tsuna threw the covers from his bed aside, fire burning beneath his skin, things were dangerous.

He grabbed a sweater and slid it over his pajamas, not bothering to change further. He walked down the stairs, quickly, and still the world was silent bar his steps. He went to the front door, slipped his shoes on, and walked out into the streets.

It was like seeing the world through a grey film. Like someone had taken all the color and color and color and bled them until they were but a pale imitation of what they once were. Of what Tsuna had always known them to look like.

(Run, something whispered. Run)

Creatures once parading down the streets, ribbons and and banners and flags behind them, scuttled
off into the side alleys and the corners and the cracks. Ghosts which once screamed and wailed their woes, then whimpered and faded. Beings, life which loved the town and the air and the sky, all seemed to vanish. Gone. As if they had never been there.

Tsuna ran.

( Run )

Down his home street and past the garden where gnomes liked to have tea he ran, passed the hidden wizard’s house ( no spell smoke, no crashes, no lightning, no flames? ) and the chittering bush he ran. Through the knight’s alley, under the red leaves canopies, around the joker’s hideaway he ran.

Gold sprung up around him, the sky faded in and out. It went and went, and slowly, so slowly, the sound of someone singing began to echo in his ears. The world vanished slowly around him, and with it, he gave himself to the Past.

“Elena!” He called out, tripping over a stray stone and catching himself before he fell. He grinned, right wide, and made his way to the old tree in the middle of the field of yellow flowers.

“There you are!” A woman said, looking quite annoyed with him. A crown of hope rested on her brow, its trails of silver so pure trailing down her back. The strands shone in the light and mixed with her hair, and he thought she was beautiful. Apple blossoms grew along her arms, thin branches reaching across her dress. She stood from the root of the tree she was seated upon and brushed off her skirt, her eyes bright and happy.

“And G?” She asked.

“Distracted as can be,” he replied, without really knowing why. It escaped him, the reason, slipped through his fingers like smoke.

The woman grinned and started walking, expensive brown shoes stepping through pale flowers and roots. “Off we go, then!” She exclaimed, hands lifting her skirt so as to keep it off the ground.

“Oya? What’s this?” Someone spoke, and Tsuna turned, the vision leaving him. He caught a glimpse of feathers before the figure, too, vanished.

“Oh,” Tsuna whispered, the smell of rot reaching him, the gray world returning. ( “Off we go!” Her voice sounded in his head, like memories not his own ) The house before him was unfamiliar, and the door stood open a crack. He stumbled forward, drawn by some power beyond him, a force beyond his comprehension, and pushed the door open.

“Oh.”

Then, from further in the house, someone screamed.

…”

The police station was buzzing around him, the officers running to and fro like annoying flies. Hibari Kyoya stalked forward, jacket flaring out wide behind him, and slammed the door to his uncle’s office open, moving quickly towards the figure seated in front of the desk. He walked with all the power he held at his fingertips raging and swirling beneath his skin, a tempest barely restrained.

“Tsunayoshi,” he said, reaching out, without really thinking about it, and placing a hand in the
small animal’s hair. It was soft, so soft, and Tsunayoshi looked up at him with wide brown eyes.

“Kyo-san?” He spoke and Kyoya resisted the urge to growl. Tsunayoshi trembled slightly under his touch, and Kyoya knew the look in his eyes, knew it, and despised its very presence.

“What happened?” He asked, ignoring the curious and sometimes frightened looks of the officers around him. The herbivores didn’t matter. They never had, so long as they continued to stay in line, knowing their place. Tsunayoshi mattered. Tsunayoshi was pack.

“Something was calling me,” Tsunayoshi answered, getting that faraway look that he always bore when he spoke of something that Kyoya couldn’t see, something of that strange other world that overlapped with his. “Drawing me towards that place.” He hesitated. “Death warned me.”

Tsunayoshi’s mouth drew into a thin line, eyes darting towards a blank piece of wall before looking back at Kyoya once again.

He looked scared. There was little that could make Tsunayoshi scared.

“Things are getting dangerous,” Tsunayoshi whispered, so quiet, Kyoya almost couldn’t hear.

“Kyoya?” A voice sounded behind him, and Kyoya resisted the urge to growl when he turned around to see his uncle standing there, a suit jacket slung over one shoulder and a coffee mug in his free hand. He had files tucked under his arm. “Here for Tsunayoshi?”

“What happened, Herbivore?” Kyoya questioned, not deigning to answer such an obvious question.

“There was a corpse,” Hibari Satoshi answered, sighing and moving to sit in his seat behind the desk. He drapped his jacket on the chair and set the files down on the desk. “Rotted. Gruesome sight, certainly. Looked to be at least a week old. How it got to be in the entrance hall of the Mochida residence, I haven’t the faintest clue. We’re not even sure who the victim is yet. No ID on the body, and all the Mochidas were accounted for up until yesterday. To make matters even stranger, the son Kensuke vanished during the night. No one’s seen him since yesterday evening, when he came home from his date. We’ll have to question the girlfriend later.” He sighed again and took a long swing of his coffee. “It’ll take a bit to get more information. Until then, I recommend you take Tsunayoshi home.”

Kyoya frowned, but did not protest. He looked back to the small animal, only to find he was staring at something in the distance.

“You won’t find her,” Tsunayoshi said, the words ringing louder in the room than they otherwise should. “Chaos has taken her.”

“Chaos, huh?” Satoshi muttered. “Fantastic. More madness. Why is it that this happens every time you get involved with a case?” He sighed once again, this one far more dramatic than the last two.

Kyoya sent Satoshi a sharp look, before taking a step away from Tsunayoshi so the small animal could stand. Tsunayoshi got to his feet and wavered a moment before setting off, Kyoya following close behind.

Just what was going on now?
I'd apologize for the long wait, but I'm honestly too tired to. My interests have been elsewhere, my health has been all over the place, and there's been irl drama all around. Good news is that this chapter is finally done! Bad news is I have no idea when the next one will be. Nevertheless, I will be typing away and making an attempt at completing this and all my other works as well.

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